



## Exile Night Introduction

*"I am N?" What does that mean?*

When militants from the self-proclaimed Islamic State (ISIS) moved into northern Iraq, they began tagging Christian-owned property, homes and churches with a spray-painted Arabic letter ن, or "N." This single letter conveyed the powerful accusation that the occupants were "Nazarenes" — people who followed Jesus of Nazareth rather than Islam.

To be labeled "N" in a community dominated by Muslim extremists is to face an immediate identity and life change. With this mark comes an ultimatum: Convert to Islam, pay a high tax, leave the area ... or be killed.

Anyone who takes a stand for Jesus when facing Islamic extremists, anyone who chooses to be "N," pays a high cost. Without warning, some Christians are dragged from their homes and businesses by armed militants, never to be seen again. Pastors who share the message of Jesus in their communities are beheaded in front of their families. Children who will not renounce Jesus are shot. Teenagers may be taken from their families and forced into service to ISIS, or they may be beaten, mutilated and left for dead.

Yet these believers' courageous, steadfast commitment to God in the face of persecution provides Jesus followers all over the world with a powerful picture of what being "N" is all about. They willingly sacrifice everything they have in this world in order to fulfill God's calling to obey and serve Him.

For one night, you will identify with these courageous believers, experiencing in a small way what it's like to be a refugee. You will eat what they eat, sleep how they sleep and hear their stories. Their stories and situations matter because they are your brothers and sisters in the global family of Christ, and they need us to stand with them.

It won't be easy to listen to some of the stories you will hear tonight. It is unsettling to know that these are true accounts of incidents that happened to real Christians. But your persecuted brothers and sisters want you to hear them. We invite you to think deeply about their stories and allow yourself to share in their experience of faith lived out among persecutors.

The goal of Exile Night is not to elicit pity for persecuted Jesus followers in hostile Muslim countries. The goal is to draw you into fellowship with them and inspire you to pray for them. By doing so, you will let them know they are not alone in their efforts to share the love of Jesus among those opposed to Him and His people.

God is working powerfully and strategically throughout the world. Many persecuted Christians have boldly proclaimed, "I am N." They stand firm, faithfully sharing the message of God's grace to a world that desperately needs Him. At Exile Night, you will stand with our persecuted family. Their testimonies will deepen your commitment to Christ and his Great Commission, and our prayer is that you will also choose to declare, *"Count on me. I am N, too."*

**[i-am-n.com](http://i-am-n.com)**