



Mesa, Arizona, teens join millions of kids nationwide praying at their school flagpoles

What did 2 million kids pray about?

by Billy James Hargis II, publisher

More than 2 million students nationwide prayed in front of their schools in September for the annual “See You at the Pole” observance, now in its 21st year.

Coordinated by the National Network of Youth Ministries in San Diego, the event is youth-led by design and takes place each year before the school day begins. Local youth ministers from a variety of denominations encourage their youngsters – kindergartners through high schoolers – to show up for school early and pray at the flagpole.

Predictable controversies have occurred. Three protesters showed up at an elementary school in Pennsylvania with placards directed at the children reading “Don’t pray in my school, I won’t think in your church.”

This year, teachers in Sumner County, Tennessee, were given official guidelines – which basically told them to stand back and let the kids speak to God without any adult intervention or structure, reported Jennifer Easton in the *Nashville Tennessean*.

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Christian Crusade

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‘Occupy Wall Street’ demands an end to American way of life

by Keith Wilkerson, managing editor

The media never has liked the Tea Party – it’s no fun – but Occupy Wall Street is. The hundreds of youngsters camped out in New York City’s financial district and Washington D.C.’s capital mall look like the 1960s, when kids smoking pot happily placed flowers in the rifle barrels of scowling National Guardsmen.

In fact, if you’re wondering



Protesters in New York City

what the protests are all about, the British daily newspaper the *Daily Mail* reports that Occupy Wall Street has been “infiltrated by party goers and homeless looking for sex, drugs and free food.”

“It started as a gathering of furious youngsters, protesting about the supposed lack of opportunities for the average American,” writes the *Mail*’s Hannah Roberts

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Will ‘Chrislam’ be a new one-world religion?

by Keith Wilkerson, managing editor

Are Christianity and Islam about to merge in to a worldwide mega-religion called “Chrislam”?

Popular TV evangelist Jack Van Impe thinks so. He recently ended his decades-long relationship on Trinity Broadcasting Network after he publicly accused two well-known preacher of mixing Christian and Muslim beliefs. TBN pulled the episode before a repeat broadcast could air – prompting Impe to announce he would no longer broadcast on TBN.

Is Chrislam the religion of the future? Science-fiction author Arthur C. Clarke, who wrote *2001: A Space Odyssey*, was the first to coin the term – as a

futuristic religion he imagined.

Back in February, there were reports of churches in Houston, Atlanta, Seattle and Detroit calling for an ecumenical reconciliation between Christianity and Islam. In addition to sermons, Sunday school lessons were reportedly being centered on the teachings of the Prophet Mohammad.

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British police ‘apologize’ for forcing cafe to stop displaying Bible verses

compiled by the *Christian Crusade* staff

Cafe owner Jamie Murray say British police have given a partial apology for telling him that his displaying Bible verses on a TV screen was a breach of public order.

British police are claiming they did nothing wrong when they questioned a cafe owner for almost an

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Atheist group gloats about costing little church \$20,000

compiled by the *Christian Crusade* staff

An atheist group is gloating on its website about the revenge it has taken on Christ Cathedral in Columbus, Ohio.

The church, which owns a billboard leased to Clear Channel Outdoor advertising, discovered that an atheist advertisement had been placed on their

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ACLU, Planned Parenthood join forces to sway voters

compiled by the *Christian Crusade* staff

Planned Parenthood and the American Civil Liberties Union have joined forces to create the pro-abortion “Mississippians for Healthy Families” with a goal of defeating a constitutional amendment limiting abortion in the Magnolia State.

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Judge frees girl who killed her newborn

compiled by the *Christian Crusade* staff

A Canadian judge, noting that a majority of Canadians support unrestricted abortion, has freed a woman who strangled her newborn son.

Katrina Effert of Wetaskiwin, Alberta gave birth secretly in her parents’ downstairs bathroom, then killed the boy and threw his body over a fence. She

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The U.S. Supreme Court building

High Court mulls whether churches can hire, fire without government meddling

compiled by the *Christian Crusade Newspaper* staff

Does a church have the right to hire or fire the preacher without worrying about government interference?

If a Catholic priest decides he doesn't accept the authority of the Pope, can the diocese recall him without worrying about the National Labor Relations Board? Can the local Baptist church fire a youth minister who announces he speaks in tongues and all the high schoolers will go to hell if they don't?

While the question seems obvious, it goes before the U.S. Supreme Court next week with a bit of a twist. Does the same "ministerial exception" apply to other employees? During the opening week of its new term, the court will hear oral arguments in what some observers say is the most important religious liberty case in decades — Hosanna-Tabor Evangelical Church and School v. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

In question is a 40-year-old constitutional doctrine known as the "ministerial exception." It's an interpretation of the First Amendment guaranteeing that the government may not meddle in the free exercise of religion.

The question before the justices, writes Lauren Markoe for the *Washington Post*, is whether the exemption protects churches and other religious institutions from government interference in their employment decisions.

"Few would dispute that a religious congregation should be unfettered when it chooses to hire or fire clergy. But what about other church employees?"

"Advocates for the ministerial exception argue that religious institutions, in their hiring and firing, should be regulated as little as possible," said Ira C. Lupu, a professor at the George Washington University School of Law who specializes in church-state cases. "On the other side are those concerned that a

particular group is cast outside the various protections of civil rights laws."

"The doctrine upheld by lower courts for four decades protects religious organizations," writes Hannah C. Smith for Salt Lake City's *Deseret News*, "by exempting them from certain employment rules (anti-discrimination laws) relating to their 'ministerial employees.' The doctrine reflects the long-standing recognition of church autonomy in hiring and firing ministers without government interference."

The issue is not as simple as it might seem, notes Smith, who clerked at the U.S. Supreme Court and is a member of the *Deseret News*' editorial advisory board. She is also senior counsel at the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, which will appear before the court in the case.

"This freedom enables the church to define and control its leadership, beliefs, character and message," she writes. "The question the Supreme Court will consider is who counts as a 'ministerial employee' and thus whose employment status is within the sphere of the church's autonomy."

Hosanna-Tabor Evangelical School is a small, church-run evangelical Lutheran school in suburban Detroit.

Its former fourth grade teacher — Cheryl Perich — was hired to teach an academic curriculum. But she was also hired to teach her students religion classes, lead class prayer, lead scriptural devotionals,

attend school-wide chapel services with her class, infuse religion into the secular subjects she taught and be a good Christian role model to her students. In short, her job was to instill the Lutheran faith in the next generation in her classroom.

Perich took an extended leave of absence because of illness. The church hired a replacement. Following church doctrine based on 1st Corinthians, chapter 6, the church requires members and employees to follow an internal procedure for disputes.

"So when Perich threatened to take the church to court" instead of following the internal procedure, "she did so contrary to church teaching," writes Smith. "The church released Perich from her call as a commissioned minister and teacher for insubordination and disruptive conduct in violation of church teachings."

But can they do that? She filed a discrimination claim with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission — seeking to be reinstated as a teacher at the school — over the objections of the church that runs the school. The church says that she was a "ministerial employee" and that her defiance of the church's belief in resolving religious disputes out of court justified firing her.

A trial court ruled in the church's favor. An appeals court sided with Perich.

Why is this big? Smith observes:

The Supreme Court long ago recognized that government may not tell churches whom to choose as their clergy, or how to transfer power from one leader to another, or whether to reinstate a religious leader who has been found unfit by the church. Courts may not reverse decisions made by religious tribunals or choose sides in a religious controversy. And the Supreme Court has been right.

If the First Amendment means anything, it means that the government is entirely incompetent to decide matters of religious faith, doctrine and practice.

Indeed, because of that constitutional protection written into the Bill of Rights, Mormons can require that their missionaries be Mormons, Lutherans can refuse to put Hindu priests in their pulpits and the Catholic Church can require that all nuns be female.

If, as the EEOC urges," writes Smith, "the Supreme Court decides the ministerial exception should not exist at all, the floodgates open for lawsuits claiming all sorts of "discrimination" by religious institutions that heretofore had been accepted as a legitimate form of religious expression.

More likely, the Supreme Court will recognize the danger of eliminating that exception and will uphold the doctrine as grounded in our constitutional history and applicable to the teacher in this case.

Whatever the outcome, the decision will likely have a significant impact on the level of autonomy of many religious institutions in this country.

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Tortured for 32 months, singer still praises God

compiled by the *Christian Crusade* staff

She sings without accompaniment distinctly Middle Eastern melodies. If you listen closely, you'll pick out one word that needs no translation from her native Eritrean: *alleluia*.

Helen Berhane walks haltingly with help—still recovering from nerve damage suffered from almost three years of daily beatings and confinement in a storage container. Her crime? She refused to quit singing God's praises.

Eritrea is a desperately poor African nation wedged between Ethiopia and the Red Sea. She was arrested when she refused to stop singing Gospel music and sharing her faith publicly. When she speaks as she did recently at Christian conferences in Ireland, Australia and Germany, she describes unrelenting torture. Friends say she is still suffering mentally and physically from her ordeal.

She sings, then quietly shares that today thousands of Christian prisoners remain in Eritrea—and they need our help in our prayer.

Statistics show that 50 percent to 62.5 percent of Eritreans are Christians—with 36.5 percent to 50 percent Sunni Muslim. However, the government closely regulates religious activity. It recognizes the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahdo Church, the Roman Catholic Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church but all other Christian denominations are required to undergo a restrictive registration process. Jehovah's Witnesses, the Bahá'í Faith, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and numerous other Protestant denominations are not registered and cannot worship freely. Helen is a member of the Rhema Church, a Pentecostal group that has not been recognized and is officially banned.

Helen was arrested in the city of Asmara and held for 32 months. Recently she spoke to a conference sponsored by Open Doors Australia, an organization helping to raise awareness of the persecuted church. She also visited churches across Australia, speaking to other Christians about her ordeal and how Eritrean officials considered her a criminal "serial evangelizer." She was frequently imprisoned for brief periods, she says.

"The police would capture me and ask 'when are you going to stop this?' They all knew me and I would come in and out of prison. When I would arrive, the other inmates would say 'Helen's back! Welcome!'"

But after releasing a recording of her Gospel music, officials took a sterner attitude. Separated from her young daughter and taken to the notorious Mai Serwa military camp, she was imprisoned for almost two years, spending much of that time in a shipping container "no more than twenty feet long, so we were packed closely together."

"There were eighteen of us inside," she recalls. "We were given a bucket as a toilet and allowed out once a day to empty it," she said. Yet even in the rancid conditions of her imprisonment, Helen sang. She speaks of her desire to praise God despite her circumstances.

"Even though we were in a dark situation, we could not suppress the word of God. We praised God in spite of the fleas, the lice and the heat. We could not be prevented from singing—even in captivity."

But singing praises to God meant severe punishment for Helen and the other women who joined her in worship. Helen was reluctant to describe in detail the torture that came as a result of her stubbornness in Christ when speaking to the Australian magazine *Eternity*.

"They would handcuff me and fasten my ankles together too tight so the pain was excruciating. They left us there the whole night—I was in too much pain to sleep. I concentrated on the stars, because if I let myself think of my legs the pain became unbearable."

Helen and the other prisoners were frequently promised release if they signed a document declaring they would no longer preach, writes Kaley Payne for *Eternity*.

But Helen refused, instead looking for ways to continue to share her faith in captivity.

It was Helen's Christian witness that forced the guards to separate her from the other prisoners. She spent four months in solitary confinement. After a severe beating for being

discovered writing Bible studies for another prisoner, Helen was taken to the hospital with fears she would never walk again. From there, Helen's family helped her flee to Sudan. "It was a miracle—I felt the hand of God on my situation. By his grace, I was free."

Now living in Denmark after being granted asylum, Helen is humble about her experience.

"As I see it, what I've gone through isn't that much at all. You might think that because of all the things I've faced, that I am strong. But there are so many others that have walked where I have walked, and there is so much I still have to learn."



Helen Berhane



Ideaner Walker

100-year-old credits "serving others" for her long, happy life

compiled by the *Christian Crusade Newspaper* staff

"God is everything to me," says Ideaner Harden Moore Walker, who just turned 100 years old. "God is great in His goodness."

"I've been praying since I was 6 years old," she told the Orangeburg, S.C.,

newspaper the *Times and Democrat*, "and I have received some big blessings. When I was little, I prayed for my father to come back home from New Jersey, and he did."

She celebrated her birthday at New Mount Zion Baptist Church a few weeks ago with friends and family. She says God provided that family.

"I prayed and fasted for seven years after no one thought I could conceive, and I had seven children," she said. "I prayed and asked God to bless me with a home of my own, and He blessed me with the home that I own."

Her faith has given her contentment, she says. Her life has included working as a farm laborer for 10 cents a day, picking cotton, beans and peas. As a young wife and mother, she took care of her children while raising chickens and hogs to feed her family. Despite some hard jobs, her family says she has always kept a positive attitude.

She says she's happy as she looks back over her life.

"I wanted to be a musician," she said. "I really wanted to play the piano. I also wanted to be a teacher or a nurse."

She didn't accomplish those things, but says she'd change "nothing, absolutely nothing." The strong Christian woman says hard work and "serving God by serving others" is what added so many years to her life.

"God is everything to me," she said. "God is great in His goodness."

He answers prayer, she says.

Walker's children also came in answer to prayer.

What is her advice to the younger generations?

"Pray and go to church," she said. "Never even put your hands on something that doesn't belong to you.

Work hard and send your children to school and keep them away from drugs. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

"God is God and always will be. Stick together."

Under Obama rules, Jesus not religious enough

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New federal guidelines are so narrow that Jesus himself would not qualify for the Department of Health and Human Services “religious employer exemption,” says pro-life activist Daniel DiNardo.

Neither would the Good Samaritan.

The HHS rules has so many rules that “it protects almost no one, said DiNardo, chair of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities.

Both Jesus and the Good Samaritan would be disqualified because they had a record of “helping people who did not share their view of God,” notes Jeremy Kryn of LifeSiteNews, a Christian advocacy website.

DiNardo was citing the HHS requirement that goes into effect in 2012.

The new rule requires all insurance programs nationwide to cover all forms of contraception – including abortion-inducing drugs and sterilization – referring to them as “preventive services for women.”

Under the mandate only faith-based institutions that serve members of the same faith would be able to claim an exemption, thereby excluding any religious organizations that offer their services to the general public regardless of religious affiliation – or lack thereof.

DiNardo accused the HHS of “a distorted view of sexuality and a disdain for the role of religion,” during the USCCB’s 40th annual “Respect Life Month” observed during October, noted Kryn.

“The decision by HHS is wrong on many levels,”

DiNardo said.

“Preventive services are aimed at preventing diseases (such as by vaccinations) or detecting them early to aid prompt treatment (such as screening for diabetes or cancer).

“But pregnancy is not a disease.

“Mandating such coverage shows neither respect for women’s health or freedom, nor respect for the consciences of those who do not want to take part in such problematic initiatives,” said DiNardo.

He blasted the Obama administration for what he called their “misguided efforts to foster false values among our youth, to silence the voice of moral truth in the public domain, and to deprive believers of their constitutionally-protected right to live according to their religious convictions.”

Obama opens military chapels to same-sex wedding ceremonies

compiled by the *Christian Crusade Newspaper* staff

If U.S. military chaplains are asked to perform same-sex weddings, they will not be forced to violate their consciences nor the doctrines of their faith, according to an official ruling from the Pentagon.

They may decline to officiate nuptials for homosexual couples even though the “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy barring open homosexuals from serving has been abolished.

The ruling came in a memo from Clifford Stanley, undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness. The same memo says chaplains are permitted to perform homosexual marriage ceremonies on military bases in the six states where such are allowed: Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York and Vermont – but they will not be forced to do so.

Forty-one states either have laws or constitutional amendments prohibiting same-sex marriage. The decision “threatens to reignite the contentious debate in Congress over gays and lesbians in the military,” notes Charles Hoskinson in *Politico*. Federal law does not recognize same-sex marriages.

In fact, a number of Congressmen vowed to overturn the Pentagon ruling.

The memo notes that “a chaplain is not required to participate or officiate in a private ceremony if doing so would be in variance with the tenets of his or her religious or personal beliefs,” writes staff writer Andrew Tilghman for the *Army Times*. “In addition, a chaplain’s participation “does not constitute an endorsement of the ceremony” by the Defense Department.

In a separate memo, Pentagon lawyer Jeh John-son directed base commanders to make decisions about the use of Defense Department “real property and facilities, private functions for religious and other ceremonies . . . made on a sexual-orientation-neutral basis, provided such use is not prohibited by applicable state and local laws.”



A traditional military wedding

The move was hailed by homosexual advocacy groups and denounced by conservative groups such as the Concerned Women for America.

“The Pentagon overstepped its bounds,” said Penny Nance, the chief executive officer for the Virginia-based group. “As part of the federal government, the Department of Defense must abide by federal law including the Defense of Marriage Act, which permits marriage only between one man and one woman.”

Congressional lawmakers who opposed the repeal of “don’t ask, don’t tell” forced the Navy to reverse itself in April when Navy officials recommended allowing chaplains to perform same-sex marriages. Lawmakers called the Pentagon’s decision illegal and vowed to block it.

“The Department of Defense has decided to put the White House’s liberal agenda ahead of following the law,” said Rep. Todd Akin (R-Mo.)

“The Defense of Marriage Act makes it clear that for the purposes of the federal government, marriage is defined as between one man and one woman. The use of federal property or federal employees to perform gay marriage ceremonies is a clear contravention of the law.”

The constitutionality of the 1996 law is in doubt after several court rulings against it, and the Obama administration announced in February that it would no longer defend DOMA against challenges. Lawyers for the House of Representatives have stepped in to defend the law, and the issue is eventually expected to reach the Supreme Court.

The Pentagon memo sidestepped extending military benefits to same-sex spouses, stating a chaplain’s participation in a same-sex marriage “does not constitute an endorsement of the ceremony” by the Department of Defense.

Judge frees mom who killed newborn

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was 19 at the time. She told the court that she was worried that her parents would become alarmed by the baby’s cries. They were unaware of her pregnancy. When the baby’s death was investigated, she initially told police she was a virgin.

She received a three-year suspended sentence from Justice Joanne Veit of the Alberta Court of Queen’s Bench. As a result, she was able to walk out of court, though she will have to abide by certain conditions. The judge earlier had heard testimony

that while jailed, Effert had suffered abuse from fellow inmates who had a low regard for “baby killers.”

Veit ruled that because Canada has no abortion laws reflects that “while many Canadians undoubtedly view abortion as a less than ideal solution to unprotected sex and unwanted pregnancy, they generally understand, accept and sympathize with the onerous demands pregnancy and childbirth exact from mothers, especially mothers without support.”

Abortion in Canada is not addressed by the law – resulting in unrestricted, on-demand abortions up until the baby is born. The Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1968-69 specifically decriminalized abortion, as long as a committee of doctors signed off that it was necessary for the physical or mental well-being of the mother. Even that requirement was thrown out by Canada’s Supreme Court in 1988.

Polls show that a majority of Canadians believe abortion should remain legal, according to the *Montreal Gazette* newspaper.

Appalled by the decision, Jim Hughes, national president of Canada’s Campaign Life Coalition told LifeSiteNews:

“We live in a country where there is no protection for children in the womb right up until birth and now this judge has extended the protection for the perpe-

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trator rather than the victim, even though the child is born and as such should be protected by the court.”

“Yet what seems like a straightforward case of ‘girl murders baby’ has since turned into anything but,” observes Susan Martinuk in the *Calgary Herald*. “This determination that human life somehow has a lesser value when first born is the logical ending to decades of abortion public relations, convincing women—and apparently girls—that human life has no value at any time while in the womb. Based on this decision, that devaluation has now been taken one step further in that a child has no value when first born. It makes one wonder where the cutoff date now stands for the state to protect a live child. Will that line soon move to a week? A month?”

“In fact, if Effert had gone to a willing doctor just before giving birth, she could have avoided her legal problems altogether. She could have had a late-term abortion under Canada’s nonexistent abortion laws.

“Do you think Canadians would support that if they knew about it? Society still stands aghast at the actions of Katrina Effert, and the legal acceptance of these events only contributes to the further brutaliza-

tion of our culture.”

“Pro-life advocates have warned for years that widespread acceptance of abortion will open the door to greater societal acceptance of infanticide, beginning with the euthanizing of disabled newborns,” observed the website Fellowship of the Minds.

“Infanticide proponent Peter Singer, a top ethicist at Princeton University, has said, for example, “there is no sharp distinction between the fetus and the newborn baby.”

“Though he once was considered to be on the radical fringe, Singer’s views are becoming more mainstream. For example, the world’s most prestigious bioethics journal, the *Hastings Center Report*, published in 2008 an enthusiastic defense of the Netherlands’ practice of euthanizing newborns.

“Where will it end? A one month old child whose parent has decided is not worthy of life, a six month old child, a two year old child, a special needs child or how about a teenager?” asked Jim Hughes of the Campaign Life Coalition. “We live in a country where there is no protection for children in the womb right up until birth and now this judge has extended the protec-

tion for the perpetrator rather than the victim, even though the child is born and as such should be protected by the court.”

“It is time that Parliament, whose duty it is to protect and legislate regarding the Constitution, examine its duty with regard to the first constitutional right – ‘the right to life’ and enact legislation which recognizes that life begins at conception and must be protected from that time until natural death,” said Mary Ellen Douglas, national organizer of CLC. “The mother’s stress cannot equate to the loss of a lifetime for the child.”

“Decades ago it was feared that the legalization of abortion would lead to infanticide,” observed Patrick Craine of LifeSiteNews.

“Now – instead of children being cherished as a blessing and a miraculous gift from God, the secular humanists have diminished the little ones’ value to being a ‘burden,’ and that the woman or girl must live her own life.

“The evil one takes great delight in deceiving the world – and anyone who thinks their own personal comfort and convenience comes before that of an innocent’s – is of the devil, and is doing his will.”

‘Occupy Wall Street’ demands end to capitalism

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and Paul Bentley. “But then the freeloaders came along.” Now it’s beginning to look a little more like Woodstock.

“As the Occupy Wall Street protest continued in full strength in Manhattan this weekend, the atmosphere in New York’s financial district became increasingly debauched,” reports the *Mail*.

Conspicuously living among the politically active in the makeshift village in New York’s Zuccotti Park are junkies and homeless people – making the most of the free food.

Also present and infuriating the hard core activists are teens looking to turn the gathering into a wild party.

“Among the banners and flags are now discarded packets of condoms, cigarettes and bottles of spirits, while naked youngsters happily get together with just sleeping bags covering their modesty,” reports the *Mail*.

“Those who are there for political reasons, have raged against corporate greed and influence over American life, the gap between rich and poor, and hapless, corrupt politicians.

“Among the activists, however, clearly there are some on the ground with less noble intentions.

“Most of the kids are trust-fund babies. They don’t need to be here,” Andre, a 40-year-old activist told the *New York Post*. “I’ve seen some making out, having sex. It doesn’t look good.”

On Saturday morning a 23-year-old man named Zachary was rushed to hospital after drinking a combination of liquor and cough syrup. He stopped breathing and was rushed in a serious condition to Downtown Hospital.

“The leaders of the protest are furious at the manner in which it has been hijacked and have set up a make-shift internal police to stop the debauched behavior,” reported the *Mail*.

“We want to make sure everyone is here for the right reason,” Ricky Torres, 23, who is part of the security unit, told the *New York Post*.

Zuccotti Park, the site of the New York demonstration, is showing signs of strain. “Sanitation is a growing concern,” Brookfield Office Properties, which maintains the park, said in a statement.

“Normally the park is cleaned and inspected every week night. Because the protesters refuse to cooperate, the park has not been cleaned and as a result, sanitary conditions have reached unacceptable levels,” CBS News reported.

Despite the protester’s claim that they represent “the 99 per cent,” of Americans who are not bankers or Wall Street moguls, not all Americans are behind the Wall Street protests.

The *Financial Times* noted that both President Obama and Vice President Biden are backing the protests: “Obama and Biden have expressed understanding of the movement that has spread rapidly across the country. Obama said people were angry because Wall Street had not been ‘following the rules.’

“Occupy Wall Street” is more than a bunch of rich kids making love in the park, smoking dope and railing against capitalism, says the Ayn Rand Center’s Don Watkins.

“The real motive of the protesters is not to end ‘crony capitalism’ — it’s to attack real capitalism and end whatever is left of it in America,” says Watkins.

The movement continues to grow. Celebrities are giving their endorsements.

“Michael Moore and Susan Sarandon have dropped in,” reports Tina Susman for the *Los Angeles Times*. “A seasoned diplomat dispenses free advice. Supporters send everything from boxes of food and clothes to Whole Foods gift cards. They even have their own app, for the legions of fans following them on iPhones and Androids.”

Watkins at the Ayn Rand Center is wary of the movement: “Some Americans have expressed sympathy with the Occupy Wall Street protesters because they oppose bank bailouts and the incestuous relationship between Washington and Wall Street. Americans are understandably upset by what they see as ‘crony capitalism,’” writes Watkins:

“For years, Washington has favored certain bankers by intervening in the market. But that has nothing to do with genuine capitalism. Capitalism means that the government does one thing – protects us from force and fraud – leaving us free to conduct our economic affairs as we see fit. A capitalist government doesn’t intervene to pick winners and losers, or to save companies from their mistakes.

“But the Wall Street protests aren’t calling for an end to government intervention in markets – they want to increase it. Most of them, for example, want to increase wealth redistribution in the name of fighting income inequality.

“Contrary to their rhetoric, they do not oppose the banks on the grounds that Wall Street is in bed with Washington.

“What the protesters object to is not government stacking the deck to determine winners and losers. They just want the government to pick different winners and losers. They want to take the ‘capitalism’ out of ‘crony capitalism’ – not the other way around.”

Susman at the *L.A. Times*, however, doesn’t see the kids in the park as a threat. She asked some of the demonstrators about their long-term strategy and goals. “At a certain point, there’s a valid criticism in people asking, ‘What are you doing here?’” protester Chris Biemer, 23, told her.

Biemer, who recently moved to New York from Florida with a degree in business administration, says that ideally the group should team up with a nonprofit organization and get office space.

“It’s possible to stay here for months or longer, but at some point we’re going to become a fixture,” he said of their home in Zuccotti Park, a privately owned, publicly accessible plaza dotted with trees and flower beds about midway between the Stock Exchange and the former World Trade Center site.

Protester Victoria Sobel, “who like Biemer serves on Occupy Wall Street’s finance committee,” disagrees, writes Susman – and said the group’s strength lies in its ability to remain highly visible and in a place where anyone can visit and participate:

The 21-year-old New York University student happily reported that bookshelves had been delivered to the UPS store where the group receives mail. They’ll sit beneath a tarp in the park, all part of Sobel’s vision to solidify the group’s foothold.

“It’s a moment of clarifying for us,” Sobel said, confident that as autumn’s chill turns to winter’s subfreezing temperatures, Occupy Wall Street will stay put. “We’ll layer,” she said with a laugh, when asked how they’ll manage the cold.

“Tourists stroll in to snap pictures and read the protest signs scattered across the ground,” reports Susman, “then wander off to their next sightseeing stop. Executives drop in on lunch breaks to talk politics and economics. Police hang back on the sidewalks, and follow along when groups of protesters stage marches.

“Protest numbers vary as people drift in and out of the park. Some live in the area and come by for a few hours each day or week.

“Others stay there around the clock, their sleeping bags, guitars and clothing bundles spread on the ground. On Wednesday, they included a sleepy-eyed young man in a rumpled T-shirt cuddling a pet rat, and a woman who pranced about in her underwear . . .”

Top atheist says ‘dangerous’ Christians ‘must be eradicated’

compiled by the *Christian Crusade Newspaper* staff

American Atheists, a non-profit that claims to protect the rights of atheists and to ensure the “absolute separation of government and religion,” always seems to find itself in the middle of controversy, writes Billy Hallowell at the news website the *Blaze*.

“As if the most recent Ground Zero cross lawsuit the group launched isn’t enough to inspire widespread angst, an explosive new blog post on the organization’s web site advocating for the ‘eradication’ of fundamental Christians (and Islamists) is certain to make waves,” notes Hallowell:

In the post, Al Stefanelli, American Atheists’ Georgia State Director, makes a bizarre connection between radical Muslims and Christians. \

In speaking about “fundamentalist Christian and radical Islamic doctrines,” Stefanelli says that both are “dangerous, damaging and disingenuous.” Throughout the blog post, he continues to create ties between these two groups, but declines to truly define them.

Aside from making this comparison, he goes on to write that “most of these people” (again referring to both fundamentalist Christians and Islamists) “lack

“The atheist community gets angry when we read about the antics of idiotic, ignorant and imbecilic politicians and celebrities like Palin, Bachmann, Beck, Limbaugh, Pawlenty and Santorum.

“We post our thoughts on our social networks and our blogs and try to expose these creeps for exactly what they are. Most of the GOP, just about all of the Tea Party movement and even some Democrats and Independents should be ashamed of themselves for going out in public wearing the equivalent of an intellectual diaper.

“We criticize them for their rejection of science in favor of their fairy tales and write our letters and support our advocate organizations when our legal rights are abrogated.”

He quickly turned up the volatility, continuing:

“But the underbelly of fundamentalist Christianity and radical Islam does not operate in the legal system.

“They don’t respond to lawsuits, letters, amicus briefs or other grass-roots campaigns and they must, must, must be eradicated.”

the maturity and intelligence” to act in “a socially acceptable manner.” Many of these adherents, he believes, are “sociopaths,” “psychopaths” or simply “delusional.”

He then claims that radical interpretations of the Bible and the Koran require that believers “kill the infidel,” but he provides no evidence that Christians here in America are seeking to do anything along those lines.

It doesn’t take long for Stefanelli to take aim at conservative media and political leaders (including Glenn Beck), either.

He writes:

Researcher: Atheists live shorter, unhappier lives

compiled by the *Christian Crusade Newspaper* staff

Caution: Shaking your fist at the sky while proclaiming that God doesn’t exist and mocking the faith of His flock can be harmful to your health.

“This isn’t about what happens to you in the hereafter,” writes Patrick Chisholm for the news website the *Daily Caller*. “It’s about what happens to you in the here and now. Atheists and agnostics suffer, on average, higher rates of physical ailments, depression, suicide, alcohol use and drug addiction. They have greater marital instability, weaker parent-child relationships, lower lifetime earnings, lower educational attainment and higher rates of criminal activity.”

“These aren’t some trumped-up claims made by people with a religious ax to grind,” he continues. “These are the conclusions of many scholars in the sciences and social sciences whose work appears in numerous non-religious scholarly journals including *Psychological Bulletin*, *Journal of Personality and Clinical Studies*, *Social Science Research*, *Preventive Medicine*, *Demography* and many more.”

Chisholm cites headlines on LiveScience.com – which he notes is “hardly a religious or conservative publication,” which include “Churchgoers live longer,” “Online prayer helps cancer patients,” “Churchgoers breathe easier” and “Why religion makes people happier.”

Why are the faithful healthier?

“On the physical side,” notes Chisholm, “religious belief often prompts one to view one’s body as sacred and a gift from God, which reduces the likelihood of such factors as smoking, drinking, unhealthy eating, unsafe driving, physical inactivity and substance abuse. Religious persons also tend to have a greater support network of family and friends, which encourages healthier lifestyles.”

“People prone to anxiousness and depression tend to die sooner than would otherwise be the case, and religious practice often reduces those negative mental conditions. The Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index found that very religious persons are less likely

to have been diagnosed with depression during their lifetimes than the moderately religious or nonreligious.

“The evidence that religion has such a strong positive effect on health and well-being is so compelling that some non-religious mental health professionals even recommend religion therapy for their patients. ‘Religious therapy resulted in significantly faster recovery from depression when compared with standard secular cognitive-behavioral therapy,’ according to a study in the *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*.

“It definitely cuts down on suicide. Last year New York Department of Transportation worker Isidor Suarez talked a man out of jumping off a bridge. After confirming the man was a Christian, Suarez told him, ‘If you kill yourself, it’s like murder.’ The man relented. He must have recalled the Christian teaching that suicide is a sure ticket to hell.

“The hell factor I’m sure is just one of the many factors resulting in less suicide among church-goers,” writes Chisholm.

An *American Journal of Psychiatry* study found that they’re significantly less likely to commit suicide than those who never attend religious services. Atheists have fewer reasons for living and possess fewer moral objections to committing suicide.

“Another very secular institution,” notes Chisholm, “National Public Radio, featured a story that goes a long way in explaining why religion has such a profound positive effect on outcomes and behavior. The perception that someone or something is always watching, evaluating and judging your every move can make a model citizen out of you in no time.

“NPR interviewed Jesse Bering, director of the Institute of Cognition and Culture at Queen’s University, Belfast, and a committed atheist.

“He conducted a fascinating study where he divided children into three groups and had them do a game where it was almost impossible to win unless they cheated.

“One group was unsupervised, another group was

supervised and another group was told an invisible magic princess was watching them.

“The results? You guessed it,” writes Chisholm. “While the unsupervised group cheated the most, the magic princess group was just as likely to not cheat as the group supervised by a human.

“The NPR reporter mentioned a similar study with adults showing that people are far less likely to cheat when they think a supernatural presence is watching them,” noted Chisholm.

“God knows what you did. God is going to punish you for it. And that’s an incredibly powerful deterrent,” Dominic Johnson of the University of Edinburgh told NPR. “Everywhere you look around the world, you find examples of people altering their behavior because of concerns for supernatural consequences of their actions.”

A French philosopher and atheist, Voltaire, who lived around the time of the French Revolution, is said to have banned any talk of atheism around his servants, writes Chisholm, “I want my lawyer, tailor, valets, even my wife, to believe in God,” Voltaire said. “I think that if they do, I shall be robbed less and cheated less.”

“People often bad-mouth religion by pointing to wars and other wicked deeds people have carried out supposedly in the name of Christianity or other religions,” writes Chisholm. “But in those cases, the perpetrators are religious frauds. I remember as a kid hearing about Christian militiamen in Lebanon committing a massacre, and puzzling over their description as ‘Christian.’ If you massacre people, you’re not a Christian, I thought. You’re the opposite thereof. The same is true for Norwegian terrorist Anders Behring Breivik, described by many in the media as Christian. If you do what he did, you’re anything but.

“Islam gets a lot of bad PR for similar reasons, but the benefits of that religion are – apparent – as long as one doesn’t go the militant route.

“The recent riots in the U.K. included relatively few Muslims. Birmingham University education dean James Arthur attributes this in part to their religion. “They have clear family values.

“They have a code of honor and a morality . . . They could recognize these virtues more readily because . . . their religion brought them up in the discourse of these values.”

“To be sure, Muslims have rioted elsewhere such as in France in 2005, but in that case, indications are that many if not most of the rioters were not very devout.

“What if you’re an atheist or agnostic who’s convinced that church is a good thing, but you just can’t

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bring yourself to believe?" asks Chisholm. "Go to church anyway."

A study in the *American Sociological Review* concluded that the social networks one forms at church are a big factor in boosting well-being. People with more than 10 friends in their congregation were almost twice as satisfied with life as people with no friends in their congregation. And who knows—you just may come around to believing.

"If you still can't be a believer, raise your kids to be, if you have any," writes Chisholm. "While it's no guarantee, chances are that it will help them live longer and be happier.

"And, as predicted based on the magic princess example above, religious kids are more likely to be better behaved and adjusted, according to a study.

(Although the opposite could happen if parents regularly argue over their faith at home, the study found.)

Another study concluded that religious children have higher self-control and lower impulsiveness, and do better at delaying gratification and social adjustment.

"Non-religious people often say they'll let their children decide whether to be religious when they get older. But if you're not instilled with religion when you're young, it's a lot harder to become religious later on. Better to instill it in them first, and then let them decide.

"All of this begs the question: Would the noted atheist Christopher Hitchens be in his current state of ill health, had he not embraced atheism?

"Not necessarily," writes Chisholm. "If it was

smoking and drinking that led to his throat cancer, turning toward religion certainly may not have tempered his preference for booze and tobacco. There are plenty of unhealthy church-goers who die before their time, and lots of healthy atheists who live long and fruitful lives.

"Statistically, however, the religious outdo the atheists when it comes to longevity and satisfaction.

"Another French philosopher, Blaise Pascal, urged atheists to make a wager.

"Embracing religion means you have everything to gain in the afterlife if there's a God, and nothing to lose if there isn't a God.

"But it's not just the afterlife. When it comes to being healthy and happy, embracing religion means you have everything to gain and nothing to lose in this life, too."

Atheists gloat over costing small church \$20,000

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sign by the Freedom From Religion Foundation.

They had it removed as offensive.

The billboard featured the smiling image of Dylan Galos, a local college student, proclaiming the atheist message: "I can be good without God."

It seemed more than coincidental to some that the pictured atheist student was black, just like Christ Cathedral's pastor, Rev. Waymon Malone.

After the billboard was removed from church property, the atheist organization, based in Madison, Wisconsin, decided to take revenge on the church for removing their sign.

On their website, Freedom From Religion describes what they did next:

A decision by Christ Cathedral Church, 3350 Allegheny Ave., Columbus, Ohio to remove a Freedom From Religion Foundation billboard has had expensive consequences for the church.

Shortly after Columbus atheist Dylan Galos' "Coming Out of the Closet" billboard, stating "I can be good without God," went up in late June, Rev. Waymon Malone Jr. of Christ Cathedral Church said it had to go, and it was moved to a new location.

The church owns the property the billboard company was leasing near its parking lot.

After finding no record the Church paid property taxes for this commercial use of the property, FFRF sent a letter July 7 asking Franklin County Auditor Clarence Mingo II to investigate.



Dylan Galos in front of the billboard

The auditor responded by billing Christ Cathedral for roughly \$20,000 in past taxes. Meanwhile, the account executive who worked with FFRF to find locations for the atheist organization's billboard says he had no idea that one of those selected was on church property.

It was "an unfortunate oversight" by Clear Channel, said Jay Schmidt, account executive for Matrix Media Services, who handled the atheist organization's billboard purchase.

ACLU, Planned Parenthood join forces to fight pro-life vote

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Christine Dhanagom of LifeSiteNews writes that "Yes on 26," a coalition of anti-abortion groups, obtained a copy of the Mississippians for Healthy Families' *Statement of Organization for a Political Committee* from the Secretary of State's office."

The official filing lists Nsombi Lambright, Kay Scott and Barry Chase as the organization's officers.

"Lambright is the Executive Director of the ACLU of Mississippi," notes Dhangagom, "Scott is the CEO of Planned Parenthood Southeast, which covers Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi; and Chase is the President of Memphis Regional Planned Parent-

hood in Tennessee."

Chase's clinic made headlines in 2009 when one of his employees was caught in a videotaped sting coaching an actress posing as a 14-year-old girl, explaining to her how to lie about the age of her boyfriend—who the girl had said was 31.

A space on the official filing which requests a description of the purpose of the committee and the identification of "affiliated or connected organizations" is left blank, reports Dhangagom. Lambright is listed as the director and Scott as the treasurer.

Yes on 26 notes on its website the financial investment that Planned Parenthood, the nation's largest

abortion provider, has made in the Mississippi campaign:

"Abortion, to put it plainly, is a very lucrative business, and this has been true from the beginning.

"By last count, Planned Parenthood (a tax-exempt organization!) has \$951 million in total assets.

Kay Scott and her partners in the abortion industry have a very good reason to make sure Amendment 26 doesn't bring an end to their payday in Mississippi."

"The organization "Mississippians for Healthy Families" is simply a front organization for Planned Parenthood and the ACLU, who are attempting to

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ACLU, Planned Parenthood join forces to fight pro-life vote

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prevent a pro-life amendment from being added to the state constitution, according to a state pro-life organization,” concludes Dhangagom.

The Yes on 26 website also notes: “John Powell, the ACLU’s national legal director, says he considers abortion to be the ACLU’s number one priority;

the defense of the First Amendment, (the alleged heart and soul of the ACLU’s mission), was listed third, after civil rights.

“Why? Simply follow the money. Defending abortion ‘rights’ is a much more lucrative venture than defending free-speech.”

“Mississippians for Healthy Families” meanwhile accused Yes on 26 of setting up a “fake website.”

If passed, the Mississippi amendment will define a person as “every human being from the moment of fertilization, cloning or the functional equivalent thereof.”



“Backyard Skeptics” sign at Huntington Beach

curately, with how they are treated by people of faith,” noted Hirshfield. “Are we really still at the level of needing to recall that two wrongs don’t make a right?”

A Christian preacher who often preaches at Huntington Beach noted that they chose not to desecrate a Koran—since Christians forgive those who intentionally offend them.

The Backyard Skeptics, a group that has put up pro-atheism billboards throughout California’s Orange County, said they wanted to point out what they call immoral acts in the Bible, reports Jaimee Lynn Fletcher for the *Orange County Register* newspaper.

They promised to tear out pages of the Bible at Huntington Beach pier to point out what they say is immorality in the book upon which Christians base their faith and doctrines. In fact, they decided to only tear up pieces of paper on which they had printed selected verses that they claimed portray immoral biblical law.

Group members said they objected to Deuteronomy 22: 14-31, which tells those living under the pre-Christian Mosaic law that if a man finds his wife not to be a virgin, the community can stone her; or a later verse in the same chapter the Backyard Skeptics said can be interpreted to say that virgins who are raped will be forced to marry their rapist.

Ray Comfort, who often open-air preaches in Huntington Beach and has an evangelical ministry television show with actor Kirk Cameron, told Fletcher that he and the group’s leader are “friendly enemies” who often discuss religion.

“I would seriously like to supply them with a Koran and maybe something Hindu,” he said. “If he wants to make a statement about God, he should spread it around a little and not pick on Christians.”

Comfort added he believes Backyard Skeptics targets Christianity because Christians are taught to “love their enemies.”

“If atheists/agnostics/freethinkers/humanists object to being insulted and talked down to by people of faith, as well they should,” observed Hirshfield, “perhaps they should refrain from the same behavior. While they may not draw on traditions such as ‘Love your neighbor as yourself,’ ‘Do unto others as you would have them do unto you’ or ‘Love your enemy,’ there are plenty

California atheists announce plan to rip apart a Bible in front of media

compiled by the *Christian Crusade Newspaper* staff

On September 17, a group of California atheists summoned the media at southern California’s Huntington Pier with a promise that they were going to tear offending pages out of a Bible.

“There is something pretty odd, dare I say hypocritical, about a bunch of people who call themselves “free-thinkers” and “humanists” not only verbally abusing people of faith, but actually tearing up verses from the Bible as an act of protest, as they did on a pier in Huntington Beach,” observed Brad Hirshfield in the *Washington Post*. “It doesn’t sound terribly humane to me, and I am quite sure that destroying texts, however much one may object to them, is the opposite of free thought.

Indeed, 15 members of a group called Backyard Skeptics, “proved nothing so much as their own ability to act out in the name of no God, in precisely the same obnoxious ways which they associate, too often ac-



Huntington Beach atheists talk to the press

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The atheists in front of their advertising



of parallel teachings in secular thought which are just as ennobling.

“If one really can be ‘good without God’ as the California protestors’ signs proclaimed, then why not be so, and let the proof be in the experience of their living?”

“This was not a case of their rights as atheists being abridged in the name of

other people’s faith. If it were, I would likely be on their side even though we disagree about God.

“No, this was simply one more time when people fanatically attached to their own view of things felt that their sense of things was so true, it justified trampling on the views and sensitivities of others.”



Atheists would remove all crosses like this one

Bellar said the cross was erected on the water tower about eight years ago by private citizens who collected donations to cover costs, Fox reported:

It’s just a cross on the water tower,” Bellar said. “All we’re doing is exercising our right to practice our beliefs down here but this organization is now going to stymie that.

“We’re not out here knocking on doors trying to convert people.”

But Freedom From Religion Foundation co-president Dan Barker told Fox the cross is a violation of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. They’ve given the mayor until the end of October to remove the cross. “The law is very clear on this,” Barker told Fox:

“A secular city may not promote or hinder religion. We don’t have a problem with believers putting up crosses wherever they want, but this is a cross put up by the city on the city water tower.”

Barker said they’ve been sending letters to the city since last year demanding that the cross be taken down, acting on behalf of an unnamed resident who complained.

“It offends many residents,” Barker said of the cross. “Many of them think the cross symbol is an offensive symbol—that it’s an insult to humanity.”

Mayor Bellar said he doesn’t believe that’s true.

“As a matter of fact, I don’t even think it’s a Whiteville resident,” he said. “We don’t have

Tennessee mayor asks for help battling “terrorist” atheists

compiled by the *Christian Crusade Newspaper* staff

Calling a group of aggressive out-of-state atheists “terrorists,” a small-town Tennessee mayor has asked for help defending a cross atop his town’s water tower.

“They are terrorists as far as I’m concerned,” said Whiteville, Tennessee, Mayor James Bellar about the Wisconsin-based Freedom From Religion Foundation. “They are alleging that some Whiteville resident feels very, very intimidated by this cross.”

The Wisconsin group has sent him threatening letters saying they will take the small Tennessee community to court to force removal of the cross, reports WREG-TV Channel 3 News.

“The mayor said his community is under attack,” reported Fox News Radio.

people of that belief here and if we do they’re not going to raise that kind of ruckus for the rest of the town.”

The town council has voted to consult with the Alliance Defense Fund about their legal options, “This is their cause in life—to ride up and down the highway and find small towns that maybe have a religious symbol somewhere on public property,” he said.

“A terrorist is more than a guy that flies the planes into the building,” the mayor told Fox. “It’s anyone who can disrupt your way of living, destroy your lifestyle, cause you anxiety. It’s more than killing people.

“If they can disrupt your routine in life, that’s what they want to do. They are terrorists as far as I’m concerned.”



“See You at the Pole” at Waxahatchie, Texas



Praying together at Lufkin, Texas



“See You at the Pole” at Radford, Virginia



Praying at Clinton, Mississippi



Praying at Bluffton, Indiana



Kids gather at Osceola, Florida



Students praying in Alhambra, California



"Meet You at the Pole" at Waller, Texas

What are all these kids praying about?

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While hundreds of students across Sumner County gathered at their school's flagpole for prayer for See You At The Pole Day, school officials took extra measures to ensure teachers, administrators and coaches did not participate.

In anticipation of the annual event, school officials distributed guidelines telling school staff if they choose to pray on campus, it must be done out of sight and earshot of students.

"When a teacher or administrator participates in events such as See You At The Pole, it is possible for a student to confuse a teacher or administrator's personal speech with their official speech," the

guidelines stated. The new rules were a result of an American Civil Liberties Union suit. A jury trial is scheduled for June 2012.

The policy change has created some frustration among coaches and administrators, said Jason Cline, area director of the Northern Middle Tennessee chapter of Fellowship of Christian Athletes. "I think the coaches have been told so much about what they can't do, they're not sure about what they can do," Cline said.

A group of teenagers in Burleson, Texas, is credited with the "See You at the Pole" concept in 1990.

"They came seeking God and little did they know

how powerfully He was about to move," notes a press release from the youth ministers network. "Compelled to pray, they drove to three different schools that night. Not knowing exactly what to do, they went to the school flagpoles and prayed for their friends, schools, and leaders.

"Those students had no idea how God would use their obedience.

"God used what He did among those teenagers and others who were holding similar prayer meetings at their schools to birth a vision in the hearts of youth leaders across Texas. The vision was that students throughout Texas would follow these examples and meet at their school flagpoles to pray simultaneously.

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"See You at the Pole" at Reno, Nevada

What are all these kids praying about?

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The challenge was named 'See You at the Pole' and shared with 20,000 students in June 1990 at Reunion Arena in Dallas."

On September 12, 1990, more than 45,000 teenagers met at school flagpoles in four different states to pray before the start of school. Reports came for days after the first event.

On September 11, 1991, at 7:00 a.m., an estimated one million students gathered at school flagpoles all over the country.

This year, from Boston to Los Angeles, from North Dakota to the tip of Texas, students came together to pray.

Some sang, some read Scripture, but most importantly, they prayed. Like those first students, they prayed for their schools, for their friends, for their leaders, and for their country.

This year, the event occurred in every state of the Union as well as in Canada, Korea, Japan, Turkey and the African nation of the Ivory Coast.

More than 30,000 kids in Alabama gathered at various schools, reported Greg Garrison for the *Birmingham News*:

"With a heavy fog hanging in the air, about 300 Oak Mountain Middle School students huddled on the football field to pray," he wrote. "An estimated 30,000 Christian students gathered before school at more than 200 public schools across central Alabama."

The movement toward religious clubs meeting on campus and organizing prayer rallies before school gained steam after the 1984 Equal Access Act granted student-led religious clubs the same right to meet on campus as other clubs. The law was upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1990.

At Westmoreland High School in Sumner

County, Tennessee, teens said they did it to honor God and to make a public witness of their faith—but also to show their support for their teachers and coaches who were barred from participating in the event.

Some of the kids told reporters that they came to

pray for the school board and—incredibly—for the American Civil Liberties Union.

"We prayed that the ACLU wouldn't be a hindrance to us, but also that the Board of Education would change their thinking and stop appeasing the ACLU," said one dad who brought his kids to the annual event.

"Many in the Westmoreland community for weeks have been in an uproar over controversy surrounding the reprimand of four Westmoreland Middle School coaches who were observed bowing their heads during a student-led prayer after a football game," Jennifer Easton in the *Gallatin News Examiner*.

The coaches were required by Principal Danny Kay Robinson to sign letters acknowledging they would not be allowed to coach if they violated policy by engaging in any conduct that appeared to be religious.

Some of the kids who attended the See You At The Pole event said they felt the Board of Education had gone too far and were infringing on the rights of school employees to observe their faith.

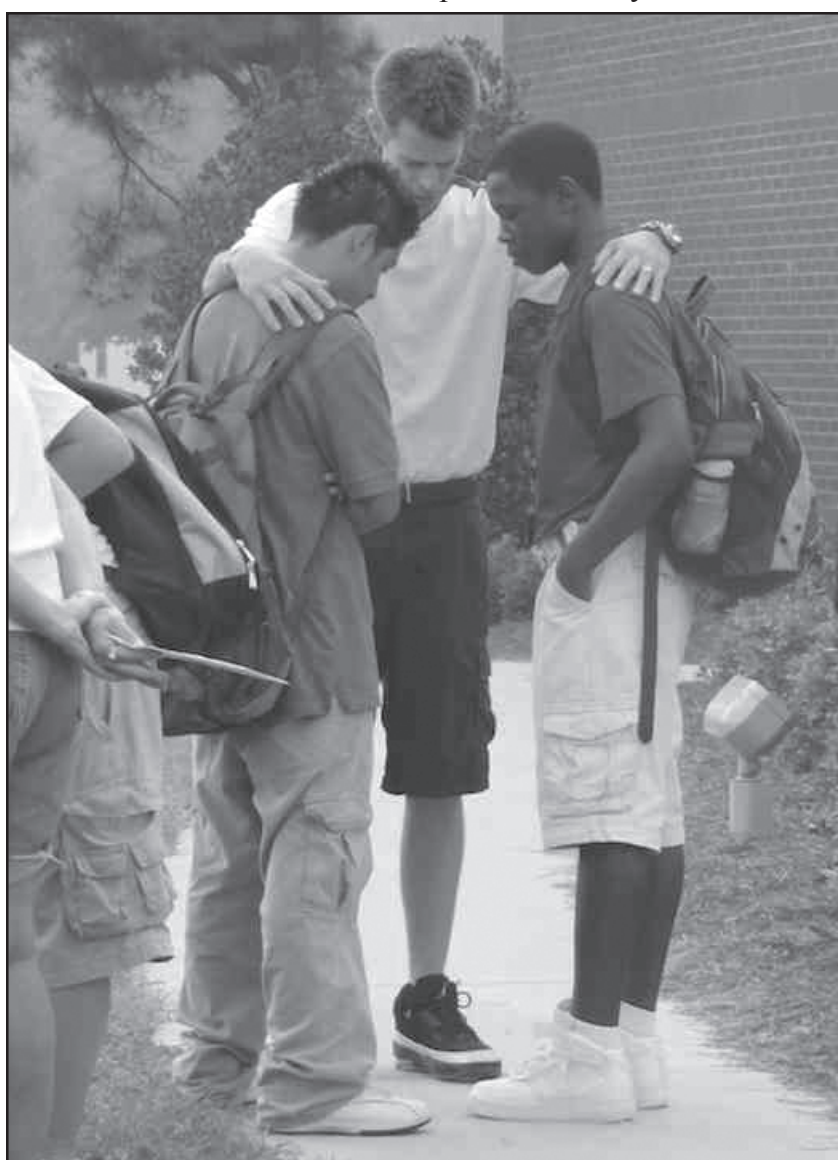
Kayla Carter, a senior at Westmoreland High School, was at the pole to pray for her school and classmates, but also to pray for her teachers who couldn't participate.

"I think we all want to take a stand," she said. "It's upsetting and it's not right teachers can't pray with us."

Former WHS Principal Dwayne Oldham, who retired earlier this year, did pray with students.

"I think it's important that kids have an example to go by," Oldham said.

"That's something that's lacking in our society today."



Kids praying in Oklahoma



The Salt and Light Cafe

Police 'apologize' for forcing cafe owner to stop displaying Bible

continued from page 1

hour until he turned off a video displaying Bible verses.

Jamie Murray, owner of the Salt and Light Cafe in Blackpool, 240 miles northwest of London, said two uniformed officers from Lancashire Constabulary arrived at lunchtime, the cafe's busiest time of day. Officer June Dorrian told him there had been a complaint and he was in violation of the Public Order Act 1986.

"I told them that all that appeared on the screen were the words of the New Testament," Murray told the *Daily Mail* newspaper. "There is no sound, just the words on the screen and simple images in the background of sheep grazing or candles burning. I thought there might be some mix-up but they said they were here to explain the law to me and how I had broken it.

"I said, 'Are you really telling me that I am facing arrest for playing the Bible?' and Dorrian fixed me with a stare and said, 'If you broadcast material that causes offence under the Public Order Act then we will have to take matters further. You cannot break the law.'"

Murray told the *Mail* that he realized the only way to appease the officers was to pull the plug on the Bible.

Apparently a customer had complained that by displaying verses from the Bible, Murray was inciting hatred against homosexuals.

Murray described an "aggressive inquisition" during which, the *Mail* reported, "he thought he was going to be arrested and 'frog-marched out of the cafe like a criminal.'"

But he added: "I have now checked on my rights and I am not going to be bullied by the police and the 'politically correct' lobby out of playing the Bible silently in my cafe. It's crazy. Christians have to stand up for what they believe in. I was worried about being handcuffed and led out of the shop in front of my customers. It wouldn't have looked good so I thought it was better to comply. It felt like a betrayal. They left the shop and told me they would continue to monitor if we were displaying inflammatory material. At no stage had they spoken to me like I was a law-abiding citizen trying to earn a living. I felt like a criminal," reported the *Mail*.

Murray said he had been given no indication of who had complained or which verses of the New Testament had caused the offence, but he guessed it may have been a reaction to the Book Of Romans that had been playing the week before. The Book takes the form of a letter from the apostle Paul to the people of Rome, in which he rails against all manner of godlessness.

In verses 26-28 of Chapter One he says: 'God let them follow their own evil desires. Women no longer wanted to have sex in a natural way, and they

did things with each other that were not natural. Men behaved in the same way. They stopped wanting to have sex with women and had strong desires for sex with other men. They did shameful things with each other, and what has happened to them is punishment for their foolish deeds.'

Far from apologizing about the incident, Lancashire Police said they had received a complaint from a customer who was "deeply offended" by the words on the screen.

A law firm, the Christian Institute, said its lawyers have told Murray he is free to display the Bible in any way he chooses, and they are preparing a complaint against the police.

"I have no problem with the police looking into a complaint," institute spokesman Mike Judge told the *Mail*, "but once they realized it was just the words of the Bible being shown on the screen, then they should have walked away. This is intimidatory and completely unacceptable."

At first, Lancashire Police told the *Mail* they were "duty bound" to respond to the complaint and "had concluded the cafe could be in breach of Section 29E of the Public Order Act, which warns that people who play images or sounds that stir up hatred against homosexuals could be guilty of an offense. At no point did the officer ask the cafe owner to remove any materials or arrest the man and we took a common-sense and objective approach in dealing with the complaint. We believe our response and the action we took was completely proportionate."

Then a day later, a spokesman admitted that Officer Dorrian got the law wrong. The spokesman said the department is sorry for the "manner" of their investigation.

"But they refused to apologize for launching the investigation and they also denied banning the display of the Bible texts in the cafe," reports the website of the Christian Institute, a British advocacy group that is providing Murray with legal assistance.

Murray, says he accepts the police's apology "as far as it goes" and forgives them -- but he believes some important matters remain unaddressed.

Murray says he will not allow the police to brush

the incident under the carpet, because he is worried that it could happen to another Christian.

Supported by the Christian Institute, he intends to lodge a formal complaint with the police.

The police claim they never told Murray that he couldn't display the Bible texts. But Murray says the police are "obfuscating" -- a polite, rather British term for "lying."

There also appears to be confusion over which part of the Public Order Act 1986 the police were using to justify their actions. Originally two police officers told Murray they were investigating a possible Section 5 offence, which outlaws insulting words that are likely to cause distress.

But days later, police told the media they were investigating a possible Section 29E offence, which outlaws the broadcasting of offensive material intended to stir up homophobic hatred. The Christian Institute's attorney, Sam Webster, says that simply displaying Bible texts in a Christian cafe does not fall within the scope of either offence.

The Christian Institute's Mike Judge said: "Murray is obviously pleased that the police have admitted to some of their mistakes. It is shuddering to think that a British police force in the 21st Century needs to be reminded of such basic civil liberties. There is clearly a need for Lancashire police force to review the training of its officers."



Jamie Murray

Who is trying to merge Islam and Christianity into hybrid 'Chrislam'?

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However, such acceptance of Muslim theology is unlikely to be accepted by any Christians other than non-fundamentalists such as Universalists, Unitarians and perhaps some Methodists or Episcopalians.

After all, Christianity has at its very core that Jesus is the only way to heaven—and that eternal salvation is a gift of grace, earned for mankind by Christ's crucifixion. Islam holds the firm view that eternal damnation awaits those who do not earn salvation by submitting to the requirements of the Koran, which describes Jesus as a noteworthy prophet who didn't really die on the cross.

So, how does one reconcile the two views?

In Nigeria, Shamsuddin Saka seeks to bridge the religious divide. However, notes Fred de Sam Lazaro for "The World" radio program on Public Radio International:

"It doesn't take much to spark religious violence in the West African nation of Nigeria. Just this past weekend, rioting erupted in the town of Bauchi after Muslims parked their cars in front of a church. Bauchi lies along a line between Nigeria's mainly Muslim north and the Christian south. Tensions in the region often spill over into violence, but one man is trying to bridge the gap. He preaches a liturgy that blends Christianity and Islam."

"Of hundreds of small churches in Lagos, this likely is the only one that has both a Bible and a Qur'an on the lectern. The invocations come loudly from both. Practitioners of what the preacher calls 'Chrislam.'"

Saka preaches that Jews and Muslims are both children of Abraham.

Saka was born Muslim, and, the PRI report notes:

"it was after returning from a Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca that he was inspired – he says instructed by God – to launch his new ministry: 'That was about 19 years ago. I was praying and I laid down and the Lord told me, make peace between Christian and Muslim.'"

Christian Science Monitor reporter Abraham McLaughlin describes Saka's place of worship:

"At first, it seems a surprising sight: inside a two-story mosque in sub-Saharan Africa's largest metropolis hangs a life-size portrait of Jesus Christ."

"Yet worshipers at 'The True Message of God Mission' say it's entirely natural for Christianity and Islam to co-exist, even overlap. They begin their worship by praying at the Jesus alcove and then 'running their deliverance' – sprinting laps around the mosque's mosaic-tiled courtyard, praying to the one God for forgiveness and help."

"They say it's akin to Israelites circling the walls of Jericho – and Muslims swirling around the Ka'ba shrine in Mecca."

This group—originally called "Chris-lam-herb" for its mix-and-match approach to Christianity, Islam, and traditional medicine—is a window on an ongoing religious ferment in Africa. It's still up for debate whether this group, and others like it, could become

models for Muslim-Christian unity worldwide or whether they're uniquely African. But either way, they are "part of a trend," says Dana Robert, a Boston University religion professor.

At a nearby church/mosque with perhaps 500 worshipers is a teacher named Tela Tella who says that Saka stole his idea for the religion. Saka's

congregation is larger than Tella's—primarily because Saka is more aggressive in recruiting new members. PRI describes a service at Saka's facility:

It begins each Sunday morning with Qur'anic prayer. The prayer is intense, a trance-like frenzy similar to a Pentecostal Christian service. It climaxes with a sermon hitting repeatedly on the themes of

prayerfulness and on the commonality between Islam and Christianity.

Ishak Akintola, a religion scholar at nearby Lagos State University, told PRI the spiritual basis for the merger is sound:

"The Bible concentrates on teachings of love; that's what Jesus says in Matthew: Chapter Five, that you love your neighbor and you even love your enemy. Now you find the Qur'an saying exactly the same thing."

And there are those academics who predictably think Chrislam is wonderful. Anthropologist Mara Leichtman at Michigan State University notes:

"According to Islam, the prophet Muhammad was the final prophet, but certainly not the only prophet; and they believe in Jesus and all of the other prophets of Judaism and Christianity that came before the prophet Muhammad." "So it's nothing foreign to a Muslim to believe in Jesus, to pray in Jesus, to light a candle for the Virgin Mary, for example, as I've experienced Muslims do in churches in Senegal."

However, Alan Wisdom, director of the Presbyterian Action committee and vice president for research and programs at the Institute on Religion & Democracy contends that Islam should never be viewed as an equal to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Moreover, Qurans should never be placed next to God's Holy Word, he says. He told writer Chad Groening at the news site OneNewsNow:

"The Bible is God's unique revelation to us."

The pulpit of a church is for preaching the Word of God, and we believe that is the scriptures of the Old and New Testament. When we go to worship God, we worship Jesus Christ, and we can't mix that worship with any other allegiance."

Wisdom said that while he believes it is important for Christians to study and understand religions like Islam, he does not think believers should ever cross the line and blend Christianity together with a religion that is "antithetical to Christian teachings."

Author Bill Muehlenberg on his website Culture Watch sees no future for Christlam:

Some misguided Christians believe they can somehow combine the two religions and still have something recognizable as the Christian faith. Sorry, but it can't happen.

Muslims are happy to use such versions of religious syncretism to gain entry into Christian circles, but it just results in the creation of more dhimmitude – Christians becoming second-class citizens.

Islam always wins in such attempts, while Christianity always loses. The truth is, the two religions are fully incompatible. They may seem to be similar (both are world religions, both have Abrahamic origins, both are monotheistic, etc) but the differences are far greater.

Yet some quite foolish Christians think they can blend their faith with that of Islam and still remain intact, effective, and biblical. Sorry, but it just does not – indeed, cannot – happen.

He cites the example of churches in London sharing their premises with Muslims:

They seemed to think that a church and mosque could co-exist on the same premises, and that Christianity and Islam could co-exist as a faith system. But all that happens is the Christian faith gets watered down while Islam continues to thrive.

Muehlenberg quotes author Mark Durie, an Australian authority on Islam:

"A prominent element in Islamic daily prayers is the recitation of Al-Fatihah (the Opening), the first chapter of the Koran. Often described as a blessing, Al-Fatihah has a sting in its tail. After introductory praises, the final sentence of Al-Fatihah is a request for guidance 'in the straight path' of Allah's blessed ones, not the path 'of those against whom You are wrathful, nor of those who are astray.'"

"Who are the ones who are said to be under Allah's wrath or to have gone astray from his straight path? According to the revered commentator Ibn Kathir, Muhammad himself gave the answer: 'Those who have earned the anger are the Jews, and those who are led astray are the Christians.'"

"Al-Fatihah is as central to Islamic devotion as the Lord's Prayer is to Christians: It is recited at least 17 times a day as part of daily Muslim prayers. Yet according to Muhammad himself, this prayer, which is on the lips of every pious Muslim day and night, castigates Christians as misguided and Jews as objects of Allah's wrath."

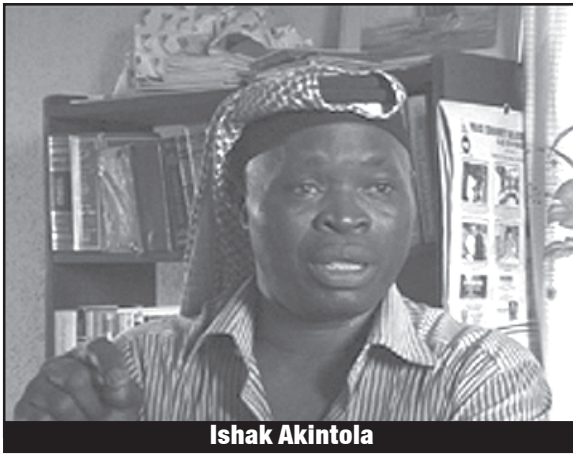
And while Muslims may look up to Jesus as a prophet, they regard it as blasphemous to view him as God's son and the Savior of the world. As Durie remarks, "Certainly there are some similarities between Isa of the Koran and Jesus of the Gospels. The Koran calls Jesus 'al-Masih'—the Messiah—and teaches He was born of a virgin, performed miracles of healing

and raised the dead. Yet here the similarities end. Isa of the Koran was not crucified and did not die but was raised up by Allah (Sura 4: 157-158).

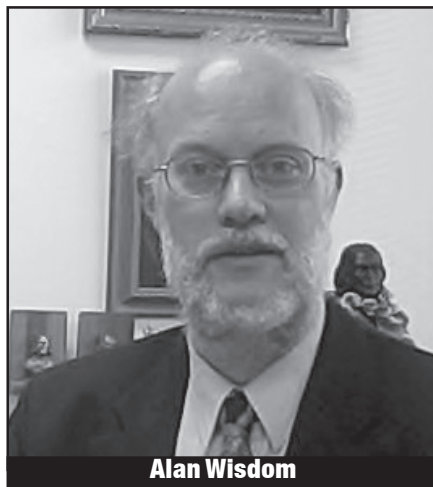
Author David Dollins doesn't pull any punches in



Shamsuddin Saka



Ishak Akintola



Alan Wisdom

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his denunciation of Chrislam – quoting Peter the Apostle:

“But there were false Prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord Who bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction” (2 Peter 2:1).

“For these church leaders,” declares Dollins, “who are blind watchmen, to bring Islam and the reading of the Quran into the Church is to deny the Lord himself, it is to deny who He is, and it is to deny what He accomplished at Calvary’s Cross 2,000 years ago, when He gave His life for the sins of the world!”

He continues in the *Christian Post*:

Just as bad, it is an open acceptance of the Spirit of Antichrist, which John said will bring swift destruction and ultimately, yet sadly, the damning of the soul.

What should the Church do now? We must get back to proclaiming that Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation without fear of reprisal. We must defend and preach the deity of Jesus, that He is the one true God and there is no other. Then we must also boldly proclaim the Holy Scrip-



David Dollins

tures, not the Quran, as the inspired and inerrant Word of God.

Everyone should be free to practice their religion in the way they choose. What this is about is defending the truth of who Jesus Christ is and what He accomplished at the Cross, and preserving the purity of the Church against the infiltration of false doctrine. The Early Church Fathers (e.g., St. Polycarp, St. Irenaeus) defended the Truth against heresy, so why don’t we?

And never one to mince words, author Dr. John MacArthur on his website Grace to You writes of Chrislam:

When evangelicals capitulate and attempt to soften the offense of the gospel by joining with Muslims in this way, they blur the lines between the god of Islam and the God of the Bible. But now is not the time for blurring lines. Now is the time to draw lines—lines between truth and error, and between the one path to heaven and the many paths to hell.

Islam rejects the Trinity and the God of the Bible, insisting instead that Allah alone is the one true deity. It denies that Jesus is God, that He died on the cross, and that He was raised from the dead. Instead, say Muslims, Jesus was but one of

thousands of prophets sent by Allah, the greatest of them being Mohammed. In other words, Jesus was merely a man.

Islam rejects the salvation of forgiveness through Christ, teaching that only Muslims can be saved. According to the Koran, if a person follows Islam and does enough good deeds to outweigh the bad, Allah may allow him to enter paradise, but even then he can’t be certain. The only sure pathway to heaven is killing and being killed in jihad, a holy war.

Islam gives lip service to the Bible as a holy book, but it undermines and denies every fundamental doctrine about sin and salvation taught in the Bible. In fact, Islam today is the most powerful system on earth for the destruction of biblical truth and Christianity—thousands of Christians are dying under Islamic persecution, especially in the Middle East, Africa, Indonesia, and other parts of Asia.

Clearly, Islam and Christianity are mutually exclusive. Both claim to be the only true way to God, but both cannot be right. There is no atonement in Islam, no forgiveness, no savior, and no assurance of eternal life. The gospel of Jesus Christ is a message of hope; Islam is a religion of hopelessness.

Making these kinds of distinctions may not be politically correct, but it is critical if the purity of the gospel is to be protected. Put simply, there is no salvation outside of Christ.

Pakistan’s Islamic state careens into anarchy

compiled by the *Christian Crusade* staff

Assassinations and abductions are increasingly a part of Pakistan politics as the Islamic republic descends into mob anarchy. Instead of public debate, politicians who take controversial positions are murdered and their killers treated like heroes.

Punjab’s governor and presidential hopeful, Salman Taseer, and the federal minister for minorities, Shahbaz Bhatti, have been gunned down. Both committed the unpardonable sin of coming out in favor of repealing Pakistan’s notorious blasphemy laws.

In Pakistan, any Muslim can accuse any non-Muslim of blaspheming the Prophet Mohammed or the Koran – and the accused is doomed. Accusations have included touching the Koran without ceremonially washing one’s hands or commenting aloud that Jesus died for our sins and Mohammed did not.

That comment resulted in a death penalty for Christian mother of five Asia Noreen Bibi, who sits on death row awaiting her execution.

Islamic *shari’ah* law bars her from testifying against her accusers. No defense is effective. “Extra-judicial execution” is increasingly common – meaning that if the courts find the accused innocent, the exonerated is likely to

be gunned down by spectators in the courtroom or waiting outside.

Families of the accused have to go into hiding – frequently losing everything they own. Increasingly the law has been abused in property disputes. If a Christian, Buddhist, Sikh or Hindu refuses to sell a key property, the buyer accuses them of blasphemy – and while they are in jail, the accuser just takes the

real estate.

Pakistan is a key U.S. ally in the War on Terrorism, yet the insanity of its judicial system and the deadliness of political debate is ignored by the American press.

“I was wondering about a reporter friend I met in Jerusalem,” writes Mollie Hemingway on Dr. Terry Mattingly’s website “GetReligion.”

“So I stopped by her Facebook page and was surprised to see a few links to stories about the abduction of the son of Salman Taseer. Punjab Gov. Salman Taseer was assassinated at the very beginning of this year by his own bodyguard. That bodyguard was upset about Taseer’s opposition to blasphemy laws carrying the death sentence for insulting Islam. Taseer was riddled by gunshots, shot in the back. The response to his assassination, the most high-profile one since former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto was killed a few years prior, was perhaps even more shocking.

“The 26-year-old assassin was showered by hundreds of supporters with rose petals and garlands when he appeared in court.

“A couple of months later, the Christian federal minorities minister, Shahbaz Bhatti, was also gunned down,” writes

Hemingway. “He was also killed for speaking out against a brutal blasphemy law. The law isn’t just theoretical. Christian Asia Noreen Bibi has been on death row under the law for some time now.

“And now Taseer’s son Shahbaz has been kidnapped. My main complaint about the coverage is that it’s lacking. You can actually find hundreds of stories

Pakistani Christian girl misspells word, goes into hiding accused of blasphemy

compiled by the *Christian Crusade* staff

A 10-year-old Christian girl, Faryal Bhatti, has had to go into hiding with her single mother after she misplaced a dot on her Urdu-language spelling test.

Faryal was a fifth grader at Sir Syed Girls High School at the Pakistan Ordinance Factory Colony in Havelian. She is now accused of blasphemy under Pakistan’s religious laws after she incorrectly placed a dot in the word *naat*, meaning a poem written in praise of the Prophet Mohammed.

She incorrectly placed a dot that changed the word to *lanaat*, which means “a curse.”

The child’s schoolteacher, identified as “Mrs. Fareeda,” sternly rebuked Faryal in front of the class, then took the matter to the headmaster, even though the tearful Faryal defended herself by saying that it was a mistake.

“The news of her alleged transgression spread outside the school into the community and she was labeled a blasphemer,” reports the *Pakistan Christian Post* news site.

“The mosque loud speakers helped to spread the news and rallies were arranged in protest

against the mother and daughter.”

In response, factory officials fired the mother and told her to vacate factory housing.

“Despite the mother’s abject apology and explanation that it was the simple error of a young girl who was in a hurry,” officials apparently were ready to charge the 10-year-old with blasphemy, prompting the single mother to go into hiding with her daughter.

The two have fled from their hometown fearing for their lives, reports Jeremy Reynolds of the Assist News Service.

The *Post* said Nazir S. Bhatti, President of the Pakistan Christian Congress has condemned the blasphemy allegations by the child’s teacher.

The newspaper urged the government of Pakistan “to repeal the blasphemy law as it is hanging like a sword on the necks of millions of Christians, Hindus and Ahmadi religious communities and hundreds of innocent minority members have been killed by Islamists on this pretext.”

He urged Islamic clerics and Islamic political leaders to step forward to stop the misuse of the blasphemy law.

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Pakistan's Islamic state careens into anarchy

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in the Pakistani press and in the European press. But the stories stateside are much harder to come by.

"The *Los Angeles Times* did publish a story. *Time* actually has an economical but informative story about the current situation facing those who oppose capital punishment for blasphemy:

On Jan. 4, Governor Taseer – an outspoken advocate of religious tolerance – was gunned down with 27 bullets by one of his own elite bodyguards. The assassin, Mumtaz Qadri, confessed to his crime with chilling pride.

"This is the punishment for a blasphemer," Qadri declared.

The reaction to the assassination was no less shocking. Within moments of Taseer's murder, Qadri was hailed as a hero by a broad section of mainstream Pakistani society.

In the months before he was killed, Taseer had been robustly campaigning against the country's vaguely worded blasphemy laws that have been consistently invoked against religious minorities.

In particular, Taseer demanded the release of Asia Noreen Bibi, a poor farmhand, who became the first Christian woman to face the death penalty under those laws.

The governor's rare and forceful opposition was twisted and cast as

an act of blasphemy itself. When Qadri appeared at court, he was garlanded and cheered by a group of lawyers.

In the ensuing months, not only has Qadri evaded conviction, but the Taseer family has also endured a series of further threats. Despite Qadri's confession, the court has convened only fitfully, dragging out the trial.

"The government set a very bad precedent in the aftermath of Salmaan Taseer's death by not seeking to hold his murderer accountable," says Ali Dayan Hasan, Pakistan director for Human Rights Watch. "There has been no movement on the case, and the failure to prosecute and convict the self-confessed murderer is a sign of both incompetence and an appeasement of extremists."

It is this form of surrender, Hasan says, that emboldens further lawlessness in Pakistan.

"Very well written by Omar Waraich," comments Hemingway. "I hadn't realized, for instance, that Taseer's family had faced further threats or that the trial



A Pakistani street protest

wasn't being run fairly.

"I realize that America has its own troubles, particularly with the economy. I understand that reporters here are focused internally and obsessed with politics. But Americans also need to know what's going on in Pakistan."

Is Indonesia in danger of sinking into Pakistan-like shari'ah chaos?

compiled by the Christian Crusade Newspaper staff

Islam's most populous nation, Indonesia, is the most diverse nation imaginable – a far-flung archipelago of 13,466 islands where 238 million people speaking 742 languages live in everything from luxurious skyscraper penthouses to squalid cardboard slums, mountainside-hugging bamboo huts and rain-forest tree houses.

The government only recognizes six religions. Census figures show the population is overwhelmingly Muslim at 86.1 percent with 9 percent Christian (Catholic and Protestant combined), 3 percent Hindu, 2 percent Buddhist and 1 percent Confucianist.

And while freedom of religion is guaranteed by the national constitution, the minority religions complain of an official bias toward Islam, write university professors Moh Yasir Alimi and Salim H. Ali in separate articles in the *Jakarta Post* and the *International Herald Tribune*.

"Four men, traumatized, terrorized and stigmatized, sat in a Jakarta apartment and described to me how they were almost killed by a Muslim mob earlier this year," writes Benedict Rogers of the London-

based human rights organization Christian Solidarity Worldwide in a guest column in the *Wall Street Journal*:

One was stripped naked, beaten to a pulp, a machete held at his throat. He was dragged through the village and dumped in a truck like a corpse. Another fled into a fast-flowing river, pursued by attackers throwing rocks and shouting "kill, kill, kill." He hid in a bush, dripping wet and extremely cold, for four hours. A third suffered a broken jaw, while a fourth, pursued by men armed with sickles, machetes and spears, was detained by the police for three days, treated as a suspect not a victim.

The four were members of Indonesia's Ahmadiyya community, a Muslim sect regarded by other Muslims as heretical. They were victims of an attack in Cikeusik, Banten province, on February 6. More than 1,500 Muslims attacked 21 Ahmadis, killing three. President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono has called for a full investigation.

If Cikeusik was an isolated incident, it could



A protest in Indonesia

be dismissed as a tragedy. Sadly, such tragedies are increasingly frequent. Last month I visited Cisalada, West Java, the scene of a similarly violent attack in October. Houses had broken windows boarded up, and some had been burned. A mob had thrown Molotov cocktails at the Ahmadi mosque and carried samurai swords. Anti-Ahmadi abuse was scrawled on the walls.

"Indonesia's tradition of pluralism, enshrined in its state ideology 'pancasila,' is now under increasing threat," worries Rogers. "The world's largest Muslim-majority nation has won applause for its religious tolerance and remarkable transition from authoritarianism to democracy, but these achievements are undermined by an increasingly vocal, violent Islamist minority. Under pressure from Islamists, the government banned the dissemination of Ahmadiyya teachings in 2008."

Indeed, the rise of militant Islam has caused some in Indonesia to warn of "Pakistanization," notes Rogers. In Pakistan, non-Muslims live under constant threat of being charged with "blasphemy,"

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which can be punishable by death and has no defense. The accused or their sympathizers, if non-Muslims, cannot testify against Muslims.

And so, new laws favoring Indonesia's Muslim majority are worrisome. "The anti-Ahmadiyah decrees in Pandeglang West Java and most recently in East Java have incited fears among many hearts that the country is heading towards 'Pakistanization.'" writes Moh Yasir Alimi, a lecturer at Semarang State University in Central Java, Indonesia.

Indonesia should not choose as a role model Pakistan, writes Alimi in the *Jakarta Post*, one of the Indonesian capital city's daily newspapers. Pakistan, far from being a model, is "a failed state" and "a laboratory of abuse in the name of religion."

A country built upon egalitarian values, Pakistan is now a place devastated by religious vigilantes, a place suffocated by the rancid smell of blood, a place where Ahmadiyah, Islamic sects and religious minorities are persecuted, a place where bombings take place every day, weakening the power of the nation to build.

Alimi worries that new restrictive decrees in Indonesia's heavily Muslim provinces of West Java and East Java "will criminalize the religious activities of Ahmadiyah and will embolden religious extremists to further persecute Ahmadiyah followers. The ordinances look like a license to kill."

Ahmadiyah is a sect of Islam that fundamentalists consider blasphemous.

Its founder claimed to fulfill the prophecies of the return of Jesus Christ, Islam's "Hidden Imam" Messiah-figure, the Buddha and Hinduism's god Krishna. By decree, Ahmadi Muslims are denied many rights enjoyed by Pakistan's majority Sunni Muslims. The result, writes Alimi:

... is frightening: murder before the police, mosque attacks, expulsions of Ahmadis from many state universities, widespread violence, exclusion of Ahmadis from votes, arson attacks on their homes, businesses and mosques, desecration of their graves and more.

We fear that Indonesia can fall in the same situation. As the state fails to protect its citizens, many groups in society will create their own paramilitary armies to protect themselves. We can predict the consequence of such a situation.

Therefore, not only are the ordinances in West Java and East Java a blatant violation of international human rights law, the Constitution, the dreams of our founding fathers, but they will threaten our national security and the existence of the nation.

The deepest moral crises take place when religious leaders begin to see other people merely from their outer dress, not from their inner humanity. When these two characteristics are absent, the blessings of God will leave us.

But it's not just the Ahmadis who are suffering in Indonesia, writes Rogers in the *Journal*:

Christians are also under pressure. Radical Islamists have stirred tensions and forced churches to close.

Even churches that have legal registration and secured Supreme Court rulings in their



Emotions run high in a protest

favor have remained sealed, their congregations forced to worship in the street.

According to the Setara Institute in Indonesia, 91 violations of religious freedom were documented in 2010, at least 75 of which affected Christians.

Both Ahmadis and Christians warn that if their persecution continues, Indonesia could fracture.

Some warn that it is only a matter of time before there is 'Sudan-ization,' of Indonesia—a splitting of the country between Muslims and minorities—as has now happened with north and south Sudan. Indonesia does have constitutional and legal protections for minorities—but outside observers are concerned at the persecution of non-Muslims, writes Rogers:

In fact, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Navanethem Pillay, in a letter to Indonesia's foreign minister in April, called for a review of all laws restricting religious freedom, to "ensure they comply" with Indonesia's own constitution and international covenants.

The core problem is the weakness of the government.

President Yudhoyono makes tepid statements condemning violence, but takes no action to protect minorities. Perpetrators of violence are arrested, but face minor charges and paltry punishments.

Indonesia's traditional "moderation is eroding," writes Saleem Ali in the International Herald Tribune:

Last year, Indonesia had an appalling spate of violence against Ahmadis and Christians, reminiscent of Pakistan. During my visit to Indonesia, the leader of one of the Islamic schools in Java refused to allow his students to sing the Indonesian national anthem or respect the flag, branding the practice un-Islamic.

It appears that the tropical 'paradise' of these lands is being eclipsed by the seductive absolutist shortcut to heaven offered by many clerics.

A group of fanatical women in Malaysia influenced by individuals such as Pakistan's evangelical lady of middle-class piety, Dr. Farhat Hashmi, have set up an "Obedient Wives Club."

Their motto, according to one of the founders, Rohayah Mohamed, also a medical doctor, is to "obey, serve and entertain."

No mention is made by these good doctors of how such a submission among women has set them up for abuse in so many societies by dominant men.

Why can't these well-intentioned ladies suggest good family values of mutual respect rather than asymmetric empowerment that has proven to lead to exploitation?

BBC correspondent Mishal Husain asked the Indonesian foreign minister, at an interview after the World Economic Forum, if Indonesia was afraid of being 'Pakistanized.'

That fear is very real and palpable for moderate Muslims in the region.

Recent atrocities against Christians and other minorities "have tarnished Indonesia's international reputation as a tolerant society," writes Rogers.

"The rise of radicalism is not only a problem between Indonesians. We need the international community to be a watchdog.

"If there is no help from the international community, we are hopeless, we will be destroyed.

"If Indonesia abandons pluralism," writes Rogers, "the geopolitical consequences will be significant. The democratic success of the largest Muslim-majority country will be in jeopardy.

"The world will have lost a role model of tolerant, moderate Islam, which doesn't bode well for the success of democratic revolutions in the Middle East.

"It is in all our interests to ensure that does not happen."

Leader says Tunisia needs *shari'ah* law

compiled by the *Christian Crusade* staff

Personal freedom would not be at risk if the north African nation of Tunisia were to embrace Islamic *shari'ah* law, says Islamist leader Rachid Ghannouchi.

"Tunisia's most important Islamist party would prefer to see a mild form of shari'ah law implemented in the North African country rather than the 'neo-laicism' promoted by Turkey's prime minister during a recent visit to Tunis," reports staff writer Pek Yezdani in Turkey's *Hürriyet Daily News*.

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has made repeated calls for "neo-laicism"—government by non-clergy—in Arab countries which recently have overthrown their dictatorships. There is a fear that some will follow Pakistan and Iran, becoming radicalized Islamic republics, governed by Muslim religious law.

"Turkey is a democratic, secular and social state of law," Erdogan recently said in a speech in Tunisia, which threw out its government during "Arab Spring" uprisings that have swept North Africa and the Middle East.

"A secular state has an equal distance to all

religious groups, including Muslim, Christian, Jewish and atheist people," Erdogan said during his visit to Tunis, the Tunisian capital. "Tunisia will prove to the whole world that Islam and democracy can co-exist.

"Turkey with its predominantly Muslim population has achieved it."

Ghannouchi was skeptical, saying the two nations are too different: "What is meant by secularism is different between the Arab world and Turkey. In the Arab world, secularism has been linked in recent decades with dictatorship and with oppression, whereas secularism in Turkey is linked to democracy and freedom of choice," Rachid Ghannouchi, the leader of Tunisia's Ennahda Party, told the Turkish newspaper.

He advocates official Islamic law

"Shari'ah is not something that is alien or strange to our societies," Ghannouchi said, adding that some aspects of Islamic law were already enshrined in both Tunisian and Egyptian legal codes. "We don't see shari'ah as intervening in people's private lives and to their freedom to wear what they want. Personal freedom is very important for us."



The injured had to be taken to hospitals on rickshaw since no official help would come

Chinese student escapes terror, now tries to save a generation of girls

compiled by the *Christian Crusade Newspaper* staff

In the spring of 1989, a young, idealistic Beijing college student found herself leading one of the most well-known student protests ever – which turned into one of history’s most vicious massacres.

The Chinese government’s violent repression of the peaceful student-led protest in Beijing’s main square led to widespread international condemnation – which the Chinese leadership ignored. The 100,000-strong gathering had been the culmination of months of pro-democracy demonstrations. Hungary had defied the Soviet Union and opened its borders and held democratic elections. Czechoslovakia and Poland followed – as did Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Romania threw out its Communist oppressors as did Bulgaria and Albania. Then Soviet Union itself had collapsed. Freedom was spreading like wildfire across the globe – and Chinese students were sure they could bring it to China, too.

Instead, the entrenched Chinese Communist Party coldly sent in tanks and drugged, semiliterate infantry conscripts from rural provinces who had been worked into a frenzy, promised they would be national heroes for saving China



China’s Communists crushed anyone who got in their way

She and Feng encountered an eccentric movement of deep-breathing exercise enthusiasts – who took great risks in hiding the two fugitives, but were willing to help because they believe human life is sacred. The two hid in a forest for three months, then spent time in such unlikely hiding places as a shipping crate.

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from chaos. The Mongolian troops – who didn’t even speak Chinese – coldly shot, beat and bayoneted students and ran them down with armored vehicles. Hundreds died, up to 10,000 were injured and widespread arrests, trials, and executions followed. Armor rumbled through the capital’s streets, randomly firing on unarmed protesters. The injured were rushed to hospital on bicycle rickshaws by frantic residents shocked by the army’s sudden and extreme response.

Although violence had been predicted, the ferocity of the attack took most by surprise. President George H. W. Bush deeply deplored the massacre. British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher told the press she was “shocked and appalled by the shootings.”

Hospital operating rooms were filled with casualties with gunshot wounds, many of them local residents who had not taken part in the protests. Reports emerged of troops searching university campuses for ring-leaders – beating and killing those they suspected of coordinating the protests.

In the midst of this were a number of student leaders, including young Chai Ling whose parents were members of the Communist Party. As a young student Chai had joined the Central Communist

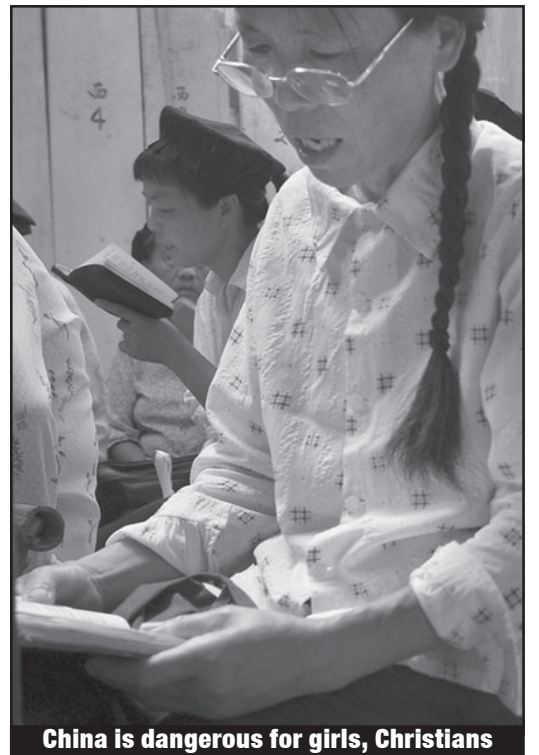
Youth League, which named her a “model student” during high school for her “good health, grades and moral character,” reported Paula Chin of *People* magazine.

She began participating in the demonstrations although she realized that speaking out could have enormously negative

political implications. Along with other student leaders such as Wu’erkaixi, Feng Congde and Wang Dan, she was listed as one of the 21 most wanted students by the Chinese government after the military crackdown.

She tells of staying at Tiananmen Square until the very last – when it was hopeless. Then in the chaos of gunfire, death, blood and terror, she and others disappeared.

They had no ties with any subversive underground and no idea how to avoid being caught. She describes her flight to freedom as purely miraculous.



China is dangerous for girls, Christians



Idealistic students hoped for Chinese democracy



The famous tank stand-off

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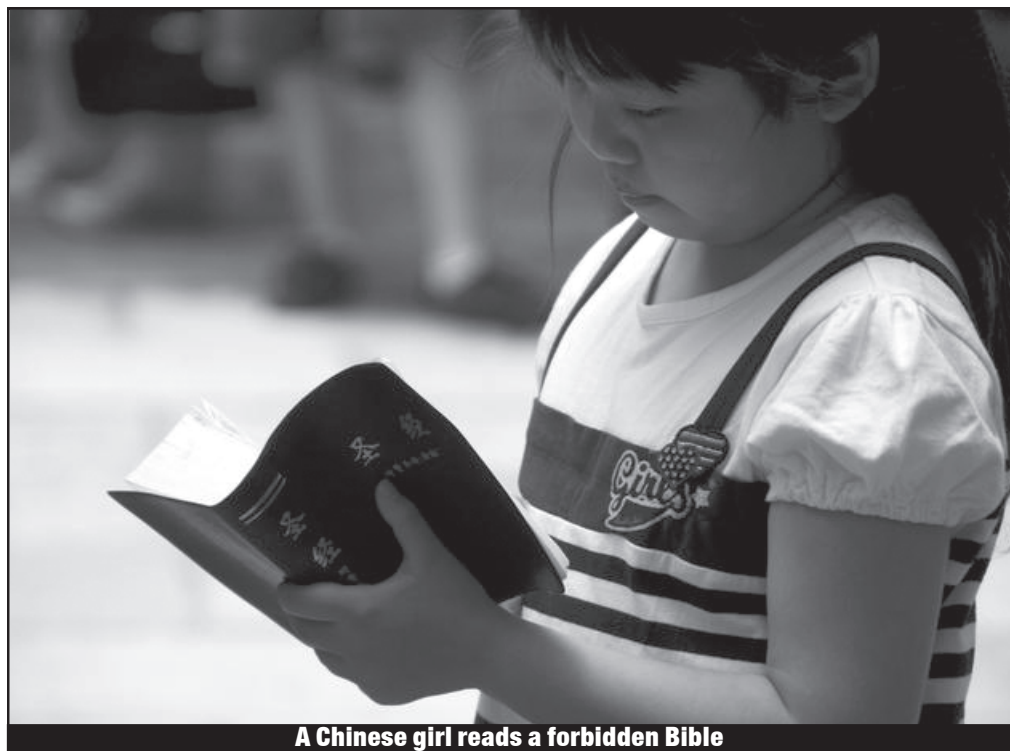
Sometimes, people helping them gave the two students all the money they had saved—in hopes the students would make it to the West to tell the world what had happened.

Chai made it across the border into Hong Kong, then settled in Paris, accepted a full scholarship to Princeton University and went on to acquire a Masters of Business Administration at Harvard Business School in 1998.

In the process of finding her way to freedom, she called out to God. He answered her cry. She became a Christian.

As she started a new life in the U.S., she founded a company, Jenzabar, which today provides software to universities across the U.S., and started a nonprofit called “All Girls Allowed” with the aim of publicizing today’s human rights violations perpetrated by the Chinese government in their forced one-child policy.

She tells in her book how girls have borne the brunt of the one-child policy since Chinese parents often choose to abort females or abandon them after birth to orphanages—seeking a male heir to perpetuate the family name and support them in their old age. Many abortions, however, take place through force as the government tracks down pregnant women who already have a child and force them—even in the final weeks of their pregnancy—to comply with the one-child policy.



A Chinese girl reads a forbidden Bible

It is estimated that more than 100 million girls have not been allowed to be born. In some provinces, there are 130 boys surviving for every 100 girls. The suicide rate is also high among Chinese women—estimated at five times the world average—and is the most common cause of death for Chinese women ages 15 to 34.

After escaping, disappearing underground and working her way out of the country, finding peace with God, then making a new life for herself in the United States, Chai writes of her disillusionment with a dramatically changed China where the Tiananmen Square Massacre is not mentioned and the vast majority submit to the government’s brutal hand in exchange for financial prosperity. She describes their complacency with a heavy heart.

But she also shares hope:

“God used the Tiananmen events to save me and free. He used everything that happened afterward to break my dependence on friends, comrades, connections, the media, the public, the legal system and law enforcement so I could see I’m completely helpless unless I trust and rely only on Him.

“When I thought I was giving my life to Jesus so He would save China, little did I know that the first ones saved would be me and my family.

“I no longer live in fear, for I know that God Almighty is holding my right hand and watching over me and my true big brother, Jesus, will be with me until the very end.

“Even better, it is no longer my battle to fight or to win—it’s His. All I have to do is take up my position, stand firm and watch for God’s deliverance.

Is the U.N. blackmailing smaller countries to legalize abortion?

compiled by the *Christian Crusade Newspaper* staff

In its push to legalize abortion on demand worldwide, is the United Nations trampling religious rights? Are UN bureaucrats bullying small countries into violating their cultures, beliefs and sovereignty?

“The UN believes in freedom of religion; at least, it passed the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief in 1981,” writes Cristina Odone in the British daily the *Telegraph*. “The UN also promotes women’s rights—as can be seen in Article 1 of its Charter.

“What happens though when the two ‘rights’ clash?

“Simple.

“The UN plumps for the rights of women over the rights of the unborn,” writes Odone, deputy editor of the *New Statesman* magazine, former editor of

Britain’s *Catholic Herald* and author of the novel *The Good Divorce Guide*, published by Harper Collins.

It is not uncommon for a UN official to tell a government in a developing country that they are treaty-bound to legalize abortion, writes Odone—with no regard for their religious heritage or beliefs of the majority.

“For a poor country, meeting UN approval is crucial; crossing them can spell the withdrawal of much-needed funds.

“Anand Grover, the UN’s Special Rapporteur,” reports Odone, “argues that legal access to abortion is a ‘right to health.’ The Secretary General endorses this stance.”

And little countries cave in to the pressure. But there is hope, reports Odone:

The San Jose Articles, a document launched today in the House of Lords by, among others, Lord Alton of Liverpool and the Lord Nicholas Windsor, aims to counteract UN pressure. The signatories spell out that no government needs to change its policy on abortion—because abortion is not an international right.

At last week’s launch of the nine articles at the UN, former US Ambassador Grover Joseph Rees said: “When I was (Ambassador to) Timor I witnessed firsthand a sustained effort by some international civil servants and representatives of foreign NGOs to bully a small developing country into repealing its pro-life laws. The problem is that people on the ground, even government officials, have little with which to refute the extravagant claim that abortion is an internationally recognized human right.”

The UN might like to contemplate that in fact abortion is often used against women: in China, gender selection, whereby parent abort baby girls, has meant that the sex ratio for the generation born between 1985 and 1989 was 108, already just outside the natural range. For the generation born in 2000-04, it was 124 (124 boys were born in those years for every 100 girls). According to CASS, the ratio today is 123 boys per 100 girls. These rates are biologically impossible without human intervention.

“But,” writes Odone, “maybe the UN believes gendercide is a right, too?”

73.1 % of Americans believe ‘God has a plan for me’

compiled by the *Christian Crusade Newspaper* staff

A new study shows that a majority of Americans believe God is the guiding force that is leading America’s economy and the government is too big.

As a result, sociologists concluded these believers are upset about U.S. economic policy because they believe increased government regulation and interference in personal freedoms go against God’s plans.

According to the Baylor religion survey data, a majority of Americans (73.1 percent) agreed or “strongly” agreed with the statement “God has a plan for me.”

Of those who believe God has a plan, more than 96 percent said that government was doing too much. Paul Froese, associate professor of sociology for Baylor University, told Stephanie Samuel at the *Christian Post* that many Americans believe that an “engaged” God guides America’s economic direction.

“A way of thinking of this is the ‘invisible hand,’ spoken of by Adam Smith, has really become God’s hand for many Americas,” Froese told Samuel.

Adam Smith was a Scottish philosopher commonly credited with concept of the free market, and the “invisible hand” symbolizes the self-regulating nature of the marketplace.

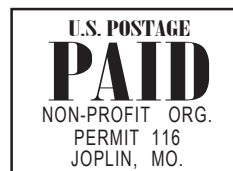
According to the Baylor study, those who believe in an engaged God also tend to believe government is too involved in Americans’ affairs. They also tend to believe that able-bodied people should not receive unemployment checks and that success has little to do with luck. Nearly 53 percent of those who “strongly” agreed that God has a plan said government does too much.

Among the respondents who said they “agreed,” 43 percent also said they believe the government is doing too much.

Nearly 88 percent of those who believe God has a plan said they trust that “anything is possible for those who work hard.” And 56.1 percent agreed that “success is achieved by ability rather than luck.”

CHRISTIAN CRUSADE

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An Open Letter from our publisher

September-October 2011

DEAR FRIEND:

Just last night I spoke to a dear old friend of mine, a teacher of art and music at a Beaumont, Texas, elementary school. Last week she happened to be visiting New York City with another woman that is a long time friend, as well, when suddenly they found themselves smack-dab in the middle of one of these “Occupy Wall Street” demonstrations. As if out of nowhere, suddenly they were overtaken, in a strange city, by hundreds if not thousands of radicals. She said it was as if they were sardines in a can who could not move in any direction and overwhelmed with fear of what was about to take place.

My friend, who has suffered loss of sight in one eye and is disabled with the loss of all her toes on one foot, and not a bold person, was in a state of absolute panic when a woman next to them, this one holding a baby in her arms, began to scream at the top of her lungs. Only at this point did some of the people begin to make some space for her and her child to escape the melee. Immediately this other woman I know grabbed my elementary school teacher friend by the hand and attached them both to the woman with the child ahead of them and were able to escape harm, but the effect was traumatic.

This is no polite group of Tea Partiers, lovingly picking up after a rally at the Lincoln Memorial, but the beginnings of a mob. In fact, my teacher friend said, it reminded her of nothing so much as something out of Hitler Germany with some large Nazi mob taking over.

And it is my fear that these mobs, as in the Middle East and Europe, will continue to continue to grow larger and more violent than anything we witnessed in the 1960’s, by

design, in order that martial law might be imposed, elections suspended, the right to bear arms for the protection of our families and homes ended, the free exchange of ideas from Christian conservatives shut down in the media and on the Internet, and a New World Order established abolishing the Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave in exchange for a world government, just as my father, Dr. Billy James Hargis, long feared and warned us!



This comes at a time when our financial situation could not be more desperate. We were unable to print the newspaper last month. Even now, we are having to combine the September and October issues. Can you help us? I hope you will notice that our articles are shorter and to the point – as we attempt to squeeze all the news into the 20 pages that we can afford to print and mail out.

Can you help with a gift of \$5, \$10, \$25, \$50, \$100? Will you write to us and share

your prayer needs? My wonderful mom, Mrs. Betty Jane Hargis, has prayed over our ministry partners’ prayer requests for almost six decades. She wants to know what is happening in your life – and how she can pray for your needs.

As we will be so grateful if you can send *Christian Crusade Newspaper* a gift of \$5, \$10, \$25, \$50, \$100 so that we can publish a November edition! Help us to get back on a regular monthly schedule! Help us to alert America! The need is so urgent! And we simply cannot do it without your help.

God bless you! Go with God!

Billy James Hargis II,
PUBLISHER AND PRESIDENT

Christian Crusade

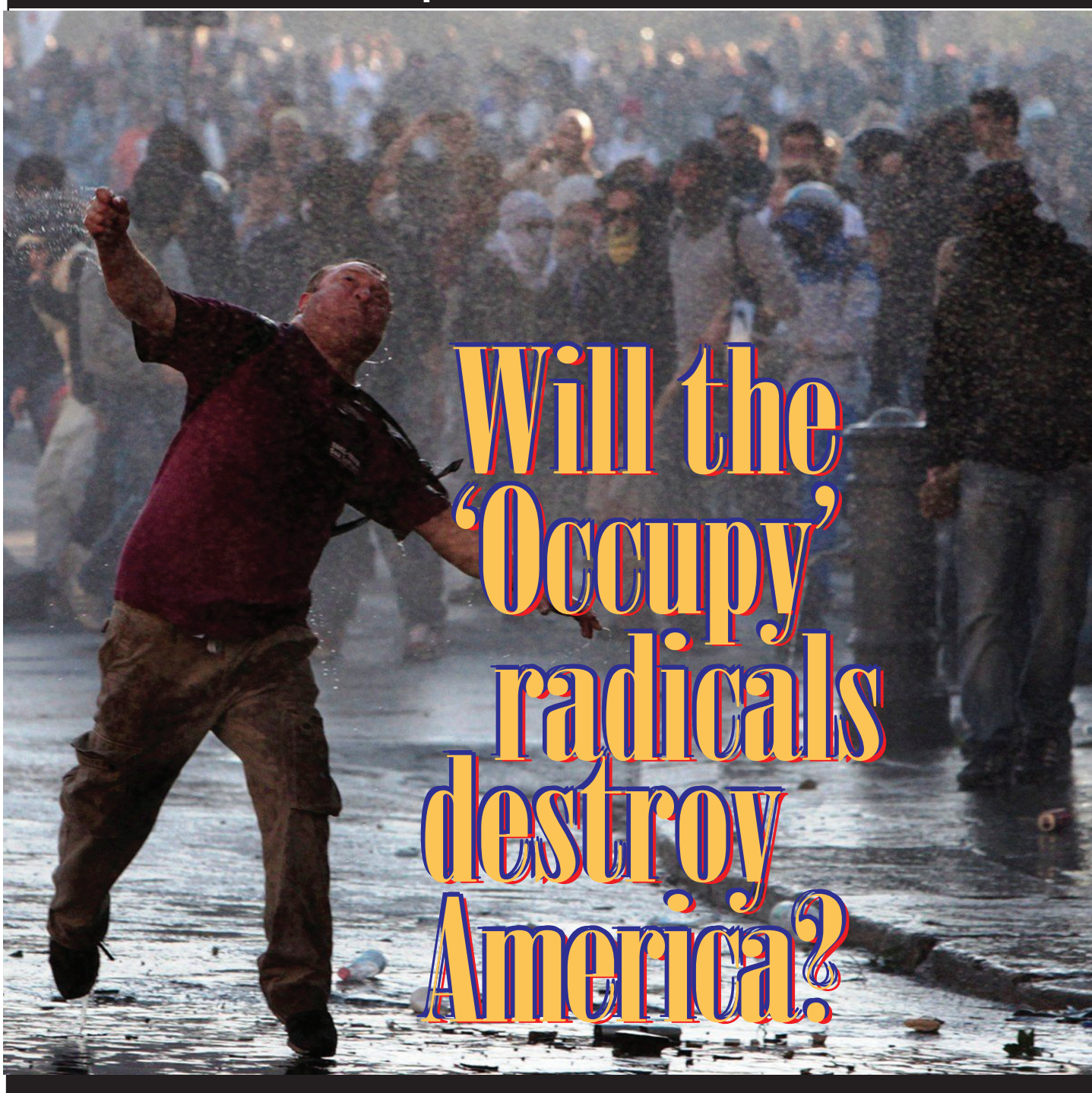


The late Dr. Billy James Hargis with
Mrs. Betty Jane Hargis and
Publisher Billy James Hargis II

Volume 59

September-October 2011

Number 7





"See You at the Pole" at Waxahatchie, Texas



"See You at the Pole" at Radford, Virginia

