

Global Diagram 6. The phenomenon of martyrdom: 70 million Christians killed for their faith in 220 countries across 20 centuries.

At the heart of the Great Commission, the 3rd of the 7 Mandates is the command 'Witness!' Because living as a witness to Christ (NT Greek *martyrs*) often resulted in persecution and death, by the end of the 1st century AD, *martyrs* had taken on today's connotations of the 'martyr' who witnesses to Christ by his death.

Table 5-1 includes 2 columns (58, 59) that describe the whole extent of Christian martyrdom and its martyrs—defined by 5 criteria: believers in Christ, who have lost their lives, prematurely, in situations of witness, as a result of human hostility. These results are based on a 30-year research investigation into the extent of martyrdom in Christian history up to the present day, in every part of the world, and across all traditions of Christianity.

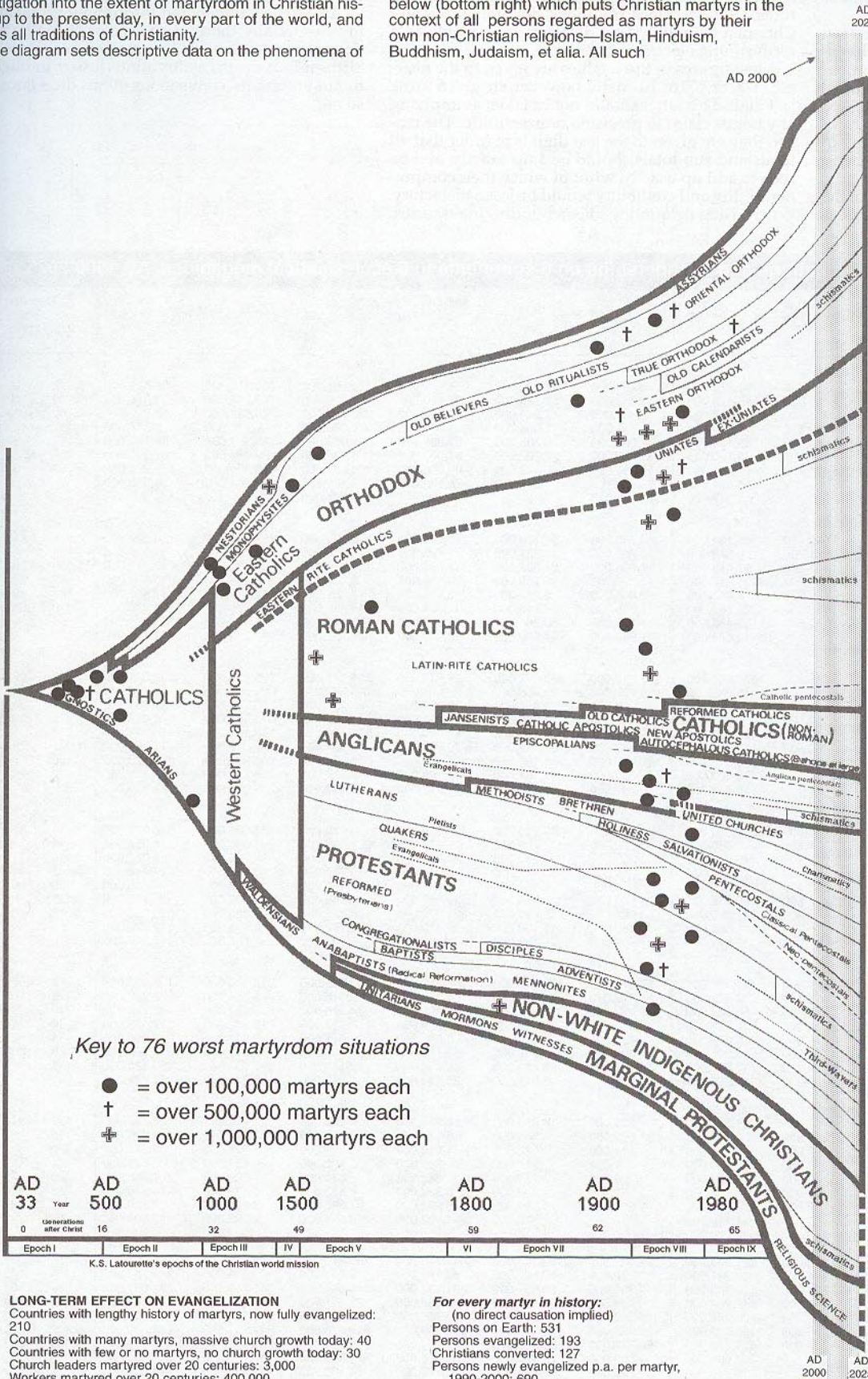
The diagram sets descriptive data on the phenomena of

martyrdom onto a background diagram showing the expansion of Christianity in all its traditions over 20 centuries. History's 76 worst situations of mass martyrdom (over 100,000 each) are then shown as black crosses or dots, the latest being Amin's Uganda massacres in 1971, the Sudan holocaust of 1963-1999, and the Rwanda genocide of 1994. Numerous other equally dangerous situations have been averted because the persecutors have been alarmed by the prospect of international opprobrium.

Although 'martyr' on this page means almost exclusively a witness to Christ, the one exception is a single table below (bottom right) which puts Christian martyrs in the context of all persons regarded as martyrs by their own non-Christian religions—Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, et alia. All such

martyrs share with Christian martyrs in this greatest of deprivations of human rights.

The effect of Christian martyrdom on evangelization over the centuries has been profound. Naturally, Christians have almost always insisted that martyrdom should not be deliberately sought for; but when it happens, the news spreads widely, and unbelievers including persecutors are converted. Martyrdom can be termed the final witness, the complete personal statement of faith in Christ, the ultimate proclamation of the gospel.



**TOTAL PERSONS, AD 33-2000**

All persons born since AD 33: 36,831 million

All persons evangelized since AD 33: 13,366 million (36% of human race)

All Christians since AD 33: 8,816 million (24% of human race)

All martyrs killed since AD 33: 69,420,000

Martyrs as % all Christians ever: 0.8%

Martyrs among all Christian leaders ever: 2.0%

**HISTORICAL OVERVIEW, AD 33-2000**

600 major martyrdom situations over 20 centuries

76 with over 100,000 martyrs each

27 with over 500,000 martyrs each

15 with over 1 million martyrs each

Average martyrs per martyrdom situation: 115,000

Martyrdom loci: in 220 countries

Ecclesiastical traditions involved: all 300

Denominations with own martyrs: 4,000

**CONFESSION OF VICTIMS, AD 33-2000**  
(total martyrs of each tradition)

Eastern Orthodox	37,444,000
East Syrians (Nestorians)	12,400,000
Roman Catholics (after AD 1000)	11,000,000
Protestants	3,170,000
Gregorians (Armenian Apostolic)	1,220,000
Coptic Orthodox	1,070,000
Anglicans	983,000
Catholics (before AD 1000)	838,000
Ethiopian Orthodox	651,000
West Syrians (Jacobites)	351,700
Maronites	153,000
Non-White indigenous Christians	140,000
<b>Total all martyrs</b>	<b>69,420,000</b>

**PERSECUTORS AND THEIR VICTIMS, AD 33-2000**

Persecutors responsible	Martyrs
Secular governments	55,597,000
Atheists (overlap with above)	31,519,000
Muslims	9,101,000
Ethnoreligionists (animists)	7,469,000
Roman Catholics	4,951,000
Quasi-Christians	2,711,000
Buddhists (Mahayana)	1,811,000
Hindus	676,000
Eastern Orthodox	600,000
Zoroastrians (Parsis)	384,000
Other non-Christians	250,000
Other Christians	220,000
<b>SUBTOTALS:</b>	
Non-Christian persecutors	64,100,000
Christian persecutors	5,320,000
<b>Total all martyrs</b>	<b>69,420,000</b>

**SITUATION BY AD 2000 (p.a.= per year)**

Martyrs in 20th century (1900-2000): 45,400,000

Martyrs since 1950: 13,300,000

Average annual martyrs since 1950: 278,000 p.a.

Recent annual martyrs: 171,000 p.a.

Current annual martyrs: 160,000 p.a.

Countries heavily involved in AD 2000: 50

**CONFESSION OF VICTIMS, AD 2000**  
(average annual martyrdom rates)

Roman Catholics	100,000
Protestants	30,000
Orthodox	14,000
Non-White indigenous Christians	10,000
Marginal Protestants	5,000
Anglicans and Old Catholics	1,000
<b>Total martyrs p.a</b>	<b>160,000</b>

**LIKELIHOOD (%) OF BEING MARTYRED**  
(at current rates)

Full-time workers	L%	Per year
Bishops	5.0	15
Evangelists	4.0	133
Catechists	3.5	175
Foreign missionaries	3.0	131
Clergy	2.0	303
All Christian workers	2.0	1,700
Monks, brothers	1.9	63
Sisters, nuns	1.8	300
<b>Other Christians</b>		
Great Commission Christians	1.6	80,000
Christians (all kinds)	1.0	160,000

**MARTYRDOM IN WORLD RELIGIONS SINCE ORIGIN** (persons regarded as martyrs by their own religions)

Islam:	Muslim martyrs	80 million
Christianity:	Christian martyrs	70 million
Hinduism:	Hindu martyrs	20 million
Buddhism:	Buddhist martyrs	10 million
Judaism:	Jewish martyrs	9 million
Ethnoreligions:	Ethnic martyrs	6 million
Others:	Other religious martyrs	5 million
Sikhism:	Sikh martyrs	2 million
Baha'i:	Baha'i martyrs	1 million