

Persecution and the New “Normal” World: “When persecuted, we endure.” (1 Cor 4:12)

Benjamin Lee Hegeman

Benjamin Lee Hegeman is a missionary scholar in residence at Houghton College, Houghton, New York and a life-long missiological researcher, curriculum-writer, teacher, and consultant. He earned his Ph.D. from Rijks University, Utrecht, Netherlands. He and his wife, Christine, are career missionaries with SIM with 25 years of overseas experience. Dr. Hegeman has also served as a church-planter, academic dean, and school administrator.

No one saw this coming so soon or so fast. From mid-December 2013 to January 2014, various Western media outlets ran headlines and articles reporting an alarming rise in religious persecution. WSJ¹, Reuters², AP³, BBC⁴, Fox News⁵, and CNN⁶, among others, reported that Christians now rank as the most persecuted believers, the world’s largest minority faith, and a religion in danger of becoming extinct in the Middle East. Minority persecution has become the “new normal” of the globalized world.

No one predicted this in 1989 when the oppressive communist regimes collapsed at the fall of the Berlin Wall. The global leaders of that era heralded a new golden era of freedom and capitalistic globalization; not of persecution. Twenty-three years later we hear an entirely different message from German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who stated openly: “Christianity is the most persecuted religion worldwide.” The same was said by French President Sarkozy, lamenting that Christians face a “particularly wicked program of cleansing in the Middle East; religious cleansing.”⁷ Not even in 1979,

when the Iranian Shah was overthrown by the Shiite mullacracy, and when, in the same year, the Sunni mujahedeen fighters rose up to fight the Soviets in Afghanistan—and then the *Jahiliyyah*-West, i.e., the whole corrupted, rebellious world⁸—did anyone predict the scale of the coming oppression against vulnerable Christian minorities everywhere. As far as I have seen, no authoritative media or author predicted that militant Muslims would become the fiercest religious persecutors in the 21st century. Arguably the first person to warn us was Harvard political scientist, Samuel Huntington (1927–2008) whose highly controversial work, *Clash of Civilizations*, (1993) has not yet been successfully refuted.

Today this reality is beyond dispute. Persecution, and in particular Islamic persecution of Christians, is one of the most pressing issues facing the global church.⁹ What Christian leaders now ask each other is, first, “Why did we not see this coming so quickly upon us?” Second, “Are there clearly known causes for this?” And finally, “Is this temporary?” These opening questions promise to take us, if we are willing to go there, into a very steep learning curve, and it is to Islamic history that we must first turn.

The Origin of Muslim Persecution of Christians

Muslim persecution of Christians today has its deepest roots in the premature death of Islam’s prophet, Abdul Qasim Muhammad in A.D. 632. At the age of 62, Islam’s “final prophet” unexpectedly died following a brief illness. This had a profound theological impact that reverberates to this very day. Muhammad had long taught his followers that any new “revelation” he gave which contradicted any previous revelations took precedence because it was Allah’s desire to abrogate and replace the older one with the new and better one.¹⁰ So, whatever Muhammad revealed last from Allah always eclipsed anything contrary which he may have revealed before. It was exactly while he was on war-footing with—well, frankly everyone—that Muhammad suddenly died. His forces were in the heat of a peninsular battle with all pagan Arabs, Jews, and even distant Christians. His final Surahs, *Bara’ah* (9) and *Al Maidah* (5) are therefore not only his concluding divine discourses but also the most militant revelations. He died with his sword unsheathed. Thereby inadvertently, and possibly unintentionally, Muhammad locked and enshrined all of Islamic theology in a militant posture, tragically abrogating all prior reasonable, tolerant, and peaceful revelations.¹¹ That nothing has been found by Muslim theologians decisively to abrogate this final confrontational posture is, in my opinion, the greatest crisis within Islam.

The consequences for devout Muslims and all non-Muslims alike (Jews,

Christians and pagans) are immeasurable, both historically and currently. First, Muhammad's final theology, correctly understood, sealed the Muslim's worldview into an eternal cosmic struggle (*jihad*) with all other "corrupted" religions. In every century the world waits to see how obedient or disobedient Muslims will be to the Qur'an's final confrontational mandate. This is the very stuff that continues to make daily headlines, especially since 9-11. Second, since no other religion on earth reached its final state of authoritative scripture on the battlefield, Islam alone engenders endless generations of zealots desirous of martyrdom in defensive or offensive militant contexts. Third, Islamic devotion will invariably be measured by an eternal call to arms and repeated jihads to pacify the perceived hostile forces arraigned against Muhammad's reputation and final revelations. Fourth, Surah 9¹² and 5 are as authoritative when you read these words today as they were on the eve of Muhammad's death. Even as you read this article, it is possible that one or more Muslims are dying somewhere in obedience to these very revelations. What was true for Muhammad's final weeks on earth is true forever until *Isa al-Masih* (i.e., Jesus the Messiah) returns. This makes Islamic persecution of others morbidly pietistic. Finally, we should note that this militant struggle is as much against unbelieving non-Muslims (*kaffir*) as against Muslim hypocrites (*munafiqun*). Listen to one of Allah's final commands to Muhammad: "O Prophet, strive hard [*jihad*] against the unbelievers [*kaffir*] and the hypocrites [*munafiqun*], and be firm against them. Their abode is hell."¹³ We need look no further to explain why the allegedly heretical "hypocritical Muslim" Ahmadiyyas are as persecuted as Christians are today, in, say, Pakistan or Indonesia. For them too, "Their abode is hell."

For this reason, and seen from the scope of all of Christian history, no religious tradition has persecuted Christians so universally, so consistently, so relentlessly, so piously, and so successfully as devout Islam.¹⁴ This is the subject at hand: the astounding success of Muslim persecutors in the new "normal" world, and the new role for the persecuted Christians, who are called to pray and to bless their oppressors. Persecution for our faith in the Lordship of Christ is scripturally guaranteed and it ought not to strike us "as though something strange were happening" to us.¹⁵ Indeed, it is our calling, writes Paul: "For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have."¹⁶

Yet the sheer, staggering rise in persecution from the hands of Muslims in the 21st century alone merits our fervent prayers and attention. Persecuted Christians deserve a heart-felt remembrance in our circles. To do the

persecuted church justice in the new “normal” world, I propose that we do well to consider five crucial questions. First, what is the known scale of the rise in persecution? Second, why is it counterproductive to promote fear of Islam? Third, what has caused the unpredicted rebirth of global jihadism since 1960? Fourth, what causes certain writers to question Muslim global persecution of Christians? And finally, what are the noblest Christian responses to persecution today?

1. The Staggering Rise in Persecution.

We have modern communication to thank for giving today’s oppressed minorities their growing global voices. Formerly, when there were outbreaks of persecution (say the Assyrian¹⁷ or Armenian¹⁸ genocides), it would take months or years to communicate and verify these reports; now such news can be reported globally within days. In 1960, newly invented portable cell phones freed callers from government-controlled landline-only calls. In 1971, individualized electronic emails freed letter writers from State-controlled postal services. Two years later, portable computers freed users from institutional fixed computerized sites. In 1990, the Internet freed readers from relying entirely on paper journalism and hard-copy reporting. In 2001, digital satellite radio and TV broadcasting freed consumers from regional services. Among the many beneficiaries of this globalization are the persecuted, oppressed and bereaved Christians whose cases are being digitally reported by a wide variety of church denominations, missions, NGOs and concerned web sites. This accounts for why the news of the significant rise in persecution is reaching so many people so quickly. We have never known more about global persecution than we do today. (My inbox fills daily with global persecution reports.) This information only promises to increase, unless - God forbid - multinational or international treaties begin to curtail the freedom to report, or inhibit open access to global news, or reverse the present access for surfing the Web.

The rise in persecution is indeed factual and measurable. Since 1980, Christian minorities in Egypt, Palestine, Jordan, Pakistan and Indonesia, have morphed from being passively tolerated to being aggressively attacked. The rise in numbers is real. So is the voice of the persecutors in global reporting and broadcasting. The same globalized media that passionately advocates for the persecuted is also the same worldwide media which promotes the “in-your-face” message of West-hating, Christian-loathing oppressors, who scream that they—not Christians—are the real victims of oppressive, crusading, “Christian,” Western powers. Again, the same digital media that broadcast the pleading

voices of suffering Christians also floods the TV and millions of computer screens in Muslim lands with the depravity, greed, and arrogance that flows out of the “Christian” West, as they perceive it. The media’s amplified messages are truly everyone’s medium: persecutor and persecuted.

How then do we summarize this in numbers? The highly cited *Open Doors* website begins with this announcement: “100 million Christians are persecuted worldwide; in 60 countries the church is being persecuted.”¹⁹ Further in the site we read: “An average of 180 Christians around the world are killed each month for their faith.” These claims, in turn, are supported by a research team of five full-time workers, annual audits²⁰ and a rigorous methodology that was upgraded in 2012 to offer “credibility, transparency, objectivity and scientific quality.”²¹

The opening paragraph of the webpage of *Persecution International Christian Concern*²² begins with this claim: “200 million Christians across the world suffer some form of persecution because of their faith.”²³ That is twice the number offered by Open Doors. We are not told how persecution is defined, although PICC seeks to be the “source for news on Christian persecution around the world ... constantly monitoring more than 35 countries to report on the persecution of Christians and fill the gap that the mainstream Western media leaves wide open.”²⁴ Its stated purpose is to be a Washington, DC based NGO watchdog for the human rights concern of Christians worldwide. Even the recent masterwork from the Egyptian-American Raymond Ibrahim, *Crucified Again: Exposing Islam’s New War on Christians*,²⁵ repeats the same the sources as mentioned above and below.

Similar massive numbers of persecuted also appear from Archbishop Silvano M. Tomasi, Vatican ambassador to the United Nations who stated on 27 May, 2013:

Credible research has reached the shocking conclusion that an estimate of more than 100,000 Christians are violently killed because of some relation to their faith every year. Other Christians and other believers are subjected to forced displacement, to the destruction of their places of worship, to rape and to the abduction of their leaders -as it recently happened in the case of Bishops Yohanna Ibrahim and Boulos Yaziji, in Aleppo (Syria).²⁶

We are not told on this or any other official news site how this “credible research” has been conducted.

The most extensive known research on all forms of persecution of all faiths is done by the American think tank, the Pew Research Center in

Washington, DC.²⁷ Their methodology includes coding and surveying twenty-one sources of government restrictions and social hostilities to religions. For them, however, the public banning of burqahs in France is as much persecution as the violent attacks of Boko Haram on Nigerian villages.²⁸ Clearly, all media agencies rely heavily upon each other for trustworthy reporting and analysis of a highly complex issue.

Other reporting agencies have focused on regional narratives. The ministry of *Voice of the Martyrs*, a ministry to the persecuted in forty-six nations and founded in 1967 by persecuted Jewish-Romanian clergyman, Rev. Richard Wurmbrand (1909-2001), focuses on monthly statistic for a specific region being narrated.²⁹ Such reports, as with other websites, are now sent out weekly.

Barnabas Fund, founded in 1993 in the UK for supporting Christians who suffer discrimination or persecution, also focuses its weekly newsletters/website on narrative accounts and articles which inform readers of recent reports of persecution. On their “global map overview” they list the following categories of persecution: 1) threats/attacks against people; 2) attacks on property; 3) legal issues/legislation; 4) religious freedom; 5) humanitarian crises/needs; 6) political change/unrest; and, 7) actions by the authorities.³⁰ This permits a broad definition, which is necessary since persecution can take so many forms.

Some non-Christian organizations list human right abuses perpetuated by Muslims against minorities, and use film media to expose this reality. Foremost in this sphere is the *Clarion Project* founded by Canadian-Israeli film producer Raphael Shore. The Coptic American researcher, Raymond Ibrahim, a global expert on Christian persecution, is a regular feature writer for the *Middle East Forum*, and his book, *Crucified Again: Exposing Islam's New War on Christians*, is rich with cited documentation but has few hard numbers. A far more polemic and vilifying approach is used by the Maronite Lebanese-American scholar, Robert Spencer whose widely-read daily-blog called *Jihad Watch* routinely reports persecution against minorities, and chiefly Christians.³¹

Open Doors's data-gathering organization made American headlines in early January 2014 by publishing their *World Watch List* of registered martyrs.³² According to their findings, 2,123 Christians were intentionally martyred in 2013 due to their faith, compared to 1,201 in 2012. More than half of those reported killings (1,213) occurred in Syria, followed by Nigeria (612) and Pakistan (88). The worst persecuting government, however, remains North Korea, where an estimated 300,000 Christians live in the

most extreme, insufferable conditions with 2013 being the twelfth consecutive year of such conditions. The following nine most persecuting nations, listed in order, are: Somalia, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Maldives, Pakistan, Iran and Yemen.³³ For a seasoned reader, the Islamic variable stands out. Even when the top twenty-five are noted, twenty-one are Muslim-majority nations.

Another, powerful political and Christian voice is *Christian Solidarity International* (CSI) an international Swiss-founded Christian human rights organization. CSI campaigns for religious liberty and human dignity, and assists victims of religious persecution, victimized children and victims of catastrophe.³⁴ In particular, CSI has highlighted the crisis of the flight of Christians from the Middle East by compiling a list of quotes from religious and political leaders and then circulating them to the media. The following small treasury of recent quotes illustrates the point:

“Massacres are taking place for no reason and without any justification against Christians. It is only because they are Christians. What is happening to Christians is a genocide.” Former Lebanese President Amine Gemayal, January 3, 2011.

“The next genocide in the world will likely be against the Alawites in Syria.” Ambassador Peter W. Galbraith, November 2012.

“Growing numbers of foreign Sunni extremist fighters are battling not just to rid Syria of Mr. Assad, but to religiously cleanse it.” Simon Adams, Executive Director of the Global Center for the Responsibility to Protect, November 15, 2012.

“The future of Christians in the Middle East is very bleak. What has happened in Iraq and Syria is de facto ethnic cleansing of Christians.” Neil Hicks, Human Rights First, April 2, 2013.

“Wherever they are, the Christians of the East are not only threatened, but hunted down and liquidated.” Laurent Fabius, French Foreign Minister, October 1, 2013.

“Christian populations are plummeting and the religion is being driven out of some of its historic heartlands. In some places, there is a real danger that Christianity will become extinct.” Baroness Sayeedi Warsi, United

Kingdom Minister for Faith, November 15, 2013.

“We will not resign ourselves to imagining a Middle East without Christians.” Pope Francis I, November 21, 2013.

“It seems to me that we cannot ignore the fact that Christians in the Middle East are increasingly being deliberately targeted by fundamentalist Islamist militants.” Charles, Prince of Wales, December 17, 2013.

“We see the Middle East emptying of its historic Christian populations.” Robert P. George, chairman, U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, January 6, 2014.

The unity of alarmed voices gives credibility where the gathering of hard numbers is complex and disputed.³⁵ Syria illustrates this point. While it was reported during the failed Geneva II Peace Talks (February 10-15, 2014) that 140,000 people are now estimated killed in the Syrian Civil War, no one knows how to break down and verify that staggering number into religious classification. That may take years. The point stands: while numbers are estimates, all credible Western sources agree that something akin to a massive religious-genocide against Christians is happening in the most violent corners of the Middle East and beyond: Syria, Iran, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Somalia, Syria, Saudi Arabia³⁶ and the Maldives –namely the majority of the top persecuting nations in the world.

2. Why is it Counterproductive to Promote Fear of Islam.

Islamic missiologist and missionary statesman Dr. Don McCurry has repeatedly remarked that the greatest enemy and the greatest danger is not Islam itself but the fear of Islam. His discernment combines two seminal truths: first, fear is the Achilles’ heel of both global and historic Christianity; secondly, Christlike fearlessness is the ideal “confessional” life of the Holy Spirit in us.

Fear was the first Christian-Jewish response to Islam. The first recorded extra-Qur’anic observations on the “Saracens” (i.e., Muslims) in *Doctrina Jacobi* (dated A.D. 634), has a Greek Jew writing with alarm: “there is no truth to be found in the so-called prophet, only the shedding of men’s blood.”³⁷ From the outset, the militant die had been cast and almost all Jewish and Christian observations about the Muslims in the centuries to follow would chronicle fear-saturated accounts of persecution and oppression. Reading Robert Hoyland’s exhaustive anthology in *Seeing Islam as Others*

Saw It makes for very sober, disquieting reading; it is the voice of the untold thousands of suffering oriental Christians writing to each other, spanning many centuries. Even as Philip Jenkins records, Islamic persecutions of oriental Christians—and that over a thousand years—were not systematic but periodic, causing a “ratchet effect;” meaning Muslim powers repeatedly and violently bore down on the Christian enclaves until the remnant fled, converted, or were martyred.³⁸ How could they not live in constant, unrelenting dread? Fear has been the overwhelming universal and historic “Christian” response to Islam, up until the decisive defeat of maritime slave-raiding “jihadism” by the Barbary pirates in the Mediterranean Sea, thanks to the second American naval intervention in 1815.

Fear of Islam has rebounded with a vengeance since September 2001, following the infamous and strategic 9-11 attack on the heartland of America’s economic empire. Militant-minded Muslims succeeded in gaining what had eluded them since their first suicide attacks against Americans in Beirut, Lebanon on 18 April, 1983: creating a climate of terror of “Islam” in the West. That the misnomer “Islamophobia” owes its wide media circulation to the post-9-11 period is a testimony to the jihadists’ triumph. Islamophobia is one of their most cherished outcomes. Islamic expert, Daniel Pipes in 2005 wrote:

The word literally means “undue fear of Islam” but it is used to mean “prejudice against Muslims” and joins over 500 other phobias spanning virtually every aspect of life. The term has achieved a degree of linguistic and political acceptance, to the point that the secretary-general of the United Nations presided over a December 2004 conference titled “Confronting Islamophobia” and in May [2005] a Council of Europe summit condemned “Islamophobia.”³⁹

That “fear of Islam” has succeeded as much among Christians as among other Westerners is deeply troublesome for two reasons: first, Christians are forced to revisit the dreadful and dark historic epoch of past persecution (632–1815); second, true Christianity has no legitimate mandate to remain fearful. Indeed, fear is as much an enemy of faith as is doubt. Fear of Islam, if left untreated, turns to hatred of Muslims. Hatred, in turn, is an utterly untenable position to defend from Scripture, especially given such commands as: “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head” (Rom 12:20). Yet post-9-11 anglophone evangelical and conservative literature on

Islam is profoundly alarmist, which again, if left untreated, turns to loathing of Muslims.⁴⁰ While most works on Islam, especially from a Christian view, provide a generous disclaimer of needing to pray for, befriend, and reach out to Muslims in compassion, the greater deposit left with readers is a deep angst of all things “Muslim.” That 57,614 Americans alone have been killed or wounded in wars since 2011 resulting from the post-9–11 alleged “War on Terror” is evidence enough that death, destruction, and fear have become the daily staple news items of the Western coverage of the multiple wars with Islamic militants, who, by the latest media protocol,⁴¹ may only be identified as “terrorists.”⁴²

McCurry, in his wisdom, navigates Christians towards a posture of a divine and a fearless profession of the Lord Jesus Christ in the face of all religion-manufactured fear. There are more scriptural commands to “not fear” or to “not be anxious” than there are days in a year. The “fear not” mandate is inescapable and ubiquitous in Scripture. Indeed, a fearless “testimony” or “witness” is translated as *martus* in Biblical Greek and *martyr* in Latin, and which, in turn, has been adopted by all Western languages. We are left in no doubt as to what our fearless testimony might merit: persecution or death. And yet, the spiritual virtue that is most resistant, most conquering of fear is open, courageous fearlessness. Nothing negates terror’s power more than fearlessness. As Jesus said, “do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matt 10:28). This command, if obeyed, is an antidote to terrorism. It is to this bold horizon that Christ points the contemporary suffering Bride of Christ. (More on this subject below.)

3. The Unexpected Rebirth of Persecuting Jihadism Since 1960.

The modern rise in Muslim persecution of Christians has a distinct and recent theological rebirth. Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966), an Egyptian literary critic turned political leader of the emerging Islamic Brotherhood (*Ikhwan*), made himself into a household name in the Sunni Islamic world by becoming the spiritual “father” of innovative small group jihads.⁴³ Qutb grew up in British-occupied Egypt, was imprisoned for his treasonous calls for a jihad to overthrow the republic, and was then executed in 1966 in President Nasser’s independent Egypt. The genius of Qutb’s theocratic and militant theology was his success at resurrecting a duplicate of the original “companion” generation, that is, those who were Muhammad’s immediate jihad-disciples (called the *sahabah*) and who took the prophet’s militant mandate and conquered the then-known world in their lifetime. Qutb calls his re-born mil-

itant generation “the vanguard,” a term and strategy borrowed from both Marxist and fascist ideologues.⁴⁴

To justify small-group jihad, he concluded in his last two works⁴⁵ that Muhammad’s original and authentic Islam was now extinct in his own lifetime, and that the whole Islamic world of the 20th century, together with the “Christian” West, had sunk into a depraved state of godless *Jahiliyyah* (ignorance). This was the exact term Muhammad had used to describe his godless, rebellious world and that he used to justify its conquest. So doing, Qutb bypassed the need to seek permission for any jihad from the reigning Islamic authorities, and he replaced it with an individual interpretation of the Qur’an, mandating singular jihad from selected verses. He turned jihad into a private obligation, a collective duty for all Muslims, and even into one of the pillars of Islam. After centuries of slumbering Islamic traditionalism, Qutb had let a violent jihad genie out of the Oriental Islamic bottle.

Qutb’s teaching deeply impacted the emerging “who’s who” of post-9-11 violent Islamism: Ayman al-Zawahiri, Sheikh Omar ‘Abd al-Rahman, Osama Bin Laden, Sheikh Fateh Krekar, Dr ‘Abdullah ‘Azzam and the groups Shabab, Jama’at al-Muslimin, Al-Jihad, Al-Gama’ah al-Islamiyyah, Al-Qaeda and Ansar al-Islam.⁴⁶ In short, all the contemporary militant interpretations of the majority Sunni world drew their inspirations—directly or indirectly—from Qutb. The initial targets of Qutbism did not include the vulnerable Christian minorities in Islamic nations but the corrupted “Muslim” dictators and the greater, pernicious Western “Christian” patronage over the Muslim world. However, the post-9-11 “Western” invasion into Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003) changed the scope: defenseless Christians in Muslim lands became legitimate “fifth column” targets. Qutb’s jihadism declared open season on all Christians in much of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC),⁴⁷ the international Islamic organization consisting of 57 member “Muslim” states.⁴⁸

Two decades later, Shiite militancy had its own rebirth in Tehran, Iran, when, on February 1, 1979, the supreme Shiite imam, the Grand Ayatollah Khomeini (1902–1989) returned from exile and founded the first “Twelver Shiite” imamate in 250 years, that is, since the defeat of the Persian Shiite Safavid Dynasty (1501–1736). Foundational to Khomeini’s theocracy were the powerful *fatwas*⁴⁹ in his *Little Green Book* (1979)⁵⁰ which inspired jihadism, martyrdom, and justification for killing not only infidel Sunni enemies, but also the “Great Satan” (USA) and the “Little Satan” (Israel). He wrote:

If one permits an infidel to continue in his role as a corrupter of the earth,

the infidel's moral suffering will be all the worse. If one kills the infidel, and this stops him from perpetrating his misdeeds, his death will be a blessing to him.⁵¹

In Khomeini's 1978 interviews with western journalists in Paris, he assured them that all minorities would be respected,⁵² that women would be free in the Islamic Republic in the selection of their activities and their future and their clothing,⁵³ and that he would not "personally have a role in running the country after the fall of the current system."⁵⁴ Upon coming to power, he reversed his promises in every respect and founded a Twelver theocracy which was in every way as militant as Qutbism. Unlike Qutb, Khomeini retained the imam's exclusive role in declaring a jihad, something which he did unceasingly as he waged war on the entire world: Sunni and Western. As he said in his own words:

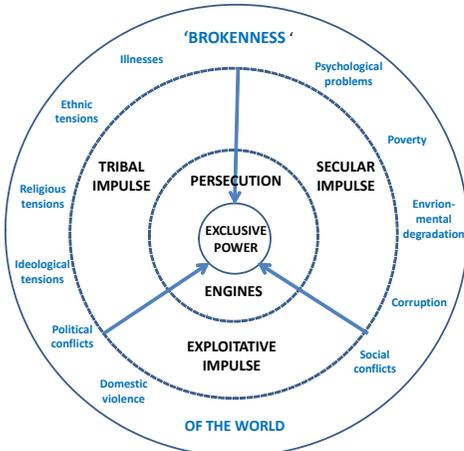
Those who study Islamic holy war will understand why Islam wants to conquer the whole world ... Those who know nothing of Islam pretend that Islam counsels against war. ... Islam says: Kill in the service of Allah those who may want to kill you!" Does this mean that we should surrender [to the enemy]? Islam says: 'Whatever good there is exists thanks to the sword and in the shadow of the sword!' People cannot be made obedient except with the sword! The sword is the key to Paradise, which can be opened only for the holy warriors! There are hundreds of other [Qur'anic] verses and Hadiths urging Muslims to value war and to fight. Does all this mean that Islam is a religion that prevents men from waging war? I spit upon those foolish souls who make such a claim.⁵⁵

The conquest-focused ayatollahs not only led their Shiite faithful into the 1980-88 Iraq-Iran War (1,250,000 estimated casualties--making it the bloodiest war since WW II) but also to the violent persecution of all dissidents: political, Baha'i, Ahmadiyyas, and, increasingly, Christians. The utterly unexpected miraculous birth of the underground church in Iran has inspired an augmented and ruthless state persecution and martyrdom amongst all new Christian believers. As Matthew Clark argues in his 2013 article for The American Center for Law and Justice, the Iranian Imamate refuses to recognize the possibility of any Muslim converting to Christianity, hence new Christians do not qualify for constitutional protection. While "apostasy" is not a codified crime, writes Clark, all legal judgments are made on Sharia law and *fatwas*, essentially criminalizing

conversion. As a result, “prosecutors often bring charges against Christians, asserting that their Christian activities amount to crimes such as ‘propaganda against the Regime’ and ‘acting against national security.’ The reality is, although Iran acknowledges constitutional protections, it fails to uphold them for its Christian community” (Clark, 2013).

Increasingly since 2005, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad have openly instructed their governors to arrest, interrogate, detain and prosecute Christians in violation of their fundamental human rights. Since then, the Christian world has been awash with unceasing accounts of persecutions in Iran, chiefly the attacks on key underground pastors, among them Saeed Abedini,⁵⁶ Avanesian,⁵⁷ and dozens more. As reported by the 2013 U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, “Since becoming president, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has called for an end to the development of Christianity in Iran” (Weinthal, 2013).

Both Sunni and Shiite have had a robust renaissance of classical jihadism, whether through Qutbism or imamate theology.⁵⁸ Both sides use their militant interpretation to attack both the “Satan outside” (the West and Israel) but also the “Satan within” (Christians, Muslim apostates, minorities). Given the staggering financing of their militant ideologies through OPEC⁵⁹ resources, there is nothing to suggest that either of these competing movements have exhausted themselves—as is clear from the present proxy war in Syria.



World Watch List
Brokenness of the World

4. The Disputed Nature of Muslim Global Persecution of Christians.

Among contemporary Islamic missiologists a debate exists as to what constitutes “belief persecution” in that political,

cultural, ethnic, and psychological factors may strongly contribute to the violence experienced by suffering Christians. Surely, not all that is called “persecution” is “persecution,” Should martyrdom and discrimination even belong on the same list? Or again, can hostility against Christians stem

from something non-religious, like racism, tribalism, political grievances, or pro-democracy loyalties? Open Doors ministry limits the word “persecution” to intentional suffering inflicted upon Christians and has established the following model.⁶⁰

Persecution is when Christians and their communities experience specific pressure and/or violence in a situation of “brokenness” that are related to persecution dynamics prevalent in their environments and are forcing them to comply with the drivers of these dynamics. The WWL methodology re-groups these dynamics in three different impulses, fuelling eight different persecution engines and being driven by specific actors or drivers of persecution. The diagram shows the relation between “brokenness,” impulses, persecution engines and the related drive for exclusive power.⁶¹

Consider the example of the violent Muslim persecution of Christians in sub-Saharan Africa in 2013-2014. The horrific televised scenes of violence in which Christians are targeted in Kenya, Sudan, Central African Republic, and Nigeria, and to a lesser degree in Mali, all suggest, to Western journalists, that “religion” is used as a justification for collective violence but is not the original cause for persecution.⁶² Secular reporters routinely point to a tell-tale chronology of grievances, beginning with historic tribal tensions—often over resources. These are exacerbated by accrued political abuses, compounded by growing economic cultural discriminations, and finally triggered by a tinder-box style provocation from one side, which is then fuelled by war-mongering sermons from both religious quarters, finally leading to “religious” vigilantes fighting “religious” troops or “religious” rebels.⁶³ The result is a sudden reciprocal and horrific blood bath, into which the international community tardily sends peacekeeping troops in order to stop the gross violation of human rights committed by both warring “religious” factions. Invariably, once the fighting abates, all Western voices quickly join together to play down the crisis by delegitimizing the actual role of religion in the violence. “Religion” say such experts, “was not the real but the blamed cause.”

This form of “not-real-but-blamed” reporting harms the truly persecuted victims in three respects. First, Western reporters of “religious wars” assume mutual guilt prematurely. The “both sides are guilty” script compensates the first persecutors as being as much a victim as their persecuted prey. So doing, the Western media treats the warring “religious” factions much like no-fault car insurance policies treat their clients: regardless of who is really responsible for the accident, the amount compensated is never based on who really caused it. When both sides are “now persecuting, now persecuted’

then everyone is guilty (read, “no one”). Justice is no longer the arbitrator.

For example, for over two decades, the BBC has faithfully reported that the northern Nigerian Muslim-Christian violence is fundamentally political and tribal in nature. “Religion has been hijacked as just one of the major instruments used and abused by politicians,” the BBC reported in their recent interview of Nigerian Imam Ashafa.⁶⁴ The imam says, and the BBC fully agrees, that “something other than religion causes violence” and all peace-loving BBC readers know this. It also means that persecuting “religious” leaders expect immunity instead of the prospect of being tried for violent crimes. They know that they will rarely be brought to trial for violent faith persecutions. Were they not hijacked by politicians?⁶⁵

The second reason this form of “not-real-but-blamed” reporting harms the persecuted victims is that the journalist’s logic is built on a deeply flawed premise that “religion” is a mere smoke screen for other real fires (as per Imam Ashafa above). But this beggars belief! How can tens of thousands of Muslims attack, kill and die with the triumphant cry “Allah U Akbar” in their mouth and the journalists say that this has nothing to do with religion? Does this form of reporting not rather expose an anti-religious bias of the journalist? Religion, it turns out, is the real combustible fuel added to the tribal/cultural/political hay. That “Christian” vigilantes quickly copy-cat their Muslim firebrand counterparts merely adds more fuel to the existing “religious conflagration.” But the original victims of persecution get quickly forgotten in this form of reporting. If, as the Western narrative goes, Muslims rarely kill Christians for their faith—but for a host of other local factors— then why report the slaughter as “religious”?

Thirdly, this form of Western reporting robs the persecuted victim of coverage because it assumes that the causes for violence can be surgically dissected and separated, ranking them on a list of most-to-least deserving facts for coverage. Here lies a blind spot. It is a distinct feature of the Western-trained mind to individually compartmentalize one’s mental life in categories: my economics, my politics, my culture, my ethnicity, my sexuality, my ideological beliefs, my amusements, etc. Those who do so assume the whole global adult population does likewise. Yet the very persecuting-victimized communities about which they are reporting are not made up of western thinkers, but of people who see themselves collectively (“I am who we are”) and who think in holistic, non-categorical ways. For devout Muslim thinkers, Islamic beliefs and economics and politics and culture and ethnicity are all inseparably one. Islam does not exist for them as an independent mental compartment; it is all of life.

Drivers of persecution	
Government	Government officials at any level from local to national
Society	Ethnic group leaders
	Non-Christian religious leaders at any level from local to national
	Religious leaders of other churches at any level from local to national
	Fanatical movements
	Normal citizens (people from the broader society), including mobs
	Extended family
	Political parties at any level from local to national
	Revolutionaries or paramilitary groups
	Organized crime cartels or networks
	Multilateral organizations

For this reason, Open Doors WWL methodology distinguishes various “drivers” of persecution (chart below), acknowledging that often more than one driver is active in and around one or more persecution engines.⁶⁶ Persecution is highly complex and one aggressive driver easily feeds another.

A second debate among missiologists concerns the marketing of persecution. How much of Western reporting is being converted into publicity, fund-raising, marketing material, and in short, capitalistic advocacy drives? Is there a danger that the sheer scale of information of persecution could become a “business”?

We are left with the urgent need to respond to horrific daily reports of persecution and suffering on all fronts; all of which requires the wise mobilization of our resources. The requests for help come with sterling Biblical support: “If anyone has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth” (1 John 3:17-18).

Appeals for prayer and money are therefore legitimate even if they appear hyperbolic at times. This requires an exceptionally high level of trust in these emergency relief organizations, as is already the case for Compassion International, Food for the Hungry, World Vision, and Samaritan Purse. Outside of many denominational and historic mission agencies, the most frequent request for financial aid to the persecuted church come from (in alphabetic order) the Barnabas Fund, Christian Aid Ministry, Christian

Freedom International, Open Doors, Persecution International Christian Concern, and Voice of the Martyrs. These charities, in turn, are watched by charity transparency agencies such as Charity Navigator,⁶⁷ the International Institute of Religious Freedom (IIRF), and each American agency is a member of ECFA, the Evangelical Council of Financial Accountability. All this is worthy of our confidence and endorsement.

5. The Noblest Christian Responses to Persecution Today.

In China, when a man of integrity faces a severe character test, others will encourage him and say, “True gold fears no fire.” Persecuted Christians, however, do not seek to prove their sterling character when they suffer but rather they long to prove their faith and to glorify Christ: “You have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet 1:6-7).

This is the noblest of responses to all forms of discrimination and persecution. Christians throughout the world suffer remarkably well because they do it to honor God, not to gain a reputation or salvation. They suffer joyfully as the Lord Jesus told them to: “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad” (Matt 5:11). They suffer in obedience to Christ, not to prove their worth. As Raymond Ibrahim notes:

Christianity is the quintessential religion of martyrdom. From its inception—beginning with Jesus followed by his disciples and the early Church—many Christians have accepted martyrdom rather than recant their faith, in ancient times at the hands of Romans, in Medieval and modern times at the hands of pious Muslims and others. Few other religions encourage their adherents to embrace death rather than recant, as captured by Christ’s own words: “But whoever denies me before men, I will deny him before my Father in heaven.”⁶⁸

In the eyes of all nations, Christians seem to suffer more frequently and more nobly than others who are suffering for their career, ideology, nation, family, or religion-of-birth. Thousands of accounts per years, disseminated in many web sites, testify to Christians suffering like gold in the fire, blessing and forgiving their persecutors, as Paul instructed the Romans: “Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.”⁶⁹ The following account illustrates it fully:

On May 27, 2010, an Afghan TV show called *Sarzamin-e-man* (my Homeland) broadcast a two-year-old-video of indigenous Afghan Christians holding a worship service. Two days later, some twenty-five Christians were arrested, and many others fled. One, who had converted to Christianity eight years previously, Said Musa, was arrested when he sought asylum at the German embassy. Having lost his leg after stepping on a landmine while serving in the Afghan army, he now wears a prosthetic limb. He is the father of six young children, the oldest -then eight- and another who is disabled. He worked for the Red Cross/Red Crescent as an orthopedic therapist, giving advice to other amputees and fitting patients for prosthetic limbs.

In early June, the deputy secretary of the Afghan parliament, Abdul Sattar Khawasi, said, “[T]hose Afghans that appeared on this video film should be executed in public.” The authorities forced Musa to renounce Christianity on television, but he continued to say he was a Christian.

His wife only learned his whereabouts from a released inmate who had shared his jail cell, and she first saw her husband on July 27. He was forced to appear before the court without a lawyer and without knowing the charges against him. “When I said ‘I am a Christian man,’ he [a potential defense lawyer] immediately spat on me and abused me and mocked me ... I am alone between 400 people with terrible values in the jail, like a sheep.” No Afghan lawyer would defend him, and authorities denied him access to a foreign lawyer.

In a letter smuggled to the West, he described the first months of his detention: “The authority and prisoners in jail did many bad behaviour with me about my faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. For example, they did sexual things with me, beat me by wood, by hands, by legs, put some things on my head. [T]hey mocked me ‘He’s Jesus Christ,’ spat on me, nobody let me for sleep night and day.” He added that he would be willing to sacrifice his life so “other believers will take courage and be strong in their faith. Please my English writing is not good enough. If I did some mistake please forgive me!” (from Kabul Provincial jail).

Said Musa was eventually smuggled out of Afghanistan thanks to personal intervention from US commander General David Petraeus.⁷⁰ These are the daily fearless testimonies of pure gold faith tried in the fire of perse-

cution. In this respect, the church of Christ has truly returned to the book of the Acts of the Apostles. Listen to how brilliantly Paul captures the glory of martyrdom for both his generation and now ours: “As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us” (Rom 8:36-37).

This is the new “normal” world, and yet never has the Body of Christ prayed more for Muslims, shown them more compassion, designated more missionaries towards Muslim needs, loved them more as neighbors and embraced them more as refugees. The most notable post-WW II example of this compassion for Muslim refugees comes from Indonesia during the 1965–1971 slaughter of “Muslim” communists by General Suharto. As a result of Christian compassion in protecting and caring for these refugees, 1,870,512 Indonesian Muslims were eventually baptized as Protestants and 938,786 as Roman Catholics.⁷¹ This is the largest known case of Christian compassionate love.

The new “normal world” is fast becoming the world in which courageous love, sacrificial love, dying love, fearless love, and compassionate love are not required of a few but of the majority of Christians; who are now the largest minority religion in most nations. Even in formerly historic “Christian” nations, Christians are becoming the new minority. The increased marginalization—if not vilification—of devout Christians in the secular-West suggests that global advocacy coming from the “free” West may be significantly curtailed in the future. If Canada is any indication, Christian charities and mission agencies face repeated challenges of their legal status and whether they comply with prevailing political sentiments. Their Canadian role as Christian advocates of global causes and ministries is not without repeated legal attacks. Yet Christians remain the foremost advocates for all persecuted religious minorities, not just Christians.

During March 15-18, 2013, the International Institute for Religious Freedom of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) met with Christian researchers from three universities and forty scholars to analyze the struggle for religious freedom and the growth of belief persecution. Sociologist and WEA ambassador for human rights, Thomas Schirrmacher pointed out that there are today roughly 300 million Christians in Muslim majority countries.⁷² Given that Christianity is the greatest minority religion on earth, it stands to reason that they are targeted everywhere. As Raymond Ibrahim notes,

Christianity is the largest religion in the world. There are Christians practically everywhere around the globe, including in much of the Muslim world. Moreover, because much of the land that Islam seized was originally Christian—including the Middle East and North Africa, the region that is today known as the “Arab world”—Muslims everywhere are still confronted with vestiges of Christianity.⁷³

Under the leadership of Schirmacher, the WEA consultation developed a policy of “seven pillars’ of Christian response to persecution:

1. Prayer ranks as the first pillar, and since the earliest days prayer for the persecuted has been a part of Christian worship; today this is expressed in the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church.
2. The second pillar is explicit solidarity with those affected by offering assistance and training.
3. The third pillar is media work, since honest, accurate reporting is essential to document the problems.
4. Fourth, there is the legal defense of those affected before courts, as well as other forms of advocacy. At this time Advocacy International has its own network of thousands of lawyers, though more legal advocacy is urgently needed. Much religious persecution is contrary to the laws of the country in which it occurs and should be addressed in the courts.
5. The fifth pillar is political activity. Since Christians are against violent self-defense and advocate the separation of church and state through the state monopoly on the use of force, they should not use violence to protect themselves. Rather, they have to call upon states to defend their human rights. Where one’s own state does not intervene, Christians turn towards other states and global organizations with their plea to apply pressure to other states. Prayer, humanitarian aid, legal defense, media activities, and political involvement are all only possible where there is sound information.
6. For this reason the sixth pillar is the WEA’s investment in global research, represented at the Istanbul Consultation.
7. Seventh, and finally, the WEA has a “Peace Building Track” in order to actualize a space for local, political peace between adherents of different religions, for whom nothing is more important than to get to know each other.⁷⁴

Prayer for the persecuted church and believers has indeed soared worldwide. In all denominations and in all media outlets, the intensity of prayer—

and of giving—has increased exponentially. Global prayer and compassion for global persecution has united Christians in a manner unprecedented in church history, with Protestant-Evangelicals, Roman Catholics and Orthodox communities praying everywhere for other Roman Catholics, Orthodox, Oriental and Evangelical Christians in persecuted lands. The primary reason why prayer for the persecuted is uniting Christians is that for the first time since the era of Constantine (A.D. 325), Christian denominations are not persecuting other denominations or other faiths.⁷⁵ Christianity has finally come full circle to her primitive pacifist past.

For that reason, the most debated of these seven pillars will be the phrase in the fifth pillar: “Christians ... should not use violence to protect themselves.” In nations where the right to self-defense includes bearing arms, the theological case for Amish-styled unconditional pacifism will be strongly disputed, especially in regions that have become “failed states” and where the police are the primary persecutors. The WEA may choose to advocate pacifism as the best but not exclusive response for all Christians in all contexts. As the old adage goes, “It takes one sword to keep another in the sheath.” Fear is a wonderful God-ordained deterrent against violent persecutors.⁷⁶ A far more likely compromise is that the secular West will become the destination for fleeing Christians, a destination whose longing is inscribed in the Statue of Liberty.

Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed, to me: I lift my lamp beside the golden door.

Whether post-Christian secular nations will continue be to a haven for Christian minorities is uncertain. Indeed, the world’s most secular nations, China and Japan,⁷⁷ are not even candidates for receiving religious refugees of any kind. What is clear is that all post-Christian Western nations are seeing a rapid decline in religious beliefs.⁷⁸ The torch of the “Statue of Liberty” may well pass, in the future, to highly religious nations, such as Ghana, Brazil, Peru, and Poland.

Conclusion

North American Christians remain amongst the best informed in the world concerning persecution, thanks in large part to a vast network of Christian radio and TV stations, Christian magazines and blog sites. This places a significant responsibility on their shoulders. In particular, the leading 21st

century cable network, neo-conservative Fox News⁷⁹ has strongly covered Christian persecution in Muslim lands, educating their 1.097 million prime-time viewers of the nature and scope of persecution.⁸⁰ Reporter Timothy Samuel Shah, in particular, is shaping the issue by exposing the myths concerning global Christian persecution.⁸¹ A growing number of North Americans are becoming very discerning observers and responders to the persecuted church. What remains utterly uncertain, in human terms, is whether the alarm, reported by the media in late 2013 and early 2014, will prevail. There is nothing to suggest that Islamic theology is any closer to finding a mechanism to abrogate the final militant message of the Qur'an. Persecution seems certain to remain or rise in the new "normal" world. We do well to remember: if no one predicted this global church crisis twenty-five years ago, are we wise to proceed cautiously in optimistic predictions?

The most cherished news, however, is not that certain governments are indeed improving their records of religious freedoms—as good as that is—but rather that unprecedented numbers of Muslims are coming to Christ. This is happening especially among those who encounter courageous Christians in persecuted regions, or those who receive a dream in which Christ's person and/or voice establishes beyond dispute that Jesus is Lord of all, the Son of God and that Christians follow the truth. This is truly an unprecedented visitation by God and we ponder the exciting implications. Indeed, when the persecuting "Sauls" become the persecuted "Pauls," the church grows in her suffering, and that is perhaps a prayer greater than for global peace, and, in the spirit of Tertullian (d. A.D. 220), we do well to pray "Thy kingdom come" and may the blood of the martyrs be once again the seed of the church.⁸²

¹ Ben Otto, "In Indonesia, Trying Times for Minority Faiths: Intimidation Is Rising as Hard-Line Muslim Groups Grow Increasingly Vocal," WSJ, Dec. 23, 2013. online.wsj.com.

² Tom Heneghan, "Reported Christian "martyr" deaths double in 2013," London, Jan 8, 2014, reuters.com. Also published in the Huffington Post, Jan 09, 2014.

³ AP: "Pope Francis Slams Christian Persecution, Urges People To Speak Out Against Injustice," December 26, 2013, Associated Press.

⁴ John McManus, "Christians persecuted by Islamists," says Prince Charles, BBC News, 18 December, 2013. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-25426155>.

⁵ Christopher Snyder, "Report: North Korea worst for Christian persecution," January 08, 2014, foxnews.com.

⁶ Richard Allen Greene, "Christians face rising persecution, experts say," CNN. CNN news.

⁷ <http://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2013/04/02/middle-east-christians-need-our-protection-column/2047473/>.

⁸ *Jahiliyyah* means the whole corrupted, rebellious "world," both inside and outside of the *ummah*, which is resisting submission to Allah and the final Qur'an message.

⁹ In that the majority of persecution comes from Muslim-majority nations this article will not survey the equally tragic rise of persecution against Christians from Hindu-majority, Buddhist-majority, Communist-governed, and

extreme secular regimes. Indeed, the worst persecuting nation in presently North Korea, yet in terms of sheer global numbers, Christians suffer more from Muslim persecutors than any other religion or ideology.

¹⁰ Called the doctrine of *an-nasikh wa'l mansukh*. See Surahs 2.106, 13.39, 16.103.

¹¹ Surah 9.5 is called since the 19th century “the Verse of the Sword.” It alone abrogates 124 tolerant and peaceful verses according to Muslim theologians Jalal ad-Din Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Mahalli (1389-1459), Jalal al-Suyuti (1445-1505), Isma'il al Dimashqi (1301-1372), and Ibn Juzayy (d. 1340). See also Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) and Osama bin Laden (d. 2011). See also Robert Spencer, *Guide to Islam* (2005), 25.

¹² Especially 9.5 and 9.29 where Muhammad commands believers to fight all non-Muslims till they either convert, or at least submit, to Islam.

¹³ Surah 9.73. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Noble Qur'an*.

¹⁴ This text will recognize the monopolizing theological dominance of both Sunni and Shi'a clergy (the *ulema*, *imams*, or *ayatollahs*) over Islam's doctrines and practices and I will refer to them and their followers as “devout” Muslims. That the majority of global Muslims do not obey the strident calls of fundamental imams is a providential mercy for Christians Jews and atheists. Muslims worldwide, however, are not governed by majority convictions. We also note here that Christendom behaved at its worst when militant “Christians” sought to reserves Muslim gains by imitating jihadism and launching martial crusades.

¹⁵ 1 Peter 4:12. All verses in this article will be ESV.

¹⁶ Phil 1:29-30.

¹⁷ This was carried out by the Ottoman Empire during the 1890s, 1914–1918, 1922–1925, targeting Assyrian civilians through deportation and mass murder, leading to 275,000-300,000 premature deaths.

¹⁸ This was carried out in 1915 by the Young Turk government against the entire Armenian population through death marches and mass murder, resulting in an estimated 1.5 million premature deaths.

¹⁹ <http://lp.opendoorsusa.org/general/google/persecution-c/christian-persecution.html?gclid=CPeGo5CtvbwCFY1AMgodVD8Ajg>. Namely, the organization is focused on research in 60 out of the 192 UN-listed countries.

²⁰ See “Press release from the International Institute for Religious Freedom” (IIRF) on the WWL audit. Approved, level 3 version. December 17, 2013. Available from Open Doors, a ministry focused on the persecuted since its founding by “Brother Andrew” in 1956.

²¹ Open Doors World Watch List, “2014 World Watch List Methodology,” published December 2013. Available from Open Doors.

²² ICC was founded in 1995 by Steve Snyder, former president of the USA Division of Christian Solidarity International. In 2002, Snyder was succeeded as ICC President by Jeff King, who had served 11 years with Campus Crusade for Christ.

²³ <http://www.persecution.org/awareness/>

²⁴ <http://www.persecution.org/awareness/>

²⁵ Raymond Ibrahim, *Crucified Again: Exposing Islam's New War on Christians* (Regnery, 2013) is a Middle East and Islam specialist, and a Shillman Fellow at the David Horowitz Freedom Center and an Associate Fellow at the Middle East Forum.

²⁶ Vatican Radio, “Vatican to UN: 100 thousand Christians killed for the faith each year,” 2013-05-28, http://www.news.va/en/news/vatican-to-un-100-thousand-christians-killed-for-t?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter&utm_campaign=catholicclisa. See also Frances d'Emilio, “Pope Calls Christians the Most Persecuted” Associated Press, December 16, 2010. <http://cnsnews.com/news/article/pope-calls-christians-most-persecuted>.

²⁷ The Pew Forum provides information on social issues, public opinion, and demographic trends shaping the United States and the world. See <http://www.pewresearch.org/>

²⁸ See Pew Forum methodology. For Canada see Olivia Ward Foreign Affairs Reporter, “Meet Canada's defender of the faiths,” *The Toronto Star*, Feb 14, 2014.

²⁹ For example, “26 Christians Killed in Boko Haram Attacks” VOM Sources, BBC News (Jan 26, 2014) VOM contacts in Nigeria said as many as 200 Christians have been killed by Boko Haram since the Jan. 26 attacks. http://www.salememail.com/specialoffers/VOM_Persecution/VOM_persecution_watch_full.aspx?id=1&archive=true

³⁰ <http://www.barnabasfund.org/>

³¹ <http://www.jihadwatch.org>. Jihad Watch is a blog affiliated with the David Horowitz Freedom Center and was founded in 2003.

³² Open Doors. World Watch List: “WWL 2014 Violent incidents article FINAL.” Reporting period November 2012-October 2013. Including killings and physical violence, based on the violent incidents media research. Approved, level 3 version. December 17, 2013. Used with permission.

³³ Joshua Rhett Miller “Christians killed for faith nearly doubled in 2013, group finds,” January 10, 2014, <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2014/01/10/christians-killed-for-faith-nearly-doubled-in-2013-group-finds/>.

³⁴ CSI was founded in 1977 in Switzerland by Rev. Hans Stükelberger, following peaceful demonstrations in support of persecuted Christians. See more at: <http://csi-usa.org/about.html#sthash.toyd3WdE.dpuf> <http://csi-usa.org/about.html>.

³⁵ Concerning confirmation of data, Iranian Pastor Sasan Tavassoli wrote to me in a personal letter (14 Dec 2014), in

reply to the accuracy of data reporting: "By the very nature of the topic this is not the kind of info you can find on a website." See also Pew Forum methodology.

- ³⁶ The persecution against Christians is focused exclusively on foreign domestic workers, not indigenous Christians.
- ³⁷ *Doctrina Jacobi* (V. 16, 209) as cited in (Hoyland, 1997, 57).
- ³⁸ Philip Jenkins. *The Lost History of Christianity: The Thousand-Year Golden Age of the Church in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia—and How It Died*, (2009).
- ³⁹ Daniel Pipes, "Islamophobia?," *New York Sun*, October 25, 2005, <http://www.danielpipes.org/3075/islamophobia>. For alternative views on Islamophobia see Amir Saeed, "Islamophobia and Capitalism," THINKING THRU ISLAMOPHOBIA Symposium Papers for the Centre for Ethnicity and Racism Studies, organized by S. Sayyid Abdoolkarim Wakil May 2008, www.sociology.leeds.ac.uk; and John L. Esposito, "Islamophobia: A Threat to American Values?" *Huffington Post*, August 10, 2010, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/john-l-esposito/islamophobia-a-threat-to_b_676765.html, and again, Karen Armstrong, "Islamophobia: We need to accept the "other,"" *The Globe and Mail*, March 26, 2012, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-debate/islamophobia-we-need-to-accept-the-other/article534337/>.
- ⁴⁰ For example, consider the following authors and their titles: Randal Price. *Unholy War: America, Israel and Radical Islam* (2001); Mark A. Gabriel, *Islam and Terrorism: What the Quran Really Teaches About Christianity, Violence and the Goals of the Islamic Jihad* (2002), and *Culture Clash: Islam's War on America* (2007); Abd El Schafi, *Behind the Veil: Unmasking Islam* (2002); R. C. Sproul, *The Dark Side of Islam* (2002); Grant R. Jeffery, *War on Terror: Unfolding Bible Prophecy* (2002); Christopher Catherwood, *Christians, Muslims and Islamic Rage* (2003); Robert Spencer, *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam (and the Crusades)* (2005); Gregory M. Davis, *Religion of Peace: Islam's War against the World* (2006); Joel Rosenberg's eschatological novels: *The Last Jihad* (2006), *The Last Days* (2006), *The Ezekiel Option* (2006), *The Copper Scroll* (2006), *Dead Heat* (2008), *The Twelfth Imam* (2011), *The Tehran Initiative* (2012) and his non-fiction *Epicenter* (2006); Raymond Ibrahim, *Crucified Again: Exposing Islam's New War on Christians* (2013).
- ⁴¹ See Society of Professional Journalists, "Guidelines for Countering Racial, Ethnic and Religious Profiling," <https://www.spj.org/divguidelines.asp>.
- ⁴² This is taken from a January 02, 2014 site from Wikipedia entitled "United States military casualties of war:" http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_military_casualties_of_war. The death toll of the "war on terror" (5,281) is soon approaching the combat death toll of the Revolutionary War (est. 8000).
- ⁴³ Classical Islamic jurisprudence only granted a caliph, a mufti or a spiritual sheikh the authority to declare a jihad for the entire Islamic community. No individual Muslim or group of Muslims had that sovereignty. Qutb's writings dismantled this exclusive privilege, allowing even a handful of "purist" Muslims to declare jihad.
- ⁴⁴ See Adnan Musallam, chapter 8, "Martyrdom, Posthumous Impact, and Global Jihad, 1965-Present" From *Secularism to Jihad: Sayyid Qutb and the Foundations of Radical Islamism* (2005). This new "vanguard" generation goes under many names: jihadists, the Taliban, the Sahabah, Al Qaeda, the *mujahideen/mujahidun/muwahhidun*, Salafists, and Wahhabis. However, they are castigated by their enemies as Islamo-fascists or Islamists, or by more descriptive names constructed from hostile adjectives: terrorists, extremists, radicals, fundamentalists, and fanatics. That all the former Islamic names are used by devout proponents and all the later constructs coined by shocked opponents suggests strongly that Western analysts are failing Sun Tzu's fundamental "rule of war:" "if you do not know your enemies nor yourself, you will be imperilled in every single battle" (*The Art of War*, chapter 3).
- ⁴⁵ *Ma'alim fi-l-Tariq* (Milestones: 1964) and Qutb's 30-volumn Qur'anic commentary *Fi zilal al-Qur'an* (In the Shade of the Quran: completed in 1965).
- ⁴⁶ Musallam, *ibid*.
- ⁴⁷ Founded in 1969, following the crisis of the Arab defeat in the 1967 Six-Day War; in 2011 it changed its name from Organization of Islamic Conference to its present name.
- ⁴⁸ It is noteworthy that Qutbism and/or Shiite imamite influences have sought to plant operational militant bases in all of the original 25-founding members (1969), namely: Afghanistan, Algeria, Chad, Egypt, Guinea, Indonesia, Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Pakistan, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia, Turkey and Yemen. Most of these original OIC member nations belong to the top 25 most-Christian persecuting states in the world.
- ⁴⁹ A *fatwa* is a ruling on a point of Islamic law given by a recognized authority.
- ⁵⁰ Translated from Persian by Clive Irving, *Sayings of the Ayatollah Khomeini: Political, Philosophical, Social and Religious*. (New York: Bantam Books, 1980). See also Daniel Deleanu, *The Little Green Book of Ayatollah Khomeini*, (2011).
- ⁵¹ Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, *Speech on the day of Mohammed's birth* (1984), cited by Marina Nemat, *Prisoner of Tehran: One Woman's Story of Survival inside an Iranian Prison*, (2008), 40.
- ⁵² Interview for Austrian television, Paris, (November 6, 1978), as quoted by Dr. Jalal Matini, and Farhad Mafie, 'Democracy? I meant theocracy — The most truthful individual in recent history', *The Iranian* (August 5, 2003).
- ⁵³ Interview for *The Guardian* in Paris (November 6, 1978).
- ⁵⁴ *Associated Press* interview in Paris (November 7, 1978).

- ⁵⁵ Ruhollah Khomeini. As quoted in Amir Taheri, *Holy Terror: Inside the World of Islamic Terrorism* (1987), 241-43.
- ⁵⁶ <http://www.persecution.org/2013/12/03/american-pastor-saeed- Abedini-threatened-at-knifepoint-health-deteriorating-in-deadly-iranian-prison/>.
- ⁵⁷ <http://www.persecution.org/2013/12/12/iranian-pastor-avanessian-sentenced-to-3-3%bd-years-prison-by-the-revolutionary-court/>.
- ⁵⁸ See also Patrick Sookhdeo. *Global Jihad: The Future in the Face of Militant Islam* (Isaac Publishing, 2007).
- ⁵⁹ OPEC: Organization of Petroleum-Exporting Countries, formed in 1961 to administer a common policy for the sale of petroleum. Its members are Algeria, Angola, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Venezuela. Ecuador and Gabon were members but withdrew in 1992 and 1995 respectively.
- ⁶⁰ Open Doors. 2014 World Watch List Methodology. Op cit., 1. Used with permission.
- ⁶¹ Ibid. *Developed by World Watch Research.*
- ⁶² For Central African Republic see http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/24/world/africa/archbishop-and-imam-are-united-across-battle-lines-in-central-african-republic.html?pagewanted=1&_r=0&emc=eta1.
- ⁶³ As illustrated in a report for members and committees of Congress, written by Alexis Arief, "Crisis in Central Africa Republic," Congressional Research Service, January 27, 2014, 8-9.
- ⁶⁴ Cited by Dan Isaac of the BBC news in Abuja, Nigeria, (2011) "Nigeria: Anxious days for Christian and Muslim leaders" <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13136318>.
- ⁶⁵ What is not asked is: "How does jihadism hijack Islam?" or "How can you hijack a religion?" One cannot hijack something that is inseparable. No one hijacks a human arm. Jihadism or a faith cannot be taken hostage for a ransom, like a family member. It's never a hostage, a prisoner, or a captive.
- ⁶⁶ Open Doors. 2014 World Watch List Methodology. Op cit., 2, used with permission.
- ⁶⁷ See Charity Navigator.
- ⁶⁸ Raymond Ibrahim, "Why Are Christians the World's Most Persecuted Group?" FrontPageMagazine.com, February 28, 2014, <http://www.meforum.org/3779/christians-persecuted>. (Matt 10:33; see also Luke 14:33).
- ⁶⁹ Rom 12:14.
- ⁷⁰ Paul Marshall, Lela Gilbert and Nina Shea, *Persecuted: The Global Assault on Christians* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2013).
- ⁷¹ See Avery Willis, *Indonesian Revival, Why Two Million Came to Christ* (Pasadena; William Carey Library, 1977), 9-10.
- ⁷² Bonner Querschnitte, "Cutting Edge Research on Religious Persecution;" *The International Consultation on Religious Freedom Research*, BQ 283b – No. 47b/2013, 3.
- ⁷³ Raymond Ibrahim, "Why Are Christians the World's Most Persecuted Group?" FrontPageMagazine.com, February 28, 2014, <http://www.meforum.org/3779/christians-persecuted>.
- ⁷⁴ Thomas K. Johnson, "A commentary by Thomas K. Johnson," *The International Consultation on Religious Freedom Research*, BQ 283b – No. 47b/2013, p. 3. Notes Johnson, "although only one of these pillars is research, all of these pillars need serious research and publications to become more effective."
- ⁷⁵ The rare exceptions most commonly cited are the exhausted Northern Ireland conflicts, and the current tribal wars in Southern Sudan.
- ⁷⁶ Cf. Rom 13:3-4.
- ⁷⁷ Japan has settled 11,319 Indo-Chinese boat refugees, from 1978 to 2005. <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/refugee/japan.html>, but as the Japan Association for Refugees (*Nanmin Shien Kyokai*) admits, "very few people are recognized as refugees in Japan". <http://www.refugee.or.jp/en/>.
- ⁷⁸ WIN-Gallup International, "Global Index of Religiosity and Atheism: Press Release," WIN-Gallup, 2012. <http://redcresearch.ie/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/RED-C-press-release-Religion-and-Atheism-25-7-12.pdf>
- ⁷⁹ In particular, reporters Cristina Corbin, Andrea Tantaros, Juan Williams, and Timothy Samuel Shah.
- ⁸⁰ Merrill Knox, "2013 Ratings: Fox News, #1 For 12 Straight Years, Sheds Viewers Too," January 2, 2014, TVNEWS-ER, http://www.mediabistro.com/tvnewser/2013-ratings-fox-news-1-for-12-straight-years-sheds-viewers-too_b208937.
- ⁸¹ Timothy Samuel Shah, "Five myths about global Christian persecution," December 10, 2013 FoxNews.com; <http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2013/12/10/five-myths-about-global-christian-persecution/>.
- ⁸² From Quintus Septimus Florens Tertullian's *Apologeticus* (A.D. 197), chapter 50, s. 13. "We multiply whenever we are mown down by you; the blood of Christians is seed." *Plures efficitur, quoties metumur a vobis; semen est sanguis christianorum.*