Voice of the Martyrs have revealed that around 3000 people become Christians every day in China, despite the horrendous persecution from the communist authorities. Christians in China routinely face beatings from the Secret Police, their meetings are broken up, their buildings are demolished, their Bibles are confiscated and their leaders are executed, but the Church grows - as in New Testament times.

Quote: *"VOM said the persecution is having little effect on the desire to know more about Christ. "In the past year, we received more requests for Bibles and Christian books from Chinese believers because they wanted to share the gospel with others," a VOM source within the restrictive nation said. "The Communist government of China does not see Christ as the most important person in an individual's life.* ***Christians count it a privilege to believe in and suffer for Jesus Christ.***
" The contact said Christians simply adjust to the persecution at hand – including arrests, demolished buildings and confiscated materials.

I remember seeing a Chinese Christian being interviewed on television. He said they were once taught that the Lord would come back, and they wouldn't have to suffer persecution. That was before the communists took control of China. He said a lot of Christians came to realize then that that they needn't look to the rapture as an escape from persecution. Sadly we in the West have not learned the same lesson. Some have this idea that the rapture is a fire-escape from suffering, and those who don't believe in the pre-tribulation theory think we must prepare for persecution during the tribulation period. Friends, as I heard last night in our Bible study in 1st Peter, it is given to us not only to believe in Christ, but also to suffer for His sake (Philippians 1:29). Of the tribulation saints, it is said they "loved not their lives unto the death", Revelation 12:11. Even if we we had to go through the tribulation period, we shouldn't be stockpiling food, or building hideouts for our families. When Ezra was given the task of rebuilding Jerusalem, he says he was ashamed to ask the king for an escort, because he had told the king how God looked after His own (Ezra 8:22). What sort of confidence are we showing in our God by trying to hide from persecution? Did He not command us to not be mindful of what we eat or what we wear, "because your Heavenly Father knows you have need of these things?" (Luke 12:30). I was encouraged by the Chinese Christians' resolve to count it a privilege to believe in and to suffer to Jesus Christ. The New Testament Christians thought the same. We have so much to learn.

Acts 5:40-42
And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten [them], they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

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