

# Finding peace

## Strategies for dealing with pain and persecution

By Jaime Hunt

Persecution and injustice are expected in a fallen world. Yet, finding the right way to deal with hurtful situations can still be difficult, says spiritual director Lola Scobey.

“Persecution because of beliefs in biblical equality can challenge a person’s deepest sense of self and self-worth,” says Scobey. “A constant barrage of views historically held by some church groups ... can undermine a person’s confidence in both their personhood and their viewpoints.”

Many emotions can be expected. Among them are anger, hatred, sadness, resentment, self-doubt, derailment, fear and hopelessness, says Scobey.

“[D]ifferent strategies are required to deal with each of these negative emotions,” says Scobey. However, she adds that there are six fundamentals for dealing with any negative emotion.

Maintaining faith in God is the highest priority. Scobey recommends that hurting people try to remember that God is with them and that he will help them endure hurtful situations. She encourages hurting people to pray that there will be some benefit from the situation in terms of personal growth.

Scobey also advises people to remember their calling as Christians.

“[Tell yourself], ‘I have an obligation to God to do my best to maintain myself in a life situation where I can fulfill the calling God has given me,’” she says. “No human

rules or expectations can be allowed to shame ... or persecute [you] into abandoning [your] calling. ... God is [your] ultimate authority.”

Scobey reminds sufferers that they can detach themselves from harmful situations or people who show no indication of repentance or change. “The purpose is not to get revenge on the other party, but to give [yourself] an opportunity to heal, gain perspective and possibly re-engage the situation at a later date.”

She urges humility and stresses that a hero or martyr approach can be damaging if done out of pride. She encourages people who are feeling persecuted to recognize where they are in their spiritual growth and determine how much they can reasonably handle before engaging in further battles.

Despite that, Scobey asks sufferers to persevere.

“Always look within yourself to see if there is, in fact, one more step toward reconciliation and healing you can initiate with the other party,” says Scobey. “Can you go one step beyond what you currently think you can [handle]? What would that step look like?”

Most importantly, Scobey urges forgiveness. “Never lose sight of the fact that your ultimate goal is forgiveness. ... If you can’t yet forgive, just keep in mind that forgiveness is your goal. State that goal to God and pray that you will one day be able to forgive. If you can’t even desire to forgive, ask God to give you the abili-

ty to want to forgive as a first step.”

Beyond these six fundamentals, Scobey urges hurting people to contact CBE to find support and validation. She also recommends the following:

- Read books that reinforce the truth of biblical equality.

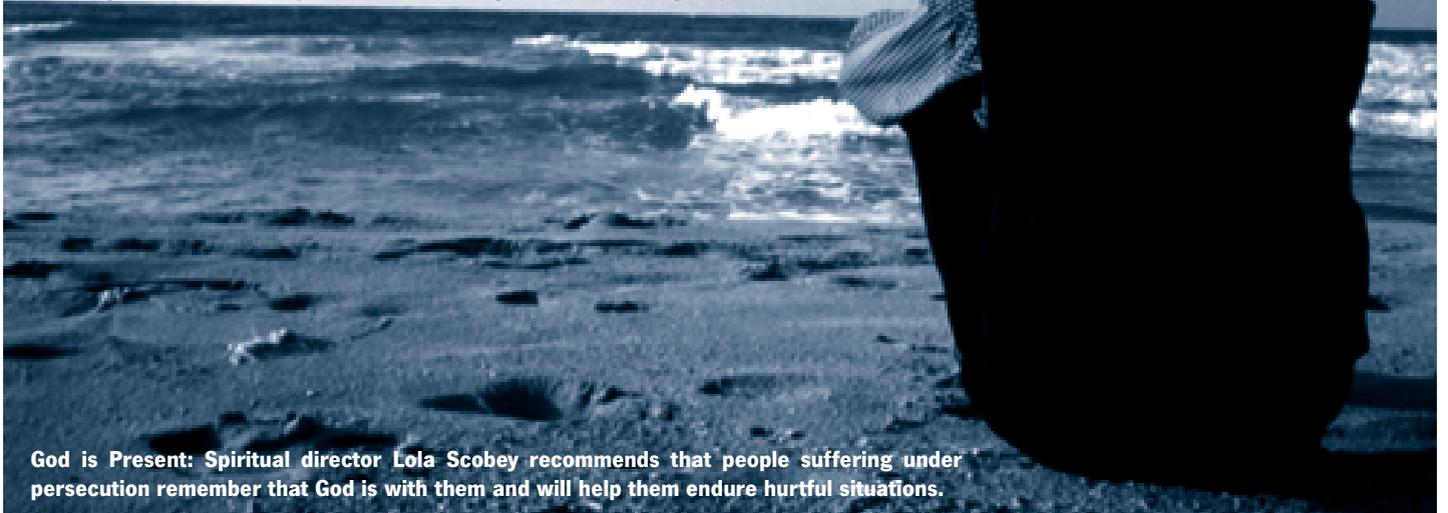
- Find at least one person who can provide moral support, whether it is someone already familiar with the situation or someone from the outside such as a spiritual director.

- Pray for God to reinforce and reveal his essential goodness and concern for the potential and purpose of each human being.

- Accept the forgiveness of others.

- Reflect on God’s promise to all those who stand up for who he really is: “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for

in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you” (Matthew 5:11-12).



God is Present: Spiritual director Lola Scobey recommends that people suffering under persecution remember that God is with them and will help them endure hurtful situations.