

Dear Nikki,

1/18/17

As a citizen of South Carolina, I am so very proud of you as our governor - I appreciate your strong, but humble leadership, your concern for your states' citizens, the way you have strengthened the economy, and especially how you have governed with faith in God's guidance and with respect for all people.

When I read the enclosed article from World Magazine that describes the plight of Christian refugees from Iraq & Syria, I wanted to send it to you because I believe that as our new U.N. Ambassador, you would find a way to provide aid for this neglected minority.

According to the article, none



of the billions of dollars in
P.S. aid, managed primarily
by the U.N., has reached the
Christian minority.

I hope that as our U.N.
Ambassador you will be
able to make a difference.

My prayers go with you
May God bless you!

Pam Schmutz

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Iraqis attend a service in the Assyrian Orthodox church of Mart Shmoni, in Bartella, on Dec. 24.

for populations affected by ISIS. UN programs manage a significant portion of that funding. But for Christians nothing has changed since a Chaldean representative, Stephen Rasche, testified to Congress last September: “The Christian community in Iraq has received nothing in aid from any U.S. aid agencies or the UN.”

U.S. Rep. Chris Smith, R-N.J., a senior member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, went to assess the situation for himself after hearing testimony from Rasche, an American attorney for the Chaldean archdiocese in Erbil. The diocese oversees care for approximately 70,000 people displaced from Mosul and Nineveh Plains, for nearly

three years now relying entirely on private church-based donations.

Smith arrived in Erbil on Dec. 23 and told me he could not gain security clearance from the U.S. Consulate there or the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad to visit the church-based camps. The lawmaker traveled without official U.S. security to Ashti-2, at 6,000 residents the largest Christian camp. Unlike camps for Muslims in the area, it receives no support from USAID or from U.S. government-funded NGOs like the International Rescue Committee and Save the Children.

“I could not be more disappointed,” Smith told me by phone from Washington after his return, “that especially after the last three years these Christians have not gotten more help. The funding is there, and we have asked repeatedly for money, but they have bypassed the Christians.”

Last year the Republican-led Congress allowed to die without a vote a bill introduced by Smith to address the discrepancy and protect minority communities in Iraq, H.R. 5961.

Beyond ISIS

BILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN U.S. HUMANITARIAN AID AREN'T REACHING IRAQ'S CHRISTIANS *by Mindy Belz*

➔ A spate of bombings in Iraq and Turkey shows militants belonging to ISIS aren't ready to give up. Twin blasts ripped through central Baghdad on New Year's Eve and again on Jan. 2, leaving more than 50 dead and hundreds wounded. ISIS also spawned a New Year's Day shooting at a nightclub in Istanbul, killing 39.

But the bombings were a distraction from recent ISIS military losses in Syria and Iraq. With the group's plans for a global caliphate largely diminished, an international coalition is readying plans to restore damaged cities and towns recently captured from ISIS.

Overall, the violence has affected every religious and ethnic group. But nearly a year after the United States and others—including the European Union—

declared ISIS actions to be genocide against Christians and other minorities, billions of dollars in humanitarian aid aren't reaching these believers.

Upcoming rebuilding efforts also appear to exclude affected Christians, whose population has dwindled by close to 80 percent since the 2003 U.S.-led war—from 1.4 million to under 225,000. Displaced by ISIS invasions since 2014, many of the remnant are sheltering for a third winter in unfinished buildings or temporary unheated trailers.

More than 3 million Iraqis have fled their homes since ISIS seized territory in Iraq in 2014, and the United States has allocated \$1.1 billion in humanitarian aid, with an additional \$1 billion made available in last year's stopgap spending bill for “economic support”

DISPATCHES

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Historic pilgrimage

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (left) and U.S. President Barack Obama throw flower petals into the Wishing Well at the USS Arizona Memorial at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. During the Dec. 27 ceremony, Abe expressed his "sincere and everlasting condolences" for the 2,400 Americans killed during Japan's attack on the harbor's naval base 75 years earlier. Abe is the first Japanese prime minister to visit the site since the 1950s.



December's stopgap spending measure included \$1 billion in economic support aimed at victims of ISIS genocide, but it did not specify minority groups and has no reporting mechanism to ensure how the money is spent.

The UN Development Program (UNDP) is expected to manage U.S. and other funding to rebuild Iraqi towns laid waste by ISIS, with \$48 million already committed by the United States for "immediate stabilization." UNDP's latest report shows about 20 distribution centers across Iraq—but not one facility is located in Christian areas of Nineveh Plains.

Many of those historic villages and sites around Mosul—including ancient churches, monasteries, and shrines marking the birthplaces of Old Testament prophets—already have been liberated from ISIS and are currently controlled by Kurdish or other militia forces. Residents, however, have not been allowed to return until security and reconstruction plans are in place.

In the camp in Iraq, Smith said, he was able to attend a Christmas program with about 200 elementary students singing. "What's striking are the signs of joy and the lack of complaint," he told me. "But if the takeaway is they are doing OK, they are not doing OK because we are doing what we should to help them, but it's their faith. That's what is getting them through it." ❁

HOPE AWARD HOPEFULS

WORLD is accepting nominations throughout January for the 12th annual Hope Award for Effective Compassion. Please email June McGraw (jmcgraw@wng.org) a note with the name of an explicitly Christian poverty-fighting ministry you've observed and a paragraph about what it does. Groups must offer challenging, personal, and spiritual help and rely on the time and money of volunteers. Ministries that don't make the cut this year will be eligible for consideration in future years.

40%

The percentage of young Americans ages 18 to 34 who were living with their parents, siblings, or other relatives in 2015, according to a Trulia analysis. It was the highest percentage since 1940.

11.4 million

The average number of viewers for *Monday Night Football* during the 2016 season, the second-lowest average since the weekly NFL game moved to ESPN in 2006.

762

The number of homicides in Chicago in 2016, the city's highest total in two decades.

2 million

The number of Israeli children estimated to have been aborted since the 1948 founding of Israel, which permits abortions at any stage of pregnancy. Hitler killed 1 million Jewish children.

15 million

The number of rides provided by Uber on New Year's Eve, according to company estimates, nearly triple that of the year before.



Charged

Authorities on Dec. 21 charged **Andrew McClinton** with arson for allegedly burning Hopewell Missionary Baptist Church, an African-American church in Greenville, Miss., in November. McClinton, an African-American, attended the church. The attack included a spray-painted "Vote Trump" message on the church, leading authorities initially to suspect a political motivation (see "Human Race," Nov. 26). Hopewell is boarded up currently and will probably be torn down. Rebuilding will take months, and the predominantly white congregation of First Baptist Church has welcomed the Hopewell congregation to use its building for as long as Hopewell needs it.

Accused

Authorities say three Chinese citizens hacked into the computers of U.S. law firms, making more than \$4 million off their fraud. The three, posing as information technology analysts, allegedly stole information from seven

New York firms for use in insider trading, making tens of thousands of attempts before they broke into their systems. They allegedly made investments based on the information they stole, landing massive profits and sparking an investigation. Authorities have arrested one of the alleged hackers, Iat Hong from Hong Kong, but the other two are still at large.

Bombed

A driver plowed a van carrying gas cylinders into the headquarters building of the **Australian Christian Lobby** in Deakin on Dec. 21, causing damage to the building but no injuries to those inside it. The driver

was treated at a hospital for injuries. Police quickly said the driver's actions "were not politically, religiously or ideologically motivated." ACL managing director (and *WORLD's* Daniel of the Year) Lyle Shelton disagreed, telling ABC radio the act was "an attack against the sort of things that we've been saying in the public square."

Reunited

More than a dozen Chibok girls kidnapped by Boko Haram were reunited with their families, seeing them on Christmas Day for the first time since their kidnapping. The schoolgirls, 21 of them and a baby, waited nearly three years

for their kidnappers to release them. In April 2014, Boko Haram kidnapped nearly 300 Christian girls and forced them to convert to Islam, sparking international outrage. Nigerian authorities and an unidentified Swiss contingent brokered a deal leading to the release of these 21 girls. The girls spent two months undergoing psychoanalysis and medical assistance before they went home to their families.

Admitted

Russian officials in December conceded, for the first time, the large-scale doping of their Olympic athletes. Olympic officials have been collecting information chronicling an institutional doping conspiracy for years. The **Russian sports agency**



began by vehemently denying the accusations, even after Olympic officials banned Russian athletes from the last Olympics. But the investigation has now been published, and the International Olympic Committee required the nation to admit the truth in order to be accepted again as an equal Olympic competitor and possible host of future games. The Russians, however, only admitted to a low-level conspiracy, still claiming the Russian government was not involved.

