

WINTER 2017 • ISSUE 6

PROVIDENCE

A JOURNAL OF CHRISTIANITY & AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY



REINHOLD NIEBUHR & THE PROBLEM OF PARADOX

By MARC LiVECCHÉ

THE GREAT WAR & THE DAWN OF THE AMERICAN CENTURY

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WILL CHRISTIANITY SURVIVE IN THE MIDDLE EAST? A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

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ALSO: ROBERT NICHOLSON LOOKS EAST TOWARD THE SYRIAN CRISIS • MARK TOOLEY CONSIDERS CHRISTIANS & EMPIRE • LUBO ONDRASEK PAYS TRIBUTE TO JEAN BETHKE ELSHTAIN • MICHAEL NOVAK IS COMMEMORATED • WAYNE SCHROEDER CALLS CHRISTIANS TO PEACE WORK • THORIN OAKENSHIELD MAKES A DEATHBED CONFESSION • DOUGLAS BURTON REPORTS ON MOSUL • AMITAI ETZIONI PRESCRIBES MORAL TRIAGE • HERMAN MELVILLE REMEMBERS THE BATTLE OF SHILOH • & ALAN DOWD REFLECTS ON AMERICA'S LONG DEFENSE OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

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Portrait of Reinhold Niebuhr by Hannah Strauss, original commission, 2017. A pensive Reinhold Niebuhr considers the scene before him, surrounded by iconic images from the Second World War. While referencing historical events, horrific locations, and the machinery of warfare, these images also suggest the focal points of Niebuhr's internal conflicts as he wrestled with his own theological and ethical conceptual dilemmas. Immediately behind Niebuhr is an amphibious assault, with warfighters disembarking a landing craft and wading toward a shoreline already engaged with the fire, smoke, and din of battle. Above him, bombers swarm in deadly formation. Below are rendered scenes depicting the hated guard towers and dreaded gate of Auschwitz-Birkenau and the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, Japan. Taken together, these scenes begin to describe the reach, the moral and political complexity, and the devastation of human conflict.

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THE KING'S COLLEGE
NEW YORK CITY

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\$28 FOR A YEAR, FOUR ISSUES.
STUDENT RATES AVAILABLE.
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
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ISSN

24713511

WILL CHRISTIANITY SURVIVE IN THE MIDDLE EAST? A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

KENT R. HILL



THE CONTEXT OF GLOBAL CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION

According to the most recent information available from the Pew Research Center, in 2014 “roughly three-quarters of the world’s 7.2 billion people (74 percent) were living in countries with high or very high restrictions or hostilities” involving religion.¹ Although these statistics were modestly better than 2012 and 2013, 2014 showed a “marked increase in the number of countries that experienced

religious-related terrorist activities,” and this was primarily due to Islamic terrorists associated with Boko Haram in West Africa, and al-Qaida and Islamic State (ISIL, ISIS, or Daesh), often in the Middle East.

The number of countries with injuries or deaths from “religion-related terrorism” rose from 51 in 2013 to 60 in 2014. Eighteen of 20 countries in North Africa and the Middle East experienced “religion-related terrorism.” It is also important to note that since 2014 there has been an increase in Islamic terrorism outside North Africa and the Middle East. This is a clear reminder that what happens in the Middle East and North Africa does impact very directly the rest of the world.

Not surprisingly, most victims of religious violence and persecution are Christians and Muslims—the two largest religions; though there has also been a rise of anti-Semitism, including violent anti-Semitic attacks in Europe. The most dangerous places to be a Christian in the world include North Korea, North Africa, the Middle East, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.

Open Doors reports that every month 322 Christians are killed, 214 churches or Christian properties are destroyed, and 772 forms (acts) of violence are committed against Christians.² The great majority of the top fifty countries where Christians face the most persecution are Muslim-majority.³ This represents a very real challenge to Christians, but also to Muslims throughout the world, the majority of whom do not even live in the Middle East (indeed, only 20 percent of the world’s Muslims do).⁴

Though the relationship between Christians and Muslims has frequently been strained through the centuries, it has often been better and more tolerant than in recent decades. In fact, Muslims and Christians have often been capable of living together quite peaceably in the past, which offers hope for the future.

The enormous pressure on persecuted Christians in parts of the Middle East to flee is completely understandable. Yet, it is



Christ Whipped, by Edward Knippers, 1998
Source: all images courtesy of Edward Knippers.

imperative that we understand that a Middle East devoid of Christians and other religious minorities would be a tragedy—a tragedy not only for Christians and others who have lived in the Middle East for centuries, but a tragedy for an outward-looking and tolerant Islam. Thus, it is in everyone's best interests to not lose hope and develop strategies which will promote pluralism and religious freedom. To stay, if at all possible, is what most Middle Eastern Christians want to do and what they feel called by God to do.

CHRISTIANITY IS ANCIENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Some Americans envision the Middle East as a monolithic sea of Arabs and Muslims, and they fail to see the rich pluralism of diverse ethnic and religious communities that have inhabited this region for centuries. Far from being the byproduct of Western colonialism, Christianity in the Middle East has ancient roots that reach back to the first century.

The second Chapter of Acts, which talks about the birth of the Church, tells of the Day of Pentecost, fifty days after the resurrection—the day considered the foundation of the Christian Church when 3,000 believed and were baptized. Among those who are listed as present are the Parthians, Medes, and Elamites—from modern-day Iran and Iraq. We have historical data of this story that goes back to Eusebius in the fourth century, who talks about bishops in this part of the world. There was a converted Jew who was a bishop in Mesopotamia around 100. In fact, there were more Jews living in Mesopotamia in the first century than there were in the Holy Land, and many of them became Christian.⁵ Until about 600, more Christians lived in Mesopotamia than in the entire West put together.⁶ Mesopotamia was not only the center of Christianity but was also a center of missionary activity that extended to Mongolia, China, and India. The languages Christians speak in places like southern India reveal this history. It is Syriac, a language close to what Jesus spoke. Christians in both the East and Mesopotamia today celebrate Mass in Syriac because of this ancient history.⁷

THE PLIGHT OF CHRISTIANS IN THE MIDDLE EAST TODAY

In the global digital age, images splashed across our electronic devices have a profound power to shock, dismay, and move us.

So it was on September 15, 2015, when the world finally awoke to the horror of the greatest refugee crisis since World War II—all because of an indescribably sad image of a lifeless three-year old Syrian boy, Aylan Kurdi, washed up on a Turkish shore. All of a sudden, the tragedy of 60 million refugees worldwide, but particularly those from Syria, began to touch the consciousness of the world. The refugee crisis became real, became personal.

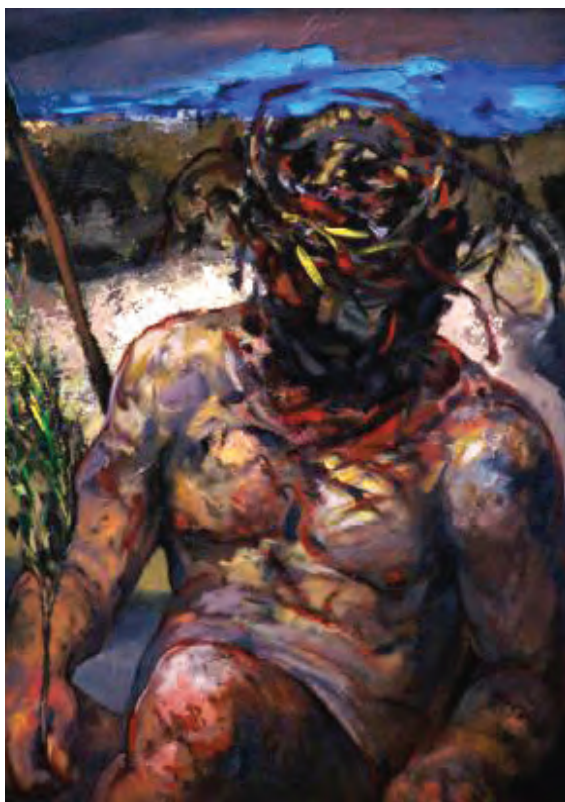
It was exactly eight months to the day earlier in 2015, on February 15, when ISIS released a chilling five-minute video of the brutal execution of 21 mainly Egyptian Coptic Christians. We watched in horror as the kidnapped migrants in orange jump suits, hands tied behind their backs, were led to the shore, forced to kneel, and then beheaded. The genocide of Christians became real, became personal.

Three factors in recent decades are key to understanding the conflict and anarchy in the Middle East which has had such a devastating impact on Christians and other minority religious communities.

First, the rise of radical Islamist thought—something which we dare not forget long precedes the rise of ISIS. Seeds of Islamic extremism can clearly be seen stretching back to the rise of Wahhabism in eighteenth-century Saudi Arabia⁸ and the founding of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in the 1920s.⁹

Second, sectarian violence and anarchy after Saddam Hussein's 2003 overthrow devastated Christian communities in Iraq.

Third, the catastrophic civil war in Syria, which began in 2011 and which has produced between 400,000 and 500,000 casualties,¹⁰ over 4.8 million registered Syrian refugees, and over 6.1 million Internally Displaced



The Mocking of Christ, by Edward Knippers, 2004.

Persons (IDPs).¹¹ Ironically, many refugees from Iraq fled to Syria, and specifically to Aleppo, only to find themselves once again in the midst of chaos and danger.

These three factors have had dramatic impacts on Christian communities throughout the region. The problem has been most acute in Iraq and Syria, but Middle Eastern Christians have also suffered in Turkey, Iran, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, the Gulf States, and North Africa. Of the 30-35 million worldwide Middle Eastern Christians, less than half still live in the Middle East.¹² According to the Pew Research Center, as of 2010 there were approximately 12.7 million Christians living in the Middle East and North Africa, which represented approximately 3.7 percent of the region's population.¹³ Given the turmoil in Iraq since 2003 and the war in Syria since 2011, the number of Christians in the Middle East has certainly declined from that number. Plus, many Christians, even if they are still in the Middle East, have been forced to flee from their homelands as refugees or IDPs.

Beyond Iraq and Syria, specific examples can help illuminate the plight Middle Eastern Christians face:

- In Turkey, which has seen the sharpest decline of Christianity in the Middle East, less than 1 percent of the population of Turkey is now Christian. (At the end of the Ottoman Empire, roughly 3.5 million Armenian, Assyrian, and Greek Christians were massacred.)¹⁴
- In Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Christian decline has been fueled primarily by political and economic reasons, not religious freedom factors. After 80 to 90 years of outflows, Palestinian Christians in this region have gone from 10 percent in 1920 to less than 1 percent today.
- The Christian population in Iran is relatively tiny, perhaps 0.3 percent.
- The largest Christian population in the Middle East is in Egypt, mostly Copts, and they make up 10-15 percent of a population of 89 million.¹⁵ At least there they can talk to the government, even if the government does not always follow through on pledges to be supportive.
- Lebanon has one of the largest concentrations of Christians in a Middle Eastern country. Perhaps 38 percent of the country is Christian,¹⁶ while the Muslim population, roughly divided between Shi'a and Sunni, make up about 61 percent. Alongside the roughly 4-6 million Lebanese, between 1-2 million Sunni refugees from Syria have entered into an already fragile demographic and religious balance. The sooner the Syria crisis is resolved, the sooner refugees can return home. If they do not go home, Lebanon could be destabilized, creating new disasters.
- Jordan has the most positive Muslim leadership towards Christians in the region. King Abdullah has for a long time promoted keeping Christians in the Middle East in order to preserve the region's rich cultural texture. Not everything in Jordan is perfect, but the King is certainly a positive force in the region in the promotion of pluralism and religious freedom.

Examples of Christian persecution in Iraq could fill many pages. Churches have been bombed, and individuals taken for ransom and murdered. ISIS swept into the second biggest city, Mosul, in August 2014. Perhaps 30,000 Christians from Mosul and another 125,000 to 150,000 from the Nineveh Plain were forced to flee, and others were killed.¹⁷

The devastation following Saddam's fall teaches a painful lesson: just removing a bad ruler does not guarantee that a situation will improve. If anarchy and conflict result, then there can be terrible unintended consequences.

It is estimated that there were 1.5 million Christians in Iraq at the time of the US invasion in 2003 (just under 6 percent of population). Prior to the rise of ISIS in 2014, the community had shrunk to less than 500,000, and now that number has probably declined to between 100,000 and 300,000 (less than 1 percent of the current Iraqi population). Many of the latter are IDPs in the Kurdistan Region of northern Iraq (governed by the Kurdistan Regional Government, KRG).¹⁸

Joshua Landis' *Syria Comment* asserts that the percentage of Christians in Syria around 2012, just a year after the civil war began, may only have been 4-6 percent, though frequently 10-12 percent is cited.¹⁹ In the spring of 2016, Antoine Audo, the Chaldean Bishop of Aleppo, reported that Syria's Christian population had dropped from 1.5 million to 500,000.²⁰

As brutal as Assad has been, were Sunni Islamist extremists to overthrow and replace him, the results for Christians and other minorities could be even worse than they face at present.

Aleppo, once a Christian safe haven, became a death trap during Syria's civil war. After Turkey's Christian genocide in the closing years of the Ottoman Empire, many survivors took shelter in Aleppo. The city went from 300 Armenian families to 400,000.²¹ Aleppo had been particularly hard hit by fighting and the persecution by extremists,



Christ Nailed to the Cross, by Edward Knippers, 2000.

resulting in its Christian population plunging from an already reduced 200,000 to 35,000 (down 85 percent), and Syria's third largest Christian community, Homs, had plunged from 40,000 to 2,000 (down 95 percent).²² Syrian Christians are effectively powerless pawns, small enough that no matter who wins or stays in power, they are in trouble.

The Islamist militant group al-Nusra took the northern Syrian city Raqqa in March 2013. The city would become the ISIS capital of Abu



Bakr al-Baghdadi's Caliphate. Of the 200,000 civilians there, 3,000 were Christian. Many fled, and others were taken captive or executed. Stories emerged about how in the city square crosses were erected and Christian victims, perhaps already dead, were hung crucifixion-style. A UN fact-finding mission reported children were "killed or publicly executed, crucified, beheaded, and stoned to death." Girls as young as 12 were seized and sexually brutalized.²³ Bishop Audo has confirmed that young children have been

beheaded and dismembered in Christian villages.²⁴

WHY ISLAM & THE WORLD NEEDS A CHRISTIAN PRESENCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Why does it matter that Christians stay in the Middle East? Some say it is so horrendous there now, particularly in Iraq and Syria, that Western Christians should arrange jumbo jets to airlift the remaining Christians out. It would seem the humane thing to do. The



Descent From the Cross, by Edward Knippers, 1998.

problem is this: removing the presence of Jews, Christians, Yezidis, and other minorities from the Middle East would destroy the region's rich culture. This impoverishes the dominant culture, and the sad truth is that societies which cannot tolerate diversity within their own backyard inevitably become a threat to their neighbors as well.

AN EVER-PRESENT QUESTION

In *From the Holy Mountain: A Journey in the Shadow of Byzantium*, William Dalrymple retells his journey through the Middle East, including Turkey, Lebanon, Egypt, and Syria. He was following in the footsteps of John Moschos, a monk who in 578 left a monastery near Bethlehem. Fourteen centuries ago, this monk wondered whether Christians could survive in the region. He asked the same

question we ask today, but, then anyway, Christianity did, in fact, continue to be an important presence in the Middle East.

Before Moschos' day, few could have predicted that Christians would have survived their persecution to become ascendant in the Roman Empire. And yet, no sooner had the Christians become ascendant than the German "barbarians" emerged as a lethal threat. Not surprisingly, Christians of that day were tempted to despair, to wonder where the Providence of God was amidst this threatened descent of "Christian" Rome into pagan hands. It was during this time that Augustine was writing his classic testimony to faith, *City of God*. Of course, we now know the rest of the story: the Germanic tribes were converted, and Christianity survived and thrived throughout the so-called "dark ages."

Then two centuries later John Moschos goes on his journey, finds Christians once again under siege, this time by the Persians, who were attacking Jerusalem and Bethlehem. All of this occurred before Islam even emerged as a powerful new religion and power, and then proceeded to conquer the region.

In other words, this is indeed a very old story, filled with many ups and downs for the Christians of the Middle East. And once again, during this past century, and particularly these last decades, the threats to Christians in the Middle East seem particularly ominous.

WHAT CAN WE DO IN THE WEST TO BE OF HELP?

What, in the midst of all this, can the West do? Christians and non-Christians alike need to first understand that keeping a multi-faith, multiethnic, diverse Middle East is in the best interests of the minorities, but also of the region and, in fact, of all of us. For Christians and non-Christians alike, there are very negative consequences for the Middle East and the world if historic minorities such as Christians are purged from the landscape.

Several years of research by the Religious Freedom Project at Georgetown University has documented that whenever religious freedom exists in a society, there are multiple ways in which that society prospers. Taking this knowledge of the value of religious freedom and communicating it to governments is the task of the newly created and independent Religious Freedom Institute in D.C. It is a message that needs now to be heard in both the democratic West and in the boiling cauldron of anarchy and conflict that is the Middle East.

Below are several specific suggestions for how the West can address the tragic problems which threaten the very survival of Christians and other religious communities in the Middle East.

First, we must not succumb to the understandable temptation to despair and give up, as if nothing we can do will

make a difference. The narrative sometimes can be heard that we have miscalculated before with our interventions, have triggered unintended consequences, and therefore, we should learn from our mistakes and do nothing. However, unintended consequences should not teach us to never act, but rather to act more intelligently and carefully. To succumb to an “isolationist” conclusion is an escape from responsibility. We must resist the temptation to believe there is no hope in the Middle East or elsewhere, that there is nothing we can do which can help or make the situation better. Doing nothing is not an option, but rather a dereliction of duty.

Second, though the use of force against ISIS is not all that will be required, it will almost certainly be an important initial part of what is required. In this case, Christian Just War theory does justify using force as appropriate. It won't be enough to solve the problem completely, but it is part of a solution. But we must also transform hearts and minds as well. Intolerance and a failure to appreciate the value of pluralism and religious freedom is a problem of cultures and societies, not just of governments and religious extremists.

Third, both individuals and nations should respond to the very tangible needs of refugees and IDPs. There is much more we can and should do. We may not be able to save all children, but that is no excuse for not saving those we can.

Fourth, the bipartisan “Iraq and Syria Genocide Relief and Accountability Act of 2016” (HR 5961) should be supported. Congresspersons, who are trying to do their best to help, need citizens' support so that resolutions like this can pass.

Fifth, the US must work with Iraq to create necessary political and societal conditions which will allow Christian IDPs and other religious communities to return to the Nineveh Plain and live in peace and security. We must accept that there is no quick fix. There can be a successful military campaign to retake Mosul,



The Second Coming, by Edward Knippers, 1998.

but creating a culture in Iraq, Syria, and elsewhere in the Middle East that ensures safety for pluralism and religious freedom is a multi-decade process. We must look at what it will take to accomplish this task, and then commit ourselves to what will be required to accomplish it. There are no short-cuts to the hard work of nurturing the values and institutions which can support democracy with minority rights, including a robust guarantee of religious freedom.

A positive future depends on the conviction that the good of both majorities and

minorities alike is advanced when religious freedom is nurtured and guaranteed. We must become much more adept at making the empirical case that this is so.

Sixth, while securing the survival of Christianity in the Middle East, it is imperative that we not just attend to the acute crises which now engulf Syria and Iraq. While the fighting there must come to an end and new political and societal environments be fostered which enable religious freedom, we should not be so focused on Iraq and Syria that other parts of the



Middle East are ignored. Places like Lebanon, Egypt, and Jordan should also be areas of concern. Where diversity exists, political and economic stability should be enhanced, as well as democracy, human rights, and religious freedom. In short, where there is at least some health, we must ensure even greater health, and do the hard work of immunizing to the fullest extent possible such settings from extremist threats by focusing on school curriculum, civil society enhancement, inter-religious dialogue and collaboration, and positive use of social media.

Seventh, we should learn from history. Crucial lessons need to be absorbed both in terms of what mistakes to avoid, but also as a means to remember that the present is not a necessary predictor of the future.

Eighth, the United States should work with practicing and devout Muslims who oppose ISIS and al-Qaida. Some say working with Muslims to defeat and marginalize extremist Islam is hopeless. But there is hope, as demonstrated by an open letter to Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, self-proclaimed caliph of the Islamic State, signed by well over 100 global Muslim leaders. Most of the signatories are from places like Egypt, Yemen, Iraq, and Syria. This letter is a carefully-crafted theological treatise, 16 pages long, which absolutely rejects the Islamic State's central tenets. According to these Muslim leaders, in Islam: it is forbidden to kill the innocent; it is forbidden to kill emissaries, ambassadors, diplomats, journalists, and aid workers; it is forbidden to harm or mistreat in any way Christians (they go on to say it's inappropriate to harm or mistreat Yazidis); it is forbidden to force people to convert; it is forbidden to deny women their rights; it is it forbidden to torture; it is forbidden to disfigure the dead; it is forbidden to attribute evil acts to God. Now, more than treatises like this are needed. It is imperative that Muslims find within their own tradition the means to excise violent understandings and interpretations of Islam that are so dangerous to the whole world and to Islam itself.

Another example of Muslim leaders strongly criticizing Islamic extremism occurred in late January 2016, when over 200 Muslims from 120 countries signed the Marrakesh Declaration, which calls for the protection of minorities in Muslim countries.²⁵

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

The purpose of this recital of history, some of it ancient, some of it all too recent, has been to affirm three key points.

First, Christianity has always been in danger in the Middle East, and elsewhere for that matter. It exists within the “ebb and flow” of history.

Second, this history reminds us that the hostility which exists between Christianity and a particularly fundamentalist and violent understanding of Islam is a sad and very painful fact at this point in history, but it should not blind us to the fact that Christians and Muslims have often lived and worked side by side together through the centuries. The relationship has been far from perfect, but there is no reason that this relationship cannot be better in the future than it has been in the past, though it will be necessary for intolerant Muslim extremists to be defeated both on the battlefield and in the ideological swamp in which they have thrived.

Third, the Church has and always will always survive, and it always will be victorious in the long-run over persecution. Being victorious, however, does not mean that death and suffering will be escaped in the short-term. For believing Christians, death, however, is never the end which the world thinks it is, which is why the symbol of the cross and crucifix is so powerful for Christians.

We are astounded at the senseless cruelty and inhumanity of 21 Christian migrants being brutally murdered on the shores of the Mediterranean in Libya. But we are even more astounded by what happened a week later when a brother of two of those victims gave an interview that was broadcasted throughout the Middle East. He not only forgave his brothers’ executioners, but he thanked the Islamic State for allowing his brothers’ final profession of faith to be broadcast. Within hours, 100,000 people on Facebook had watched that story of forgiveness.

In the New Testament and in the chronicles of Christian history, a consistent theme exists: if the followers of Jesus are faithful, even while persecuted, God will use their suffering to advance the coming of His Kingdom. The apparent defeat of “Good Friday” can indeed be followed by the victory of “Resurrection

Sunday.” Just as Saul of Tarsus, who went to Damascus to persecute Christians, became a Christian and martyr, similar miracles do and will happen again. For Christians, there are profound lessons to be learned from both Scripture and church history.

Mindy Belz’s fine book *They Say We Are Infidels: On the Run from ISIS with Persecuted Christians in the Middle East* illustrates many of these lessons. Despite the horrors, she recounts courage and joyful witness to Christian truth, such as that of Bishop Antoine Audo of Aleppo, head of the Chaldean Church in Syria. He has borne eloquent witness to his deep faith as to what the continuing presence of Christians means in the Middle East storm of violence and danger:

[T]his is the church of Mesopotamia now for two thousand years. The call is to continue with a presence to give a taste of faith to Kurdish and Arabic peoples, and others. So, I am doing my duty as a witness—praying, attending to the Eucharist, showing the presence of the Lord, and serving him with joy.²⁶

Similarly, the head monk of Mar Matti, a fourth-century monastery just 12 miles from Mosul, has insisted that as long as there are Christians in Iraq, “a shepherd cannot leave his sheep.”²⁷

So, while we are obligated to do all we can to provide refuge to all who are compelled to abandon their homes and become refugees or IDPs, we must also protect as best we can all those who remain in harm’s way. We must do the tedious, hard, and decades-long work of building conditions which promote tolerance and stability. We also have an obligation to bear witness to the faithfulness and joy of those who are persecuted, whose fidelity to the faith does not occasion despair but, by the grace of God, faithful witness. Scripture rejects resignation, and instead enjoins us to:

Rescue those who are being taken away to death; hold back those who are stumbling to the slaughter. If you say, “Behold, we did not know this,” does not he who weighs the heart perceive it?²⁸

Finally, we must not give up hope. Surely, there have been times when we have all been tempted to despair, and yet, history and our faith teach us that despair and hopelessness are not Christian virtues. Dry bones do live again. The Cross reminds us that what seems to be the end may well be just a necessary path to Resurrection Sunday.

Despite this very dark time, Christians will almost certainly survive, and God willing, one day thrive again in the home of their ancient faith. P

Kent R. Hill is the executive director of the Religious Freedom Institute.

Edward Knippers is a nationally exhibited artist known as a figurative painter of biblical subjects. We are grateful that his art illustrates the text of the memorial lecture held in honor of his late wife. To see more of Ed's extraordinary exploration of the Christian faith through artistic creation, visit: www.edwardknippers.com.

(Endnotes)

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- 8 According to Christopher Blanchard, "The Islamic Traditions of Wahhabism and Salafia," *Congressional Research Service Report*, January 24, 2008, "Wahhabism is a puritanical form of Sunni Islam... The word 'Wahhabi' is derived from the name of a Muslim scholar, Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab, who lived in the Arabian peninsula during the eighteenth century (1703-1791). Today, the term 'Wahhabism' is broadly applied outside of the Arabian peninsula to refer to a Sunni Islamic movement that seeks to purify Islam of any innovations or practices that deviate from the seventh-century teachings of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions." Page 1. Ibn Taymiyah (1263-1328) was influential on the thought of al-Wahhab. "What is Wahhabism? The Reactionary Branch of Islam said to be 'the Main Source of Global Terrorism,'" *Telegraph*, March 29, 2016.
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- 10 The Syrian Center for Policy Research reported in February 2016 that at least 470,000 Syrians had died as a result of the war. Anne Barnard, "Death Toll from War Now 470,000, Group Finds," *New York Times*, February 11, 2016.

- UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura on April 22, 2016, estimated 400,000 deaths in the conflict in Syria, http://www.unmultimedia.org/radio/english/2016/04/syria-envoy-claims-400000-have-died-in-syria-conflict/#.V_GoG5MrLox
- 11 The 6.1 million IDP number is as of September 2016, according to OCHA (the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), <http://www.unocha.org/syria>. (Actually, the same source also lists 6.5 million IDPs; we also know that many refugees are not registered, such as in Lebanon.) Here are the locations of the registered refugees: Turkey: 2,733,655; Lebanon: 1,033,513 (but the total number of refugees, since many are not registered, may be 1.5 million or more); Jordan: 656,400; Iraq: 239,008; and Egypt: 114,911.
- 12 O'Mahoney, Anthony and John Flannery eds., *The Catholic Church in the Contemporary Middle East* (London: Melisende, 2010), p. 7. Cited in "Hope for the Middle East," p. 7. See footnote 19 for full citation.
- 13 Pew Research Center. *The Future of World Religious Population Growth, 2010-50, Middle East-North Africa*, April 2, 2015, pewforum.org. 93% of the population in the Middle East and North Africa is Muslim and 1.6% Jewish. The vast majority of Jews are living in Israel.
- 14 Israel Charney, "Notes on the Genocides of Christian Populations of the Ottoman Empire," presented to the membership of the International Association of Genocide Scholars, 2007, http://www.genocidetext.net/iags_resolution_supporting_documentation.htm. The Turkish government would claim that those they killed were allied with their enemies in World War I, and thus it was not genocide.
- 15 United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF): *2016 Annual Report*, p. 91, uscirf.gov.
- 16 Estimate of 38.3% is for 2010. Pew Research Center. "Table: Christian Populations as Percentages of Total Population by Country," December 19, 2011, pewforum.org. According to the Pew Research Center, about 58% of the population of Eritrea is Christian, overwhelmingly Orthodox. Though religion is very controlled here for the four registered religions, and banned for the rest, Eritrea is not nearly as strategic in the discussion of the Middle East as is Lebanon, and thus I will not deal with Eritrea in this paper. For further information on Eritrea, see *2016 Annual Report*, USCIRF, pp. 39-42.
- 17 Belz, p. 265. According to *2016 Annual Report*, USCIRF, the Iraq Defense Minister, Khaled-al-Obeidi reported that ISIS killed 2,000, mainly in the Nineveh Plain, and forced approximately 125,000 Christians to flee, mainly to the Kurdistan Regional Government, p. 101.
- 18 "Hope for the Middle East: Impact and Significance of the Christian Presence in Syria and Iraq during the Current Crisis," February 2016, p. 9, opendoorsuk.org. A publication produced by Open Doors, Served, Middle East Concern, and the University of East London. I have lowered the number of Christians remaining in Iraq from 500,000 to an upper estimate of 300,000 to take into account the recent continued flow of emigres out of Iraq.
- 19 Ehsani [George Saghir], "Fewer Christians Live in Aleppo Than Previously Thought," *Syria Comment*, Center for Middle East Studies, University of Oklahoma, <http://www.joshualandis.com/blog/the-poor-plight-of-the-christian-minority-in-Aleppo-syria-by-ehsani/>.
- 20 "Syria – 66% of Syrian Christians Gone, Chaldean Catholic Bishop Says," Aid to the Church in Need, April 13, 2016, acnmalta.org.
- 21 Belz, *They Say We Are Infidels*, 159.
- 22 Aid to the Church in Need, April 13, 2016, <http://www.acnmalta.org/syria-66-of-syrian-christians-gone-chaldean-catholic-bishop-says-acn-malta/>
- 23 Belz, pp. 198-99.
- 24 Belz, p. 201.
- 25 See the "Executive Summary of the Marrakesh Declaration on the Rights of Religious Minorities in Predominantly Muslim Majority Communities," Institute for Islamic, Christian, and Jewish Studies, January 25-27, 2016, icjs.org.
- 26 Cited in Belz, p. 165.
- 27 Cited in Belz, p. 266.
- 28 Proverbs 24:12



DOMINION /də'minyən (IS NOT)
DOMINATION /dəmə'nāSH(ə)n/

“Let us make mankind in our image; and let them have dominion over all the earth...” Called to share the Divine likeness, human beings were made to exercise rule in the form of dominion: delegated, providential care—responsibility—for the conditions of history, in history. Such care is characterized by other-centered acts of self-donation. This contrasts sharply with domination. Since the Fall in the Garden of Eden, human beings have been afflicted by the *libido dominandi*—we have been ruled by the lust to rule. Domination is characterized by self-centered acts of other-donation that feed our hunger for power, advantage, and glory through the forced submission of the powerless to our will.

The political-theological patrimony of the Christian intellectual tradition, including just war casuistry, helps guide human beings back to the just exercise of our governing vocation. In our private and public lives, including through the work of government, human dominion is approximate, limited, and imperfect. Following after God’s work of creating, sustaining, and liberating all of creation, human beings exercise power with the aim of peace, characterized by the presence of justice and order as oriented toward genuine human flourishing.
