

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL..... The Wired Word discussions have been excellent in the past weeks. We spend time in discussion. We spend time in God's Word and we simply connect.

And the topic? Check out this article below:

120 Volunteer to Serve 10-Year Sentence for Nigerian Teen

[Welcome](#)

[Review of last Week](#)

[In the News](#)

On September 25, Piotr Cywinski, the director of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial in Poland, wrote an open letter asking Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari to pardon 13-year-old Omar Farouq for the crime of blasphemy (or "publicly insulting" Allah) he purportedly committed during a dispute with a friend.

"However, if it turns out that the words of this child absolutely require 120 months of imprisonment, and even you are not able to change that," the director wrote, "I suggest that in place of the child, 120 adult volunteers from all over the world, gathered by us -- myself personally among them -- should each serve a month in a Nigerian prison."

"In total, the price for the child's transgression will be the same, and we will avoid the worst," Cywinski continued.

In August, a sharia court in Kano, Nigeria's second-largest city, located in the predominantly Muslim northern region of the country, sentenced to the boy to 10 years forced hard labor in prison. In one-third of Nigeria's 36 states, Islamic sharia law, which allows capital punishment for the crime of blasphemy, is in effect.

Cywinski said he hoped that an appeal to show Farouq mercy might resonate with the Nigerian leader, who visited the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial in 2018 to pay his respects to victims of the Holocaust.

"As the director of the Auschwitz Memorial, that commemorates the victims and preserves the remains of the German Nazi concentration and extermination camp, where children were imprisoned and murdered, I cannot remain indifferent to this disgraceful sentence for humanity," Cywinski wrote in his letter.

"[The boy] should not be subjected to the loss of the entirety of his youth, be deprived of opportunities and stigmatized physically, emotionally and educationally for the rest of his life," Cywinski added, arguing that "whatever the boy said, just because of his age he cannot be held fully responsible."

Salihu Tanko Yakasia, a special adviser to Kano's governor, said that the position of the state government aligned with the decision of the Sharia court. But on the federal level, the president has the power to pardon the boy, remarked Baba Jibo Ibrahim, a spokesman for the Kano State Judiciary.

Farouq's lawyer, Kola Alapinni, appealed the sentence, which he claims violates the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child as well as Nigeria's own constitution that guarantees citizens rights to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and expression.

Human rights advocates around the world have also condemned the sharia court decision. UNICEF's representative in Nigeria, Peter Hawkins, filed an official protest with Buhari, reminding him that Nigeria has signed child rights treaties that the Kano State court judgment abrogated.

Reflecting on the willingness of more than 120 people to go to prison in place of Farouq so he might be forgiven and freed, Cywinski said: "We are really impressed by the humanity around us. Now we have to see if it will be enough to get freedom to this very, very young kid."

More on this story can be found at these links:

[Head of Auschwitz Memorial Seeks Easing of Nigerian Boy's Prison Sentence. *The New York Times*](#)

[Auschwitz Memorial Director Offers to Share Nigerian Boy's Blasphemy Jail Term. *Reuters*](#)
[Auschwitz Museum Head Asks to Swap Spots with Nigerian Boy Jailed for Blasphemy. *The Times of Israel*](#)

[Auschwitz Director Offers to Serve Nigerian Teen's Sharia Sentence. *The First News*](#)

Applying the News Story

The news story introduces the idea of an innocent person volunteering to take the place of someone convicted of a crime so that the convict can go free. One way to understand the death of Christ is as a substitutionary sacrifice of a blameless person to obtain forgiveness for sinners.

"Although not a Bible word, *substitution* is certainly a Bible idea," wrote J. Oswald Sanders, international Bible teacher and former consulting director for Overseas Missionary Fellowship, in his book, *The Incomparable Christ: The Person and Work of Jesus Christ*. "By substitution we do not mean the saving of a life by *mere assistance*, as in the throwing of a rope to a drowning man; or by the *mere risking* of one life to save another; it is the saving of one life by the *loss* of another. As substitute, Christ took on himself the sinner's guilt and bore its penalty in the sinner's place."

J.S. Stewart, who was a minister in the Church of Scotland, explained it this way: "Not only had Christ by dying disclosed the sinner's guilt, not only had he revealed the Father's love: He had actually taken the sinner's place. And this meant, since 'God was in Christ,' that God had taken that place. When death and destruction were rushing up to claim the sinner as their prey, Christ had stepped in and accepted the full weight of their inevitable doom in his body and soul."

The Big Questions

1. [What do you think motivated](#) so many people to volunteer to share Farouq's sentence? What do you think they might learn, if the Nigerian government were to accept their offer? Could similar efforts potentially transform the criminal justice system in our country? Explain.

2. [What do you think might be the impact](#) of the offer to serve Farouq's sentence on Farouq himself? On members of the court who rendered the original 10-year judgment? On the Nigerian criminal justice system? On the Nigerian president? On observers around the world?

3. [Has anyone ever voluntarily](#) accepted punishment for a wrong you did, to prevent you from being punished? If so, how did you feel about that person, and how did you react?

4. Have you ever volunteered to take someone else's punishment, so that person would be spared? If so, what motivated you to do so? If not, what might move you to do so? Would the person's guilt or innocence factor into whether you would be willing to take the blame and the punishment awaiting the individual? Why or why not?

5. [Given that human criminal justice](#) systems can not and do not replicate God's perfect justice here "on earth, as it is in heaven," what caveats or limits would you put on the metaphor of substitutionary atonement (as it might apply to Christ's death) suggested by the "In the News" article?

Closing and Prayer