

Dear Lillian Methodist Church family,

I believe Jesus' parable of the "sheep and the goats" (Matthew 25) is often misunderstood. Rather than a general call for good works, it appears to me that it is a direct command to help bring relief to the persecuted church.

The "hungry," "thirsty," "naked," "sick," "strangers," and "imprisoned" are named by Jesus as "brothers of mine." They are part of the Body of Christ. They are not part of the world. That is why Jesus can say, "If you have done it for them, you have done it for Me." The afflicted in this parable are our brothers and sisters in Christ, afflicted because they are true believers. The persecution of the Church is persecution of Christ Himself. (Acts 9:4)

A few months ago, I made mention of the Nigerian Church and the terrible persecution they have suffered for many years. They have had their homes burned, livelihoods destroyed, families killed or taken captive by Islamic jihadists. They certainly meet the criteria set forth by Jesus' parable as to who we need to help.

In response, the Global Methodist Church has set up a funding source to provide needed relief for our brothers in Nigeria. They are currently providing food, shelter, medicine and security for this persecuted Body of Christ.

Checks made payable to the Global Methodist Church should be designated "Global Methodist Humanitarian Relief Fund". They should be mailed to:

Global Methodist Church
P.O. Box 1360
King George, VA 22485

My family has heard their cry and will obey Jesus' command. I encourage everyone to start the new year by remembering "the least of these my brethren".

See y'all Sunday
Perry Cunningham
Lay Leader