

# In Others' Words

*Editor's Note: In this department, we highlight resources outside of the IJFM: other journals, print resources, DVDs, websites, blogs, videos, etc. Standard disclaimers on content apply. Due to the length of many web addresses, we sometimes give just the title of the resource, the main web address, or a suggested search phrase.*

## How Do Pandemics Affect Missions, Historically?

Don't miss an essay on how pandemics in general—and the 1918 Spanish Flu in particular—affected global missions (“[COVID-19 in Missiological and Historical Perspective](#),” by Hartley, Danielson, and Krabill in the January–March 2021 issue of *Missiology*). James Krabill looks at Nigeria and how the devastation of the Spanish Flu compelled Nigerian believers to turn to prayer and revival. Krabill's enlightening piece highlighted the emergence of new indigenous forms of Christianity in the wake of the impotence of Western medicine and the Western church to protect or heal.

## Is There a New Variant in the Amazon?

Deep in the Brazilian Amazon rainforest, Manaus—a city of two million devastated by COVID-19 last April—is being hit all over again by the virus. Hospitals are inundated, mass graves are being dug, hospitals have run out of oxygen, and people are dying of asphyxia. Check out this disturbing story in [The Atlantic, February 2021](#): “The Brazil Variant is Exposing the World's Vulnerability.” Is this a new variant to which there is no immunity? (See the *BMJ*'s “[COVID-19: Is Manaus the Final Nail in the Coffin of Herd Immunity?](#)” See also *Nature*'s “[COVID Research Updates](#),” Feb 26, 2021.)

## Why Is India's COVID-19 Fatality Rate so Low?

Compare it to India where they have had very low percentages of fatalities but very widespread cases of the disease, with estimates of one in four people out of 1.3 billion having already been infected. (See the *Jakarta Post* “[Over 300 Million Indians May Have/Had COVID-19](#),” and the *Straits Times* “[Over Half in Delhi May Have Had COVID-19](#).”) Scientists really don't know why the virus is so virulent in some settings and so weak in others. One possible clue might be the number of previous exposures to other viruses (*NPR*'s “[The Mystery of India's Plummeting COVID-19 Cases](#),” February 2, 2021.)

## COVID-19 Economic Hardship Hits Africa and Slums

But the poor, and the continent of Africa, have been the hardest hit, not necessarily by COVID-19-related deaths, but by economic hardship. See the article, “[Millions of Defaults Threaten the Future of Microfinance in India](#),” in the *Japan Times*, February 4, 2021. See also: “The Pandemic Could Undercut Africa's Precarious Progress” ([The Economist, February 6, 2021](#)). Also don't miss the excellent academic study of COVID-19 in eight global slums published January 21, 2021 by the *Journal*

*of the Royal Society Interface*: “[Spread of COVID-19 in Urban Neighbourhoods and Slums of the Developing World](#).”

Thanks to [JustinLong.org](#) for some of these links in “Round Up.”

## Kidnapping Nigerian Children: A Steady Source of Income for Terrorists

Speaking of Africa, Nigeria has been again hit hard recently with [mass kidnappings](#) of school children. Over [600 have been abducted](#) since December 2020 and [several hundred more in March 2021](#). Most have been returned, but only after ransoms were paid, turning kidnapping into a new income stream for terrorists. Yet, according to UNICEF, 173 girls remain missing out of 276 kidnapped by Boko Haram in 2014 from Chibok, NE Nigeria. (See “[Nigeria's Boarding Schools Have Become a Hunting Ground for Kidnappers](#),” in the *New York Times*, March 1, 2021.) Nigeria is the most populous nation in Africa and [Business Insider Africa](#) predicts it will be the second most populous country in the world by 2100. But what is happening to a generation of schoolchildren, the country's future leaders?

There are 10.5 million Nigerian children out of school. And with every attack, this number continues to swell . . . Nigerian children are unfortunately—and their parents—being forced to choose between their lives and their education. This poses the risk of creating a lost generation of Nigerians that will affect not only the future of those children, but also that of the whole country. (“[Fighting Nigeria's Kidnapping Industry](#),” *NPR*, March 7, 2021)

## How Has Terrorism in Nigeria Affected the Church?

Take a look with fresh eyes at the Lausanne Global Analysis in July 2019 entitled “[An Existential Threat to Christianity in Nigeria?](#)” This analysis comments that the Global Terrorist Index “ranks Nigeria the third most terrorized country in the world after Afghanistan and Syria.” It also states that:

Nigeria's population is evenly divided between Muslims and Christians. The church in Nigeria has one of the most dynamic evangelical and missionary movements in Africa and indeed the world, with about 7,200 missionaries and a missional presence in about 196 countries. Nigeria has been delisted from the countries with unengaged unreached peoples groups (UUPGs). Despite this vibrancy, the future of the church in Nigeria is at stake because of persecution. Although Nigeria is officially not at war, what the Church is witnessing is tantamount to a declaration of war against Christians. Especially in rural areas, Christians are being killed and dispossessed of their ancestral farmlands. Their homes are being burnt and many have been internally displaced or taken refuge in neighboring countries such as Cameroon, Niger, and Chad. Others are in captivity and slavery.

## Catholic Bishops Warn Survival of Nigerian Nation at Stake

The Council on Foreign Relations' [March 2, 2021 article](#) contains an even stronger recent declaration by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria:

Against an immediate backdrop of escalating [mass kidnappings](#), jihadist resurgence, growing [separatist sentiment](#) in the old Biafra,

and conflict over water and land that often assumes a religious and ethnic coloration, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria has [issued](#) a statement sounding the alarm over the very survival of the nation... The Roman Catholic Church is one of Nigeria's few national institutions. (Others are the Nigerian army and the Anglican Church.) The Catholic bishops have an almost unique access to what is going on at the grassroots all over the country... It and the Anglican Church have long been the two largest denominations of European origin, but both have been usurped in [size](#) by [Pentecostal](#) churches. Moreover, the Roman Catholic Church is an "establishment" institution, and its bishops by and large have good relations with the traditional Muslim leadership. The Catholic bishops' statement should be a wake-up call...

### Reexamining Missiological Paradigms

Nelson Jennings has published Part I of his 20,000-word analysis of two of Ralph D. Winter's missiological models. Jennings' article is entitled "God's Plan for the Fullness of Time: Overhauling Ralph Winter's 'Three Eras' and 'Ten Epochs' Models." Read it in its entirety here in the free online January 2021 issue of [Global Missiology](#). For your reference, here is a reprint of the original Three Eras article, "Four Men Three Eras" (<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/four-men-three-eras>) and here is a reprint of the original Ten Epochs article entitled: "The Kingdom Strikes Back: Ten Epochs of Redemptive History" ([http://wwwFOUNDATIONScourse.org/uploads/documents/reader/1\\_kingdom\\_strikes\\_back.pdf](http://wwwFOUNDATIONScourse.org/uploads/documents/reader/1_kingdom_strikes_back.pdf)).

We also commend to you Warrick Farrah's blog, [Circumpolar](#). Farrah's first two 2021 posts are an introduction to a new book just out edited by Martin Accad called *The Religious Other: A Biblical Understanding of Islam, the Qur'an, and Muhammad*. Here's a quote from Farrah's own chapter in this book on the topic of hermeneutical hinges:

As Martin Accad has proposed, "Your view of Islam will affect your *attitude* to Muslims. Your *attitude* will, in turn, influence your *approach* to Christian-Muslim interaction, and that *approach* will affect the ultimate *outcome* of your presence as a witness among Muslims." I would like to add a more foundational layer to this proposal, namely, that your *understanding* of religion and culture will affect your view of Islam. In other words, your view of Islam inevitably hinges upon your approach to religion and culture, and specifically, the relationship between the two.

### BBC Claims Detained Uighur Women Systematically Raped

On February 2, 2021, *BBC* published a very credible account of systematic rape and torture of Uighur women in the Xinjiang camps in Western China. Based on first-hand accounts from interviews with women who were held in those camps, released, and subsequently escaped the country, the article paints a horrific picture:

"Yes, the rape has become a culture. It is gang rape and the Chinese police not only rape them but also electrocute them. They are subject to horrific torture..." "They say people are released, but in my opinion everyone who leaves the camps is

finished. And that," she said, "was the plan. The surveillance, the internment, the indoctrination, the dehumanisation, the sterilisation, the torture, the rape. Their goal is to destroy everyone," she said. "And everybody knows it." ("[Their Goal is to Destroy Everyone: Uighur Camp Detainees Allege Systematic Rape](#)," *BBC World News*, February 2, 2021)

### Chinese Uighur Policies Declared "Genocide" by US, Canada, UK, and The Netherlands

What are some of the current repercussions of this? More than [180 human rights groups](#) are calling for the relocation of the Winter 2022 Olympics away from Beijing—logistically almost impossible to do. *BBC World News* has been [completely banned](#) in all of China, even in the hotels catering to foreigners in Beijing and Hong Kong. The Chinese government has delayed shipment of 50 million vaccines to Turkey on the condition it ratifies an extradition agreement, putting the largest Uighur diaspora at grave risk. (See "[Are the Uyghurs Safe in Turkey?](#)" in *The Diplomat*, February 13, 2021.)

Four Western nations—the US, Canada, the UK, and the Netherlands—have declared the Uighur atrocities amount to 'genocide.' President Biden's new Secretary of State Blinken has [already concurred](#) with outgoing Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's announcement, but now some of the State Department lawyers aren't so sure. (See "[State Dept. Lawyers Concluded Insufficient Evidence to Prove Genocide in China](#)," *Foreign Policy*, February 19, 2021.) But an article in *The Economist* argued that "genocide" was the wrong word. (See "['Genocide' is the Wrong Word for the Horrors of Xinjiang](#)," *The Economist*, February 13, 2021.) The debate appears to hinge on the meaning of genocide. (See: "By Any Other Name: [Thoughts on US Genocide Determinations](#)," Council on Foreign Relations.)

### New "Love Jihad" Laws

Don't miss the article in *Al Jazeera* about the anti-conversion law dubbed the "anti-Love Jihad" legislation in three Indian states. Mixed marriage (Hindu-Muslim) couples have been separated and Muslim husbands imprisoned:

Believing "love jihad" is real "would be a laughable idea if it wasn't so dangerous," said rights activist Harsh Mander. "What we're witnessing...is the complete demolition of everything that the constitution promised." "...It's the unholy trinity of patriarchy, caste and dominant religion that has always wanted to control women's sexuality and freedom," lawyer and rights activist Vrinda Grover told *AFP*. ("[Another BJP-Governed State Plans Anti-Conversion Law](#)," *Al Jazeera*, December 26, 2020)

### Democracy Continues to Erode in Modi's India

From a *Human Rights Watch* article posted February 19, 2021 comes a chilling description of violation after violation of some of the main principles of democracy—ostensibly core tenets of India's constitution—since Modi took office:

"The government has not only failed to protect Muslims and other minorities from attacks but is providing political patronage and cover for bigotry... The BJP government's actions have stoked communal hatred, created deep fissures in society, and led to much fear and mistrust of authorities among minority communities" Ganguly said. "India's standing as a secular democracy is at serious risk unless the government rolls back discriminatory laws and policies and ensures justice for abuses against minorities." ("[India: Government Policies, Actions Target Minorities](#)," *Human Rights Watch*, February 19, 2021)

A recent article in *Christianity Today* (March 2021) highlights the tightening of regulations regarding NGOs:

Since Modi took office in 2014, the Indian government has revoked permission for more than 16,000 nongovernmental organizations to receive foreign funding using the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) "It is deliberately an assault against the nonprofit sector," said Vijayesh Lai, the general secretary of the Evangelical Fellowship of India, "and that includes churches."... A senior Indian Christian leader who requested anonymity due to the sensitivity of the issue for his ministry, said the FCRA laws have been disproportionately applied to Christian ministries and have had a devastating impact on the poor. "The withdrawal of licenses has left millions of people in India—it's not an exaggeration, tens of millions of people—without a social help, social net, and taken away employment which the [nonprofit] sector was providing," he told CT. ("[Indian Government Regulation Squeezes Christian Charities](#)," *Christianity Today*, March 2021)

### Myanmar Coup

After the surprise takeover of the government in Myanmar by its military on February 1, 2021, hundreds of thousands of its citizens poured into the streets to protest. This is the same country where Muslim Rohingya have been massacred and millions driven out by Buddhist militias and priests. See the February 11, 2021 article in *The Atlantic*, "[Why Did it Take a Coup?](#)" See also a [summary of the Rohingya crisis](#) from *BBC News* last year. From a *Christianity Today* article comes reports of increased vulnerabilities for Myanmar's Christian minorities who make up just under 5% of the population and are the largest religious minority. (See *Christianity Today's* report, "[After Military Coup, It's 'Time to Shout' for Myanmar Evangelicals.](#)")

### China Arrests Pro-Democracy Advocates ahead of Hong Kong Election

Forty-seven pro-democracy advocates were abruptly arrested on February 26 by Hong Kong officials (at the behest of the Chinese government) ahead of an election they looked likely to dominate. If charged with treason or subversion, they could be imprisoned for life. Electoral changes slated to go into effect March 11 will virtually guarantee "only patriots" will be eligible to run for office. (See "[Attack on Political Rights](#)" in *US News and World Report*, March 5, 2021.)

Last year, hundreds of thousands of Hong Kongers demonstrated for months in the streets against new Chinese-mandated extradition laws—laws which prompted Britain to broaden both the benefits and eligibility requirements for the British National (Overseas) Passport or BN(O) passport. These new benefits for BN(O) passport holders took effect January 31, 2021:

As of Sunday, holders of British National Overseas passports—which are available to Hong Kong citizens born in the territory before it was handed back to China in 1997—can move with their families to the U.K. on five-year visas. After that period, they can apply for British citizenship. Previously these passport holders could only get six-month British visas. The immigration overhaul is a response to China's [imposition of a new national security law](#) on Hong Kong, which Britain says violates Hong Kong's judicial independence from Beijing. The U.K. argues this was guaranteed until 2047 by an international treaty the two countries signed. (Don't miss, "[UK Opens Its Doors to Five Million Hong Kong Residents, Starting Sunday](#)," in the *Wall Street Journal*, January 31, 2021.)

### Just How Many Hong Kongers Are Predicted to Actually Move to the UK?

The *Washington Post* breaks down the actual numbers of those eligible to move:

The Home Office estimates there are 2.9 million BN(O) citizens eligible to move to the U.K., plus a further 2.3 million dependents and 187,000 people aged between 18 and 23 who have at least one BN(O) parent, bringing the total to about 5.4 million, or around 70% of Hong Kong's 7.5 million population. ("[The British Passport Stoking Controversy in Hong Kong](#)," *The Washington Post*, January 31, 2021)

The *Wall Street Journal* takes a look at how much Hong Kong wealth these would-be immigrants could take with them to Britain: "The visa offer . . . could trigger capital outflows of \$75 billion from Hong Kong over five years, estimates Bank of America Corp." (See "[UK Opens Its Doors to Five Million Hong Kong Residents Starting Sunday](#)," *Wall Street Journal*, January 31, 2021.)

### Fastest Growing Movement to Christ in the World among Muslims

From The Gospel Coalition comes a report on the fastest growing movement to Christ in the world—and it's in a Muslim country:

While official reports still claim that 99.4 percent of Iranians practice Islam, a 2020 survey found that just 40 percent actually identify as Muslim. An even larger number—about 47 percent—said they were "nones," atheists, spiritual, agnostic, or humanist. Another 8 percent claim Zoroastrianism, an ancient Persian religion. And a small sliver—1.5 percent—said they were Christians. "About 20 years ago, the number of Christian converts from a Muslim background was between 5,000 and 10,000 people," Crabtree said. "Today that's between 800,000 to 1 million people. That's massive growth." ("[Meet the World's Fastest-Growing Evangelical Movement](#)," The Gospel Coalition, February 8, 2021) **IJFM**