Reporting in 2018

How to Make Sure Your Hard Work Actually Gets Read

What we'll cover:

Most maxims of reporting have stood the test of time, including the quintessential "If your mother tells she loves you, check it out. Two sources!"

But in today's world of Facebook newsfeeds and "fake news," how you arrange and package your reported material matters more than ever if you want time-starved and information-saturated readers to actually read what you've uncovered.

CT's Jeremy Weber shares his top lessons learned from 10 years of producing award-winning news coverage, including how he successfully made the jump from print to online reporting and how you can too.





Bio

Jeremy Weber is deputy managing editor at Christianity Today, where he manages a team of journalists producing international religion news focused on evangelical/Protestant Christianity for a monthly magazine and daily website serving Christian thought leaders. An award-winning journalist based in Chicago, Jeremy has recently reported from India, Lebanon, Iraq, Cuba, and South Sudan, among other countries, and recently returned from Nigeria and Vietnam. He graduated from Wheaton College (IL), and has worked at CT for 10 years. He and his wife Carolin were avid Argentine tango dancers until their son Mateo arrived in August 2016. Their daughter Yara joined them in July 2018.







Higher Goals in Christian Journalism

Reporting

First Place

Outpacing Persecution

Christianity Today

Jeremy Weber



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The Elkhart Truth

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Jeremy Weber May 29, 2004

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Stony Has READERS THAN IT DESERVES







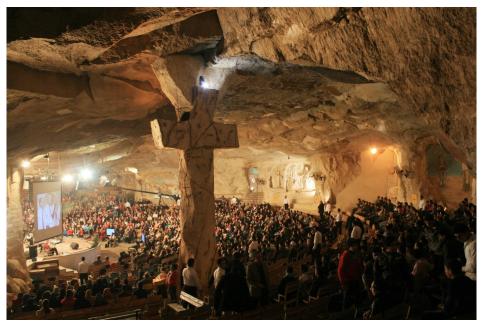












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The Christian Case for Not Giving Up on the World's Most Fragile State



Special Report: Will Success Spoil Cuba's Revival?



Image: Antonio Masiello / NurPhoto / Corbis

Hope on the Refugee Highway: A Special Report on Christians in Iraq and Greece





Image: Jon Warren / Courtesy of World Vision

Grapes of Wrath: Refugees Face Steinbeck Scenario in Lebanon's Napa Valley



Incredible Indian Christianity: A Special Report on the World's Most Vibrant Christward Movement













INTERNATIONAL

Forgiveness: Muslims Moved as Coptic Christians Do the Unimaginable

Amid ISIS attacks, faithful response inspires Egyptian society.

JAYSON CASPER IN CAIRO APRIL 20, 2017 6:00 AM



Image: MOHAMED EL-SHAHED / AFP

Coffins are carried to the funeral of Egyptian Christians killed in Palm Sunday bombings.

Case Study: Reporting the Refuge Highway













ust beyond the still-under-construction ring road on the outer edge of Erbil, a group interview turns into a mutiny.

"You already understand why we are here," says one of the IS displaced Christians and Muslims who have gathered at a World Vision food distribution site in the capital of Iraq's autonomous Kurdish region. "Everyone in America should know about our crisis by now: ISIS."

This group is weary of telling NGOs and journalists why they fled their homes, and how hard and fragile life is among Erbil's abandoned buildings.

They are especially weary because this will be their second winter of displacement. Meanwhile, tood aid has decreased from \$25 to \$16 to now \$10 per month. Most refuse to give interviews, despite the fact that their stories could spur Westerners to send more aid. If their current visitors are not there to increase food vouchers, then, they say, everyone is wasting their time.

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The world now has more displaced people than during World War II. Beyond Europe, another 2.5 million refugees are

n Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey, while 4.5 nillion people remain displaced within Syria and Iraq, where ISIS is most active.

As winter approached. Christianity Today traveled to Iraq and Greece to witness how Christian leaders are working along the "refugee highway" that now stretches from the Middle East to Europe and North America. The situation is so complicated, and the risks so high, that leaders are torn between two aid strategies should they help Christians and other minorities stay in their historic homelands, or should they help them journey to safer Western democracies?

But Kurdish and Greek evangelical leaders agree on one thing: hope remains, because they see God at work all along the highway.

'THANK YOU, ISIS'

From his front steps, Hadi Ali has a great view of the winding ravine where many flock during Nowruz (a New Year celebration) to vacation and picnic alongside the river that descends from Lake Dulan, one of the largest lakes in Kurdistan. But Ali wishes he still lived 300 miles from here. He is one of hundreds of internally displaced persons now living in a jumble of unfinished homes on the slopes of the rugged red mountains that tower above the river.

In the shadow of a pale yellow mosque that sits atop the hillside community, Ali, 43, slorts pomegranate skins as he climbs the steps of an unfinished, concrete building. He has lived here with his family of 9 for the past 15 months. His wife and children, ranging from ages 5 to 18, fled from south of Baghdad after they were threatened at gunpoint.

"They took our homes and our money," he tells CT. "Everything is gone. We don't know when we will go back."

Ali, once a school bus driver, sold his bus to relocate his family. Now he's a day laborer, working on the three-story building next door that is even more unfinished than his own temporary dwelling. "I always think of going back home once peace comes. I wish it were tomorrow. But we don't know the future. I am waiting for God."

The crisis has gone on for longer than anybody anticipated—nearly five years now for many families. Almost all of the displaced women whom CT interviewed



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HADI ALI, FATHER, NOW IN KURDISTAN



across eight refugee camps have given birth to children since fleeing.

"We support each other," says the chief of Garmawa, a 250-year-old Christian town only 40 minutes from Mosul. Ever since 1SIS seized Iraq's second-largestity in June 2014, the nearby town of 70 families has shared its land with about 500 mostly Muslim families." It is part of our faith that we host them," says the chief. However, Garmawa residents expected to play host for two months. "This is the second winter," he says. "We did not dream of this."

Christians have faced significant and well-publicized persecution (notably in Mosul and other Nineveh Plains cities). Christian leaders told CT that other minorities such as the Yazidis, an ancient religious group, have suffered even worse. Thus, many churches are aiding more non-Christians than fellow believers.

In a UN camp in Khanke, seven Yazidi children tussle over the UNICEF-issued teal backpack found in almost every refugee dwelling and arrange its contents on the floor. It holds not school supplies but photos of their deceased older sister, Almas, killed when ISIS came to their hometown of Sinjar Their four-month-old sister. born in this room of concrete walls and a tarp roof, is named in her honor. Their mother, Wadkha, says the memory makes it to opainful to return to Sinjar, which was liberated from ISIS while CT was in Iraq. "When I make bread, I think of my daughter and weep."

Many refugees no longer hope to return home. "The Christians are tired here," says Ashty Alisha, chairman of the Evangelical Alliance in Kurdistan. At his



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most recent church service, a member explained how he plans to leave with his family because they have no money for rent or food; all they have is the memory of their son killed by ISIS. Alisha says, "I am not encouraging people to go. But I can't tell people to stay."

Father Daniel is more blunt. "The Middle East is lost for Christians," says the 25 year-old priest at Mar Elia Church, which hosts 570 displaced believers on its triangular compound in Ankawa, Erbil's Christian district. Hejust finished leading a service in Aramaic, Mar Elia is one of the few churches that preserve the language jesus spoke. But Daniel says he would be fine! fon eday he had no flock to shepherd because they had all left for Europe or the United States.

"We should consider the lives and souls of these people," he says. "It's not just about the Christian history here. We don't want them to live as victims." A newlywed resident of the camp concurs: "This is truly a holy land here for us. But it is no longer a heartland."

By contrast, Abu Karam is likely one of the only displaced Iraqi Christians to ever turn down a visa to the West. The 66-year-old Mosul pastor became a UN refugee in Jordan and obtained a visa to Canada. But then, he says, God told him in a vision to go back to Iraq and serve the church. He declined the visa and returned to Mosul until ISIS arrived.

At the Christian and Missionary Alliance church in Ankawa, Karam now serves displaced Christians from a range of historic and newer denominations. He encourages them all to stay in Iraq. "Jesus tells us it wort be easy to continue our religion. But he says, "No matter what happens to you, I win, so you will win," says Karam. "Ever since the third century, this has been our Christianity: one of suffering. If we live an easy life, what is our message?"

Notable efforts to help Christians stay include an evangelical church that rents a five-story building in Erbil for 170 people displaced from Qaraqosh. Ho Aladean archibishop of Erbil, Bashar Warda, is trying to build a new Catholic university, (He explains: "How will they stay unless we show them that we are going to stay?") On the "go" side, a group from Slovakia—visiting Mar Elli at the





same time as CT-brokered a deal to relocate 149 Christians to their Eastern European nation by Christmas.

"It is not a zero-sum game of stay or go. We can help people stay safer and go safer," says Jeremy Courtney, director of the Iraq-based Preemptive Love Coalition. "But if we are serious about helping Christians stay, we have to love Muslims more than we hate and fear Islam. We do bad for Christians if we don't do good for their neighbors."

One of the silver linings of the crisis is that most of Irag's evangelical churches are now overflowing with displaced Christians. They more than make up for the families that emigrated to the West after the United States invade Iraq 12 years ago. "God is using ISIS to

shake the church," says a leader in Erbil who requested anonymity. "Christians who were nominal are now saying, 'We need to be the church."

crisis presents an unprecedented opportunity for evangelism, "I've been here 20 years and shared the gospel with two people; one accepted, one did not," said a long-term missionary from Egypt who also requested anonymity. "These days, we can reach 2,000 people in one day. This is the time to be here, otherwise we'll lose the opportunity. I've heard many people say, 'Thank you, ISIS,' because they lost everything but have new life in Jesus." As many churches have become de

Likewise, many pastors told CT the

facto refugee camps, cramming as many Christian families onto their properties as possible, the mixing of different denominations has produced what Pope Francis terms an "ecumenism of blood."

"Before ISIS came, we were divided. We thought we were the best Christians, and we could do everything on our own," says Daniel. "God does things for a purpose.

We should consider the lives and souls of these people. It's not just about the Christian history here. We don't want them to live as victims.'

FATHER DANIEL, PRIEST, ERBIL

He combined the churches together to handle the situation as one hand.

"Unfortunately, it was ISIS that united us. We can send a message to all the Christians around the world: Don't wait for bad things to unite you; unite now, under the name of Jesus Christ."

On CT's last day in Iraq, global sentiment

toward refugees began shifting dramat-

PARALYZED BY PARIS

ically. Coordinated ISIS attacks killed 130 in Paris. Soon, the main emblem of the refugee crisis-the small body of a drowned Syrian three-year-old on a beach-was replaced by the specter of sleeper terrorists. More than hal of US governors announced bans or fugee resettlement in their states Polls suggested that many evangelicals supported the bans; only one-third of hite evangelical Protestants told th Pew Research Center they favored th nited States accepting more refugees and that was prior to Paris. After th acks, LifeWay Research found tha 18 percent of self-identified evangelic astors agreed there was "a sense o

fear" within their congregation about efugees coming to America.

But a month after Paris, one prominent gathering told a different story about evangelical attitudes. On the campus of Wheaton College, more than 120 leaders representing major denominations and ministries gathered to discuss how US churches could best apply the Great Commandment and the Great Commission to the situation, and not repeat the mistakes of what speakers labeled a tardy response to the HIV/AIDS crisis.

Conference organizers had expected only one-fourth as many people to come, but the room overflowed. There, leaders





took turns addressing the crowd. Wheaton president Philip Ryken said it was "hard to imagine a more important topic to be talking about a compassionate, Christ-centered response to right now." Southern Baptist International Mission Board president David Platt used Bible passages to exhort evangelicals to "act justly, love sacrificially, and hope confidently," given that God remains sovereign over the refugee crisis.

World Vision president Richard Stearns explained how, if the crisis were taking place proportionally in the States, "everyone west of Ohio would have to flee their homes." He described feeling "ashamed by the hateful rhetoric" from politicians, media, and some church leaders. "They've taken this terrible tragedy and somehow made it about us," he said, "We have an opportunity on the world stage to show what we stand for: not fear, but grace,"

World Relief president Stephan Bauman said that while "this is a time of lament" as refugee resettlement groups receive criticism, his ministry has seen "more volunteers coming out from churches to help than ever" in its 35 years. "Not all Americans will be in favor," he said. "But as they understand that facts are our friends, and theology is a mandate, more will see we don't have to have security and compassion be mutually exclusive." (Two-thirds of evangelical pastors told

ifeWay they agree.)

Prior to Paris, three-quarters of self-identified "committed Christian in America said they were willing to he Syrian refugees, according to an Ips

nly 44 percent had already done so.

Of the one-quarter of committed Chris ans who were not willing to help, 34 ercent said it was because they feared at refugees were potential terrorists hile 24 percent felt the problem was o big for them to make a difference.

Such findings were corroborated at Wheaton, where leaders took a straw poll to identify the main obstacles to mobilizing American evangelicals on refugee care. Only one word received a unanimous vote: fear. Church leaders agreed that they needed better information to circulate in better ways.

Few evangelical churches are currently aring for refugees internationally (18% locally (8%). Another 8 percent desir get involved. But more than two-third f churches have not discussed it.

LifeWay also found that only 1 in 3 evangelical pastors have addresse e refugee crisis from the pulpit. rior survey found that only 2 percer f evangelicals get their informati n international migration to Amer om their local church, while 12 perce ted the Bible. The two combined wer wer than those who rely on the media.

"Most evangelical Christians are not thinking as Christians on the issue," said Matthew Soerens. World Relief's church training specialist, "Most see newcomers as a threat or a burden. Only 4 in 10 see a gospel opportunity."

"We are being countercultural," said convener Ed Stetzer, director of LifeWay Research, "The mood of many of our constituents is against refugees. But when we respond in an environment of fear with faith, we win an audience for the gospel."

GIVING AS MUCH AS THEY CAN

fore than 80 percent of refugees enter grope by crossing the Aggean Sea fron urkey into Greece, due to its many is inds (like Lesbos) and thus pourou rder, Most pass through Athens en oute to Germany, Sweden, and other

Greek evangelicals were actually leading refugee ministries decades before little Alan Kurdi-dressed in red T-shirt, blue shorts, and Velcro eakers-washed up on a Turkish beach nd galvanized the world's attention on Syria and Iraq. And they remain at the forefront, even as their own nation eathers a 25 percent unemploymen ate and a debt crisis that nearly brough own the Eurozone

At a coffee shop in Athens, a family clasps their cups at a high street-side table while their three-year-old son plays with a vellow toy crane among a pile of backpacks. He is bundled up for the cold. but he also wears a blue life jacket. His younger sister wears a red one.

Here on the blocks around Piraeus. the main port of Athens, refugees who urvived the dangerous crossing from urkey to Lesbos (more than 800 drowne

2015) outnumber Greeks 4 to 1. Dozens walk past closed shops to board a white double-decker bus bearing a Greek Islands ad of two smiling children lounging on a sunny beach. A blue bus soon pulls up. followed by a vellow one as the white bus prepares to depart.

It is likely headed to Victoria Square, a plaza lined with restaurant patios and trees decked with strands of gold Christmas





lights. As the sun sets on Saturday night. Almost 50 people wait in line at a food truck. But this is no gourmet hipster meal. They are all refugees, waiting here for the buses that will lake them to Greece's northern border with Macedonia, then on through the Balkans to Germany. The truck belongs to Plision, a ministry where Greek evangelicals unite with other groups to offer aid. Tonight it is passing out 500 black bowls filled with beef, rice, and beans made by church volunteers.

Shortly after, Plision's leader, Christos Nakis, sits at the plastic-covered Communion table of his charismatic church, fittingly located next to Athens's central market where rows of vendors sell produce and meat. He explains how 10 teams from evangelical churches help feed about 1,700 migrants a day across Athens's three refusee camps

One month ago, leaders of all of Greece's evangelical churches gathered with Natistia or gare to help non-Christians and Christians allie. "We think our mission as people of God is to help everybody the same. After all, God sends rain the same on the good and the bad," says Nakis, referring to Matthew 545.

"The refugee crisis is both new and not new," says Giotis Kantartzis, senior pastor of one of Greece's largest evangelical churches. "Greece has been receiving refugees for a long time. What is different is the intensity of it."

What was once 3,000 migrants per week has become 3,000 per day. So the Greek Evangelical Alliance gathered all the churches and ministries that represent the officially Orthodox nation's 40,000 evangelicals.

"For the very first time in our history, we were able to sit down and coordinate our efforts," says Kantartzis. "Some wanted to do evangelism and give out Bibles. Others said, 'No, let's just have a Christian aroma.' [This collaboration] is a new thinp. And it is a good thine."

CT rides along as a church volunteer transports dinner to Galatsi Hall, snee the Olympic stadium where Greece hosted the Summer Games in 2004. It lay in modern ruins until the government made it the largest refugee camp in late 2015.

Most Galatsi refugees are from Af ghanistan. They spend a few days waiting for money from relatives in the West to arrive before continuing on. Most Syrian and Iraqis, including the Christians, have enough money to pass through Athen the same day, leaders explain.

Moinos Eleftheriou, 53, is tall with a mop of wiry hair and the energy to match in his role as camp leader Galasti provides food, bedding, clothing, medical supplies, English lessons, art therapy—even a "goodbye goodle bag" for those going farther up and farther into Europe once



'We have the first opportunity to engage these people with the best elements of our faith and our culture. And the most important thing is exposing them to a healthy and authentic version of Christianity.'

FOTIS ROMEOS, GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE GREEK EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE, ATHENS



they obtain a bus ticket out of Athens. "We have to help them," says Eleftheriou. They are our neighbors. They are not animals; they are human beings." The cavernous rooms that hosted the world's best gymnasts and table tennis players now house mostly Afghani women and children clustered on blankets. A lucky few have camonic tents for orivacy.

"We give them as much as we can," explains Eleftheriou. The parting gift is a grocery bag full of "things they like"; juice, milk, biscuits, honey, tunn fish, toilet paper. The facility even has an elderly woman pushing a shopping cart around giving out sweets. "We do the small things to make them smile."

Just 45 days old, the camp has already hosted 10,000 refugees. One main wall showcases the drawings of the 3,000 Afghani children who have passed through Galatsi. "Some of them are very sad. We don't put those here," says Eleftheriou. Back in his office, he pulls out a drawing

> of a girl's family in a boat. Overhead, the sun is shedding tears. Earlier, walking through the middle of the gymnastics hall turned dormitory, a woman in a black robe and pink headscarf stood up from her family's three blankets and half bowed as he passed. Her two-year-old daughter, as well as her sister and seven-year-old niece, drowned when her family crossed the sea. When he first

asked what the family needed, the mother replied tearfully, "The only thing I need is a stone with my daughter's name on it for the graveyard." Eleftheriou told her, "I will do this for you."

Greek evangelicals recognize that, living in one of the world's most "Christian" countries (legally and culturally), they are the first believers many refugees from Afghanistan and other Muslim-majority nations encounter. "I can't show them a film of Jesswi 'life," one leader told CT. "But bit by bit, it will all happen." (As a Plision driver puts it. "If they see Jesus in our face, it is enough.") A child's poem on the Galatsi wall of drawings suggests success." I was in I ran. I saw a lot of Muslims but I didn't see [godly people]. When I came to Greece, I saw a lot of non-Muslims. But I saw [godly neonle!"

On the question of whether Christian refugees should remain in the Middle East or leave for the West, Kantartzis quickly shoots down the question as not worth pondering. (This is noteworthy, given an Athens tourism campaign coins the term "philosofa" for 'the Athenian habit of lounging around and philosophizing.") "It's the wrong question. These people came; they left already," he said. "The question is a kind of avoidance; an alibi to dodge the responsibility in front of us.

"It is a wakeup call," he says. "Are we ready as the church to show who we are and what we believe?"

ARAB SPRING FROM ABOVE

Surveying Athens from its tallest peak, Fotis Romeos, general secretary of the Greek Evangelical Alliance, gestures to the New Testament sites nestled among the modern below. He believes American evangelicals can learn from their brothers and sisters at one of the world's major crossrands.

"Refugee ministry is not new for us.
What is new is the pace." Previously,
most refugees would stay in Greece for

ix months to one year to acquire their egal papers. Now they stay two or three lays before moving on.

"We once had a chance to get to know them and share the gospel." says Romeos. No longer. So churches now focus on "helping them feel human" by offering showers, children's games, cell phone recharging—even free wifi. "Refugees are people, not a caste. We can serve them in what they need right now," he says. "We have the first opportunity to engage them with the best elements of our faith and our culture.

"We trust that the Lord will complete his work in other countries through the evangelicals there," says Romeos. "We look at these people as long-term residents of Europe, and we try to focus on being the best hosts at the entrance."

Given that Greek evangelicals are few in number, with their resources already stretched thin by their country's financial crisis, fromeos wants strategic, long-term partnerships with evangelicals in America and other nations. 'It is a dilemma of short-term fireworks or long-term fire,' he says. 'We don't want to light the fireworks show, we want to fuel the long-term kingdom of God.'

Since the Syrian and Iraqi families slowly reaching Western shores represent only 5 percent of the refugee crisis, church leaders in Iraq and Greece encourage US evangelicals to take their cues from those closer to the action.

"Why are you Christian brothers in the West afraid? We are here on the front lines and are not afraid," said an Iraqi pastor appearing via video at the Wheaton leader summit. "We believe in an Arabic spring, but not this Arab Spring. We believe in one that comes from above. And we know that spring comes after winter."

JEREMY WEBER is senior news editor of Christianity Today magazine. To get involved with the refugee crisis, visit wewelcomerefugees.com.

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"You already understand why we are here," says one of the 15 displaced Christians and Muslims who have gathered at a World Vision food distribution site in the capital of Iraq's autonomous Kurdish region. "Everyone in America should know about our crisis by now. [SIS."

This group is weary of telling NGOs and journalists why they fled their homes, and how hard and fragile life is among Erbil's abandoned buildings.

They are especially weary because this will be their second winter of displacement. Meanwhile, food aid has decreased from \$25 to \$16 to now \$10 per month. Most refuse to give interviews, despite the fact that their stories could spur Westerners to send more aid. If their current visitors are not there to increase food vouchers, then, they say, everyone is wasting their time.

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"We should consider the lives and souls of these people," he says. "It's not just about the Christian history here. We don't want them to live as victims." A newlywed resident of the camp concurs: "This is truly a holy land here for us. But it is no longer a heartland."

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At the Christian and Missionary Aliance church in Ankawa, Karam now serves displaced Christians from a range of historic and newer denominations. He encourages them all to stay in Iraq. "Jesus tells us it won't be easy to continue our religion. But he says. 'No matter what happens to you, I win, so you will win," "says Karam. "Ever since the third century, this has been our Christianity; one of suffering. If we live an easy life, what is our message?"

Notable efforts to help Christians stay include an evangelical church that rents a five-story building in Erbil for 170 people displaced from Qaraqosh. Horlidean erbibishop of Erbil, Bashar Warda, is trying to build a new Catholic university. (He explains: "How will they stay unless we show them that we are going to stay?" On the "go' side, a group from Slovalda-visiting Mar Ellia at the





same time as CT-brokered a deal to relocate 149 Christians to their Eastern European nation by Christmas.

"It is not a zero-sum game of stay or go. We can help people stay safer and go safer," says Jeremy Courtney, director of the Iraq-based Preemptive Love Coalition. "But if we are serious about helping Christians stay, we have to love Muslims more than we hate and fear Islam. We do bad for Christians if we don't do good for their neighbors."

One of the silver linings of the crissis is that most of Iraq's evangelical churches are now overflowing with displaced Christians. They more than make up for the families that emigrated to the West after the United States invaded Iraq 12 years ago. "God is using ISIS to shake the church," says a leader in Erbil who requested anonymity. "Christians who were nominal are now saying. "We need to be the church."

Likewise, many pastors told CT the crisis presents an unprecedented opportunity for evangelism. "Twe been here 20 years and shared the gospel with two people: one accepted, one did not." said a long-term missionary from Egypt who also requested anonymity. These days, we can reach 2,000 people in one day. This is the time to be here, otherwise we'll lose the opportunity. I've heard many people say. Thank you, ISIS; because they lost everything but have new life in lesus."

As many churches have become de facto refugee camps, cramming as many Christian families onto their properties as possible, the mixing of different denominations has produced what Pope Francis terms an "ecumenism of blood."

"Before ISIS came, we were divided. We thought we were the best Christians, and we could do everything on our own," says Daniel. "God does things for a purpose. 'We should consider the lives and souls of these people. It's not just about the Christian history here. We don't want them to live as victims.'

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"Unfortunately, it was ISIS that united
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PARALYZED BY PARIS

On CT's last day in Iraq, global sentiment toward refugees began shifting dramatically. Coordinated ISIS attacks killed 130 in Paris. Soon, the main emblem of the refugee crisis-the small body of a drowned Syrian three-year-old on a beach-was replaced by the specter of sleeper terrorists. More than half of US governors announced bans on refugee resettlement in their states. Polls suggested that many evangelicals supported the bans; only one-third of white evangelical Protestants told the Pew Research Center they favored the United States accepting more refugeesand that was prior to Paris. After the attacks, LifeWay Research found that 48 percent of self-identified evangelical pastors agreed there was "a sense of fear" within their congregation about refugees coming to America.

Buta month after Paris, one prominent gathering told a different story about evangelical attitudes. On the campus of Wheaton College, more than 120 leaders representing major denominations and ministries gathered to discuss how US churches could best apply the Great Commandment and the Great Commission to the situation, and not repeat the mistakes of what speakers labeled a tardy response to the HIV/AIDS crisis.

Conference organizers had expected only one-fourth as many people to come, but the room overflowed. There, leaders





took turns addressing the crowd. Wheaton president Philip Ryken said it was "hard to imagine a more important topic to be talking about a compassionate, Christ-centered response to right now." Southern Baptist International Mission Board president David Platt used Bible passages to exhort evangelicals to "act justly, love sacrificially, and hope confidently." given that God remains sovereign over the refugee crisis.

World Vision president Richard Stearns explained how, if the crisis were taking place proportionally in the States, "everyone west of Ohio would have to flee their homes." He described feeling politicians, media, and some church politicians, media, and some church tragedy and somehow made it about us," he said. "We have an opportunity us," he said. "We have an opportunity on the world stage to show what we stand for not fear, but grace."

World Relief president Stephan Bauman said that while "this is a time of Iment" as refugee resettlement groups receive criticism, his ministry has seen "more volunteers coming out from churches to help than ever" in its 35 years. "Not all Americans will be in favor," he said. "But as they understand that facts are our friends, and theology is a mandate, more will see we don't have to have security and compassion be mutually exclusive." Unce thirds of evangelical pastors told LifeWay they agree.)

Prior to Paris, three-quarters of self-identified "committed Christians" in America said they were willing to help Syrian refugees, according to an Ipsos poll sponsored by World Vision. However, only 44 percent had already done so.

Of the one-quarter of committed Christians who were not willing to help, 34 percent said it was because they feared that refugees were potential terrorists, while 24 percent felt the problem was too big for them to make a difference.

Such findings were corroborated at Wheaton, where leaders took a straw poll to identify the main obstacles to mobilizing American evangelicals on refugee care. Only one word received a unanimous vote: fear. Church leaders agreed that they needed better information to circulate in better ways.

Few evangelical churches are currently caring for refugees internationally (18%) or locally (8%). Another 8 percent desire to get involved. But more than two-thirds of churches have not discussed it.

LifeWay also found that only 1 in a evangelical pastors have addressed the refugee crisis from the pulpit. A prior survey found that only 2 percent of evangelicals get their information on international migration to America from their local church, while 12 percent cited the Bible. The two combined were fewer than those who rely on the media. Most evangelical Christians are not thinking as Christians on the issue." A work of the company of the children of th

"We are being countercultural," said convener Ed Stetzer, director of Life/Way Research. The mood of many of our constituents is against refugees. But when we respond in an environment of fear with faith, we win an audience for the gospel."

GIVING AS MUCH AS THEY CAN

More than 80 percent of refugees enter Europe by crossing the Aegean Sea from Turkey into Greece, due to its many islands (like Lesbos) and thus pourous border. Most pass through Athens en route to Germany, Sweden, and other popular refuges.

Greek evangelicals were actually leading refugee ministries decades before little Alan Kurdi-dressed in a red T-shirt, blue shorts, and Velcro sneakers-washed up on a Turkish beach and galvanized the world's attention on Syria and Iraq. And they remain at the forefront, even as their own nation weathers a 25 percent unemployment rate and a debt crisis that nearly brought down the Eurozone.

At a coffee shop in Athens, a family clasps their cups at a high street-side table while their three-year-old son plays with a yellow toy crane among a pile of backpacks. He is bundled up for the cold, but he also wears a blue life jacket. His younger sister wears a red one.

Here on the blocks around Piraeus, the main port of Athens, refugees who survived the dangerous crossing from Turkey to Lesbos (more than 800 drowned in 2015) outnumber Greeks 4 to 1. Dozens walk past closed shops to board a white double-decker bus bearing a Greek Islands and of two smiling children lounging on a sunny beach. A blue bus soon pulls up, followed by a yellow one as the white bus prenares to deoart.

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lights. As the sun sets on Saturday night, almost 50 people wait in line at a food truck. But this is no gournet hipster meal. They are all refugees, waiting here for the buses that will take them to Greece's northern border with Macedonia, then on through the Balkans to Germany. The truck belongs to Plision, a ministry where Greek evangelicals unite with other groups to offer aid. Tonight it is passing out 500 black bowls filled with beef, rice, and beans made by church volunteers.

Shortly after, Plision's leader, Christos Nakis, sits at the plastic-covered Communion table of his charismatic church, fittingly located next to Athens's central market where rows of vendors sell produce and meat. He explains how 10 teams from evangelical churches help feed about 1,700 migrants a day across Athens's three refugee camps.

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"The refugee crisis is both new and not new," says Giotis Kantartzis, senior pastor of one of Greece's largest evangelical churches. "Greece has been receiving refugees for a long time. What is different is the intensity of it."

What was once 3,000 migrants per week has become 3,000 per day. So the Greek Evangelical Alliance gathered all the churches and ministries that represent the officially Orthodox nation's 40,000 evangelicals.

"For the very first time in our history we were able to sit down and coordinate our efforts," says Kantartzis. "Some wanted to do evangelism and give out Bibles. Others said, 'No, let's just have a Christian aroma." [This collaboration, is a new thing. And it is a good thing."

CT rides along as a church volunteer transports dinner to Galatsi Hall, once the Olympic stadium where Greece hosted the Summer Games in 2004. It lay in modern ruins until the government made it the largest refugee camp in late 2015.

Most Galatsi refugees are from Afghanistan. They spend a few days waiting for money from relatives in the West to arrive before continuing on. Most Syrians and Iraqis, including the Christians, have enough money to pass through Athens the same day, leaders explain.

Moinos Eleftheriou, 53, is tall with a mop of wiry hair and the energy to match in his role as camp leader. Galatsi provides food, bedding, clothing, medical supplies, English lessons, art therapy—even a "goodbye goodle bag" for those going farther up and farther into Europe once



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they obtain a bus ticket out of Athens. We have to help them: "says leithberiou. They are our neighbors. They are not animals; they are human beings." The cavernous rooms that hosted the world's best gymnasts and table tennis players now house mostly Afghani women and children clustered on blankets. A lucky few have camping tents for orivacy.

We give them as much as we canexplains Eleftheriou. The parting gift is a grocery bag full of "things they like"; juice, milk, biscuits, honey, tuna fish, toilet paper. The facility even has an elderly woman pushing a shopping cart around giving out sweets. "We do the small things to make them solid."

Just 45 days old, the camp has already hosted 10,000 refugees. One main wall showcases the drawings of the 3,000 Afghani children who have passed through Galatsi. "Some of them are very sad. We don't put those here," says Eleftheriou. Back in his office, he pulls out a drawing

of a girl's family in a boat. Overhead, the sun is shedding tears. Earlier, walking through the middle of the gymnastics hall turned dormitory, a woman in a black robe and pink headscarf stood up from her family's three blankets and half bowed as he passed. Her two-year-old daughter, as well as her sister and seven-year-old niece, drowned when her family crossed the sea. When he first asked what the family needed, the mother replied tearfully, "The only thing I need is a stone with my daughter's name on it for the graveyard." Eleftheriou told her, "I will do this for you."

Greek evangelicals recognize that, living in one of the world's most "Christian" countries (legally and culturally), they are the first believers many refugees from Afghanistan and other Muslim-majority nations encounter. "I can't show them a film of Jesus' life" one leader told CT "But bit by bit, it will all happen." (As a Plision driver puts it, "If they see Jesus in our face, it is enough." A child's poem on the Galatsi wall of drawings suggests success: "I was in Iran. I saw a lot of Muslims but I didn't see [godly people]. When I came to Greece, I saw a lot of non-Muslims. But I saw [godly people].

On the question of whether Christian refugees should remain in the Middle East or leave for the West, Kantartzis quickly shoots down the question as not worth

pondering. (This is noteworthy, given an Athens tourism campaign coins the term "philosofa" for "the Athenian habit of lounging around and philosophizing.") Ifts the wrong question. These people came; they left already," he said. "The question is a kind of avoidance; an ailbi to dodge the responsibility in front of us.

"It is a wakeup call," he says. "Are we ready as the church to show who we are and what we believe?"

ARAB SPRING FROM ABOVE

Surveying Athens from its tallest peak, Fotis Romeos, general secretary of the Greek Evangelical Alliance, gestures to the New Testament sites nestled among the modern below. He believes American evangelicals can learn from their brothers and sisters at one of the world's major crossrands.

"Refugee ministry is not new for us.

What is new is the pace." Previously,
most refugees would stay in Greece for

six months to one year to acquire their legal papers. Now they stay two or three days before moving on.

"We once had a chance to get to know them and share the gospel," says Rome. No longer. So churches now focus on "helping them feel human" by offering showers, children's games, cell phone recharging—even free wifi, "Refugees are people, not a caste. We can serve them in what they need right now," he says. "We have the first opportunity to engage them with the best elements of our faith and our culture.

"We trust that the Lord will complete his work in other countries through the evangelicals there," says Romeos. "We look at these people as long-term residents of Europe, and we try to focus on being the best hosts at the entrance."

Given that Greek evangelicals are few in number, with their resources already stretched thin by their country's financial crisis, Romeos wants strategic, long-term partnerships with evangelicals in America and other nations. "It is a dilemma of short-term fireworks or long-term fire," he says. "We don't want to light the fireworks show, we want to fuel the long-term kingdom of God!"

Since the Syrian and Iraqi families slowly reaching Western shores represent only 5 percent of the refugee crisis, church leaders in Iraq and Greece encourage US evangelicals to take their cues from those closer to the action.

"Why are you Christian brothers in the West afraid? We are here on the front lines and are not afraid." said an Iraqi pastor appearing via video at the Wheaton leader summit. "We believe in an Arabic spring, but not this Arab Spring. We believe in one that comes from above. And we know that spring comes after winter."

JEREMY WEBER is senior news editor of Christianity Today magazine. To get involved with the refugee crisis, visit wewelcomerefugees.com.



ust beyond the still-under-construction ring road on the outer edge of Erbil, a group interview turns into a mutiny.

"You already understand why we are here," says one of the 15 displaced Christians and Muslims who have gathered at a World Vision food distribution site in the capital of Iraq's autonomous Kurdish region. "Everyone in America should know about our crisis by now: ISIS."

This group is weary of telling NGOs and journalists why they fled their homes, and how hard and fragile life is among Erbil's abandoned buildings.

They are especially weary because this will be their second winter of displacement, Meanwhile, food aid has decreased from \$25 to \$16 to now \$10 per month. Most refuse to give interviews, despite the fact that their stories could spur Westerners to send more aid. If their current visitors are not there to increase food vouchers, then, they say, everyone is wasting their time.

Some in the group fidget with 11 oz. bottles of water bearing blue caps and the word life spelled in red. The i is an upside-down exclamation point, a marketer's attempt at fun in a sad setting.

But such a mark fittingly punctuates the refugee crisis. The numbers—I million refugees entering Europe by the end of 2015—surpassed comprehension long ago. The question is whether they have now also surpassed compassion.

The world now has more displaced people than during World War II. Beyond Europe, another 2.5 million refugees are in Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey, while 4.5 million people remain displaced within Syria and Iraq, where ISIS is most active.

As winter approached, Christianity Today traveled to Iraq and Greece to witness how Christian leaders are working along the "refugee highway" that now stretches from the Middle East to Europe and North America. The situation is so complicated, and the risks so high, that leaders are torn between two aid strategies: should they help Christians and other minorities stay in their historic homelands, or should they help them journey to safer Western democracies?

But Kurdish and Greek evangelical leaders agree on one thing; hope remains, because they see God at work all along the highway.

'THANK YOU, ISIS'

From his front steps, Hadi Ali has a great view of the windling ravine where many flock during Nowruz (a New Year celebration) to vacation and picnic alongside the river that descends from Lake Dulan, one of the largest lakes in Kurdistan. But Ali wishes he still lived 300 miles from here. He is one of hundreds of internally displaced persons now living in a jumble of unfinished homes on the slopes of the rugged red mountains that tower above the river.

In the shadow of a pale yellow mosque that sits atop the hillside community, Ali, 43, skirts pomegranate skins as he climbs the steps of an unfinished, concrete building. He has lived here with his family of 9 for the past 15 months. His wife and children, ranging from ages 5 to 18, fled from south of Baghdad after they were threatened at gunoint.

"They took our homes and our money," he tells CT. "Everything is gone. We don't know when we will go back."

Ali, once a school bus driver, sold his bus to relocate his family. Now he's a day laborer, working on the three-story building next door that is even more unfinished than his own temporary dwelling. 'I always think of going back home once peace comes. I wish it were tomorrow. But we don't know the future. I am waiting for God.

The crisis has gone on for longer than anybody anticipated—nearly five years now for many families. Almost all of the displaced women whom CT interviewed



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HADI ALI, FATHER, NOW IN KURDISTAN



across eight refugee camps have given birth to children since fleeing.

"We support each other," says the chief of Garmawa, a 250-year-old Christian town only 40 minutes from Mosul. Ever since ISIS seized Iraq's second-largest city in June 2014, the nearly town of 70 families has shared its land with about 500 mostly Muslim families. "It is part of our faith that we host them," says the chief. However, Garmawa residents expected to play host for two months. "This is the second winter," he says. "We did not dream of this."

Christians have faced significant and well-publicized persecution (notably in Mosul and other Nineveh Plains cities). Christian leaders told CT that other mi-norities such as the Yazidis, an ancient religious group, have suffered even worse. Thus, many churches are aiding more non-Christians than fellow believers.

In a UN camp in Khanke, seven Yazidi children tussle over the UNICEF-issued teal backpack found in almost every refugee dwelling and arrange its contents on the floor. It holds not school supplies but photos of their deceased older sister. Almas, killed when ISIS came to their hometown of Sinjar. Their four-month-old sister, born in this room of concrete walls and a tarp roof, is named in her honor. Their mother, Wadkha, says the memory makes it to painful to return to Sinjar, which was liberated from ISIS while CT was in Iraq. "When I make bread, I think of my daughter and weep."

Many refugees no longer hope to return home, "The Christians are tired here," says Ashty Alisha, chairman of the Evangelical Alliance in Kurdistan, At his



GARMAWA CAMP, NINEVEH PLAINS, IRAQ

most recent church service, a member explained how he plans to leave with his family because they have no money for rent or food; all they have is the memory of their son killed by ISIS. Alisha says, "I am not encouraging people to go. But I can't tell people to stay."

Father Daniel is more blunt. "The Middle East is lost for Christians," says the 25-year-old priest at Mar Elia Church, which hosts 570 displaced believers on its triangular compound in Ankawa, Erbirs Christian district. He just finished leading a service in Armanie Mar Elia is one of the few churches that preserve the language jesus spoke. But Daniel says he would be fine! fone day he had no flock to shepherd because they had all left for Europe or the United States.

"We should consider the lives and souls of these people," he says. "It's not just about the Christian history here. We don't want them to live as victims." A newlywed resident of the camp concurs: "This is truly a holy land here for us. But it is no longer a heartland."

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they obtain a bus ticket out of Athens. "We have to help them," says Eleftheriou. "They are our neighbors. They are not animals; they are human beings." The cavermous rooms that hosted the world's best gymnasts and table tennis players now house mostly Afghani women and children clustered on blankets. A lucky few have camping tents for orivacy.

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> of a girl's family in a boat. Overhead, the sun is shedding tears. Earlier, walking through the middie of the gymnastics hall turned dormitory, a woman in a black robe and pink headscarf stood up from her family's three blankets and half bowed as he passed. Her two-year-old daughter, as well as her sister and seven-year-old niece, drowned when her family crossed the sea. When he first crossed the sea. When he first



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countries (legally and culturally), they are the first believers many refugees from Afghanistan and other Muslim-majority nations encounter. "I can't show them a film of Jesu's life," one leader told CT. "But bit by bit, it will all happen." (As a Plision driver puts it, "If they see Jesus in our face, it is enough.") A child's poem on the Galatsi wall of drawings suggests success: "I was in Iran. I saw a lot of Muslims but I didn't see [godly people]. When I came to Greece, I saw a lot of non-Muslims. But I saw [godly a lot of non-Muslims. But I saw [godly people].

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pondering. (This is noteworthy, given an Athens tourism campaign coins the term "philosofa" for "the Athenian habit of lounging around and philosophizing.") "It's the wrong question. These people came: they left already," he said. "The question is a kind of avoidance: an alibi to dodge the responsibility in front of us.

"It is a wakeup call," he says. "Are we ready as the church to show who we are and what we believe?"

ARAB SPRING FROM ABOVE

Surveying Athens from its tallest peak. Fotis Romeos, general secretary of the Greek Evangelical Alliance, gestures to the New Testament sites nestled among the modern below. He believes American evangelicals can learn from their brothers and sisters at one of the world's major

"Refugee ministry is not new for us. What is new is the pace." Previously, most refugees would stay in Greece for six months to one year to acquire their legal papers. Now they stay two or three days before moving on.

"We once had a chance to get to know them and share the gospel," says Romeos. No longer. So churches now focus on "helping them feel human" by offering showers, children's games, cell phone recharging—even free wifi. "Refugees are people, not a caste. We can serve them in what they need right now," he says. "We have the first opportunity to engage them with the best elements of our faith and our culture.

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Given that Greek evangelicals are few in number, with their resources already stretched thin by their country's financial crisis, Romeos wants strategic, long-term partnerships with evangelicals in America and other nations. "It is a dilemma of short-term fireworks or long-term fire," he says. "We don't want to light the fireworks show, we want to fuel the long-term kingdom of God."

Since the Syrian and Iraqi families slowly reaching Western shores represent only 5 percent of the refugee crisis, church leaders in Iraq and Greece encourage US evangelicals to take their cues from those closer to the action.

"Why are you Christian brothers in the West afraid? We are here on the front lines and are not afraid," said an Iraqi pastor appearing via video at the Wheaton leader summit. "We believe in an Arabic spring, but not this Arab Spring. We believe in one that comes from above. And we know that spring comes after winter."

JEREMY WEBER is senior news editor of Christianity Today magazine. To get involved with the refugee crisis, visit wewelcomerefugees.com.



ust beyond the still-under-construction ring road on the outer edge of Erbil, a group interview turns into a mutiny.

"You already understand why we are here," says one of the Is displaced Christians and Muslims who have gathered at a World Vision food distribution site in the capital of Iraq's autonomous Kurdish region. "Everyone in America should know about our crisis by now: ISIS."

This group is weary of telling NGOs and journalists why they fled their homes, and how hard and fragile life is among Erbil's abandoned buildings.

They are especially weary because this will be their second winter of displacement. Meanwhile, food ald has decreased from \$25 to \$16 to now \$10 per month. Most refuse to give interviews, despite the fact that their stories could apur Westerners to send more aid. If their current visitors are not there to increase food vouchers, then, they say, everyone is wasting their time.

Some in the group fidget with 11 oz. bottles of water bearing blue caps and the word life spelled in red. The i is an upside-down exclamation point, a marketer's attempt at fun in a sad setting.

But such a mark fittingly punctuates the refugee crisis. The numbers—I million refugees entering Europe by the end of 2015—surpassed comprehension long ago. The question is whether they have now also surpassed compassion.

The world now has more displaced people than during World War II. Beyond Europe, another 2.5 million refugees are in Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey, while 4.5 million people remain displaced within Syria and Iraq, where ISIS is most active.

As winter approached, Christianity Today traveled to Iraq and Greece to witness how Christian leaders are working along the "refugee highway" that now stretches from the Middle East to Europe and North America. The situation is so complicated, and the risks so high, that leaders are torn between two aid strategies should they help Christians and other minorities stay in their historic homelands, or should they help them journey to safer Western democracies?

But Kurdish and Greek evangelical leaders agree on one thing: hope remains, because they see God at work all along the highway.

'THANK YOU, ISIS'

From his front steps, Hadi Ali has a great view of the winding ravine where many flock during Nowruz (a New Year celebration) to vacation and picnic alongside the river that descends from Lake Dulean, one of the largest lakes in Kurdistan. But Ali wishes he still lived 300 miles from here. He is one of hundreds of internally displaced persons now living in a jumies of unfinished homes on the slopes of the rugged red mountains that tower above the river.

In the shadow of a pale yellow mosque that sits atop the hillside community, MI, 43, skirts pomegranate skins as he climbs the steps of an unfinished, concrete building. He has lived here with his family of 9 for the past IS months. His wife and children, ranging from ages 5 to 18, fled from south of Baghdad after they were threatened at eunopint.

"They took our homes and our money," he tells CT. "Everything is gone. We don't know when we will go back."

Ali, once a school bus driver, sold his bus to relocate his family. Now he's a day laborer, working on the three-story building next door that is even more unfinished than his own temporary dwelling. 'I always think of going back home once peace comes. I wish it were tomorrow. But we don't know the future. I am waiting for God.'

The crisis has gone on for longer than anybody anticipated—nearly five years now for many families. Almost all of the displaced women whom CT interviewed



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HADI ALI, FATHER, NOW IN KURDISTAN



across eight refugee camps have given birth to children since fleeing.

"We support each other," says the chief of Garmawa, a 250-year-old Christian town only 40 minutes from Mosul. Ever since ISIS seized Iraq's second-largest city in June 2014, the nearby town of 70 families has shared its land with about 500 mostly Muslim families. "It is part of our faith that we host them." says the chief. However, Garmawa residents expected to play host for two months. This is the second winter," he says. "We did not dream of this."

Christians have faced significant and well-publicized persecution (notably in Mosul and other Nineveh Plains cities). Christian leaders told CT that other minorities such as the Yazidis, an ancient religious group, have suffered even worse. Thus, many churches are aiding more non-Christians than fellow believers.

In a UN camp in Khanke, seven Yazic children tussle over the UNICEF-issue teal backpack found in almost every re ugee dwelling and arrange its content on the floor. It holds not school supplies but photos of their deceased older sister. Almas, killed when ISIS came to their hometown of Sinjar. Their four-month-old sister, born in this room of concrete walls and a tarp roof is named in her honor.

Their mother, Wadkha, says the memory makes it too painful to return to Sinjar, which was liberated from ISIS while CT was in Iraq. "When I make bread, I think of my daughter and weep."

Many refugees no longer hope to return home. "The Christians are tired here," says Ashty Alisha, chairman of the Evangelical Alliance in Kurdistan. At his



GARMAWA CAMP, NINEVEH PLAINS, IRAO

most recent church service, a member explained how he plans to leave with his family because they have no money for rent or food; all they have is the memory of their son killed by ISIS. Alisha says, "I am not encouraging people to go. But I can't tell people to stay."

Father Daniel is more blunt. "The Middle East is lost for Christians," says he 25-year-old priest at Mar Elia Church, which hosts \$70 displaced believers on its triangular compound in Ankawa. Erbils Christian district, Hejust finished leading a service in Aramaic; Mar Elia is one of the few churches that preserve the language fesus spoke, But Daniel says he would be fine if one day he had no flock to shepherd because they had all left for Europe or the United States.

"We should consider the lives and souls of these people," he says. "It's not just about the Christian history here. We don't want them to live as victims." A newlywed resident of the camp concurs: "This is truly a holy land here for us. But it is no longer a heartland."

By contrast, Abu Karam is likely one of the only displaced Iraqi Christians to ever turn down a visa to the West. The 66-year-old Mosul pastor became a UN refugee in Jordan and obtained a visa to Canada. But then, he says, God told him in a vision to go back to Iraq and serve the church. He declined the visa and returned to Mosul until ISIS arrived.

At the Christian and Missionary Alliance church in Ankawa, Karam now serves displaced Christians from a range of historic and newer denominations. He encourages them all to stay in Iraq. "Jesus tells us it wort be easy to continue our religion. But he says. 'No matter what happens to you, I win, so you will win." says Karam. "Ever since the third century, this has been our Christianity: one of suffering. If we live an easy life, what is our message?"

Notable efforts to help Christians stay include an evangelical church that rents a five-story building in Erbil for 170 people displaced from Qaraqosh. The Chaldean archbishop of Erbil. Bashar Warda, is trying to build a new Catholic university. (He explains: "How will they stay unless we show them that we are going to stay?") On the "go" side, a group from Slovalda-visiting Mar Elli at the





same time as CT-brokered a deal to relocate 149 Christians to their Eastern European nation by Christmas.

"It is not a zero-sum game of stay or go. We can help people stay safer and go safer," says Jeremy Courtney, director of the Iraq-based Preemptive Love Coalition. "But if we are serious about helping Christians stay, we have to love Muslims more than we hate and fear Islam. We do bad for Christians if we don't do good for their neighbors."

One of the silver linings of the crisis is that most of Iraq's evangelical churches are now overflowing with displaced Christians. They more than make up for the families that emigrated to the West after the United States invaded Iraq 12 years ago. "God is using ISIS to shake the church," says a leader in Erbil who requested anonymity. 'Christians who were nominal are now saying, "We need to be the Church."

Likewise, many pastors told CT the crisis presents an unprecedented opportunity for evangelism. "I've been here 20 years and shared the gospel with two people; one accepted, one did not," said a long-term missionary from Egypt who also requested anonymity. "These days, we can reach 2,000 people in one day. This is the time to be here, otherwise we'll lose the opportunity. I've heard many people say, "Thank you, ISIS,' because they lost everything but have new life in lesus."

As many churches have become de facto refugee camps, cramming as many Christian families onto their properties as possible, the mixing of different denominations has produced what Pope Francis terms an "ocumpism of blood."

"Before ISIS came, we were divided. We thought we were the best Christians, and we could do everything on our own," says Daniel. "God does things for a purpose. 'We should consider the lives and souls of these people. It's not just about the Christian history here. We don't want them to live as victims.'

FATHER DANIEL, PRIEST, ERBIL

He combined the churches together to handle the situation as one hand.

"Unfortunately, it was ISIS that united us. We can send a message to all the Christians around the world: Don't wait for bad things to unite you; unite now, under the name of Jesus Christ."

PARALYZED BY PARIS

On CT's last day in Iraq, global sentiment oward refugees began shifting drama cally. Coordinated ISIS attacks killed 130 in Paris, Soon, the main embler of the refugee crisis-the small body of a drowned Syrian three-year-old on a beach-was replaced by the specter of sleeper terrorists. More than half of US governors announced bans on refugee resettlement in their states. Polls suggested that many evangelicals supported the bans; only one-third of white evangelical Protestants told the Pew Research Center they favored the United States accepting more refugeesand that was prior to Paris. After the attacks, LifeWay Research found that 48 percent of self-identified evangelical pastors agreed there was "a sense of fear" within their congregation about refugees coming to America.

Buta month after Paris, one prominent gathering told a different story about evangelical attitudes. On the campus of Wheaton College, more than 120 leaders representing major denominations and ministries gathered to discuss how US churches could best apply the Great Commandment and the Great Commission to the situation, and not repeat the mistakes of what speakers labeled a tardy response to the HIVAIDS crisis.

Conference organizers had expected only one-fourth as many people to come, but the room overflowed. There, leaders





took turns addressing the crowd. Wheaion president Philip Ryken said it was "hard to imagine a more important topic to be talking about a compassionate, Christ-centered response to right now." Southern Baptist International Mission Board president David Platt used Bible passages to exhort evangelicals to "act justly, love sacrificially, and hope confidently," given that God remains sovereien over the refusee crisis.

World Vision president Richard Stearns explained how, if the crisis were taking place proportionally in the States, "everyone west of Ohio would have to flee their homes." He described feeling "ashamed by the hateful rhetoric" from politicians, media, and some church leaders. "They've taken this terrible tragedy and somehow made it about us," he said. "We have an opportunity on the world stage to show what we stand for, not fear, but grace."

World felief president Stephan Bauman said that while "this is a time of lament" as refugee resettlement groups receive criticism, his ministry has seen "more volunteers coming out from churches to help than ever" in its 35 years. "Not all Americans will be in favor," he said. "But as they understand that facts are our friends, and theology is a mandate, more will see we don't have to have security and compassion be mutually exclusive." (Two-thirds of evangelical pastors told LifeWay they agree.)

Prior to Paris, three-quarters of self-identified "committed Christians" in America said they were willing to help Syrian refugees, according to an Ipsos poll sponsored by World Vision. However, only 44 percent had already done so.

Of the one-quarter of committed Christians who were not willing to help, 34 percent said it was because they feared that refugees were potential terrorists, while 24 percent felt the problem was too big for them to make a difference.

Such findings were corroborated at Wheaton, where leaders took a straw poil to identify the main obstacles to mobilizing American evangelicals on refugee care. Only one word received a unanimous vote: fear. Church leaders agreed that they needed better information to circulate in better ways.

Few evangelical churches are currently caring for refugees internationally (18%) or locally (8%). Another 8 percent desire to get involved. But more than two-thirds of churches have not discussed it.

LifeWay also found that only 1 in 3 evangelical pastors have addressed the refugee crisis from the pulpit. A prior survey found that only 2 percent of evangelicals get their information on international migration to America from their local church, while 12 percent cited the Bible. The two combined were fewer than those who rely on the media. "Most evangelical Christians are not thinking as Christians on the issue," said Matthew Soerens, World Relief's church training specialist. "Most see newcomers as a threat or a burden. Only 4 in 10 see a gossel opportunity."

"We are being countercultural," said convener Ed Stetzer, director of LifeWay Research. "The mood of many of our constituents is against refugees. But when we respond in an environment of fear with faith, we win an audience for the gospel."

GIVING AS MUCH AS THEY CAN

More than 80 percent of refugees enter Europe by crossing the Aegean Sea from Turkey into Greece, due to its many islands (like Lesbos) and thus pourous border. Most pass through Athens en route to Germany, Sweden, and other popular refuges.

Greek evangelicals were actually leading refugee ministries decades before little Alan Kurdi-dressed in a red T-shirt, blue shorts, and Velcro sneakers—washed up on a Turkish beach and galvanized the world's attention on Syria and Iraq. And they remain at the forefront, even as their own nation weathers a 25 percent unemployment rate and a debt crisis that nearly brought down the Eurozone.

At a coffee shop in Athens, a family class their cups at a high street-side table while their three-year-old son plays with a yellow toy crane among a pile of backpacks. He is bundled up for the cold, but he also wears a blue life jacket. His younger sister wears a red one.

Here on the blocks around Piraeus, the main port of Athens, refugees who survived the dangerous crossing from Turkey to Lesbos (more than 800 drowned in 2015) outnumber Greeks 4 to 1. Dozens walk past closed shops to board a white double-decker bus bearing a Greek Islands do of two smiling children lounging on a sunny beach. A blue bus soon pulls up, followed by a yellow one as the white bus prepares to depart.

It is likely headed to Victoria Square, a plaza lined with restaurant patios and trees decked with strands of gold Christmas





lights. As the sun sets on Saturday right, almost 50 people wait in line at a food truck But this is no gournet hipster meal. They are all refugees, waiting here for the buses that will take then to Greece's northern border with Macedonia, then on through the Balkans to Germany. The truck belongs to Plision, a ministry where Greek evangelicals unite with other groups to offer aid. Tonight it is passing out 500 black bowls filled with beef, rice, and beans made by church volunteers.

Shortly after, Plision's leader, Christos Nakis, sits at the plastic-covered Communion table of his charismatic church, fittingly located next to Athens's central market where rows of vendors sell produce and meat. He explains how 10 teams from evangelical churches help feed about 1,700 migrants a day across Athens's three refugee camps.

One month ago, leaders of all of Greece's evangelical churches gathered with Nakis to agree to help non-Christians and Christians alike. "We think our mission as people of God is to help everybody the same. After all, God sends rain the same on the good and the bad," says Nakis, referring to Matthew 54.5

"The refugee crisis is both new and not new," says Giotis Kantartzis, senior pastor of one of Greece's largest evangelical churches. "Greece has been receiving refugees for a long time. What is different is the intensity of it."

What was once 3,000 migrants per week has become 3,000 per day. So the Greek Evangelical Alliance gathered all the churches and ministries that represent the officially Orthodox nation's 40,000 evangelicals.

"For the very first time in our history, we were able to sit down and coordinate our efforts," says Kantartis. "Some wanted to do evangelism and give out Bibles, Others said, "No, let's just have a Christian aroma." [This collaboration] is a new thing, And it is a good thing."

CT rides along as a church volunteer transports dinner to Galatsi Hall, once the Olympic stadium where Greece hosted the Summer Games in 2004, It lay in modern ruins until the government made it the largest refugee camp in late 2015.

Most Galatsi refugees are from Afghanistan. They spend a few days waiting for money from relatives in the West to arrive before continuing on. Most Syrians and Iraqis, including the Christians, have enough money to pass through Athens the same day, leaders explain.

Moinos Eleftheriou, S3, is tall with a mop of wiry hair and the energy to match in his role as camp leader Galatsi provides food, bedding, clothing, medical supplies, English lessons, art therapy—even a "goodbye goodie bag" for those going farther up and farther into Europe once



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Greek evangelicals recognize that, living in one of the world's most "Christian" countries (legally and culturally), they are the first believers many refugees from Afghanistan and other Muslim-majority nations encounter. "I can't show them a film of Jesus' life," one leader told CT. "But bit by bit, it will all happen." (As a Plision driver puts it, "If they see Jesus in our face, it is enough.") A child's poem on the Galatsi wall of drawings suggests success: "I was in Iran. I saw a lot of Muslims but I didn't see [godly people]. When I came to Greece, I saw a lot of non-Muslims, But I saw [godly people].

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In Depth

Grapes of Wrath

In Lebanon's Napa Valley, Syrian refugees face a Steinbeck scenario. By Jeremy Weber in Beirut

eyed stands amid the rolling fields
of the Bekaa Valley, Just down the
road are award-winning, decadent
vineyards—a product of the fertile agricultural region's 5,000-year head start
on Napa Valley. The Romans even chose
to build their temple to Bacchus here.
Above loom the snow-covered slopes of
Mt. Hermon, where many today place
jesus' transfiguration. Surveying the sea
of green plants rustling in a pleasant
breeze, the 43-year-old describes what
he feels: "A kinfe in my heart."

For Faysal, a Syrian refugee, the scene is not one of grandeur but of guilt; in the field before him are three of his children—his 15-year-old son and 13- and 11-year-old daughters—bent in half as they weed optatoes instead of attending school.

"I have no choice," says the father to witness how the Bekaa Valley now

of six. In Aleppo, one of Syria's most war-torn cities, his job as a truck driver once provided a four-room house and a middle-class, urban life. Now, having injured his back in his own efforts at day labor, he can't pay there for their cobbled-together shelter on a farmer's property. So he just stands and watches his children. And cries.

"As a father, what is the purpose of my life if I can't provide for my children?" he says. "I'm ashamed of the present and the future."

On the shores of the Mediterranean Sea just north of Israel, Lebanon once enjoyed a reputation as the Switzerland of the Middle East, a land of milk and honey. On the eve of Ramadan, Christianity Today visited with World Vision *Lebanon does not allow official UN refugee camps, so many Syrians live in what aid workers call "informal tent settlements." Displaced for three years or more, many families pay rent to farmers through their children's lady

recalls John Steinbeck's Great Depression-eradescription of the Dust Bowland California. In the Bekaa, many refugees struggle to survive as tenant farmers, as did the loads of The Grapes of Wrath. But unlike the Joads, many used to be urban, middle-class families.

While Americans agonize over plans to resettle 10,000 Syrian refugees this year, Lebanon is straining under the weight of 1.5 million. And it's a nation of only 4.5 million, smaller than Connecticut and with fewer people than NEWS

Grapes of Wrath: Refugees Face Steinbeck Scenario in Lebanon's Napa Valley

While US debates resettling 10,000 Syrians, a country smaller than Connecticut struggles with hosting 1.5 million.

JEREMY WEBER IN BEIRUT | AUGUST 22, 2016



Image: Jon Warren / Courtesy of World Vision

















CHURCHES.

O U T P A C I N G P E R S E C U T I O N

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Headlines: Worth More Time Than Your Lede

Know Your Constraints

Are you going up first or second? Or 10th?

China's online retailers pull Bible from shelves as Beijing gets strict on sale of holy text

Q china A1K South China Morning Post / 1d

China's online retail giants have removed the Bible from sale ir move by Beijing to restrict its distribution.... Taobao is owned also owns the South China Morning Post.

Bibles pulled from online stores as China increases control of religion

Q china M3K CNN / 18h

China has always controlled sales of the Bible, only allow and printed by state-sanctioned churches, but in recent available to buy online.



Beijing bans online Bible sales

Q china •11 www.asianews.it / 14h

In China, the Bible is treated as a publication "for internal distribution government-sanctioned bodies.... Business but especially political considerations are behind the move, namely the Bible's growing appearance.



China bans online sale of Bible

Q china 64 Premier UK News / 13h

Although China has always controlled sales of the Bible by only a distributed and printed by state-sanctioned churches, it had been buy online.



China Bans Online Bible Sales as It Tightens Religious Controls

Q china •1K Religion and Belief / 12h

The retailers did not respond to requests for comment, although start of a long holiday weekend in China.... The move aligns with effort to limit the influence of Christianity in China.



Bible Ban: God's Word Disappears from Online Stores in China

Q china +500+ CBNNews.com / 10h

What does Carl Minzner, author of the book, End of an Era: How Authoritarian Revival is Undermining its Rise think may happen Christians in the years ahead?





"Seek and ye shall find" no longer applies to Bibles on China's biggest online marketplaces



China Bans Bibles from Online Sellers Like Amazon

As atheist government pledges to promote "Chinese-style Christianity and theology," changes at JD.com, Taobao, and Dang Dang may revive debate over B... christianitytoday.com

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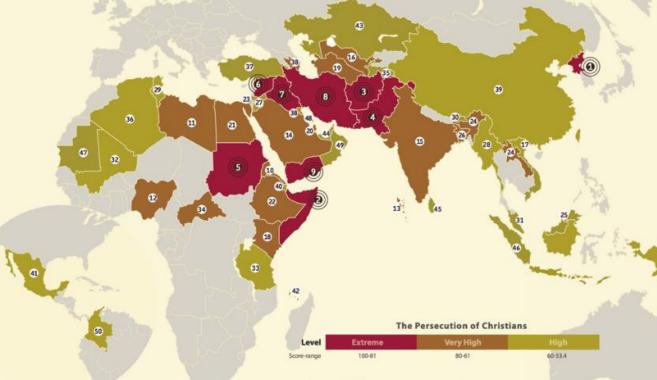
INTERNATIONAL

No More 'Seek and Ye Shall Find' for Bibles in China's Online Markets

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MORGAN LEE | APRIL 05, 2018 6:41 PM





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Facts Don't Sell

Sudan, Nigeria Rise Most in 2011 Persecution Rankings

Open Doors' 2012 World Watch List ranks countries where Christians suffered in 2011.

Compass Direct News CP [POSTED 1/4/2012 03:58PM]

African Nations Surge Up Ranks of World's Worst Persecutors

Mali, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, and Niger make debuts on Open Doors's 2013 World Watch List.

Melissa Steffan [POSTED 1/8/2013 06:59AM]

Aiming for 'Effective Anger': The Top 50 Countries Where It's Hardest to Be a Christian

(UPDATED) Christian martyrdoms doubled in 2013, reports World Watch List in revealing its methodology for the first time.

Katherine Burgess [POSTED 1/8/2014 11:41AM]

'Not Forgotten': The Top 50 Countries Where It's Most Difficult to Be a Christian

Open Doors says 2014 saw the worst persecution of Christians in the 'modern era'—but not because of violence.

Sarah Eekhoff Zylstra [POSTED 1/7/2015 08:54AM]

North Korea Gets Competition: The Top 50 Countries Where It's Now Hardest to Be a Christian

(UPDATED) Hermit Kingdom losing lead as modern persecution hits record high, according to 2016 World Watch List.

Sarah Eekhoff Zylstra [POSTED 1/13/2016 08:32AM]

'Worst Year Yet': The Top 50 Countries Where It's Hardest to Be a Christian

Islamic extremism now has a rival, according to 2017 World Watch List.

Jeremy Weber [POSTED 1/11/2017 09:00AM]



Timing Matters as Much as Topic

What To Give Up for Lent 2014? Twitter Reveals Top 100 Choices

(UPDATED) Barna breaks down which Americans are celebrating this year, while Stephen Smith tracks what 100,000+ Twitter users are pledging in real-time.

Jeremy Weber and Melissa Steffan [POSTED 3/4/2014 10:04AM]

What To Give Up for Lent? Twitter Reveals Top 100 Ideas of 2015

(UPDATED) Here's what 409,000 people pledged to fast from for the next 40 days. Morgan Lee [POSTED 2/17/2015 10:32AM]

What People Gave Up for Lent, According to Twitter

Social network sites and chocolate topped the list again. **Stephen Smith** [POSTED 4/14/2011 09:36AM]

What People Gave Up For Lent 2012 (According to Twitter)

Chocolate and social media once more top the list. And folks seem to have given up giving up Bieber.

Stephen Smith [POSTED 2/27/2012 03:45PM]

What People Gave Up for Lent 2013 (According to Twitter)

The final results are in. Whatever happened to giving up chocolate?

Kate Shellnutt [POSTED 2/18/2013 10:05AM]

What to Give Up for Lent 2016? Consider Twitter's Top Ideas

(UPDATED) Here's the final tally of the top 100 choices of 2016, plus charts on how Lenten abstinence has changed over time.

Morgan Lee [POSTED 2/5/2016 01:01PM]

What to Give Up for Lent 2017? Consider Twitter's Top Ideas

(UPDATED) Trump ranks between Facebook and hope in analysis of 73,000 tweets.

CT Staff [POSTED 2/27/2017 12:16PM]

Your Print Title Should Almost ALWAYS Change for Online

Under Discussion



Compiled by Kevin P. Emmert



Jesus Has Always Been Our Boyfriend

The biggest difference between old and new hymns.

fyou think contemporary praise music | lacks robust theology, you're not alone. Modern worship is widely criticized for not being Trinitarian enough, and its lyrics are often perceived to be more romantic than reverent-as if Jesus were a significant other, not the God of the universe.

A new study, however, finds that Jesus has always been the primary focus of evangelical songs. Further, traditional hymns and contemporary worship are more similar in describing the Trinity than is widely believed.

So says Lester Ruth, research professor of Christian worship at Duke Divinity School. He compared the 112 worship songs that topped the Christian Copyright License International lists between 1989 and 2015 with the 70 most-printed US evangelical hymns from 1737 to 1860. He found that both traditional hymns and praise songs are equally weak in

worship songs (1989-2015)

Popular worship songs that are Trinitarian (naming all three persons of the Trinity, Popular worship songs that

Popular evangelical hymns that are

heaven's blessings is immediate in praise songs, "As the angels and the heavenly host constantly sing 'holy, holy, holy' . . . so by our music we immediately access heaven and participate in our destiny to worship

God," he said. cr asked experts to weigh in.

Q: Do our worship songs promise too much 'heaven on earth'?

referencing the Trinity-and equally strong

in addressing Jesus (see stats at right).

never use sin as a verb per se, only as

a noun; meanwhile, hymns primarily

use sin as a verb. No single theory of

the Atonement predominates in either

era. And whereas hymns tend to exhort

people to worship, praise songs are more

hymns, heaven hasn't yet reached earth.

In praise songs, heaven is already here.

The striking difference between the two groups is eschatology. Ruth argues that in

Hymns emphasize patience and

perseverance, portraying the Christian

life "as a journey of harrowing dangers

and temptations that, if one stays true and

faithful, will safely bring the Christian,

by the grace of Christ, to a destiny of

By comparison, the fulfillment of

unspeakable bliss," said Ruth.

likely to worship God directly.

Ruth also found today's praise songs

(TE)

how songs highlight our access to God's presence in Christ-a truth from Hebrewssomething significant is our singing that there is lost if we forget another truth from Hebrews: We, present deficiency is to like Israel of old have a 'race set before us.' Our songs need to set realistic expectations for what we already possess in heaven, and for what is not yet ours while we sojourn here and now"

Michael Allen, associate professor, Reformed Theological Seminary

struggled to maintain the tension between the 'now' and the 'not vet' of our faith. To imply in no future expectation or turn worship into escapism, smugness, and a dangerous denial of present sin and evil. That Christ Alone' doesn't modern sonas seem to deny the 'not yet' may imply the church has limited its reach to the affluent and content."

"Christians have always

Will Willimon, professor, Duke Divinity School

*Charismatic piety since the Jesus People has led to the overrealized eschatology of modern songs. However, we should applaud songwriters trying to return Christian singing not back to the Weslew/Watts era, but to Scripture itself. For example, 'In perfectly reflect the journey motif in hymns. But it certainly focuses on the mighty acts of God in history."

Douglas O'Donnell, senior lecturer, Queensland Theological College

"It's crucial to recognize the cultural factors at work in both groups. Life for Christians centuries ago was difficult. They were more inclined to celebrate the future kingdom that God promised. Believers today expect life to be good, and appreciate their present experiences in Christ Neither is bad in itself. But if believers focus too much on one they can be distracted from serious discipleship."

dean emeritus, Fuller Theological Seminary reflect biblical themes. Modern songs reflect a distinct biblical emphasis that we currently have access to God's presence. This access is not merely deferred in Christ we have everything we need to draw upon God's enablement (Eph. 13). Assured that our future is secure, we can be less anxious about the present and patiently endure difficulties."

Darrell Bock, professor, Dallas Theological Seminary NEWS | UNDER DISCUSSION

Yes, Jesus Has Always Been Our Boyfriend

The biggest difference between old and new hymns isn't Trinitarian theology.

KEVIN P. EMMERT | JULY 1, 2015



Image: Shutterstock

EPA Headline Award Winners

That Worked in Print NOT Online



The Most Uncomfortable Christmas Verse LEER EN ESPAÑOL

"But women will be saved by childbearing," may not mean what you think it means.

WENDY ALSUP | NOVEMBER 23, 2016



Image: Pearl / Lightstock



Flip This CH \sqrt{RCH}

MORE SMALL CHURCHES ARE JOINING BIG ONES IN ORDER TO KEEP THEIR DOORS OPEN. CAN THE MULTISITE MOVEMENT GROW WITHOUT TREATING CONGREGATIONS AS LITTLE MORE THAN REAL ESTATE?



TRENDS

After Mars Hill, Will the Multisite Church Movement Grow Up?

More small churches are joining big ones in order to keep their doors open. Can multisite congregations grow without treating congregations as little more than real estate?

BOB SMIETANA | JULY 6, 2015





In Depth

Grapes of Wrath

In Lebanon's Napa Valley, Syrian refugees face a Steinbeck scenario. By Jeremy Weber in Beirut

eyed stands amid the rolling fields
of the Bekaa Valley, Just down the
road are award-winning, decadent
vineyards—a product of the fertile agricultural region's 5,000-year head start
on Napa Valley. The Romans even chose
to build their temple to Bacchus here.
Above loom the snow-covered slopes of
Mt. Hermon, where many today place
jesus' transfiguration. Surveying the sea
of green plants rustling in a pleasant
breeze, the 43-year-old describes what
he feels: "A kinfe in my heart."

For Faysal, a Syrian refugee, the scene is not one of grandeur but of guilt; in the field before him are three of his children—his 15-year-old son and 13- and 11-year-old daughters—bent in half as they weed optatoes instead of attending school.

"I have no choice," says the father to witness how the Bekaa Valley now

of six. In Aleppo, one of Syria's most war-torn cities, his job as a truck driver once provided a four-room house and a middle-class, urban life. Now, having injured his back in his own efforts at day labor, he can't pay there for their cobbled-together shelter on a farmer's property. So he just stands and watches his children. And cries.

"As a father, what is the purpose of my life if I can't provide for my children?" he says. "I'm ashamed of the present and the future."

On the shores of the Mediterranean Sea just north of Israel, Lebanon once enjoyed a reputation as the Switzerland of the Middle East, a land of milk and honey. On the eve of Ramadan, Christianity Today visited with World Vision *Lebanon does not allow official UN refugee camps, so many Syrians live in what aid workers call "informal tent settlements." Displaced for three years or more, many families pay rent to farmers through their children's lady

recalls John Steinbeck's Great Depression-eradescription of the Dust Bowland California. In the Bekaa, many refugees struggle to survive as tenant farmers, as did the loads of The Grapes of Wrath. But unlike the Joads, many used to be urban, middle-class families.

While Americans agonize over plans to resettle 10,000 Syrian refugees this year, Lebanon is straining under the weight of 1.5 million. And it's a nation of only 4.5 million, smaller than Connecticut and with fewer people than NEWS

Grapes of Wrath: Refugees Face Steinbeck Scenario in Lebanon's Napa Valley

While US debates resettling 10,000 Syrians, a country smaller than Connecticut struggles with hosting 1.5 million.

JEREMY WEBER IN BEIRUT | AUGUST 22, 2016



Image: Jon Warren / Courtesy of World Vision











PHOTOGRAPHY BY GARY S. CHAPMAN





O U T P A C I N G P E R S E C U T I O N

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CHRISTIANITYTODAY.COM NOVEMBER 2016

Incredible Indian Christianity: A Special Report on the World's Most Vibrant Christward Movement

Why it's the best and worst of times for India's burgeoning churches.

JEREMY WEBER | OCTOBER 21, 2016



Image: Gary S. Chapman

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(and beyond) while playing solo GamesRadar

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I Never Became Straight. Perhaps That Was Never God's Goal.

ChristianityToday.com

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Spotlight

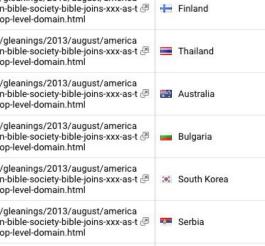
Where Protestants and Catholics Go When They Leave Their Churches ChristianityToday.com

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Name for Websites 'This is the Bible's moment to move from Gutenberg to Google,' states Jeremy Weber [POSTED 8/19/2013 01:24PM]	5.	/gleanings/2013/august/america n-bible-society-bible-joins-xxx-as-t @ op-level-domain.html	
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Sweden

Turkey

Pakistan

4,683
3,512
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10.537 (11.25%)

9,951 (10.63%)

7,610 (8.13%)

(5.00%)

(3.75%)

(2.50%)

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(1.88%)

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1,756 (1.88%)

9,951 (11.64%)

9.366 (10.96%)

9,366 (10.96%)

7,610 (8.91%)

3,512 (4.11%)

1,756 (2.05%)

1.756 (2.05%)

1,756 (2.05%)

1,756 (2.05%)

1,756 (2.05%)

1,171 (1.37%)

(0.68%)

585

(5.48%)

4,683

2.	christianity today	66,746	(1.04%)	96,965	(0.10%)	68.84%	1.0
3.	neilla hunter	37,525	(0.59%)	189,375	(0.19%)	19.82%	1.9
4.	lent 2017	26,835	(0.42%)	498,607	(0.51%)	5.38%	4.2
5.	things to give up for lent	21,871	(0.34%)	65,114	(0.07%)	33.59%	2.7
6.	martin luther	17,325	(0.27%)	1,214,056	(1.23%)	1.43%	4.8
7.	jehovah's witnesses russia	13,872	(0.22%)	109,678	(0.11%)	12.65%	3.9
8.	paula white	13,704	(0.21%)	243,235	(0.25%)	5.63%	5.6
9.	sex before marriage	13,067	(0.20%)	120,595	(0.12%)	10.84%	1.9
10.	holy spirit	12,464	(0.19%)	287,625	(0.29%)	4.33%	6.1
11.	what to give up for lent	12,339	(0.19%)	73,672	(0.07%)	16.75%	4.2
12.	st patrick	11,844	(0.19%)	653,713	(0.66%)	1.81%	5.9
13.	family christian stores closing	11,814	(0.18%)	36,110	(0.04%)	32.72%	2.0
14.	12 days of christmas	10,617	(0.17%)	141,018	(0.14%)	7.53%	4.3
15.	porn	10,359	(0.16%)	689,338	(0.70%)	1.50%	49
16.	speaking in tongues	8,217	(0.13%)	120,730	(0.12%)	6.81%	6.9
17.	dietrich bonhoeffer	7,108	(0.11%)	122,393	(0.12%)	5.81%	3.1
18.	tim keller	7,100	(0.11%)	47,531	(0.05%)	14.94%	3.7
19.	bible study	7,074	(0.11%)	129,889	(0.13%)	5.45%	4.9
20.	what is worship	7,068	(0.11%)	30,318	(0.03%)	23.31%	2.5
21.	john wesley	6,856	(0.11%)	164,058	(0.17%)	4.18%	3.2

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— □ 120K	Elisabeth Elliot Passes Through Gates of Splendor Books by widow of martyred Jim Elliot were staples in many evangelical homes. Update (June 22): Elisabeth Elliot's r
☐ 94K	Wheaton College Suspends Hijab-Wearing Professor After 'Same God' Comment (UPDATED) Larycia Hawkins said she wanted to show Advent solidarity with Muslims.
- ☐ 74K	Winter Is Coming: Mark Burnett, Roma Downey Launch \$25 Million Plan To Help Christians in Iraq and Syria Powerhouse TV Christian couple partner with Muslim king t
☐ 70K	Iran Frees Pastor Saeed Abedini after Three Years in Prison (UPDATED) Idaho pastor part of prisoner swap on Religious Freedom Day amid wife's Daniel-inspired fast.
	Russia's Newest Law: No Evangelizing Outside of Church (UPDATE) Putin signs new restrictions that limit where and how Christians share the gospel. Update (July 8):
☐ 49K	All 240 Family Christian Stores Are Closing More than 3,000 employees in 36 states will be laid off in the liquidation of one of the world's largest Christian retailers. More
□ 39К	\$600,000 Stolen from Joel Osteen's Lakewood Church Offering Megachurch 'heartbroken' but working closely with police on investigation. An estimated \$600,000 was s
- □ 31K	Died: Tim LaHaye, Author Who 'Left Behind' a Long Legacy Jerry B. Jenkins: 'Thrilled as I am that he is where he has always wanted to be, his departure leaves a void i
- □ 31K	Congrats, Frank Wolf: Obama Approves Expansion of International Religious Freedom Act IRFA modernization gives State Department new tools to protect Christians (
□ 30К	Willow Creek Chooses Co-Ed Pastors to Succeed Bill Hybels Since "no one person can replace" Willow Creek Community Church founder Bill Hybels, the influential meg
☐ 28K	Actually, Eugene Peterson Does Not Support Same-Sex Marriage A day after a Religion News Service interview portrayed retired pastor and author Eugene Peterson as
27K	Passion Students Sponsor Every Compassion Child in Four Countries Attendees at 50,000-strong conference commit to financially support 7,000 children in developing
——— 25K	The First Country to Officially Defend Christians Persecuted by ISIS Hungary has drawn criticism for favoring Christian over Muslim refugees from Syria and Iraq. This w
☐ 25K	California Lawmaker Drops Controversial Proposal to Regulate Religious Colleges SB 1146 won't be the religious liberty threat many Christians feared. A day after religious
23K	China Sees Red: Christian Protest Puts Hundreds of Crosses Back in Public (UPDATED) Protestants and Catholics unite for 'safe and legal non-violent disobedience.' U
☐ 21K	'Not Forgotten': The Top 50 Countries Where It's Most Difficult To Be A Christian Open Doors says 2014 saw the worst persecution of Christians in the 'modern era'—but
☐ 20K	Acts 29 Removes Mars Hill, Asks Mark Driscoll To Step Down and Seek Help (UPDATED) Mars Hill cancels Resurgence conference. Paul Tripp says Driscoll's accounta
☐ 19K	Confirmed: American's Pregnant Wife Faces Sudan Death Penalty for Not Renouncing Christian Faith (UPDATED) Convicted of adultery and apostasy, Sudanese docto
☐ 18K	Tim Keller Stepping Down as Redeemer Senior Pastor The influential Reformed leader is moving away from his NYC pulpit as his church becomes three. Later this year
☐ 17K	ISIS Kills 29 Christians on Church Bus Trip to Popular Monastery (UPDATED) Egypt cancels Ramadan's opening celebration as Copts resist revenge. [Updated at 11:15

Questions?

Case Studies

☆ | & 20 | ♀ 0 | Ø Add a topic







Q Search







Jeremy Weber 2:03 PM



tomorrow's promo is an egypt dispatch on how all the recent is martyrdom attacks (from libya beach to palm sunday bombings) have inspired muslims with the christian examples of forgiveness. it's really good so i want it to do well. ID is 138374.

below are the options i'm mulling. the first is my current placeholder. but i'm trying to a) not have it feel too "print headline-like", and b) possibly working in the hamilton "forgiveness/unimaginable" reference for a pop culture nod that would help it travel. thoughts?

The Coptic Power of Forgiveness

In their long struggle with terrorism, state, and society, it may be Egyptian Christians' best tool.

The Coptic Power of Forgiveness

Amid ISIS, Egyptian Christians try to do the unimaginable.

Forgiveness: Egyptian Christians Try to Do the Unimaginable Amid ISIS attacks, Coptic response inspires Muslim society.

The Scandal of Christian Forgiveness Impacts Egypt
The Scandal of Forgiveness Moves Christians and Muslims in Egypt
Martyrdoms moving from history to headlines has reawakened the church.

The Scandalous Power of Coptic Forgiveness Copts Find Power in Scandal of Forgiveness

Egypt's Biggest Christian Scandal: Forgiveness of ISIS

This Christian Scandal Is Just What Egypt Needs Forgiveness. Can you imagine?

Forgiveness Is More Scandalous (and Successful) When Copts Do It Forgiveness Is More Scandalous (and Successful) When Egyptian Christians Do It Forgiveness Is A Scandal. Even More So When Copts Do It

Forgiveness: Copts Push Through the Unimaginable Richard Clark 2:14 PM Personally i really like the straightforward Forgiveness: Egyptian Christians Try to Do the Unimaginable Amid ISIS attacks, Coptic response inspires Muslim society. **e** 2 Jenna DeWitt 2:14 PM me too Richard Clark 2:15 PM It feels like the kind of thing that doesn't need much help to gain attention, just a clear statement of what happened but unimaginable is a good way of just driving home the impact Morgan 2:17 PM when i thought of unimaginable my first thought was hamilton Kate Shellnutt 2:18 PM I think inspiring muslims is the headline-worthy part Kelli Trujillo 😭 2:18 PM The Hamilton song is actually a powerful association for this story, I think! Kate Shellnutt 2:21 PM After ISIS Attacks, Muslims Notice Christian Forgiveness Christian Forgiveness Is Inspiring Muslims in ISIS Areas Christians Bombed by ISIS Surprise Muslim Neighbors With Their Response In the Middle East, ISIS Bombs, Christians Forgive, Muslims Notice Jeremy Weber 3:38 PM

Forgiveness: Copts Learn to Live with the Unimaginable

thanks all. incorporating all the feedback, i'll go with:

3

Amid ISIS attacks, faithful response inspires Egyptian society.

Forgiveness: Muslims Moved as Coptic Christians Do the Unimaginable

INTERNATIONAL

Forgiveness: Muslims Moved as Coptic Christians Do the Unimaginable

Amid ISIS attacks, faithful response inspires Egyptian society.

JAYSON CASPER IN CAIRO APRIL 20, 2017 6:00 AM



Image: MOHAMED EL-SHAHED / AFP

Coffins are carried to the funeral of Egyptian Christians killed in Palm Sunday bombings.

In the Space of Our Face

Apple's Face ID may recognize us but God wants to know us.

Two Sides to the Face

Chinese surveillance technology can identify the human face, but God created it for so much more

Written All Over our Face

The human face is an expression of our personality and identity. People and God see faces, but increasingly, so does AI.

Two Sides to the Face

The human face is a person's public ID, which facial recognition AI increasingly will exploit. The human face is a person's conveyor of intimate expression, which God wants to know.

Apple's Face ID Is Closing in on Psalm 139
Apple's Face ID Is No Match for Psalm 139
What Apple's Face ID and Psalm 139 Have in Common

You Have Searched Me, Oh Apple Face ID, and You Know Me

Al may be familiar with all our ways, but God created our face for much more.

DOUGLAS ESTES | APRIL 5, 2018



Image: Spencer Whalen / Getty Images

The Hottest Thing at Church Is Not Your Pastor or Worship Leader

According to Gallup, it's the sermon.

KATE SHELLNUTT APRIL 18, 2017 10:10 AM



Image: Alex Workman / Lightstock



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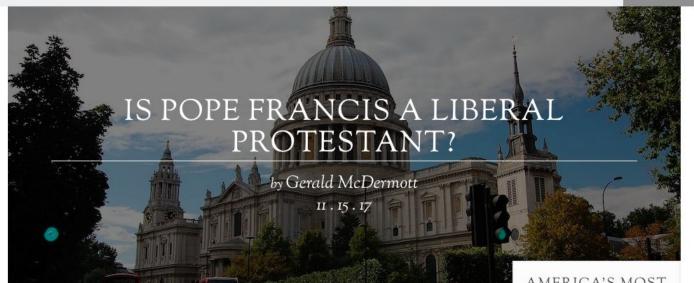
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s the pope Catholic?" For at least a century, this was the way we Anglicans joked about anything that seemed too obvious to state. Now we must ask in seriousness whether the pope is a liberal Protestant.

AMERICA'S MOST
INFLUENTIAL
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PUBLIC LIFE

Is the Pope Catholic? No, Seriously, Is He?

As moon blocks out sun, historic church blocks out traffic

By Michael Kelly BH News Service Aug 10, 2017 🗪 (0)





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Eclipse Church Won't Forgive Us Our Trespasses

The Eclipse Church near Tryon glows during a 2006 Christmas service. The owners say they've had to turn down

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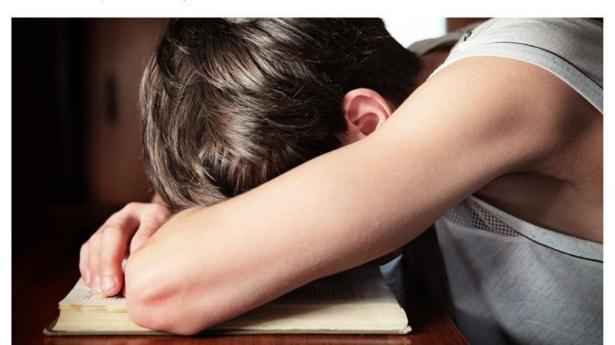
EPA Headline Award Winners

That Worked in Print AND Online

Why Lent Is Good for Bad Christians

The somber season leading up to Easter might feel like punishment. In fact, for people like me, it's sheer grace.

KATELYN BEATY | FEBRUARY 10, 2016



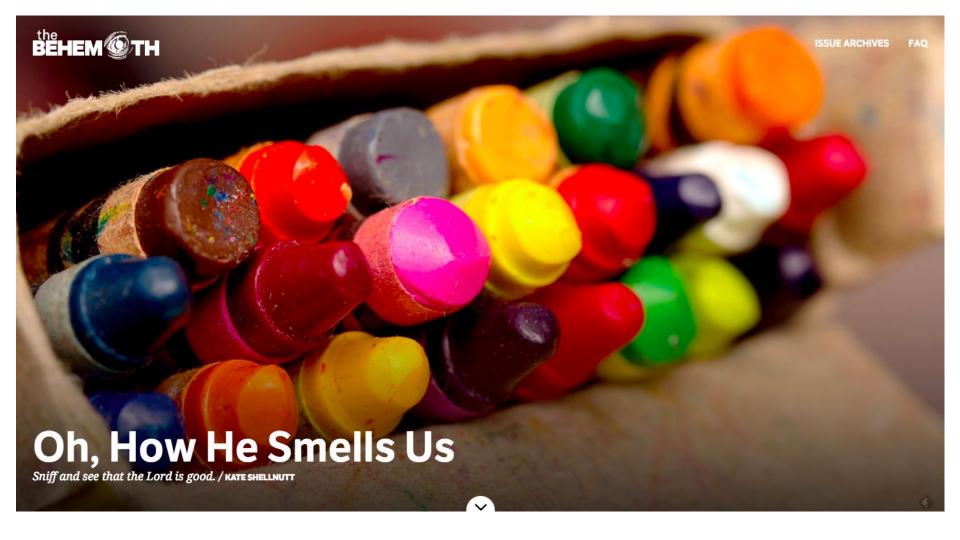
Breaking News: 2 Billion Christians Believe in Traditional Marriage

And so do we.

MARK GALLI | JUNE 9, 2015



Image: scribbletaylor / Flickr



The Most Influential Reformer You've Never Heard of

Hannah More shows us what happens when Christians focus on world-changing instead of infighting.



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China Bans Bibles from Online Sellers Like Amazon christianitytoday.com

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Will Israel deport 40,000 African migrants—many of whom are Eritrean or Sudanese Christians?



CHRISTIANITYTODAY.COM

Created for Asylum Seekers, Israel Intends to **Deport Thousands**





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Are you going up first or second? Or 10th?

China's online retailers pull Bible from shelves as Beijing gets strict on sale of holy text

Q china A1K South China Morning Post / 1d

China's online retail giants have removed the Bible from sale ir move by Beijing to restrict its distribution.... Taobao is owned also owns the South China Morning Post.

Bibles pulled from online stores as China increases control of religion

Q china M3K CNN / 18h

China has always controlled sales of the Bible, only allow and printed by state-sanctioned churches, but in recent available to buy online.



Beijing bans online Bible sales

Q china •11 www.asianews.it / 14h

In China, the Bible is treated as a publication "for internal distribution government-sanctioned bodies.... Business but especially political considerations are behind the move, namely the Bible's growing appearance.



China bans online sale of Bible

Q china 64 Premier UK News / 13h

Although China has always controlled sales of the Bible by only a distributed and printed by state-sanctioned churches, it had been buy online.



China Bans Online Bible Sales as It Tightens Religious Controls

Q china •1K Religion and Belief / 12h

The retailers did not respond to requests for comment, although start of a long holiday weekend in China.... The move aligns with effort to limit the influence of Christianity in China.



Bible Ban: God's Word Disappears from Online Stores in China

Q china +500+ CBNNews.com / 10h

What does Carl Minzner, author of the book, End of an Era: How Authoritarian Revival is Undermining its Rise think may happen Christians in the years ahead?





"Seek and ye shall find" no longer applies to Bibles on China's biggest online marketplaces



China Bans Bibles from Online Sellers Like Amazon

As atheist government pledges to promote "Chinese-style Christianity and theology," changes at JD.com, Taobao, and Dang Dang may revive debate over B... christianitytoday.com

6:58 PM - 5 Apr 2018

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No More 'Seek and Ye Shall Find' for Bibles in China's Online Markets

As atheist government pledges to promote "Chinese-style Christianity and theology," changes at JD.com, Taobao, and Dang Dang may revive debate over Bible access.

MORGAN LEE | APRIL 05, 2018 6:41 PM

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Image: China Photos / Getty Images

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China Bans Bibles from Online Sellers Like Amazon

As atheist government pledges to promote "Chinese-style Christianity and theology," changes at JD.com, Taobao, and Dang Dang may revive debate over Bible access.

MORGAN LEE | APRIL 05, 2018 6:41 PM

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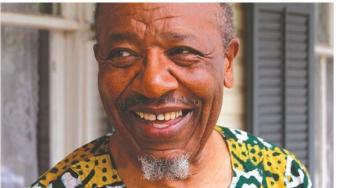
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Example 2: I need balance among the four items on our homepage news rail.



REVIEWS | BOOK REVIEW

John Perkins Has Hope for Racial Reconciliation. Do We?

The civil rights hero delivers his "final manifesto" on race and the church's call to unity.

DUKE KWON

Image: Courtesy of Baker House

News & Reporting

IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD

APR 5, 6:41 PM

China Bans Bibles from Online Sellers Like Amazon

As atheist government pledges to promote "Chinese-style Christianity and theology," changes at JD.com, Taobao, and Dang Dang may revive debate over Bible access.

APR 5, 10:41 AM

Created for Asylum Seekers, Israel Intends to Deport Thousands

40,000 African migrants many of whom are Christians fleeing Eritrea or Sudan considered "infiltrators" in need of urgent deportation.

APR 4, 9:11 AM -

50 Years After MLK, Sunday Segregation Isn't Theological

According to sociology's top survey, black and white evangelicals have more in common than politics conveys.

APR 4, 9:00 AM

For #MLK50, Christian Schools Launch \$1.5 Million in Minority Scholarships

Dream Forward initiative by Wheaton, Gordon, SBC seminaries, and others builds on Martin Luther King Jr. commemorations in Memphis.

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Died: Vonette Bright, Co-Founder of Campus Crusade for Christ

Bright, 89, was known for her love of prayer and her faithful witness. **Bob Smietana** [POSTED 12/23/2015 05:24PM]

Died: Don McClanen, Founder of Fellowship of Christian Athletes

(UPDATED) Vision of Oklahoma basketball coach 60 years ago now reaches 2 million annually.

Morgan Lee [POSTED 2/18/2016 03:29PM]

Died: Jan Crouch, Cofounder of Trinity Broadcasting Network

The 78-year-old started the world's largest religious cable network with her husband. Sarah Eekhoff Zylstra [POSTED 5/31/2016 10:38AM]

Died: Brennan Manning, Author of The Ragamuffin Gospel

Timothy C. Morgan [POSTED 4/13/2013 08:39AM]

The official website for Brennan Manning announced Friday that the author had died.

Died: Dallas Willard, 'Divine Conspiracy' Author and Philosopher

(UPDATED) Provocative thinker dies at 77 after revealing stage 4 cancer diagnosis.

Melissa Steffan and Jeremy Weber [POSTED 5/8/2013 11:44AM]

Died: Charles C. Ryrie, Theologian Whose Study Bible Shaped Dispensationalism

The 90-year-old scholar leaves behind a legacy beyond Dallas Seminary. **Kate Shelinutt** [POSTED 2/16/2016 02:34PM]

Died: Tim LaHaye, Author Who 'Left Behind' a Long Legacy

Jerry B. Jenkins: 'Thrilled as I am that he is where he has always wanted to be, his departure leaves a void in my soul.'

Jeremy Weber [POSTED 7/25/2016 11:01AM]

Missionary Pioneer Elisabeth Elliot Passes Through Gates of Splendor

Books by widow of martyred Jim Elliot were staples in many evangelical homes.

Kate Shellnutt [POSTED 6/15/2015 10:37AM]

Died: Gary Smalley, Author Who Helped Christians Make Love Last Forever

Speaker was one of Focus on the Family's favorite experts on marriage and relationships.

Sarah Eekhoff Zylstra [POSTED 3/8/2016 04:14PM]

Jerry Bridges' Pursuit of Holiness Has Come to an End

The beloved Navigators author and Bible teacher died Sunday.

Kate Shellnutt [POSTED 3/7/2016 09:47AM]

Died: Billy Ray Hearn, CCM Pioneer Who Discovered Amy Grant, Keith Green, and Steven Curtis Chapman

Michael Card, Twila Paris, and other stars of contemporary Christian music pay tribute to Sparrow Records founder.

Bob Smietana [POSTED 4/16/2015 06:26PM]

Died: Thomas Oden, Methodist Theologian Who Found Classical Christianity

His contribution to theology: nothing new. And that's what made him famous.

Kate Shellnutt [POSTED 12/8/2016 06:13PM]

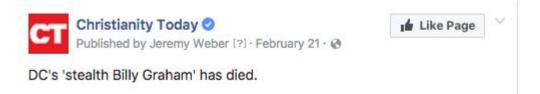
Died: Jack Chick, Cartoonist Whose Controversial Tracts Became Cult Hits

This was his life!

Kate Shellnutt [POSTED 10/24/2016 06:03PM]

Died: Doug Coe, Humble Faith in the Halls of Power

His Fellowship is the force behind DC discipleship and the National Prayer Breakfast. **Kate Shellnutt** [POSTED 2/21/2017 07:38PM]



Not Left Behind: Russell Doughten, Movie Evangelist Who Scared Scores with 'A Thief in the Night'

Died: Producer of 'The Blob' best known for End Times series seen by millions.

Jeremy Weber [POSTED 8/27/2013 12:49PM]

Died: Scholar Who Made the Bible Kid-Friendly

Adventure Bible and Teen Study Bible editor Lawrence O. Richards reimagined Christian education for evangelicals.

Kate Shellnutt [POSTED 10/26/2016 11:25AM]

Died: Bob Pierce's and Billy Graham's Bible Translator to India

Rochunga Pudaite went on from Wheaton College to found Bibles For The World.

Morgan Lee [POSTED 10/16/2015 05:15PM]

Died: George Beverly Shea, Longtime Singer at Billy Graham Crusades

(UPDATED) Shea's "How Great Thou Art" defined 'the faith of a generation that Graham helped bring to Jesus.'

Jeremy Weber [POSTED 4/16/2013 10:14PM]

Died: Donald P. Hustad, Graham Crusade Organist Who 'Inspired Generations' of Church Musicians

Long-time associate of George Beverly Shea, Hustad taught at Moody Bible Institute and Southern Baptist Seminary.

Timothy C. Morgan [POSTED 6/26/2013 10:11AM]

Died: Philip Teng, Unanimous Choice to Help Billy Graham Evangelize China

When famed evangelist wanted to take wife Ruth back to her birth country, there was only one man for the job...

Kate Tracy [POSTED 2/4/2014 10:23AM]

'Wrath of God' Keeps Popular Worship Song Out of 10,000-Plus Churches

(UPDATED) The hymn's controversial lyrics are now making waves among Southern Baptists. **Abby Stocker** [POSTED 8/1/2013 12:27PM]

Christians Welcome World's Newest Terrorist Organization

Religious freedom advocates applaud State Department's new status for Nigeria's Boko Haram.

Jeremy Weber [POSTED 11/14/2013 03:29PM]

After Tweaking 29 Verses, Bible Translation Becomes Unchanging Word of God

The new permanent ESV echoes the example of the KJV. Sarah Eekhoff Zylstra [POSTED 9/9/2016 10:45AM]

Sorry, Colorado Springs: The Top 10 Most 'Bible Minded' Cities in America

New list by Barna and American Bible Society examines regular Bible reading, belief in accuracy.

Jeremy Weber [POSTED 1/24/2013 10:10AM]

Sorry, John 3:16: The Top 10 Bible Verses YouVersion Shared Most in 2013

Leading Bible app analyzes how its millions of users used the Bible this year.

Jeremy Weber [POSTED 12/30/2013 02:38PM]

Sorry, Tertullian

Recent research tests the most famous adage about the persecuted church.

Morgan Lee / DECEMBER 4, 2014

The Fight for Egypt's Future

Coptic Christians test new strategies to thrive in an Islamist Egypt.

Jeremy Weber in Cairo / MAY 31, 2012

Missionary Donn Ketcham Abused 18 Children. Here's Why He Wasn't Stopped.

(UPDATED) After Bangladesh MKs speak out, ABWE releases final report on past problems and future protections.

Sarah Eekhoff Zylstra / MAY 10, 2016

World Vision: Why We're Hiring Gay Christians in Same-Sex Marriages

(UPDATED) Controversial decision reversed days after president Richard Stearns explains change is a symbol of Christian 'unity' not 'compromise.'

Celeste Gracey and Jeremy Weber / MARCH 24, 2014

Compassion: Why We're Leaving India, But Still Have Hope

'Frustrated' CEO explains how shutdown of 589 centers serving 145,000 children will affect staff, sponsors, and churches.

Sarah Eekhoff Zylstra / MARCH 1, 2017

Red Tape: China Wants to Constrict Christian Activities with 26 New Rules

Both official and house churches now face bigger threat than cross removal campaign.

Sarah Eekhoff Zylstra [POSTED 10/3/2016 11:58AM]

After Removing 400 Crosses, China Proposes Where Churches Can Put Them Instead

(UPDATED) China protests USCIRF report, but campaign to 'de-Christianize' skyline of China's Jerusalem continues.

Sarah Eekhoff Zylstra [POSTED 5/7/2015 10:48AM]

China Lifts High the Cross (Right Off Dozens of Churches)

Photos show campaign to 'de-Christianize' skyline of 'China's Jerusalem' continues. **Kate Tracy** [POSTED 5/30/2014 10:23AM]











Image: Courtesy of China Aid

And The Walls Came Tumbling Down in China's 'Jerusalem'

'Human shield' fails to save megachurch from demolition in China's largest Christian city. **Kate Tracy** [POSTED 5/2/2014 04:03PM]



Image: Photo from Chinese social media (submitted to CT)