

EXCLUSIVE: When Christians Come Face to Face With ISIS

While the world's attention turns more towards the Middle East, CBN viewers have grown to appreciate Chris Mitchell's timely reports from this explosive region. Mitchell brings a biblical and prophetic perspective to these daily news events that shape our world.

Charisma News sat down with Mitchell to talk about his new book, *Destination Jerusalem: ISIS, Convert or Die, Christian Persecution and Preparing for the Days Ahead*. In Part 1 of this exclusive interview, Mitchell talks about his burden to write this book and the tipping point for Christianity in the Middle East.

Charisma News: Why did you decide to write this book? Why now?

Mitchell: When you walk into an overcrowded apartment teeming with Christians who just lost their homes and faced the horrific choice of “convert or die”; or sit in a tent with a Yazidi mother who just found her son was beheaded by ISIS or sit in the dirt with 12-year-old boys who tell you their neighbor—a young girl—was killed by ISIS for refusing to convert, I felt an obligation to bring back these stories back to people in the West.

I wrote *Destination Jerusalem* because I feel those of us in the West and especially in the church need to know three things: the danger that ISIS and militant Islam pose to Western Civilization; the awful plight of our brothers and sisters in the Middle East and how we can prepare for the days ahead, which might be much more perilous than even the days we see today. I wrote it now because I felt the urgency of the message and the hour.

Charisma News: We read about the near extinction of

Christianity in some parts of the Middle East. You're in the middle of the fray there in Jerusalem. Do you feel the Middle East is at some sort of tipping point with relation to Christianity?

Mitchell: Yes, definitely! Tragically, too much of Middle East Christianity has already gone beyond the tipping point. In *Destination Jerusalem* we talk about its precipitous decline. The statistics are staggering.

For example, a century ago, Middle Eastern Christians represented about 20 percent of the population. Now they represent about 4 percent. In Iraq there were about 1.4 million Christians in 1990. Now there are about 200,000.

Just a few days ago, the 21st Century Wilberforce Initiative said Iraq's ancient faith communities are facing "genocidal onslaught." The head of the Catholic Chaldean Church in Kurdistan said Iraqi Christians have "little time left." The personal stories are heart wrenching.

In the book we share some of the experiences some Christians went through when they came face to face with ISIS. They were given four choices: Either leave your home, one you may have lived in for years or generations; pay the Islamic tax for infidels, usually too exorbitant to afford; convert to Islam or, finally, die by the sword. They also suffered humiliation.

One woman had her medicines and dentures stolen. They stole another's wedding ring. They accused one man of being a missionary or a spy because they found two New Testaments in his house. Miraculously he escaped. He gave me one of those New Testaments. I keep it as [a] reminder of our brothers and sisters who have suffered persecution at the hands of ISIS.

One other time we were in a Catholic churchyard where dozens of families had found refuge. One woman offered me a piece of candy which was about one of the few things she had to offer

any hospitality to a visitor. I've kept that too. My hope and prayer for *Destination Jerusalem* is that it can help bridge the gap between our brothers and sisters in the Middle East and those of us in the West. We need to pray for them, support them and speak up for them.

Click [here](#) to check out Mitchell's book on or visit him online at .