

Editorial: This week's news involves you; let's get involved

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The news of the last week has been one troubling story after another. It's the kind of bad news to which we give some attention (but not for too long), feel bad about (but not for too long), and move on from (as soon as possible).

We may move on because we think, as bad as the news is, it doesn't really involve us, not directly anyway.

But it does. This week's news involves us, and we need to get more involved.

Ethnic and religious persecution

We received [word last week](#) that mobs had "destroyed at least 40 churches and forced thousands of Kuki, Zomi and other minority hill-dwelling tribes ... from their homes in the Manipur State of northeast India."

We may think, "This sounds like a terrible situation," and brush it off as a people and place we know nothing about. We may call it a shame and go on to the next thing. But there's more to the story we shouldn't ignore.

Imagine having to move to a new place because you are not safe in the place you call home. Imagine after leaving all you know to go to that new place, you become unsafe there, too.

Go a step further. You aren't unsafe just because you're "not from around here." You are unsafe because of who and how you worship, because you're a Christian. And it's not just you in danger. It's your whole family and

community.

This is the case for many of the Kuki, Zomi and other tribes, many of whom have been Christians for generations.

You may not picture yourself in their situation, but you are if you claim to follow Jesus and go by the name “Christian,” because all who follow Christ are baptized into one body, one Spirit (Ephesians 4:4-5). We are one, then, with our Kuki, Zomi and other brothers and sisters in Christ who are suffering in Manipur.

Yes, this involves us.

Race and gun violence

Perhaps the news from Manipur was overshadowed—and understandably so—by the horrific [mass shooting](#) May 6 at the Allen Premium Outlet Mall.

This one hit closer to home for many *Baptist Standard* readers. Texas is no stranger to [mass shootings](#), two of which were inside Texas Baptist churches. The horrific [Uvalde school massacre](#) almost one year ago is still fresh in our minds. At least one of the children killed—[Lexi Rubio](#)—attended a Texas Baptist church, and her great-grandfather was a Texas Baptist pastor.

There also are a significant number of *Baptist Standard* readers who live in or near Allen or who consider Allen part of their extended community.

Most news reports in the days following the Allen shooting are focusing on the gunman’s white supremacist views and the fact four of the eight killed were “[of Asian descent](#).” Investigators and reporters are searching for a motive.

Part of the story that hasn’t received much attention to this point: three of

those killed—Kang Shin Young, 35; Cho Kyu Song, 37; James Cho, 3—attended a Texas Baptist church. Kang and Cho’s 6-year-old son William was seriously injured but survived.

Yes, this involves us.

How we’re involved

In a general sense, what is happening in Manipur and what happened in Allen involve us, because we all are created in God’s image and are loved by God. I’ve already mentioned these stories involve us more specifically, because they involve our brothers and sisters in Christ.

An even more specific way these stories involve Texas Baptists is through the ministry our churches share through the Baptist General Convention of Texas. If your church is affiliated with the BGCT, you have a three-fold interest in paying attention to what is happening in numerous places around the world.

What is happening in places like Manipur is directly affecting your fellow Texas Baptists, such as the [Greater Houston Burmese Christian Fellowship](#). They carry the weight of concern for their family and friends who are being hunted, brutalized and even killed in Manipur and areas to the east.

Likewise, what is for many of us a tragic news story is for New Song Church in Carrollton a propulsion into trauma. They will gather the evening of May 11 for a memorial service to mourn the loss of Kang Shin Young, Cho Kyu Song and James Cho. They will begin to do their best to care for William.

The burden is not Greater Houston Burmese Christian Fellowship’s alone. The mourning is not New Song Church’s alone. The burden and the mourning are ours, also.

Yes, this involves us.

Two ways to be more involved

We are involved in the news of this week, and alongside our prayers, we must do more than pray. But what? There are at least two things all of us can do to come alongside our brothers and sisters.

We can denounce racism and xenophobia. Neither has any place in Christ's church and should find no quarter in our thoughts, speech or actions. Every opportunity we get, we can denounce racism and xenophobia.

"In Christ Jesus ... there is neither Jew nor Gentile" (Galatians 3:28). Race, skin color, ethnicity, nationality—none of these make us better or worse than, superior or inferior to anyone else. We can make that abundantly clear everywhere we are.

We can denounce the sins of racism and xenophobia in sermons and Bible studies, in conversations with friends and coworkers, in social media posts and everywhere else we communicate. It's really not hard.

We can advocate for religious freedom for all. Religious freedom doesn't just happen in this world. We must work for it, and the work is within our reach.

We can promote religious freedom in all the same places and ways we denounce racism and xenophobia. We also can go to the halls of power and advocate for religious freedom among our lawmakers and diplomats.

These are only two things we can do. Though they may seem more abstract or controversial than "thoughts and prayers" or sending money, they have real-world consequence for real people—our brothers and sisters in Christ.

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