

*Christians Under Attack:  
Struggles and Persecution Throughout the World*  
(Miami, FL: Mango Press with The Associated Press, 2015),

After reading the stories and accounts in this recent journalistic overview of persecution, there seems little doubt that Christianity is the most persecuted religion in the world today. Ranging from Lebanon to China, Nigeria to Pakistan, it is a story of atrocity after atrocity perpetrated against professing Christians: from Muslim drive-by killings of Christians at weddings in Cairo and northeast Nigeria to suicide bombers killing worshippers in Pakistani churches. In many parts of the Middle East, ancient Christian communities are being annihilated (see also the recent article, “The Plight of the Christians”, *The Wall Street Journal*, (Saturday/Sunday, May 16–17, 2015), C1–2).

All of the accounts are recent ones by AP journalists. Replete with numerous color pictures, this is a difficult book to read, but it is also vital for those of us in the West who are seeking to be disciples of Jesus Christ. Here we are reminded of the cost of discipleship and that there are some things more precious than life itself, namely commitment to the Triune God. There are some accounts here with happy endings in this world (e.g., the freeing of Meriam Ibrahim, p. 123), but most await the justice of the world to come. There are also some disturbing accounts of Christian retaliation. For example, in the Central African Republic professing Christians have been involved in massacring Muslims, after Muslim rebels killed hundreds of Christians (p.83–91). Reading this account of the religious violence in the Central African Republic reminded me of the horrors of the French religious wars in the late sixteenth century.

A quote from an Iraqi Christian housewife, Sahira Hakim, at the very beginning of the book opposite the table of contents, though, helps set this matter of persecution in context: “We Christians are like roses. If you remove them from a garden, it will not be beautiful anymore.” Yes, indeed! True Christianity is a thing of beauty; remove it from a society and culture, and there will eventually be a deadly wasteland.

The gravity of this subject has prompted The Andrew Fuller Center for Baptist Studies to take for its conference theme this coming September 15–16, 2015, the matter of persecution in the history of the Church. Do join us as we reflect about this subject from both biblical and historical vantage-points, and spend time in prayer for the persecuted church. There is also a pre-conference round-table discussion on “Martyrdom in the Ancient Church: reality and fiction” on Monday evening, September 14, which will be co-sponsored by the Center for Ancient Christian Studies. A 3-hour credit hybrid course attached to the conference with classes during the day on Monday, September 14, is also being offered.

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