

The High Cost of Being Faithful

This fall marks 20 years since the collapse of the “Iron Curtain” across Central and Eastern Europe. Eases in travel restrictions and the right to public assembly in Poland during the summer of 1989 spread throughout the region. On November 9, the day after the communist-dominated government of East Germany resigned, thousands of Berlin residents converged on the Wall that had divided their city since 1961. On November 17, citizens of Czechoslovakia packed the streets of Prague to begin the “Velvet Revolution.” Christmas Day ended with the execution of the cruel dictator of Romania, Nicolae Ceausescu, and his wife, convicted by a military tribunal of genocide and crimes against the State.

The changes since 1989 have been extensive and unbelievable for those who experienced the harsh repression of the communist regime. Shops are filled with goods previously not available or only through special “hard currency” shops or on the black market. Instead of being barred from travel to the West, there is no longer need to stand in line for two days to get a visa for Austria or England. When you drive to the border, they just say, “Have a good journey.” Church-related activities beyond Sunday morning worship services were normally not allowed by the authorities. Immediately after the changes, mass evangelistic rallies were held and thousands of new churches were planted. Professing Christians were restricted in what they were allowed to study (if at all) and what jobs they were allowed to hold.

Now, studying abroad is often the choice of today’s young Central and Eastern Europeans considering university.



But these freedoms are not enjoyed by all of Entrust’s students around the globe. Participants in Central Asia and the Middle East are feeling a lot of pressure and facing high costs for being faithful. In Central Asia there are new laws that make the consequences for owning religious literature much more severe (about a \$2,000 fine). One student with a young wife and new baby recently faced one of these fines and couldn’t pay, so the police came to their house and confiscated all of their furniture. Students in our Middle Eastern study groups regularly face a variety of ongoing persecution, ranging from job losses, evictions and even the occasional death threat. In spite of all this our brothers and sisters keep pressing on, but they could certainly use our prayers.

As we approach the American holiday of Thanksgiving, we are thankful for your continued prayer and financial support of Entrust’s ministries worldwide.