

ISIS Murder of Elderly French Priest Exposes True Islamic Agenda

The murder of the 84-year-old priest earlier this week in France has raised this question: Are Christians to be the next target in the West?

As reported by BBC News, two men entered the church during morning mass.

Emily Fuentes of Open Doors USA says, "Some attackers came and held the people hostage and eventually ended up attacking and slaying the priest who was there, with a knife."

The assailants were killed. Shortly after, Islamic State claimed responsibility.

"What makes this event especially notable," Fuentes says, "is this was the first time really that an attack by the Islamic State [...] was actually carried out in a Western church."

A History of Persecution

According to Open Doors, global persecution of Christians has been increasing in the last few years. Through the World Watch List, they have been able to record nations with the most persecution year after year.

But even as this begins to spread to the West, it seems as though it will be harder to determine which nations are most under attack.

Fuentes says we have a lot to learn from nations where persecution has been the norm for Christian communities for a long time.

“I think we need to be holding onto the lessons we can learn from our persecuted brothers and sisters who’ve been facing this for a long, long time and not give into a spirit of fear.”

The Example of Nigeria

“An average of five churches are attacked every single Sunday in Nigeria. Yet, believers are still brave enough to go to church and stand firm and are inviting their neighbors to come to church and reaching out to others with the gospel.”

Fuentes says that over the last two to three years, the ministry has witnessed and recorded unprecedented levels of persecution. And now, it seems that it is spreading into the West. But, there is a silver lining.

“It’s interesting that while the church is facing persecution, [...] the countries where maybe there’s the most persecution, the gospel is thriving the most. Persecution causes people to draw closer to God and causes them to have braveness really about them even to reach out to their persecutors with the gospel.”

Lessons From the Persecuted Church

In areas where Islamic extremism has been plaguing Christians with violence for a while, we discover that for some extremist groups, Christianity and Western Civilization are the same thing. That is why Christians are so often targeted in the Middle East.

Knowing this can help us understand why fear spreads so quickly in countries like France. BBC says the major religion in France is Christianity; however, the CIA World Factbook reveals the number of evangelical Christians is rather low.

“Everyone’s fearful just because everyone’s Western in that country. But now it’s honing in the attack even more and specifically going after peaceful people who are completely

vulnerable in a church setting instead of large crowds.”

Fuentes says the country must reflect on why IS is targeting Christian groups now. “I think for those who don’t know Christ, it’s dismal and can seem overwhelming.”

She encourages us to cling to the lessons we can learn from our persecuted brothers and sisters: refuse a spirit of fear, and reach out to neighbors with the gospel.

Take Action

In light of the presidential race in the United States, there are a lot of agendas being pushed. The subject of terrorism has circulated through debates and speeches. However, the topic of fighting Christian persecution hasn’t really even hit the radar.

That’s why Open Doors encourages you to sign a petition for your candidate. The petition is asking both candidates how they will respond to religious persecution.

You can find that petition [here](#).

And, of course, pray. Pray for Christians to remain strong in the face of violence—to not give in to their fear. Pray that more people would come to know Christ in these dark times.
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