

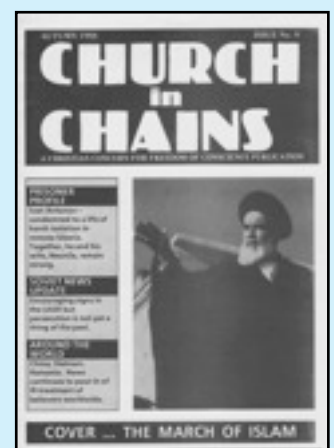
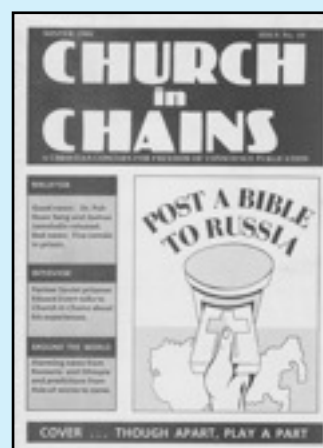


The first issue of *Church in Chains* magazine was published in Autumn 1986 and highlighted the case of **Eman Tawfick**, a young Egyptian Christian arrested because she had converted from Islam. Many readers wrote to the Egyptian Ambassador in Dublin about her case. (Eman was released from prison in July 1987.)

In the early days of the eight-page magazine, the situation of Christian prisoners in labour camps in the Soviet Union was featured regularly. **Anna Chertkova** was pictured on the cover in Autumn 1987 when she was being held as a prisoner in a psychiatric hospital. Readers prayed and campaigned for Anna and some years later, after her release, *Church in Chains* reported on how Seathrún Mac Éin and David Turner visited Anna at her home in the USSR.

In the late 1980s, an Easter postcard (designed by Bert-Jan Van Embden) was enclosed each Spring for readers to send to Christian prisoners in the Soviet labour camps. As change came to the Soviet Union, a new project was organised: **"Post a Bible to Russia"**. Thousands of New Testaments and Children's Bibles were sent to Christians all over the USSR.

The size of the magazine soon increased to 12 pages and later to 16 pages in an effort to cover the news coming from the persecuted church. The magazine extended its coverage of the persecution of Christians in the Muslim World and also in China, where house church Christians faced consistent pressure from the government.



“Others were tortured and refused to be released...were chained and put in prison”

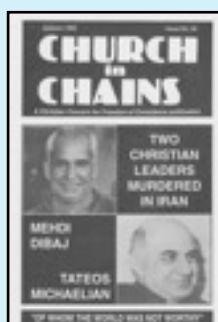
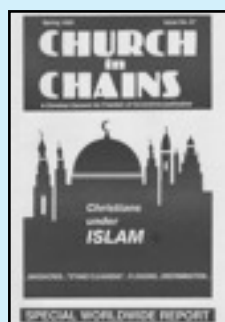
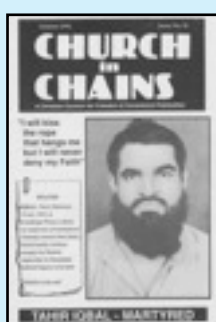


In Summer 1991, **Church in Chains** reported about a group of three Egyptian Christians who had been imprisoned and tortured for their faith. Readers were encouraged to pray and a protest march was held in Dublin to the Egyptian Embassy (Ruairi Quinn TD, now Minister for Education, spoke at the march). The three men – **Hassan, Mostafa and Sallam** – were eventually released and David Turner visited them secretly in Cairo. Many years later, one of the three (Mostafa) spoke at the Church in Chains conference about his experiences.

In Autumn 1992, **Tahir Iqbal** was pictured on the front cover and the magazine reported on how he had been martyred (probably by poisoning) in a Pakistani prison. Tahir was a former Muslim who had been accused, under Pakistan's blasphemy laws, of desecrating the Quran. Tahir, who was paralysed from the waist down, had been held in dreadful conditions. The cover included a quote from Tahir: ***“I will kiss the rope that hangs me but I will never deny my Faith”***.

In Autumn 1994, **Church in Chains** reported on the murder of two greatly-loved Christian leaders in Iran, **Mehdi Dibaj and Tateos Michaelian**. The magazine included pictures of a memorial service held outside the Iranian Embassy in Dublin. In 2007, Issa Dibaj (son of Mehdi) visited Ireland to speak at the Church in Chains conference. He spoke of his father's life and death and also about his own work as a Bible translator with Elam Ministries.

In Autumn 1997, the cover of **Church in Chains** bore the headline: **“Persecution and ‘Abundant Life’”**. The magazine reported on the arrest and imprisonment of many house church Christians in China but also detailed the huge demand for a Bible study course called “Abundant Life”. Readers contributed over IR£6,000 (€7,600 approx.) towards the printing of study books for this course.



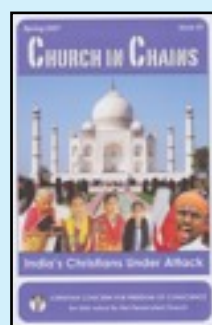
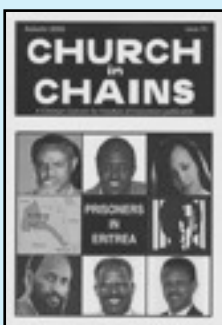
In Summer 2003, the headline on the front cover of *Church in Chains* was “Inside Cerro Hueco Prison” and the magazine carried a report from David Turner about his visit to Mexico to investigate the “*Innocent of Acteal*” case, in which 79 men (including many evangelicals) were imprisoned on false charges. David visited the men in prison and also met with their families and lawyers. **Over 50 men including Victorio Arias Perez** (the prisoner pictured on the cover) **have since been released.**



In Autumn 2005, **Christian prisoners from Eritrea** (then Africa's newest country) **were pictured on the cover** and the magazine told of how hundreds of pastors, leaders and ordinary Christians were being imprisoned without trial. Gospel singer **Helen Berhane** was one of those pictured and Irish Christians prayed earnestly for her release. Helen was eventually released and came to Ireland in 2009, where she told her story to Church in Chains supporters.

In Spring 2006, **the magazine began to be printed in colour and a children's page started.** The cover pictured three Sunday school teachers (**Rebekka Zakaria, Eti Pangesti and Ratna Bangun**) in a court in Indonesia. The women were given a three-year sentence for running a Sunday School that included some local Muslim children. Readers were encouraged to send a postcard of Ireland to the women, who were released after serving two years.

In Spring 2007, **India was on the front cover** and the magazine detailed some of the 200 violent attacks against Christians in the previous year and also highlighted the discrimination suffered by India's Christian Dalits at the bottom of the caste ladder. The magazine included a campaign postcard, designed to be sent to an Indian government commission.



Beyond... The 100 Challenge

“Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.”(Hebrews 13 v 3)



Looking back over 100 issues provokes a variety of responses, depending on your perspective. They can be seen as a catalogue of continual suffering of innocent people, but also as an inspiring record of real faith exercised by real Christians. The stories of persecution can cause some to ask where God is, but cause others to be amazed at the testimony of many to God's presence with His people in the darkest prisons.

There is no end in sight to the persecution of Christians around the world in over 50 countries, so *Church in Chains* magazine will continue to tell their stories. Sometimes, the persecution experience of an entire community (such as Pakistan's Christians) can be best described in the story of one person, such as Asia Bibi, featured on the cover in Spring 2011. The magazine reported on her situation in prison awaiting an appeal to be heard against the death sentence handed down to her under the blasphemy law.

Thanks be to God for His leading over 100 issues of Church in Chains magazine and for providing for our needs through the gifts of His people. Church in Chains has always been supported entirely by voluntary donations.

Our continuing work needs your continuing support

The aim of Church in Chains is to be **an Irish Voice for Persecuted Christians**. As we move on from issue 100, we appeal to all who support this aim to respond by sending a gift to the address below or by starting a standing order (a form is available on request or can be downloaded from our website by clicking Get Involved).



CHURCH IN CHAINS

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