

Things to never forget on 9/11

By [David Henson](#)

September 10, 2015

It's been 14 years. And we're still reliving 9/11 each year. With videos of tumbling towers, with remembrances of the dead, with the call to never forget.

But on this day, as a Christian, there are some other things I want us to never forget about 9/11 and the retaliatory war on terror that happened in response.

On 9/11, 2,977 innocent Americans were killed by terrorists.

In the 14-year war on terror, 5,280 American soldiers were killed because of our country's response to the 9/11 attacks.

Conservatively, [reports estimate](#) the war on terror claimed 1.3 million lives in Iraq, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. Our war killed 5 percent of the Iraqi population, people who had zero ties to what actually happened on 9/11.

Our war killed at least 465 people for every person who died on 9/11. Some estimate we killed 670 or more per person.

Our war displaced 3 million Iraqi people and created 2.5 million Afghan refugees.

[Our war created ISIL, which led to the current crisis in Syria.](#) So all of us in tears at the refugee crisis in Syria should look in the mirror. The death of that small boy, drowned in the sea, is on our American hands ultimately.

The flood of human need—the largest refugee crisis since World War II—has its roots in our American war and our need for vengeance. We knocked over the dominoes 14 years ago when we attacked Iraq. We destabilized a region; we tilled the soil for extremists to grow. And those dominoes are still falling.

This is what it means for violence to beget only violence. It can be so difficult, when attacked, not to retaliate. Retaliation feels natural and justified. An eye for an eye

makes so much sense. But God is in the business of disarming violence, not escalating it. On the cross, Jesus himself became a victim of violence. And so today, I believe Jesus isn't just standing with the victims who died on 9/11, but with all those who were killed, imprisoned, displaced, and tortured as a result of it as well.

Christ suffers with them, regardless of whether they are Christian or Muslim, guilty or innocent. Because Christ sees their humanity before anything else. And that is something the dogs of war have mauled out of so many Americans—the ability to see each other as humans, not as potential threats and objects of fear.

Some will argue mentioning this is in bad taste. But I think to ignore it is in worse taste still. Because American leaders have used 9/11 to justify everything—torture, pre-emptive war, and even targeting American citizens. They have used this tragedy and the deaths of these souls to justify violence and evil. The United States dishonored its dead when it replaced tears with bombs, grief with revenge.

Today, [I will pray](#) for the [dead](#). Not just the 3,000 killed on this day 14 years ago, but the 5,000 soldiers killed since, the millions more killed in the Middle East by the war on terror, the refugees we created by our wanton destruction of an entire region. And I will pray for eyes open enough to see it.

*Originally posted at [Edges of Faith](#)*