

The United States Is Not the Center of the Universe

My friend Kelechi is a brave Nigerian evangelist who has gotten himself kidnapped several times so he could share Christ with armed militants. More recently he has been involved in dangerous evangelism efforts in northern Nigeria, where Islamic jihadists have killed 17,000 people in the past five years.

A few days ago, Kelechi sent me a disturbing email, asking for prayer. He had just learned that a young man he was discipling, Boulous, was killed by militants while trying to get some Christians out of a village that had been targeted for a surprise attack.

Kelechi wrote: "Please would you pray for me and ask your friends to lift us before the Lord? It is a very trying time. We are the only people doing evangelistic work there, so we cannot stop. Also pray for me as I go to the area next week when I think it will be safer."

I feel helpless trying to raise awareness of Kelechi's cause. One of the worst waves of terrorism on planet earth has hit Nigeria, yet the world's media gives it scant attention. The Islamic group operating there, Boko Haram, killed more people in 2014 than ISIS terrorists in Syria. Last week in the Nigerian village of Dalori, Islamic militants bombed homes and burned children alive.

The death toll in Dalori was 86. But did you hear anything about the attack? It wasn't on any news channel I listen to. All the major networks were talking nonstop about Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton and the Iowa presidential caucus—along with the controversy stirred by Beyoncé's new music video.

In April 2014, Boko Haram kidnapped 276 Christian schoolgirls

from the Nigerian town of Chibok—and for a few weeks people on this side of the Atlantic Ocean paid attention, especially after First Lady Michelle Obama tweeted her support for the girls.

Almost two years have now passed, and the girls are still missing. They are most likely living as slaves in a Boko Haram camp on the Chadian border. Most likely they have been forced to marry their abductors. And most people have forgotten about them.

All these foreign problems are just too stressful to think about. And too far away. Besides, we have a Super Bowl to watch.

I'm not trying to put anybody under a guilt trip. I am blessed to live in the United States, and there isn't much I can do to stop Boko Haram from torching African villages. But it concerns me that so many of us are completely oblivious to the needs of the rest of the world.

Just a few days ago, Islamic terrorists linked to the group Al Shabaab killed four Christian in Kenya. One of the believers was beheaded. I have to rely on a relatively obscure Christian news service for this information because mainstream media outlets rarely report on Christian persecution.

Wars are going on today in Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Libya, Ukraine, Israel, Iraq, Nigeria and South Sudan—which is also dealing with a famine. But when I checked the latest headlines in *USA Today*, the focus of the news was on the New Hampshire presidential primary and pro football star Peyton Manning's legacy.

And this just in! Beyoncé will perform during the Super Bowl halftime show!

That's a shame. Especially when you do the math and realize that the United States has a population of 319.4 million while

the global population is about 7.2 billion. That works out to a 4.4 percent share of the world's population. Who do we think we are?

We are not the center of the universe.

I'm not going to hold my breath until mainstream media improves its reporting. People are always going to be more interested in Kim Kardashian's latest reality show than in how we can stop global sex trafficking, how we can help abused women in Somalia or how we can protect Syrian refugees while they flee the terror in their country.

But Christians should care. We may live in the United States, but we are citizens of God's kingdom and we are called to pray—and care—for the whole world. Paul told Timothy: "Therefore I exhort first of all that you make supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings for everyone, for kings and for all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and honesty" (1 Tim. 2:1-2, MEV).

Please be a global Christian. Look at the big picture. Stay informed of world events so you can pray with understanding. Make friends with people from other cultures and see the world through their eyes. Pray for the nations.

You can start by praying for Nigeria—and for my friend Kelechi, who will be risking his life to share the gospel this weekend while millions of Americans watch a 17-minute halftime show that will cost \$12 million.