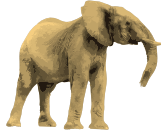


ACADEMIC PROSPECTUS

Standing Strong Through the Storm (SSTS)

Victorious Living for Christians
Facing Pressure and Persecution





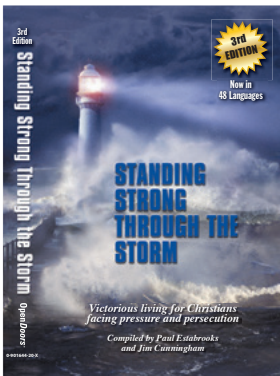
ACADEMIC PROSPECTUS

Standing Strong Through the Storm

(SSTS)

Victorious Living for Christians
Facing Pressure and Persecution

“To know God’s sovereign biblical strategy, to overcome pressure and persecution, as a victorious servant-soldier of Jesus Christ, by exhibiting agape love, forgiveness and grace.”



Overview of the SSTS Related Academic Programmes

Standing Strong Through the Storm (SSTS) provides the foundation for academically structured theological programmes equipping Christian leaders to understand and respond biblically to suffering, pressure, and persecution.

Rooted in Scripture and informed by case studies from the persecuted church, SSTS integrates theology, discipleship, missiology, and pastoral practice.

The programme is offered at:

- Bachelor of Theology (BTh)
- Master of Theology (MTh)

Each level reflects increasing academic depth and research engagement.

BACHELOR OF THEOLOGY (BTH)

Theology of Persecution

Undergraduate (Bachelor of Theology)
Course Module

Introduction

The BTh in Theology of Persecution provides a biblical and theological foundation for understanding persecution as integral to Christian discipleship.

Grounded in Scripture (Genesis–Revelation) and informed by the persecuted church, the course explores spiritual conflict, the way of the cross, the Church under pressure, and God’s provision for endurance. Students are formed to respond with courage, wisdom, forgiveness, and hope.

Designed for pastors, missionaries, emerging leaders, and believers preparing for ministry in unstable or hostile contexts.

Course Description

This course develops a biblical theology of persecution across the whole canon, focusing on:

- **Spiritual warfare**
- **The cross and discipleship**
- **The mission of the Church under pressure**
- **Perseverance through God’s provision**

The emphasis is both theological understanding and spiritual formation.

Course Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Articulate a biblical theology of persecution (Old and New Testaments)
- Identify internal and external opposition to believers
- Explain the relationship between suffering, discipleship, and mission
- Apply biblical principles to real-life persecution contexts
- Exercise pastoral and ethical discernment

Course Structure and Themes

- **The Conflict – Spiritual Warfare**
Persecution is framed within the biblical narrative of cosmic conflict. Drawing primarily from the Old Testament, students examine the enemy's strategies and the reality of opposition.
- **The Cross – Christ and Discipleship**
The cross is presented as both salvation and pattern. Persecution is understood as a normative dimension of faithful discipleship.
- **The Church – Persecuted Yet Victorious**
Through Acts and the Epistles, students explore how suffering strengthens mission, purity, and witness.
- **The Resources – God's Provision**
Scripture, prayer, righteousness, and the Holy Spirit are examined as essential resources for endurance.

- **The Training – Formation for Faithfulness**

Focuses on perseverance, forgiveness, grace, and preparation to teach others.

Primary Course Text

Estabrooks, Paul & Cunningham, Jim. *Standing Strong Through the Storm (3rd Edition)*.

Intended Outcomes

Graduates will be equipped to:

- Serve in church and mission contexts
- Teach persecution theology (2 Timothy 2:2 model)
- Respond biblically and courageously to opposition

MASTER OF THEOLOGY (MTH)

Theology of Persecution & Discipleship

Postgraduate (Master of Theology)

Introduction

The MTh in Theology of Persecution and Discipleship is an advanced postgraduate programme for scholars, church leaders, and mission practitioners engaging deeply with global Christian suffering.

The programme integrates biblical theology, doctrine, history, ethics, and contemporary persecution analysis. Research is combined with pastoral and missional application.

Graduates are prepared for theological leadership, academic contribution, and advocacy within contexts where faith carries significant cost.

Course Description

This advanced course critically examines persecution and discipleship within global Christianity. Students engage biblical theology, historical theology, missiology, ethics, and contemporary case studies to construct coherent theological frameworks for suffering, martyrdom, and faithful witness.

Course Objectives

Students will:

- Critically evaluate biblical and historical theologies of persecution
- Integrate persecution theology with discipleship and mission
- Engage global case studies theologically and ethically
- Produce academically credible research
- Equip churches for faithful response

Course Content and Academic Focus

- **Biblical Theology of Persecution**
Special focus on Luke–Acts, Pauline theology, and Revelation. Persecution is examined as part of God’s redemptive purposes.
- **Suffering, Martyrdom, and Reward**
Explores doctrinal questions concerning suffering, martyrdom, and eternal reward within Christian hope.
- **Discipleship Under Pressure**
Examines cross-cultural realities including honour, shame, fear, and survival, developing contextually sensitive models of discipleship.
- **Church Leadership, Ethics, and Pastoral Care**
Addresses leadership challenges in persecuted contexts, emphasising theological integrity and ethical discernment.
- **Contemporary Persecution Analysis**

Engages World Watch List research to connect theological reflection with global realities.

Core and Recommended Texts

Primary texts include:

- Penner, *In the Shadow of the Cross*
- Estabrooks & Cunningham, *Standing Strong Through the Storm*
- Ton, *Suffering, Martyrdom and Rewards in Heaven*

(Full bibliography available in TOPAD resources.)

Research and Assessment Emphasis

The MTh requires demonstrated competence in:

- Critical engagement with Scripture and scholarship
- Research essays or thesis
- Integration of theology with pastoral and missional praxis

Distinctives of the SSTS Academic Programme

- Biblically grounded
- Informed by the lived experience of the persecuted church
- Globally contextualised through Open Doors research
- Integrates theology, discipleship, and resilience formation
- Applicable in both restricted and free-church contexts

Contact us

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servafrika.org/academic-courses

Add your voice

Visit the link below to sign the **AriseAfrica petition** to ensure that Christians and other vulnerable individuals in Sub-Saharan Africa are treated with dignity and respect



servafrika.org/petition

"This is an excellent work. It is thorough, practical, well-supported biblically, and effectively illustrated from the experiences of the suffering people of God."

TERRANCE L. TIESSEN, (PHD)

PROFESSOR EMERITUS, PROVIDENCE COLLEGE & SEMINARY (CANADA)

"In my 35 years serving the Persecuted Church and travelling with Brother Andrew all over the world, I have had one great desire: "How can we effectively communicate the lessons we have learned from our persecuted brethren?" Well here you have it... an historic book! It will revolutionize your walk with the Lord."

JOHAN COMPANJEN

PRESIDENT EMERITUS, OPEN DOORS INTERNATIONAL

"The world is changing rapidly. We need to do more preventive work like teaching SSTS, rather than stepping in after the crisis begins - or is over."

PASTOR CARLIN WEINHAUER

PASTOR EMERITUS, WILLINGDON CHURCH, BURNABY, BC CANADA).

This course is based on the work of Jim Cunningham & Paul Estabrooks.

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