THE WORLD IS NOT WORTHY

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Over the last few days there has been a lot in the media about the Turkish elections and the possibility of Turkey's secular status coming under threat from the rise of Islam.

There has been much less said about the two Turkish Christians and their German missionary colleague who were violently martyred by Islamists on April 18 this year. You can read details of what happened to Tilman Geske, Necati Aydin and Ugur Yuksel here, it doesn't make pretty reading.

Perhaps the most amazing thing in this whole story is the reaction of Tilman Geske's wife (pictured with her children by her husband's graveside) who, echoing her Master, said:

> *"Oh God, forgive them for they know not what they do,"*

This is the power of the Gospel. Not the power of knives and guns to harm, kill or forcibly convert, but the power to forgive and bring healing in the face of the greatest tragedy and hostility. Those, who think that the gospel can be defeated (or defended) by the power for violence and force have not begun to understand the significance of a God who would humble himself to the point of dying on a cross and then rise again defeating hell and death.

On the other hand, the world is truly not worthy of people like the Geskes and their friends who were not only prepared to die for Christ, but even more remarkably to live for him and forgive.

Edited to add this link to Ben Witherington's blog giving details of the martyrs' funeral.

If you want to read more:

â€œ3 Killed in Turkey Bible Attackâ€ â€“ Associated Press (April 18, 2007)

â€œThree killed at Turkish Bible publishersâ€ â€“ Reuters (April 18, 2007)

â€œYoung Muslims in Turkey Murder Three Christiansâ€ â€“ Christianity Today (April 20, 2007)

â€œBloodbath in Turkey: Widow Forgives Murderersâ€ â€“ Assist News Service (April 20, 2007)

â€œSlain Missionary Highlights Christian Plight in Turkeyâ€ â€“ The Christian Post (April 24, 2007)

â€œTurkish church requests prayer after three Christians martyred in Malatyaâ€ â€“ Voice of the Martyrs (April 26, 2007)

â€œTurkeyâ€™s Christians face backlashâ€ â€“ The Christian Science Monitor (April 25, 2007)

â€œTurkish Believers â€˜Satanically Torturedâ€™ Before Being Killedâ€ â€“ BosNewsLife News Center (April 26, 2007)

â€œWidow of Slain Christian: â€˜Forgive Themâ€™â€ â€“ WorldNet Daily (April 28, 2007)

â€œNo Turning Backâ€ â€“ World (May 5, 2007)