



DORDT COLLEGE

Digital Collections @ Dordt

---

Faculty Work: Comprehensive List

---

5-18-2015

## My Brother, My Sister

Charles Veenstra

Dordt College, [charles.veenstra@dordt.edu](mailto:charles.veenstra@dordt.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [http://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/faculty\\_work](http://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/faculty_work)



Part of the [Christianity Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Veenstra, Charles, "My Brother, My Sister" (2015). *Faculty Work: Comprehensive List*. Paper 227.

[http://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/faculty\\_work/227](http://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/faculty_work/227)

This Blog Post is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Collections @ Dordt. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Work: Comprehensive List by an authorized administrator of Digital Collections @ Dordt. For more information, please contact [ingrid.mulder@dordt.edu](mailto:ingrid.mulder@dordt.edu).

---

# My Brother, My Sister

**Abstract**

"The year 2014 will go down in history for having the highest level of global persecution of Christians in the modern era... What should be our response as Christians to the suffering of our brothers and sisters around the world? Should we seek to end all persecution?"

Posting about the persecution of Christians from *In All Things* - an online hub committed to the claim that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ has implications for the entire world.

<http://inallthings.org/my-brother-my-sister/>

**Keywords**

In All Things, Christians, ISIS, Palestine, persecution

**Disciplines**

Christianity

**Comments**

*In All Things* is a publication of the [Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service at Dordt College](#).

# My Brother, My Sister

---

 [all in allthings.org/my-brother-my-sister/](http://allthings.org/my-brother-my-sister/)

Charles Veenstra

For a long time, I have been interested in the Middle East. I have studied its history, followed its conflicts, and observed unbalanced U.S. policy toward various groups there. A few years ago my wife and I were privileged to visit Israel and Palestine, under the leadership of Gary Burge. We were able to connect with many Palestinian Christians—including visiting in their homes. They said to us, “Why do you Americans come to visit the dead stones but pay no attention to the living stones?” Many Americans are Christian Zionists, who support Israel with buckets of cash but almost never visit Palestinians—including Christians. After listening to Palestinian Christians and seeing their plight, we made it our mission to not let any group of persecuted Christians be forgotten.

When some of our seniors in the “[Calling, Task, and Culture](#)” course began studying the topic of persecuted Christians, they were amazed at what they found. According to “[Open Doors](#),” the year 2014 will go down in history for having the highest level of global persecution of Christians in the modern era. Approximately 100 million Christians are persecuted worldwide. The same source indicates that an average of at least 180 Christians around the world are killed each month for their faith. In recent months, major news media have reported the persecution and beheadings of Christians by ISIS, otherwise known as the Islamic State. While my interest in this topic began with the Palestinian Christians, just a little research indicates that many other places in the world are much worse. In several countries, Christianity is banned; churches are not allowed. In the Middle East, persecution of Christians has increased significantly. One of the effects of this is that large numbers of Christians are leaving Iraq, Palestine, Syria, and other places in order to simply survive. Thus, the Christian witness seems diminished in areas where it once flourished.

What should be our response as Christians to the suffering of our brothers and sisters around the world? Should we seek to end all persecution? The students quickly discovered that Jesus made very clear that his followers would be persecuted, and therefore they asked: “If Jesus declared that persecution would come to those belonging to him, are we faithful because we are not being persecuted?” If persecution has been promised, should we stop it?

Several responses immediately rise to the surface. First, we must be **informed**. We tend to be so consumed with our personal lives that we do not hear the cries of those who are hurting. Once informed, we must **pray**, not “just pray,” but carefully laying needs before the throne of grace. The suffering ones are our brothers and sisters. In class, we wrestled with the next question: should we rescue them? If we do that, some said, then the voice of Christians is diminished in that area. We did not come up with an easy answer. A third possible response that we discussed was whether **governments should get involved**. My answer to the role of government is that its prime responsibility is to promote justice, and justice means people should not be killed because of their Christian faith. If the indigenous government does not protect its citizens, then a coalition of governments should step in to help promote safety for all people. Unilateral action by one country in the affairs of another is not wise. A fourth response is to **work with organizations** that have experience in providing aid. Several websites show what they can do and also give advice on proper ways of helping. Furthermore, we need to **open our borders** to those fleeing persecution. Our country has a long history of helping immigrants who are in deep need. We need to continue that history. Recently, some major media organizations have begun reporting on the persecution of Christians. Videos of the beheading of many Christians have been made public. We must keep the pressure on media to tell

the stories of those who are suffering. Its job is to stand with those in need and call out the powerful.

Even all of these responses may not bring out the result that we desire. Nevertheless, faithfulness to God requires that we continue to work and pray—including this prayer: “Come quickly, Lord Jesus. Come quickly and make all things new.”