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**Christians slaughtered, world yawns**  
By Lawrence J. Haas

Across our world in which 7.1 billion people dwell, 2.2 billion (or 31 percent) are Christians. They pray in mega-churches across America, in isolated villages in China, and in thousands of places in between.

More and more, they pray in fear. That's because, as the Hudson Institute's Paul Marshall, Lela Gilbert, and Nina Shea outline in detail in their new book, *Persecuted*, Christians are under "global assault."

"Christians are the single most widely persecuted religious group in the world today," the authors write. That may come as news to my fellow Jews who focus on the global rise of an ugly new phase of anti-Semitism, or to Muslim leaders who say that "Islamophobia" is our biggest problem. Christians have been harassed in 133 nations – two-thirds of all nations – and suffer in more places than any other religious group, according to a Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life figure that the authors cite.

As remarkable as the global assault, however, is the relative silence by global leaders and the media. Though Christians are overwhelmingly the leaders of governments across the West, no national leader has seen fit to call much attention to the horror.

"[T]here are Christians in the countries of focus who are tortured, raped, imprisoned, or killed for their faith," the authors write. "Their churches may also be attacked or destroyed. Their entire communities may be crushed by a variety of deliberately targeted measures that may or may not entail violence."

Christian persecution occurs across Asia, Africa, and the Greater Middle East; it ranges from restrictions on worship to assassination for owning a Bible; and it occurs due to government sponsorship (e.g., in North Korea, Vietnam, China, Burma, Saudi Arabia, and Iran), social intolerance (in Nigeria and Iraq), or acts of terrorism from Muslim extremists (e.g., in Somalia and Afghanistan).

Though the world's remaining Communist countries persecute the most Christians, the authors write, "It is in the Muslim world where persecution of Christians is now most widespread, intense, and ominously increasing."

"Among those assaulted with violence on a horrific scale have been the young, fast-growing churches of Nigeria and South Sudan, which are seen as a threat to Muslim hegemony. Individual converts from Islam, such as Pastor Youcef Nadarkhani in Iran, are particularly at risk of being put to death or otherwise harshly punished by either the governments or extremist elements within society in significant parts of the Muslim world. They are denounced as apostates."

But ancient churches, including Iraq's Chaldean and Assyrian churches and Egypt's Coptic churches, are under attack as well.

In some places, governments are increasingly tightening the screws on Christians or stepping aside while extremist groups do it for them. In others, like Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan, there are hardly any screws left to tighten because the governments don't even allow churches in which Christians might worship.

None of this, by the way, is any great secret, however little the mainstream media chooses to focus on it. Shea writes often about Christian persecution from her perch as Director of Hudson's Center for Religious Freedom. So, too, do Marshall, a Hudson Senior Fellow, and Gilbert, an Adjunct Fellow.

And so, too, does Raymond Ibrahim, an Associate Fellow at the Middle East Forum who has tallied the global Muslim persecution of Christians in monthly reports, each one rich with heart-wrenching detail.

In his report about December of 2012, for instance, Ibrahim wrote of dozens of Christians slaughtered in Church attacks in Nigeria, the throats of several victims cut; of a Christian man beheaded in Iraq, his remains fed to dogs; of a 70-year-old Bible school teacher shot in front of her home in Pakistan; of a 55-year-old convert to Christianity gunned down in Somalia; and of an explosion that killed two at a Coptic Christian church in Libya.

He also wrote of a young Muslim girl beaten to unconsciousness by her parents after converting to Christianity; of a youth gang that "accosted" the Holy Cross Church in Denmark; of 200 Muslims throwing rotten eggs at Christians who tried to hold Christmas Mass in Indonesia; and of Nadarkhani's re-arrest in Iran on Christmas Day.

How many more Christians around the world must die before global leaders, the media, and others of influence gives this horror the attention it deserves?

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