



Christian publishers who work in hostile contexts believe their message is worth more than life itself.

by Kim Pettit

Publishing & Persecution

Paul's faith is astonishing. Think of the hardships he suffered. "We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death" (2 Cor. 1:8-9, NIV), he writes. He boasts that he has ... "worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again" (11:23). He even says, "For Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties" (12:10).

How can anyone "delight" in persecution? Or minister despite "beatings, imprisonments, and riots" (6:5)? Paul never ceased publishing and proclaiming the good news. His letters are evidence that he continued to write and to publish despite the difficulties.

The publishers writing for this issue of *InterLit* have described the situations they face in their contexts. In various places around the world, Christian publishers today face suffering, trials, and tribulation. They publish with inadequate resources. They brave danger to distribute Bibles, tracts, books and magazines that make Christ known. They cope with threats, war, crime, economic instability, injustice, corruption, restrictions, and more. Who, in their right mind, would voluntarily put up with such things? Why would anyone carry that cross?

I admire the courage of the publishers highlighted in the preceding articles. I've been inspired by New Day's determination to pursue its mission in Sudan. In publishing for believers there, New Day's staff has faced innumerable hardships. They know what it is to cry out to God for grace and protection to continue their work in desperate situations.

I am inspired by the way God used GLS to minister to believers throughout India. The decision to publish *Burnt Alive* and to give a voice to Christians in India could have brought about increased persecution and violence instead of blessing.

But why publish when it is so dangerous?

What strikes me is that Paul took for granted that his mission is worth all of this trouble. It is amazing that he considers himself "poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything" (6:10). Paul is not mired in self-pity, complaining about the difficulties he faces. Neither is he unrealistic about the dangers. Since Paul had threatened Christians and put them in prison, it's unlikely he expected that preaching the gospel would be easy. Such expectations would have disappeared after his first beating.

I am convicted, too, when I realize that Paul never blamed God. Not once. He didn't complain that God, who is all-powerful, could have made it easier for Paul to spread the gospel. Paul not only assumes that his message is worth more than life itself, but is also confident in the goodness of God. He believes God is trustworthy, even when life includes hardship (12:8,9).

Christian publishers around the world face danger daily because they share Paul's beliefs about God's love and the inestimable worth of sharing it with others. They believe this ministry has "surpassing glory" (3:10), and that "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ" is a "treasure in jars of clay" (4:6,7). "Christ's love compels us" (5:14) to publish. Christ's love pushed Paul to continue his writing and publishing ministry even in prison, and it compels Christian publishers who are persecuted to write, to seek out manuscripts, to edit them, to illustrate them, to design, to typeset, to print and distribute books. It motivates them to continue even when facing vandalism, confiscation of property, betrayals, beatings, arrests, prison, torture and death. They focus on Christ who "was crucified in weakness, yet [...] lives by God's power, "and identify with Paul when he says, "Likewise, we are weak in him, yet by God's power we will live with him to serve you" (13:4).❖