

How Should We Respond to the Slaughter of Christians in Africa?

Once again, there is tragic news about the deadly persecution of Christians in Africa. This time, it comes from the Democratic Republic of Congo, where it was reported by Open Doors that, "At least 40 Christians who had gathered for a night prayer vigil at a church were killed when suspected Islamist militants attacked" their town.

The details of the attack are chilling.

Open Doors notes that, "According to the BBC, nine children are amongst those killed.

"More than 21 people were shot dead inside and outside [the church] and we have recorded at least three charred bodies and several houses burned. But the search is continuing," reports Dieudonne Duranthabo, a civil society coordinator in Komanda, on 27 July.

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"The bodies of the victims are still at the scene of the tragedy, and volunteers are preparing how to bury them in a mass grave that we are preparing in a compound of the Catholic church," continues Duranthabo."

Not only so, but there are reports of some Christians being abducted during the attack, along with others being killed in a nearby village in an earlier

incident.

This is absolutely heart wrenching to read, but for most of us living in the West (or in countries relatively free from physical persecution for our faith), it is completely unimaginable.

Yet these murderous attacks are part of a pattern throughout Africa, especially in Nigeria, where tens of thousands of Christians have been slaughtered since 2009.

How should we respond to this news?



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We read the accounts. We are shocked and grieved. But it is all so far from us. So distant. So other. How do we relate? And what, if anything, can we do?

If we are committed followers of Jesus who are not ashamed of our faith, we should not feel guilty if we are not suffering persecution like this. After all, Paul wrote, "I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness," (1 Tim. 2:1–2).

Acts also records that after Saul of Tarsus (Paul) encountered Jesus and became a passionate disciple rather than a murderous persecutor, "Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers," (Acts 9:31).

We should be thankful for peaceful times and for government protection as long as we don't become complacent and compromised in the process.

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As for our brothers and sisters who are suffering in Africa, as well as in countries like North Korea and China and India and elsewhere, first, let us make others aware.

Share the news when you hear about it. Talk about it with your family and friends and from your pulpits. Do not let these Christians suffer while we remain uninformed or indifferent. Let their pain become our pain. And let us learn more about the suffering church worldwide. We will be inspired and challenged as we do.

Second, pray.

Pray for the families of the martyrs. (A colleague told me about a Bible school in Nigeria which is exclusively for widows of martyred Christian man.) Pray for those who have been abducted or wounded or have lost their property or their jobs. Pray for the believers to continue to be bold in their faith and for God Himself to be with them in tangible and unmistakable ways. And pray for their protection, for righteous government action on their behalf, and for the conversion of their persecutors.

You can also search on line for prayer guides for persecuted Christians so you can pray more specifically, country by country.

Third, get involved in helping in tangible ways as you feel prompted by the Lord. This could mean financial support or writing letters to Christians in prison or asking your elected officials to call on our government to put pressure on some of these countries to change their policies. (In quite a few nations, persecution of Christians is not only allowed by the government. It is sanctioned by the government.)

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Fourth, deepen your own resolve to follow Jesus, whether by life or by death, determined to use the freedom you have to make the Lord known, regardless of cost or consequence. And never forget the words of Jesus: "Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you," (Matt. 5:10–12).

Amen!

Dr. Michael Brown () is the host of the nationally syndicated The Line of Fire radio show. He is the author of over 40 books, including Can You be Gay and Christian?; Our Hands are Stained with Blood; and Seizing the Moment: How to Fuel the Fires of Revival. You can connect with him on Facebook, X or YouTube.