

Gadhafi Dead: Christian Leaders Discuss Next Steps for Libya

While the people of Libya continue to celebrate the death of deposed dictator Moammar Gadhafi, Christian leaders are beginning to comment on his slaying.

Gadhafi, who ruled Libya for 42 years, was killed Thursday when revolutionary forces overtook his hometown, Sirte, the last major bastion of resistance two months after the fall of the regime.

Albert Mohler, president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, used the occasion to warn tyrants that they will likely lose their power the same way they received it—by force.

“We’ve seen this story over and over again,” Mohler said Friday in a podcast. “Tyrants tend to gain their power only by military means and they tend to lose their power only by those same military means.”

Libyans are celebrating the beginning of a new era that will inevitably come after the 69-year-old dictator’s end.

“The death of Moammar Gadhafi brings to an end one of the most villainous lives of our time,” Mohler noted.

Christian media guru Phil Cooke commented about Gadhafi’s death, wondering what’s next.

“Moammar Gadhafi lived life in riches and luxury,” Cooke tweeted. “Today he met his maker & begins eternity. Wonder how things are going now?”

Mohler said Thursday is a day that should be celebrated not

only by Libyans, but by the world, adding that “the world is rid of one more tyrant.”

Although Habib Malik, associate professor of history at the Lebanese American University, Byblos campus, is not surprised by Gadhafi’s brutal death, he cannot rejoice.

“The manner of his death was gruesome and, no matter how evil a person might have been, such an ending is never something to rejoice about; however, he is now dead and his people are justifiably relieved and hopeful about starting a new chapter in their history,” Malik said.

Libya’s situation has encouraged protesters in Syria who hope to overtake President Bashar al-A Assad’s tyrannical rule. But Mohler said dictators like al-A Assad will not necessarily learn the same lessons as everyone else.

“Even as the world is drawing some sense of moral satisfaction from the removal of one more tyrant from the legacy of the moral horrors of the 20th and to now the 21st centuries, you have to wonder how other tyrants are viewing this, not only from Syria but also from places like North Korea,” he said.

Mohler predicted that al-A Assad may face the same ending as Gadhafi if he continues to hold out.

“Even dictators know not their time. Ponder the coming judgment of God over all humanity in light of the death of Muammar Qadhafi,” he tweeted.

But what will Gadhafi’s death mean for Christians? Bas Vanderzalm, president of Medical Teams International, which has been working in Libya for several months, talked about the situation.

“There was still fighting going on—and Gadhafi had not been found and removed—that prevented the country from coming together. I’m hopeful the fighting will come to an end,”

Mission Network News reported Vanderzalm saying.

Many are concerned Libya will turn into another crisis like the one going on in Egypt.

"I think there is reason to be concerned about that," Vanderzalm commented. "There's strong tribal differences in the country. When you have one common enemy, it unites you; but when that enemy is gone, then suddenly the pressure to stay together is gone."

Libya ranks 25th on Open Doors' World Watch list of countries that allow persecution of Christians. Open Doors USA's President and CEO Carl Moeller says there is a spiritual hunger in the country.

"We know from co-workers there that in the last nine months more Bibles and Christian literature have been distributed in North Africa—particularly Libya—than in the last nine years," he said in a podcast.

Nevertheless, Moeller is urging Christians to pray for fellow believers in Libya because it is still unclear if the new regime will impose strict Islamic law or allow religious freedom.

Vanderzalm remains optimistic about the future of Christians in Libya.

"The people of Libya are grateful for the support they have received from Christian organizations, and I think they will provide freedom for those groups," he commented. "I really do hope the persecution ends and there will be more freedom and space for the church there."

Vanderzalm also asks for prayer.

He says Christians need to pray for this nation regarding "the opportunities that they have to actually establish a better government there. There are going to be a lot of tribal

concerns and other challenges for them.” Pray also for Libya regarding “opportunities for us as Christian organizations to reach out to people of that country and care for them and show them Christ’s love.”