

As Attacks on Christians Increase in Nigeria, Mission Equips the Persecuted

Filmmaker Judd Saul went to Nigeria a decade ago to help a missionary better market his ministry through a mission documentary. But God had greater plans for Saul, who ended up starting his own mission to help refugees. In 2019, he founded an organization called “Equipping the Persecuted” after God burdened him with the needs of “internally displaced persons” (IDP) in camps in the West African nation.

“Over the years, as attacks have increased and things have happened, I just felt more and more of a burden and a calling to focus ministry on working with persecuted Christians after going to IDP camps,” he says. “These are people whose villages have been attacked. They can’t go back because Boko Haram is squatting on their land and where they used to live, so these people are just moved to random places.”

Active in Nigeria and several other African countries, Boko Haram is expanding in its influence and increasing hostilities against Christians.

“These guys are radical Muslim terrorists that don’t like Western civilization,” Saul says. “So they formed back in 2002 just kind of as a political group, then in 2009, they decided to take military action and have grown in ranks, and they have now become officially part of ISIS. So now they are considered ISIS West Africa, and their tactics have increasingly become more brutal.”

After inquiring if anyone was helping the IDPs, Saul saw an opportunity to meet needs and share the gospel in the camps.

“Once people are displaced from their village, their churches

are burned, their schools are blown up and burned down,” he says. “There are massive amounts of children that have no education at all. There’s no reading and writing. They’re just kind of sitting there. And so what we found was a way to get some of our people in at least once a week to get a bunch of kids together, teach them reading and writing, and we do it with biblical material.”

To do the job well, Saul needed a network of trusted nationals who would be willing to take risks to serve people in need—and over the last 10 years, he found some men who were willing to help for the sake of the gospel.

“The people that we’ve chosen to work and network with all over Nigeria are men who are dedicated to Christ, who risk their lives for Christ every day, and they’ve been tested by fire,” he says. “So these are people that I’ve built a trust with that are in it for the mission. And each one of them have had friends and relatives that have been killed by Boko Haram, but they want to stand strong and they want to stand strong for Christ.”

Saul and his supporters receive regular communication from the people in his network, so they know when there is a crisis to respond to immediately, and they know that what they donate is actually helping the people for whom it was sent.

“Our team sends us documentation of what they are doing, documentation of the aid being delivered, and they give personal testimonies of what we’re doing,” Saul says. “So when people donate to us and this ministry, they see immediate results.”

Learn more about *Equipping the Persecuted* on the first of three episodes on the *Charisma Connection* podcast.