

This is not the worst thing that can happen to us'

"In this world you will have troubles, but take heart I have overcome the world." — John 16:33

Along with the rest of the world, I was horrified by the brutal beheading of 21 Egyptian Coptic Christians by the Islamic State — an attempt to strike fear in anyone with an internet connection and a heart.

Tactical. Shrewd. Evil.

I immediately thought of my Coptic Christian friends. While my wife and I were students at Harding University, we spent a couple of weeks traveling in Egypt. Even then, the Coptic community was feeling persecuted in their predominantly Muslim homeland. They were cautious to identify themselves publicly, but several whispered to us "I follow Jesus too," and the like.

Sometimes they didn't have to say anything — like Jasar.

We met Jasar when we stopped at a kiosk to get a snack. He had an Arabic Bible open in his lap. He told me that Jesus followers were all around us, trying to live at peace with people who don't believe like they do.

Often, Egyptians are confused by Christianity and American culture, he said. I soon understood what he meant. Before we left, a Muslim gave me a handwritten note — addressed to me, then-president George W. Bush and Condoleezza Rice. I've kept it for more than 13 years:

Americans: Please tell your film censor board not to release any pop albums which are of bad scenes. This will affect our children in bad manner. Thank you for your presence.

The man who gave it to me told me that he could never be a Christian because he believed that sex was meant only for marriage and shouldn't be degraded the way he saw it portrayed on imported television shows and songs from the West.

The Islamic State makes the same mistake — assuming that the way of Jesus is embodied by American culture, politics, territory. The murder of the Coptic Christians is a letter, "signed in blood to the nation of the Cross," they claim.

I'm a part of this nation of the Cross. It has no borders. It is a worldwide community of people who believe that this act of brutality is not the worst thing that can happen to us. Murder doesn't silence the voices of the slain. Their blood cries out to God.

Fear-driven acts of bullying only strengthen our resolve to lay down our lives. "The blood of Christians is the seed of Christianity," one early Jesus follower wrote, during a much scarier time than this. And he was right.

Back to Jasar, my Coptic Christian friend. After visiting with him for a few minutes, I asked him to read John 16:33. His rough translation from his Arabic Bible was this: *"This life and the world you live in will be hard, but don't be anxious. I win."*

Come soon, Lord Jesus.

— JONATHAN STORMENT—*Christian Chronicle*, February 2015

Storment is preaching minister for the Highland Church of Christ in Abilene, Texas.

See jonathanstorment.com for an expanded version of this piece and thoughts on leadership, church and culture.

PRAYER LIST

- **Pauline Alvarez** (health)
- **Lauren Babb** (health)
- **Aaron Banks**
- **John Beiler** (health)
- **Jim Carpenter** (Cody Chrismon's great uncle—health)
- **Dawn Clarke** (Shirley Kuchynka's daughter)
- **Betty Cox** (Brent Barnick's sister—Texan nursing home)
- **Dixie** (Debbie Faires's mother—Alzheimer's)
- **Jake Faires** (Air Force, deployed to Jordan)
- **Paul Faires** (health)
- **Steven Faires, and Lexi**
- **Leon Giesecke** (Jan Moerbe's father—throat cancer)
- **Kameron Glass** (recovery from surgery, broken ankle)
- **Herbert and Nelle Hahn** (health)
- **Debbie Jalufka**
- **Sandra Jetton** (health)
- **Kevin and Victoria Johnson** (healthy pregnancy/baby)
- **Ada Powell** (Sharron Mason's sister—health)
- **Jean Rice** (Rex Boggs's cousin—health)
- **Randall Sweeney** (recovering from surgery)
- **Adrienne Zingrich** (Susan Barnick's cousin—cancer)

If you have any announcements or prayer requests you wish to have included in the bulletin or to sign up for weekly e-mail updates, please contact Victoria Johnson: 325-518-9205, victoria@gonzaleschurchofchrist.org.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Family Field Day & Easter Egg Hunt

Please make plans to join us for a Family Field Day & Easter Egg Hunt **next Sunday, April 9**. We will have a potluck lunch in the annex immediately following morning worship. Anyone who is able is asked to bring a dish to share. At the conclusion of lunch, we will have an Easter egg hunt for the smaller children. Then, after the hunt, we will have family field day games. **Please bring a change of clothes that can get a little wet and a little dirty.**

Easter Egg Candy

Our annual Easter egg hunt will be Sunday, April 9. The congregation is asked to bring candy or pre-stuffed eggs to the church **TODAY**.

Field Day Supplies

Following our Easter egg hunt on April 9, we will have a family field day. **Please pick up a list of needed supplies in the foyer.** If you have any of the items on the list, please contact Kevin or Victoria, or bring the items to the church **TODAY**.

Host Family Needed

Volunteers are needed to host April's 5th Sunday Fellowship on **April 30**. Please contact Victoria Johnson if you are interested in hosting this event.

Peach Valley Bar-B-Q Fundraiser

Peach Valley Christian Youth Camp is hosting its Annual Bar-B-Q Fundraiser on **Saturday, April 29**. A silent auction will follow. Please sign up in the foyer if you are able to prepare a dessert. Desserts need to be to the annex by 9:30 a.m. that morning. Please see Peggy or Pauline if you have items you can donate for the silent auction.

Baby Shower

You're invited to a baby shower honoring **Kevin and Victoria Johnson** on **Sunday, April 30, from 2-4 p.m.** at the home of Stacia Sweeney. Kevin and Victoria are registered at Wal-Mart, Target, Babies 'R' Us, and Babylist.com.

Wednesday Evening Meal & Bible Study

Please join us at **5:15 p.m. this Wednesday** for dinner in the annex. This week's entrée is **potato soup**. Anyone who is able is asked to bring sides to share, but please do not let that prevent you from joining us. Classes for all ages follow at 6 p.m.

Volunteers Needed: Wednesday Night Meals

Volunteers are needed to prepare the entrée for meals on Wednesday evenings. To help, please sign up in the foyer. **If you signed up to prepare a meal, please send your menu to Victoria by Wednesday the week before your turn.**

Volunteers Needed: Communion Prep

Volunteers are needed to prepare communion in the coming months. This task takes very little time and is a great service to the congregation. Please sign up on the large bulletin board in the foyer.

Sunday Night Small Group

There is a small group that meets in the annex each Sunday evening from 6-7 p.m. The Lord's Supper is available.

Tuesday Morning Men's Prayer Breakfast

All men are invited to the annex each Tuesday morning at **6:20 a.m.** for a time of breakfast, prayer and fellowship.

Ladies Class

Ladies Class continues **this Tuesday, March 28, at 11 a.m. at Jennie Chrismon's house in Shiner.** We are continuing the series *Ruth: Loss, Love & Legacy* by Kelly Minter. For more information, please contact Jennie.

Mark Your Calendars

May 7—Senior Sunday

YOUTH ZONE

MONDAY, APRIL 3
JUNIOR HIGH TRACK AND FIELD
SHINER @ DISTRICT MEET (WEIMAR)

LITTLE LEAGUE SOFTBALL
ASTROS @ REDS, 6 P.M. (FIELD 3)
LITTLE LEAGUE BASEBALL

METS V. CUERO RANGERS, 7 P.M. (FIELD 1)

TUESDAY, APRIL 4
HIGH SCHOOL TENNIS

GONZALES JV @ DISTRICT (NAVARRO)
LITTLE LEAGUE BASEBALL
CUBS @ YANKEES, 7 P.M. (FIELD 1)



Hunter Babb—Cubs (Shiner Baseball)
Caden Chrismon—Shiner Jr High Track & Field,
Mets (Shiner Baseball)
Callie Chrismon—Astros (Shiner Softball)
Jacy Chrismon—Shiner Jr High Track & Field

APRIL 5-6
HIGH SCHOOL TRACK AND FIELD
GONZALES @ DISTRICT 27-4A MEET (WIMBERLEY)

THURSDAY, APRIL 6
LITTLE LEAGUE BASEBALL
METS V. TIGERS, 7 P.M. (FIELD 1)

FRIDAY, APRIL 7
HIGH SCHOOL SOFTBALL
GONZALES @ AUSTIN EASTSIDE, 5 P.M.
LITTLE LEAGUE BASEBALL
CUBS V. RANGERS, 7 P.M. (FIELD 2)



Megan Epley—Shiner Jr High Track & Field
Cole Hendershot—Gonzales HS JV Tennis
Coach Kevin Johnson—Gonzales HS Girls Track & Field
Morgan Mason—Gonzales HS Varsity Softball