

around the world because of their belief in Jesus Christ—one million already in this still young century.

That threat to religious believers is growing. The Pew Research Center reports that 75 percent of the world's population "lives in countries where governments, social groups, or individuals restrict people's ability to freely practice their faith." Pew lays out the details of this "rising tide of restrictions on religion," but we don't need a report to tell us something we sadly see on the news every day.

While Muslims and Christians have long lived peacefully side-by-side in Zanzibar, for instance, this past year has seen increasing violence. Catholic churches have been burned and priests have been shot. In September one priest was the victim of a horrific acid attack. Nigeria has also been the site of frequent anti-Christian violence, including church bombings on our holiest days.

The situation in India has also been grave, particularly after the Orissa massacre of 2008, where hundreds of Christians were murdered and thousands displaced, and thousands of homes and some 400 churches were torched. Just recently, a Christian couple was recently attacked by an angry mob just because of their faith, their Bibles torn from their hands.

We remember our brothers and sisters in China, where Catholic bishops and other religious leaders are subject to state supervision and imprisonment. Conditions are only getting worse, as the government closes churches and subjects members of several faiths to forced renunciations, so-called re-education, and torture.

Of course, it's not just Christians who suffer from religious persecution, but believers in other faiths as well. Much religious persecution is committed by Muslims against other Muslims. Buddhists in Tibet suffer under government torture and repression. In Myanmar Muslims suffer at the hands of Buddhist mobs. All of us share apprehension over reports of rising anti-Semitism.

But there is no escaping the fact that Christians are singled out in far more places and far more often.

I don't have to tell anyone in this room that our brothers and sisters in the Middle East face particular trials. As Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople has observed, for Christians in the Middle East, "even the simple admission of Christian identity places the very existence of [the] faithful in daily threat . . . Exceptionally extreme and expansive occurrences of violence and persecution against Christians cannot leave the rest of us—who are blessed to live peacefully and in some sense of security—indifferent and inactive."

The humanitarian catastrophe that continues to unfold in Syria has been particularly close to our hearts these past few months. We've prayed for and stood in solidarity with the Church and the people of Syria, and with Pope Francis and the bishops of the Middle East in their call for peace.

It's no surprise that this violent and chaotic situation has bred even more religious persecution. Of course we're all familiar with Syria's venerable history as the place from which our faith spread to the rest of the world, and Syria has long been home to a sizable Christian minority. Yet those Christians who have remained in Syria face ever-present, rising threats of violence.

Last April two of our Orthodox brother bishops were kidnapped in Aleppo by gunmen as they returned from a humanitarian mission. Their driver was shot and killed. And a little less than a year ago an Orthodox priest

from Hama was killed by a sniper while helping the wounded. Similarly tragic violence against believers is now commonplace.

Just as Syrian Christians have suffered from the war raging in their land, the war in Iraq has devastated that ancient Christian community in that country as well. As Bishop Shlemon Warduni of Iraq tearfully told us during our spring assembly in 2012, remember, the situation of Christians there "became a tragedy of immense proportions after 2003," with many religious and lay faithful tortured and killed.

Violent attacks continue to terrorize the Iraqi people. Just a little over a year ago the war's worst massacre of Iraqi Christians occurred in a brutal attack on Our Lady of Salvation Church in Baghdad, where some 58 believers were massacred. Those martyred for their faith included their parish priest who died holding a crucifix, forgiving the gunmen and asking him to spare his people.

The situations in Syria and Iraq wrench our hearts, but the plight of Christians in Egypt is no better. This past summer saw the serious escalation of violence against our brothers and sisters there, as the ancient Coptic Christian community has been targeted. Dozens of Coptic churches have been burned; Christian-owned businesses and hotels have been attacked; and individual believers have been murdered.

To take one example, John Allen reports that in August, "hundreds of Muslim extremists stormed a school run by Franciscan sisters in . . . Upper Egypt, where they reportedly raped two teachers. Three nuns were paraded before the crowd as prisoners of war." It was only through the intervention of a Muslim lay teacher that other sisters' lives were spared.

We as bishops, as shepherds of one of the most richly blessed communities of faith on the planet, as pastors who have spoken with enthusiastic unity in defense of our own religious freedom, must become advocates and champions for these Christians whose lives literally hang in the balance.

Pope Francis recently invited us all to an examination of conscience in this regard during his General Audience on September 25:

"When I hear that so many Christians in the world are suffering, am I indifferent, or is it as if a member of my own family is suffering? When I think or hear it said that many Christians are persecuted and give their lives for their faith, does this touch my heart or does it not reach me? Am I open to that brother or that sister in my family who's giving his or her life for Jesus Christ? Do we pray for one another? How many of you pray for Christians who are persecuted? How many? Everyone respond in his own heart. It's important to look beyond one's own fence, to feel oneself part of the Church, of one family of God!"

I am convinced that we have to answer those questions of Pope Francis, not merely as individual believers, but collectively as a body of bishops.

So you ask me, what can we do? Without any pretense of being exhaustive, here are some ideas I'd like to lay before you, with a nod to John Allen and his recent compelling work on this topic.

First, we can encourage intercession for the persecuted. Remember how the "prayers for the conversion of Russia" at the end of Masses over a half-century ago shaped our sense of what was going on behind the Iron Curtain? A similar culture of prayer for persecuted Christians today, both in private and in our liturgical celebrations, could have a similar remedial effect.

We can also make people aware of the great suffering of our brothers and sisters with all the means at our disposal. Our columns, our blogs, our speeches, and our pastoral letters can reference the subject. We can ask our pastors to preach on it, and to stimulate study sessions or activist groups in their parishes. We can encourage our Catholic media to tell the stories of today's new martyrs, unfortunately abundant. Our good experience defending religious freedom here at home shows that, when we turn our minds to an issue, we can put it on the map. Well, it's time to harness that energy for our fellow members of the household of faith hounded for their beliefs around the world.

We know the importance of supporting organizations such as Aid to the Church in Need, the Catholic Near East Welfare Association, Catholic Relief Services, and the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, who have done heroic work, while among our Protestant brothers and sisters groups such as Open Doors make a similar contribution. Writers such as Nina Shea, Paul Marshall, John Allen, and Phillip Jenkins here in the United States help keep the issue alive, as does our own Committee on International Justice and Peace.

Finally, we can insist that our country's leaders make the protection of at-risk Christians abroad a foreign-policy priority for the United States. We can also cajole political leaders to be more attentive to the voices of Christians on the ground, since those Christians will certainly feel the consequences of whatever the West does or doesn't do. As Dr. Thomas Farr reminded us at our spring meeting a couple summers ago, the protection of religious freedom abroad, and advocacy of oppressed believers, has hardly been a high foreign policy priority for administrations of either party.

In general, my brothers, we can make supporting the suffering Church a priority—not one good cause among others, but a defining element of our pastoral priorities. As historians of this conference know, speaking up for suffering faithful abroad has been a hallmark of our soon-to-be-century of public advocacy of the gospel by the conference of bishops in this beloved country we are honored to call our earthly home.

Protecting religious freedom will be a central social and political concern of our time, and we American bishops already have made very important contributions to carrying it forward. Now we are being beckoned—by history, by Pope Francis, by the force of our own logic and the ecclesiology of communion—to extend those efforts to the dramatic front lines of this battle, where Christians are paying for their fidelity with their lives. As the Council reminded us, we are bishops not only for our dioceses, not only for our nation, but for the Church universal.

May all the blessed martyrs, ancient and new, pray for us, as we try to be confessors of the faith.

Praise be Jesus Christ!

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ALLYSON Y. SCHWARTZ

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 14, 2013

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 572, I was unable to be present for the vote. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

HONORING MATTHEW ALAN
STUBBS II

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 14, 2013

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Matthew Alan Stubbs II. Matthew is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 264, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Matthew has been very active with his troop, participating in many Scout activities. Over the many years Matthew has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. Most notably, Matthew has contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Matthew Alan Stubbs, II for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

CONGRATULATING ED ROCHA AND
ROCHA'S VALLEY ENTERPRISES

HON. JEFF DENHAM

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 14, 2013

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Ed Rocha and Rocha's Valley Enterprises, which will be inducted as a member of the Stanislaus County Agricultural Hall of Fame "Legends in Agriculture" during a ceremony in Modesto, California, on November 14, 2013.

Trucking is truly a family legacy for the Rocha family. In 1924, John Rocha founded John N Rocha transportation. They started hauling milk, hay and dairy supplies and added cattle a few years later. In 1952, when Ed was a senior in high school, his dad took him to Salinas Dressed Beef Company, in Salinas, CA, to look at two nearly-new 1951 Peterbilt Cabovers they had for sale. His dad told him, "If I like the deal, you're in business." They ended up buying the trucks and Ed and his father became partners under the name Rocha Livestock Transportation.

Ten years later, Ed decided to go out on his own and started Ed Rocha Livestock Transportation. Over the years, Ed's operations expanded to Stockton and Modesto and the fleet grew to include tankers, vans, curtain vans, flats and of course cattle trucks.

In 1990, Valley Enterprises was founded, leasing tomato trailers to the Morningstar Company. To this day they are handling the shuttle and interplant business for E&J Gallo. It is important to note that the Rocha family has been hauling for the Gallo family for over 70 years.

A true family business, Ed's youngest son Douglas was running a tomato operation at twelve years old, helped out by his sister

Stephanie, at only nine years old. Today, Doug runs Valley Enterprises whose fleet consists of 27 power units and 150 sets of trailers.

Dedicated to giving back to the industry, Ed is very active with several trucking organizations. He is the former president of the California Trucking Association and is active in the American Truck Historical Society (ATHS). Ed also serves on the board of directors for the American Trucking Association (ATA), served on the National Ag Science Center Board of Directors, and he is the executive director and past president of the Hays Antique Truck Museum. His community involvement spreads beyond transportation, Ed and Carole helped start Children's Guardian Home in Oakdale, a home that takes in abused and abandoned children. Ed is a past president of the Children's Crisis Center in Modesto.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in praising Ed Rocha and Rocha's Valley Enterprises, for their significant contributions to agriculture and to the people of our local community.

TRIBUTE TO LEONEL J. CASTILLO,
EDUCATOR, CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIV-
IST, AND HOUSTON'S FIRST HIS-
PANIC ELECTED

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 14, 2013

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Leonel J. Castillo, a legendary and pioneering figures in the history of Houston, Texas. Mr. Castillo, who was the first Hispanic elected to public office in Houston, died November 4, 2013. He was 74 years old.

Leonel J. Castillo was born June 9, 1939 in Victoria, Texas and educated at St. Mary's University in San Antonio, from which he received his Bachelor's degree in English, and his Master's degree in Community Organization from University of Pittsburgh.

Like many men and women of his generation, Leonel Castillo was inspired by President John F. Kennedy's call to service and joined the Peace Corps, serving in the Philippines. During this time he met the gracious and brilliant Evelyn, his partner in life and marriage for more than 50 years, and the mother of their two children, a daughter Avalyn, and a son, Efrem.

In 1967, Leonel and his family moved to Houston where he soon became involved with local neighborhood organizations. He organized across racial lines and worked to find common ground on important issues to each community, including integration and better educational opportunities for the children of Houston.

Leonel served as Director of SER-Jobs for Progress, board member of Catholic Charities, and member of the Memorial Hermann Hospital advisory board. Leonel also was one of the co-founders of the Houston Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and Houston International University. He also taught at the University of Houston and Texas Southern University.

In 1971, Leonel Castillo was elected Comptroller of the City of Houston, the first Hispanic

ever elected to public office in the city's history. He served in that office with distinction, earning the nickname the "Watchdog at City Hall."

Based on his record of demonstrated excellence as a manager and public administrator, Leonel Castillo came to the attention of President Jimmy Carter, who nominated him on April 7, 1977 to be Commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service and confirmed by the Senate just three weeks later, on April 27, 1977. He was the first Hispanic to hold this position. Leonel Castillo served as INS Commission until October 1, 1979.

At a White House swearing-in ceremony, President Carter explained his reasons for appointing Leonel Castillo to such an important post:

He's a man who has the highest possible reputation. He's a public administrator, and I think I can tell you that he's going to take on one of the most difficult jobs in the Government.

Mr. Speaker, Leonel J. Castillo touched so many lives in so many ways. He inspired a generation of civic minded Hispanic men and women to seek public office. He was a towering figure in the life of our community. He will be greatly missed.

I ask the House to observe a moment of silence in honor of a great American, my friend, the Honorable Leonel J. Castillo.

HONORING ANGEL WOODRUFF

HON. JASON T. SMITH

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 14, 2013

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Ms. Angel Woodruff of Cape Girardeau, Missouri for her compassionate defense of others in her local community. Ms. Woodruff currently serves as the first assistant prosecuting attorney in Cape Girardeau County, and has become widely-known for her compassionate and diligent defense of victims of crime. She is known for encouraging victims to advocate for themselves, and to actively seek out the help of the law. Ms. Woodruff began her education studying English at Southeast Missouri State University, and continued on to earn a Law Degree at the University of Missouri-Columbia. She began working at the Cape Girardeau Prosecuting Attorney's Office in 1998 and specializes in violent crimes, drug crime, domestic violence, and sex crimes. She believes that her job is more than just what people see on headlines and in court rooms, and seeks to help victims whose daily lives are affected by her cases on a personal level. Ms. Woodruff reaches out to victims and shows them that they are not alone, and that she is willing to fight for them.

In the words of the U.S. Attorney who hired her, Morley Swingle, "A crime victim is lucky if she is assigned to the case." I am grateful that we have such caring and hardworking members of the Cape Girardeau community, such as Ms. Angel Woodruff. It is my pleasure to recognize her achievements before the House of Representatives and to encourage her to continue advocating for victims of crime.