

# NEWS BYTES

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“Let us be alert to the season in which we are living. It is the season of the Blessed Hope, calling for us to cut our ties with the world and build ourselves on this One who will soon appear. He is our hope—a Blessed Hope enabling us to rise above our times and fix our gaze upon Him.” Tozer

## Another famine coming? China struggles to meet basic food demands

BY JIANLI YANG, OPINION CONTRIBUTOR — 09/17/20

China, which embarked on the mission of becoming a superpower by showing its economic and military might to the world, now may be brought to its knees over a shortage of food. Reduction in overall domestic food production; a recent deluge in the Yangtze River basin, the rice bowl of China; and a slash in imports, mostly aggravated by deteriorating diplomatic relations, has caused Beijing to hit the panic button.

Chinese President Xi Jinping recently launched the “Clean Plate” campaign to ensure that food supplies do not deplete quickly and bring about a repetition of the 1959 Great Famine, in which millions of people starved to death. And recent skirmishes along the Sino-Indian border, as well as China’s aggression in the South China Sea, may be Xi’s strategy to divert attention from China’s pending food crisis, just as Mao Zedong did in 1962 to mask the failed Great Leap Forward movement.

The Yangtze River basin, which accounts for 70 percent of China’s rice production, has seen the worst floods since 1939, damaging millions of acres of cropland. According to the China Meteorological Administration, the country has experienced a 20 percent increase in heavy rainfall since 1961, taking the water level of more than 400 rivers above the flood control line, with 33 of them reaching record highs. The heavy rain has ravaged vast swaths of industrial and agricultural land, and experts warn the worst may be yet to come.

Soaring prices of agricultural products are stoking food-security jitters in China. According to the China’s National Bureau of Statistics, food prices went up by 13 percent in July, compared to the previous July; the price of pork rose about 85 percent. On a year-on-year basis, food prices have increased by 10 percent in 2020 — the price of corn is 20 percent higher and the price of soybeans, 30 percent.

According to global financial group Nomura, China’s agricultural GDP could fall by nearly a percentage point in the July-September quarter, rendering losses of \$1.7 billion (USD) in the agriculture output. Chinese brokerage firm Shenwan Hongyuan has anticipated that China could lose 11.2 million tons of grains this year, compared to last year. Although Xi claimed that the country’s grain output increased this year, imports of grains have gone up almost 22 percent, to 74 million tons in the first half of this year. Imports of wheat went up by a whopping 197 percent during the period.

This has forced Beijing to release 62.5 tons of rice, 50 tons of corn and 760,000 tons of soybeans from its strategic reserve — the amount is significantly higher than last year.

Insect infestations also have caused great damage to China's food sector. An invasion of fall armyworms and locusts devoured millions of acres of wheat and corn crops this year. African swine fever has forced authorities to kill more than 180 million pigs, or about 40 percent of China's swine population, causing prices to soar. Imports of meat have jumped significantly in just one year.

It may come as no surprise that China has spoiled bilateral relations with those nations on whom it depends for its food. Increased hostilities, coupled with pandemic-related disruption in the supply chain and global commodity markets, have created huge barriers for Beijing to meet its domestic consumption demands and ensure enough stock for "rainy days."

The United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Indonesia are among the top exporters of agriculture commodities to China. Despite its dispute over tariffs with the U.S., China still remains heavily dependent on the United States to meet its food demand. China's agricultural imports in 2019 were pegged at \$13.8 billion (USD), up from \$9.1 billion in 2018, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Even during the first quarter of 2020, China imported farm products from the U.S. worth \$5.08 billion, while its exports dropped by 17.2 percent in January and February and 6.6 percent in March.

Beijing has shot itself in its foot by banning agricultural products from Australia over its demand for an independent inquiry into the COVID-19 outbreak. Similarly, farm trade with Canada, New Zealand, Indonesia and India are in the doldrums over different issues, including the potential security threat from Huawei and border skirmishes. China's food shortfall will only get worse in coming years unless it undertakes major agricultural reforms, warns the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. A key question is, can China buy enough food to feed its 1.4 billion people if domestic production does not increase and imports are its only mainstay? Surely, China's food self-sufficiency rate must increase, but the current situation appears to preclude such an improvement.

It is difficult to ascertain the real situation since information coming out of China may not reflect the true severity of the crisis. However, Xi's statements on the need for "gastronomic discipline" are reminiscent of similar instructions issued by Mao in 1959, at the beginning of the Great Famine (1958-1962). A combination of factors indicate that China is at risk for this history to repeat itself — a massive food shortage that could worsen into one of its biggest crises since the founding of the People's Republic in 1949.

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## **"Why Are You Killing Christians?" Trump Asks Nigeria's President**

"Why are you killing Christians?" US President Donald J. Trump apparently shocked his Nigerian counterpart, Muhammadu Buhari, by asking this question the first time they met in the White House in April 2018. The Nigerian

president admitted this, according to a September 8, 2020 report, toward the end of a recent talk with his cabinet members

"When I was in his office, only myself and himself, with Allah as my witness, he looked at me in the face and said 'why are you killing Christians?' I wonder, if you were the person how you would react? I hope what I was feeling inside did not betray my emotion...

He should not have been shocked. Several international observers characterize what Nigerian Christians experience not just as "persecution" but as a "pure genocide.

Since 2009, "not less than 32,000 Christians have been butchered to death by the country's main Jihadists," according to a May 2020 report. Hundreds more have been killed since then. Earlier this year, Christian Solidarity International issued a "Genocide Warning for Christians in Nigeria" in response to the "rising tide of violence directed against Nigerian Christians and others classified as 'infidels' by Islamist militants...."

Under Buhari, who became Nigeria's president in 2015, the carnage of Christians has only accelerated. According to a March 8, 2020 report, titled, "Nigeria: A Killing Field of Defenseless Christians,"

Available statistics have shown that between 11,500 and 12,000 Christian deaths were recorded in the past 57 months or since June 2015 when the present central [Buhari-led] government of Nigeria came on board. Out of this figure, Jihadist Fulani herdsmen accounted for 7,400 Christian deaths, Boko Haram 4,000 and the 'Highway Bandits' 150-200."

In just the first four months of 2020, Fulani herdsmen and other terrorists "hacked to death ... no fewer than 620 defenseless Christians," and engaged in the "wanton burning or destruction of their centers of worship and learning":

"The atrocities against Christians have gone unchecked and risen to alarming apogee with the country's security forces and concerned political actors looking the other way or colluding with the Jihadists. Houses burnt or destroyed during the period are in their hundreds; likewise dozens of Christian worship and learning centers."

How have formerly simple and unarmed Fulani herdsmen managed to kill, since 2015, nearly twice as many Christians as the "professional" terrorists of Boko Haram -- and exponentially more Christians than under Buhari's (Christian) predecessor, President Goodluck Jonathan? "Because," according to numerous Christian leaders in Nigeria, "President Buhari is also of the Fulani ethnic group," to quote Nigerian bishop Matthew Ishaya Audu.

The bishop is only one of a growing chorus of voices accusing the Muslim president not only of turning a blind eye to his clansmen's slaughter of Christians, but actively exacerbating it -- including with fighter jets. A few examples:

The Buhari government is "using the levers of power to secure the supremacy of Islam... The only difference between the government and Boko Haram is that Boko Haram is holding the bomb." -- Bishop Matthew Hassan Kukah.

Buhari "is openly pursuing an anti-Christian agenda that has resulted in countless murders of Christians all over the nation and destruction of vulnerable Christian communities." -- Bosun Emmanuel, secretary of the National Christian Elders Forum.

"Under President Buhari, the murderous Fulani herdsmen enjoyed unprecedented protection and favoritism... Rather than arrest and prosecute the Fulani herdsmen, security forces usually manned by Muslims from the North offer them protection as they unleash terror with impunity on the Nigerian people." -- Musa Asake, general secretary of the Christian Association of Nigeria.

In a statement issued earlier this year, the Christian Association of Nigeria, an umbrella group representing most denominations, repeated that "the federal government under President Muhammadu Buhari" is "colluding" with the Islamic terrorists "to exterminate Christians in Nigeria."

Even the average persecuted Christian is aware of Buhari's alleged role. After Muslim Fulani killed five Christians in a mini-store, Ibrahim Agu Iliya, a local Christian, explained why the terrorists were able to shoot for a full ten minutes -- despite the presence of armed security -- before absconding without a trace:

"These Muslim Fulani herdsmen have been attacking our communities because we are Christians. Their desire is to take over our lands, force us to become Muslims, and if we decline, they kill us.... The government's inability to stop these Muslim Fulani herdsmen is because the government is being controlled by Fulani political leaders headed by Muhammadu Buhari, Nigeria's president, who's also a Fulani man."

Some Nigerian leaders blame Buhari's rise to power on "the evil called Barack Obama" -- in the words of Femi Fani-Kayode, Nigeria's former Minister of Culture and Tourism, on February 12:

"What Obama, John Kerry and Hilary Clinton did to Nigeria by funding and supporting Buhari in the 2015 presidential election and helping Boko Haram in 2014/2015 was sheer wickedness and the blood of all those killed by the Buhari administration, his Fulani herdsmen and Boko Haram over the last 5 years are on their hands."

It was doubtless these disturbing statistics and accusations against Buhari that prompted Trump to ask why he was "slaughtering Christians in Nigeria."

How did Buhari respond? He blamed "climate change and population growth."

"I tried and explained to him," continued Buhari, that "this has got nothing to do with ethnicity or religion. It is a cultural thing."

Not only does such an argument ignore that culture often emerges from the blending of ethnicity and religion; it also fails to answer the central question: "Since the government and its apologists are claiming the killings have no religious undertones," the Christian Association of Nigeria asked, "why are the terrorists and herdsmen targeting the predominantly Christian communities and Christian leaders?"

Similarly, as members of the Christian Association of Nigeria evidently wonder: "How can it be a [secular or economic] clash when one group [Muslims] is persistently attacking, killing, maiming, destroying, and the other group [Christians] is persistently being killed, maimed and their places of worship destroyed?"

As Sister Monica Chikwe once explained, "It's tough to tell Nigerian Christians this isn't a religious conflict since what they see are Fulani fighters clad entirely in black, chanting 'Allahu Akbar!' and screaming 'Death to Christians.'"

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# The Coming Tide of Evil

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Candy Austin    raptureready.com

**Matthew 24:21 “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.”**

There is a coming ‘Tide of Evil,’ an Unprecedented Hurricane, the Big Kahuna of all Reefs if you will, that is ever so ominously looming upon the horizon! Just take a look in the book of Revelation and we will find that there is fast approaching a time, in the not too distant future, when the deluge of ‘All Evil’ will be unleashed during the ‘Hour of Trial,’ also known as the Great Tribulation!

Right now, during this ‘Age of Grace,’ we the Church who are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, are present in this world as an ‘unseen barrier.’ This spiritual force working through us is, in essence, helping to restrain and hold back this looming ‘Ocean Tide of Wickedness’! This ‘Malevolent Surge’ wants nothing more than to consume and ultimately wipe us out!

Through our prayers, this invisible wall continues to be fortified as the Holy Spirit’s ‘restraining influence’ on this World. As secure as this shield is, God still allows us to, nevertheless, receive ‘Splashes of Darkness’ as the billows relentlessly crash in, for reasons known only to Him, according to His Will. This ‘Pervasive Wickedness’ that we are allowed to experience helps to alert us to the hour that we are in, to wake those up who are asleep, and to give those who are ‘lost and willing’ another chance to come to Repentance and Salvation before it is too late!

As Believers, we have a spiritual type of covering from God that serves as a kind of ‘tarp or umbrella’ that helps to shelter us from fully getting wet and overwhelmed by the ongoing ‘Torrential Waves of Evil’! Whereas, the Unbelievers who do not have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in their lives, woefully, have no form of Spiritual Protection, Type of Shield, or any such Divine Covering from God to ‘block or safeguard’ them from the constant ‘Surf of Wickedness’ that is permeating our world!

Therefore, these Unbelievers become inundated, overwhelmed, and soaked by the incessant ‘Ripples of Vileness’ each and every day! Even on this side of the Tribulation, this dampens their spiritual eyes by covering them with the ‘Filthy Waters of Darkness’! This, in turn, spiritually blinds them from being able to see the Truth and Light of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ!

**2 Thessalonians 2:7-8 “For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.”**

Of course, the Spirit works through believers to accomplish this. The church, indwelt by the Spirit of God, has always been part of what holds society back from the swelling tide of lawless living. At some point, Paul says, the Spirit will “step aside” from His restraining work, allowing sin to have dominion over mankind. [Second Thessalonians 2:7](#) can be literally rendered, “The secret of lawlessness is already working, only it cannot be revealed until he who now withholds disappears from the midst.” We believe this “disappearing from the midst” will happen at the time the church leaves the earth at the [rapture](#). The Holy Spirit will still be present in the earth, of course, but He will be taken out of the way in the sense that His unique sin-restraining ministry—through God’s people—will be removed (see [Genesis 6:3](#)).

Second Thessalonians 2 is clear that the removal of the restrainer’s influence precedes the revealing of the Antichrist. Given free rein during the [tribulation](#), the lawless one will “use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders” to deceive the people of the earth (verses 9–10). After the Antichrist’s time is up, the Lord Jesus will return and overthrow the man of sin by “the breath of his mouth and destroy [him] by the splendor of his coming” (verse 8). Evil is restrained right now; once the [Church Age](#) ends, the hindrance to evil will be removed, and the rebellion will seem to be winning; however, the ultimate doom of evil is sure.

We cannot really imagine what life will look like during the upcoming 7-year Tribulation, but from what we can perceive from scripture, it is going to be ‘beyond horrific’! Some people foolishly think that they can wait until then to become Saved and then live their lives for God.

Truth be told, it will be ‘unfathomably harder’ to be a born again Christian during that utterly terrifying and mortifying time! Most assuredly, countless numbers the world over will have to give up their lives for their ‘steadfast loyalty’ to Jesus

Christ by being beheaded! This will be in exchange for their refusing to worship the Antichrist by taking his despicable 'Mark of the Beast,' which will condemn one's soul to Hell for all Eternity!

**Revelation 13:16-17** “**And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.**”

Think of this coming 'Tide of Evil' as a parallel to the impending flood in Noah's day! A time when they thought Noah, a 'Preacher of Righteousness,' was nothing more than an old lunatic! Therefore, they laughed him off and went about living their lives as 'business as usual.' Unfortunately, they did not know what hit them until the massive worldwide flood swept them all away! So shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

**Matthew 24:37-39** “**But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.**”

Every day I pray that God's Holy Spirit would hold back the Tide of Evil as much as He Wills until we (the Church) are taken out of the way (through the Rapture)! Also, my prayer is that we would be accounted worthy to escape all of the things that are to come and to stand before the Son of man! That is why our 'Blessed Hope' is so very precious because it saves us out of and from the 'Hour or Trial' that is to come upon the whole Earth!

**Luke 21:36** “**Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.**”

One would be 'very wise' to give their life to Jesus Christ now during this Church Age of Grace! Act while there is still time before the Rapture of the Church and the encroaching 'Flood of Evilness' is allowed to break loose and burst in! This 'Tsunami of Horror' will flood onto the world scene and drown its inhabitants in 'overwhelming darkness' for 7 long and agonizing years!

Just know that the Antichrist will be an indescribably cruel, merciless, and murderous ruler of everyone but especially towards Christians and Jews! Think in terms of Hitler, Stalin, Nero, and every other 'Antichrist in training' but times that by a million!

Believe me, you will not want to be here! Please repent if you have not done so before it is too late! We do not know how much longer God's Staying Hand will keep this 'Tide of Evil' at bay! The waves are crashing ever so constantly and with more raging fierceness with each and every passing day!

As Noah would say, "Get on the Ark while you still can!" Before you know it, there will be no more time and the door to the Ark of God will be shut! Remember, God closes doors that no man can open, and He opens doors that no man can close! Do not delay; get right with God today... for tomorrow may be too late!

**Titus 2:13** “**Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.**”

Until next time... Maranatha!