

# TLP CLEAR – DISSEMINATION UNLIMITED



## In Obscura

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(TLP-C) Christianity Is the Vanguard of Western Civilization—and America Must  
Protect It Abroad, 3 May 2026

**KNOW THE TARGET – WATCH THE TARGET – LOOK DEEPER -EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED**  
**IN OBSCURA THEAT LEVEL – IMMINENT**

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There is an incalculable mission in protecting the church, that of the Watchman and the gifts of the spirit, each of our bodies, the Temple of the Holy Spirit with that reminiscence if not standing destiny as a piece of King David. Despite his overtly described imperfections, even his sinfulness, his warrior spirit remained, as did Gid's steadfast love, patience and presence in, for and through David. The enemy is rising exponentially with as many deceptions and souls he can produce. This writing, one I was directed to discover, is the critical mission and the "why" of that mission in the securing of the flock. Exodus 14:14.

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The screenshot shows the top of a web browser displaying the FDD (Foundation for Defense of Democracies) website. The header includes the FDD logo, navigation links for 'About', 'Issues', 'Projects', 'Products', and 'Connect', and buttons for 'SUBSCRIBE' and 'INVEST'. A search icon is also present. The main content area features a large image of a cathedral interior with the title 'Christianity Is the Vanguard of Western Civilization—and America Must Protect It Abroad' overlaid in white text. Below the title, it says 'April 13, 2026 | Providence'. A breadcrumb trail reads 'Home > Christian Persecution'. Social media sharing icons for X, Facebook, LinkedIn, Email, and Print are visible. Below the article title, there is a profile picture of Samuel Ben-Ur, Research Analyst, and a 'Listen to analysis' button with a play icon and '9 min' duration.

**Christianity Is the Vanguard of Western Civilization—and America Must Protect It Abroad**, Samuel Ben-Ur, Research Analyst, April 13, 2026 | Providence, via Foundation for Democracies <https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2026/04/13/christianity-is-the-vanguard-of-western-civilization-and-america-must-protect-it-abroad/>

On Easter Sunday, the White House [issued](#) a press release stating that under President Donald Trump’s leadership, “the U.S. is once again a beacon of religious liberty — honoring the biblical values and heritage that built our nation.”

Other presidents have addressed this issue, but not like Trump. On the eve of World War II, Franklin Roosevelt [identified](#) the “freedom of every person to worship God in his own way” as one of four essential freedoms on which global security should rest. Rather than emphasizing a need to protect all faiths, Trump has made protecting Christianity across the globe a prominent feature of his foreign and domestic leadership.

America’s Christmas Day strikes against Islamic State terrorists in Nigeria marked a first for a nation preparing to celebrate its 250<sup>th</sup> birthday. This is the first time in living memory that the United States has undertaken a military operation with the [explicit](#) purpose of preventing violence against Christians.

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Of course, religious intolerance is not new—nor is it confined to attacks on Christians—so why should U.S. policy focus on just one faith, and why now?

The moral case for safeguarding persecuted Christians applies to all other targeted faiths. Christians are arguably the most [persecuted](#) religious group on the planet, but that does not weaken the case for protecting others.

Yet Christianity has a unique relationship to the American conception of liberty. The White House hinted at Trump’s underlying motivation when it [clarified](#) that “faith is not a private matter to be silenced by government — but a foundational strength of our Republic.”

By protecting Christianity abroad, the Trump administration seeks to foster the conditions for democratization in deeply illiberal, authoritarian, and fractured societies. Christianity deserves a special place in American foreign policy, not just for moral reasons, but because protecting global Christianity advances America’s strategic aims of promoting liberalization and democracy abroad.

American democracy evolved from two essential components: Enlightenment values of religious tolerance and liberalism; and the underlying Judeo-Christian principle that man was created in God’s image. Without both, American democracy would not exist or would at least be unrecognizable.

America is a nation of ideas. Specifically, it is a nation of these ideas:

John Locke’s *Second Treatise of Government*, perhaps the single-most important Enlightenment text that inspired America’s system of government, bridges the gap between secular American democracy and biblical values.

Locke, an Anglican, developed modern religious freedom from his Christian belief that man, “being all the workmanship of one omnipotent and infinitely wise Maker,” has no natural right to authority over others. Since man was created in Gods image, he can only be legitimately governed by other men if he consents to this governance. Perverting the natural right of man to freely pursue life, liberty, and property is as amoral as it is heretical, in Locke’s conception.

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America is fighting a protracted ideological war for Locke’s ideas. In battle after battle, the United States has confronted Marxism, fundamentalist Islamism, and authoritarianism, which offer fundamentally different interpretations of political legitimacy.

As in the Roman Empire, Christianity thrives today in oppressive societies. America’s adversaries, namely, [China](#), [Russia](#), [Iran](#), and [North Korea](#), are acutely aware of this dynamic, and it terrifies them. Each persecutes its Christian population, albeit in different ways and with different aims.

Broadly speaking, China and Russia seek to manipulate Christian worship into tools of state power, while Iran aims to stymie its growth, and North Korea desires to eradicate it. In China, Christianity has gained a little room to grow since the 1960s after the country’s leaders [eased](#) religious restrictions that had grown out of Mao Zedong’s [zero-tolerance](#) atheism.

And given just a sliver of sunlight, Christianity in China has bloomed. As many as 130 million Christians live there now. It is [projected](#) to be the world’s largest Christian nation by 2030. This explosive growth has caught the ire of current leader Xi Jinping, who in 2018 began to implement a [coercive policy](#) designed to “Sinicize” Christianity.

Churches operating independently of the state or deviating from Beijing’s acceptable version of Christianity face overt repression. China has increasingly [turned](#) its sharp-eyed surveillance network on underground Christian worship, launching mass raids, requiring clergy loyalty tests, and removing thousands of crosses from church buildings. Even state sanctioned Chinese churches have been forced to [replace](#) core Christian teachings, [including](#) the Ten Commandments, with Xi Jinping Thought and communist diktats.

Russia, on the other hand, elevates the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC)—which has [become](#) a de facto Kremlin propaganda arm—above other Christian faiths. In occupied Ukraine and Crimea, competing branches of the church—including Orthodox churches that subscribe to different patriarchates—have been all but [cleansed](#) by Russian Federal Security Service forces. In the Ukrainian Kherson region alone, a once diverse faith community of 990 organizations across 38, mostly Christian,

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faiths, have been [decimated](#) to a mere 175, of which 86 percent are now registered to the ROC.

Iran's Shiite fundamentalist hardening in recent decades coincides with Tehran unwillingly presiding over the [fastest-growing](#) church in the world. Traditionally, Iran's Christians originate in ethnic Armenian and Assyrian communities, which Tehran tolerates under highly restrictive conditions. Christians are the only faith community [forbidden](#) from holding services in Farsi, as the Islamic Republic fears that if its majority Muslim population understood Christ's teachings, many would convert. And many have, despite apostasy being punishable by [death](#) under Tehran's interpretation of Sharia law.

North Korea is far and away the [worst](#) place in the world for Christians to live. Merely [possessing](#) a copy of the Bible is punishable by life in a labor camp for both the offender and [up](#) to three generations of their family. Of North Korea's [approximately](#) 400,000 Christians, 50,000 to 70,000 are [believed](#) to be in camps where torture, starvation, and forced labor are routine.

These adversaries have expended tremendous manpower and wealth to surveil, suppress, and manipulate Christianity precisely because they fear it. They see Christianity as a conduit for the same ideas that make Americans free. And it is true. No single idea is more diametrically opposed to authoritarianism than consent of the governed. This principle, radical in America 250 years ago, remains radical to the authoritarian world today.

Protecting global Christianity should be at the forefront of America's long-term strategic goals, although we should implement it with caution. Washington should not endanger Christians by coordinating with churches to actively undermine rogue regimes. China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea consistently and unjustly label apolitical Christian worship as malign Western influence. An American strategy that gives credence to these arguments by using Christianity to purposefully undermine its adversaries ignores the universal values in Christianity, instead infecting them with a dissident political tilt.

The Trump administration's current approach is the correct one. Safeguarding the rights of Christians to practice freely allows the virtues of the world's most popular religion to take

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root organically. America's foreign policy should prioritize protecting this natural proliferation.

It is not always easy for a government to stand up for religious liberty and specifically for Christianity. Similarly noble agendas often give way to short-term, more material concerns. The current administration's welcome statements should not become a reason for complacency. Rather, it is essential to keep presenting American leaders with evidence of ongoing persecution and holding them to their commitments to protect the faith.

The world will be a better place for it.

*Samuel Ben-Ur is a research analyst focusing on the Middle East at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD).*

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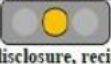


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