



Bethany Lutheran Church & Preschool
5051 McCarty Road
Saginaw, MI 48603
www.bethanysaginaw.com
Phone: 989-793-9579

Viewpoints

Observing events in our modern world from the viewpoint of our ascended Savior.

Why Wars Continue - June 19, 2014

God knows that we need help remembering "I'm but a stranger here."

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Will it never end? Where war was supposed to have ended, it's flared up again with especially cruel intensity.

You probably think I'm referring to Iraq. Just three years after American troops were pulled out of Iraq, Islamic jihadists fighting for the "Islamic State of Iraq and Syria" (ISIS) are decapitating a swath across Iraq. ISIS wants to turn Iraq into an Islamic state of terror. So some American troops have now been sent back to Bagdad to protect our embassy and to serve as advisors for the Iraqi army.

So when I mention a war erupting to life, it would be natural for you to think of Islamic jihadists suddenly on a rampage to conquer Iraq. But actually I'm thinking of another war, more localized and nearly as brutal, occurring in Papua New Guinea.

The wilderness of Papua New Guinea offers exquisite trekking for those who can afford the services of a professional outfitter that supplies a guide and a support team of porters comprised from local tribes. In September 2013, such a 6-day trek was underway when the expedition was savagely attacked by men wielding machetes. Two porters died on the spot, a third was so cut up he died within days, and six other porters were brutally hacked so as to render them lame for the rest of their lives. Why were the foreign adventurers only beaten and terrorized, not murdered or maimed? Because this attack stemmed from a multi-generational turf war between local tribes.

Within a week, family members of one of the murdered porters discovered a village where some of the attackers were being harbored. Because the tribal culture of Papua New Guinea is one in which violent "payback is standard," the avenging family "went in and cut them and chopped them and killed them with the bush knife."

Why doesn't God stop these wars in Iraq and in Papua New Guinea? As God Almighty, he has the power, and when it serves his purposes he does stop them (Psalm 2, Psalm 46:9). But when he doesn't stop them, it's not because he in any way initiates or cooperates with sin; nor does he condone wickedness or tolerate evildoers. Remember, our holy God declares himself to be the final avenger who upholds perfect justice by bringing hell's punishment against evildoers-- so great is his righteous anger against sinners (Psalm 5:5, Ezekiel 25:17, Romans 12:19). Eventually all wars, from those that sweep across countries like Iraq, to those waged with machetes along the hiking trail, will be made to cease when Christ comes to

judge the world at the Last Day (Micah 4:3-4, Matthew 25:31-46; Revelation 14:13). Again, we ask, why doesn't God stop every war right now? It's only because God has ways of turning the evil perpetrated by those who unjustly wage war, to serve his eternal kingdom. So until Christ's return at the Last Day, whenever we hear of wars, Jesus' Spirit will be tugging on our souls to remind us of some important truths, such as...

1) Do not become comfortable with your sins. The atrocities of war arise from a sinful nature unrestrained—the same sinful nature with the same potential to commit heinous crimes—that resides in me and you. “There but by the grace of God go I” will be our penitent confession whenever we hear of the horrors of warfare. And “thanks be to God who has rescued me from this body of death!” will be the gospel sentiment that quickly follows (Romans 7:14).

2) Don't forget that Jesus is coming soon. Maybe he will come for you personally tonight. You see, he who died and rose to pay for the sins of the world wants you, me and all believers to be prepared for the Last Day. “You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come” (Matthew 24:6).

The list could be longer, but there are two ways in which Jesus uses wars to help our spiritual lives. Even though we're not on a guided hike through the paradise of Papua New Guinea, I can very easily become infatuated with the exquisite sites and sounds this world offers. Thus we need constant help to live vigilantly in the truths we sing in the hymn: “I'm but a stranger here, heaven is my home; life is a desert drear, heaven is my home!” ☩☩☩

Source Material (Links may become inactive over time.)

[World Ablaze In An Orgy of Jihad](#) @ torontosun.com

[ISIS a Fanatical Force With A Weakness](#) @ cnn.com

[Trail of Murder and Revenge in Papua New Guinea](#) @ outsideonline.com

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Blessings to you and your loved ones, Pastor Mike Nitz

