

Despite 200 Murders, Iraqi Church Grows Strong

Most Bible-believing Christians would probably run from a church after one or two of its members were murdered, much less after witnessing 200 killed in the first six months of the year.

Indeed, many of the most fervent saints would abandon a congregation where bomb blasts are the norm and where saints are kidnapped on a weekly basis.

Despite these horrible realities, however, Iraqi Anglican Canon Andrew White says his Baghdad church is 4,000 people strong—and his members are among the happiest church-goers he's ever seen.

"So many Christians have been killed," White said in an exclusive interview with *Charisma* Publisher Steve Strang which you can watch below.

"Yet the church in Iraq is so happy—miraculously happy. The fact that the church is like this is incredible. And they've got a huge amount to teach us."

St. George's Church, located in Baghdad's Red Zone, is one of the only Anglican churches in Iraq. Though an estimated 800,000 Christians have fled the area in recent years, the church has grown to become the country's largest. White estimates more than 550 Muslims attend St. George's, though there may be more given that most Muslims in Iraq face the threat of death upon publicly confessing Jesus as Lord. Last year White baptized 13 Muslims; within a week, 11 of them were murdered.

"We say to them, 'You realize this is dangerous,' and they always say, 'We just love and want to follow Jesus,'" White

says.

White takes the danger seriously. In fact, to guard against suicide bombers and other attacks, at least 30 armed officers surround St. George's, and each worshipper is searched before entering the church building. But with unrest now part of daily life, White says the church must be a beacon of peace to a nation filled with turmoil.

"That's very important," he says. "We can't talk about reconciliation or peace-making without actually providing for the needs of people."

Operating on a \$177,000 monthly budget, the church supplies weekly groceries to more than 4,000 and free medical care to everyone in the area. Its compound currently has a medical facility housing four doctors and three dentists, as well as a pharmacy and laboratory. The church plans to open a school and provide money for housing to their mostly Muslim recipients.

Known as the "Vicar of Baghdad," White is also the founder of the Foundation for Relief and Reconciliation in the Middle East, through which he has mediated hundreds of hostage negotiations and peace agreements. But this London native says sharing Christ's love with the Iraqi people overshadows the dangerous situations in which he often finds himself.

"Despite the difficulty, you have to love the people. Part of worship is loving," he says. "When Jesus went about His work He preached and healed. And that is what we aim to do: preach and heal."

To that degree, White says healings and miracles are a normal part of the church's life, as are angelic visitations and divine acts of protection.

"When you've lost everything you realize that Jesus is all you have left," he says. "And that's all we have is Jesus. The church has continued under much opposition. It's grown to be

large, so strong. So awful are the things around us and yet we're the most happiest church I've ever pastored."

For more information on St. George's, visit .

You Have Power to Help Advance the Kingdom in Iraq

By Charisma Founder & Publisher Steve Strang

My interview with Canon Andrew White impacted my heart—and I hope it impacted yours. In many nations, Christians are free to worship and evangelize. Yet in countries like Iraq, the danger is real and growing. Men of God like White are on the front lines of the battle to establish the kingdom of God in a Muslim land. I have decided to help, and I hope you will too.

We can pray, and we should. But the Bible also instructs us not to withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to do it (Proverbs 3:27). White deserves help for this great cause. If it is in your power to help, then the easiest way to make sure the money gets into his ministry is to give generously to our non-profit partner Christian Life Missions. You will get a receipt for income tax purposes.

Your gift will go 100 percent to White's ministry to help these persecuted Christians with food, medical care and other needs. If you are a pastor, what need could be greater for your church to respond? I urge you to show the eight-minute video in the story above and take up an offering. White told me few Christians in the West respond to the need. Let's change that. To help fellow believers in Baghdad, [click here](#) to give to White's ministry. Remember, 100 percent of your donation will go toward aiding the persecuted church in Iraq.