

Christian Leaders Repeat Calls for Iran Sanctions

✘ A cross-section of Christian leaders is calling on President Obama, Congress and the international community at large to bring a halt to Iran's nuclear weapons program by placing strict sanctions on the nation.

During a national conference call Tuesday, members of Christian Leaders for a Nuclear-Free Iran (CLNFI), including Richard Land of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, repeated calls for economic sanctions on Iran and a complete arms embargo.

Ralph Reed, chairman of the Faith and Freedom Coalition and a member of CLNFI, said "a narrow window" for the U.S. to seek a peaceful and diplomatic solution "is rapidly closing."

"We're very concerned that if we wait any longer than right now, right at this moment, that window is going to close and the available options to the civilized world to deal with a nuclear Iran are then going to go from bad to worse," Reed said.

He added that financial sanctions "would make it very difficult for the Iranian regime to continue to go down this course."

The call came days before the U.S. was to meet with Iran in Geneva with the other permanent members of the U.N. Security Council—England, France, China and Russia—and Germany. The talks, to begin Thursday, are aimed at getting the nation to freeze its nuclear program and open up to serious nuclear inspections, the Associated Press (AP) reported.

Last week, more than 50 Christian leaders who sent a letter to Congress stressing the need for a diplomatic initiative that would bring about "swift, sure and severe sanctions" to prevent Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad from obtaining nuclear weapons.

"We urge your immediate action to address Iran's program to develop and deploy nuclear weapons by imposing economic sanctions on foreign companies that export refined petroleum products, including gasoline," the letter stated. " ... The U.S. should also immediately initiate a boycott of any arms sales to Iran."

The document, sent a day before Ahmadinejad was to address the United Nations General Assembly on Sept. 23, was signed by such leaders as San Antonio pastor John Hagee, Christian Broadcasting Network founder Pat Robertson and Southern Baptist Convention President Johnny Hunter.

Tuesday's conference call came on the heels of Iran's latest public display of nuclear readiness. Last week the country's military leaders test fired several short to medium-range missiles and three long-range ballistic missiles capable of striking Israel and U.S. forces.

Ahmadinejad reaffirmed his commitment to wage war against Iran's enemies while speaking to a crowd of parade participants in Tehran Sept. 22. "No power dares imagine an invasion against Iran," he said, according to the AP. Observers say Ahmadinejad's remarks allude to the U.S. and Israel.

"Our armed forces will cut the hand of anyone in the world before it pulls the trigger against the Iranian nation," he added.

On Tuesday, Jordan Sekulow, director of international operations for the American Center for Law and Justice, said U.S. sanctions are urgent in light of the brutal human rights

violations occurring in Iran.

“There is a growing movement throughout the world, specifically in Western Europe and the [European Union’s] 27-member states that have seen a shift in their own view of what’s happened,” he said. “Documented rapes, tortures-these are not allegations. These are official reports in Iranian news sources.”

He said the European Center for Law and Justice last Friday filed a second complaint with the United Nations asking leaders to investigate the arrests, tortures, rapes and murders of Iranian opposition leaders as well as ordinary citizens.

“We feel not only is there a nuclear threat issue with this regime, but there are Iranian people themselves suffering every single day at the hands of this brutal regime,” Sekulow said.

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When We Offend the Holy Spirit

How many times have you read in Scripture do not "grieve" the Holy Spirit? (See Eph. 4:30.) The Greek translation of "grieve" is *lupeo*, which means "to be sorrowful or to be in heaviness." When we swap godly character and gossip, act rudely or mistreat others, the Holy Spirit is deeply saddened by our offense. We must guard our words and actions so we do not offend God and weaken our testimony before others. Click below to watch a challenging message about grieving the Holy Spirit.

There's Healing in His Name

The Bible has a Word for each believer who is ill. The apostle James tells the sick to "call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord" (James 5:14, NKJV). Whether you battle cancer, high blood pressure or clinical depression, the Bible says to ask for prayer. Sharyn Culp of His Majesty Ministries, a global prayer sanctuary on the Web, prays along with other intercessors for people around the world. To receive healing

prayer from Sharyn, [click here](#) to listen to podcast.

Indonesian Church Wins Legal Battle to Worship in Building

Christians have won a court battle restoring the right to worship in their building in Depok City, West Java.

Depok Mayor Nur Mahmudi Ismail on March 27 had revoked the building permit for a multipurpose building and house of worship for Gereja Huria Kristen Batak Protestan (HKBP) church following protests by Muslims. A court in Bandung on Sept. 17 rescinded the order that revoked the church building permit, paving the way for congregants to resume worship there.

Head Judge A. Syaifullah read the decision of the three-judge panel, which found the mayor's reasoning for canceling the building permit inadequate. The mayor had said that most people living near the church objected to its building in Jalan Pesanggrahan IV, Cinere Area of Depok City.

"These objections by the local residents should have been raised when the building permit was going through the approval process, not protesting afterwards," said Syaifullah.

Syaifullah added that the mayor also should have taken the views of church members into consideration.

"In this case, the revocation of the building permit was based upon the objections of one group in the community without considering those from the church," he said.

Construction of the church building had begun in 1998, shortly after the permit was issued, but halted soon afterward due to

a lack of funds. When the project began anew in 2007, members of a Muslim group from the Cinere Area of Depok City and neighboring villages damaged the boundary hedge and posted protest banners on the walls of the building. Most of the protestors were not local residents.

The court determined that lawyers for the church successfully demonstrated that church leaders had followed all Depok City procedures for the building permit. Betty Sitompul, vice-chair of the HKBP church building committee, stated that the church court win was a victory for all Christians.

“We won because we had followed all the procedures and had completed all the required documents,” she said.

In early June the church had filed suit against the mayor’s action in a provincial court in Bandung, with church lawyer Junimart Girsang arguing that the mayor’s revocation of the permit was wrong.

Girsang said that the court had finally sided with justice for all Indonesians.

“The judges made the right decision and had no choice, because all of the papers for the permit were done properly,” he said.

The church had been meeting in a naval facility located about three miles from the church building since the permit was revoked, causing great inconvenience for church members, many of whom did not have their own transportation.

In South Sumatra Province, another HKBP church outside the provincial capital city of Palembang is trying to overcome objections by Muslim protestors in order to complete construction of its building in Plaju.

Church leaders acknowledge they had not finished the application process for a permit before beginning construction. They said they went forward because after they

applied to the mayor of Palembang, he told them to talk with the governor of South Sumatra. After talking with Gov. Alex Noerdin and securing his approval on Feb. 10, church leaders began construction on a donated plot of 1,500 square meters only to face a demonstration by members of several Muslim organizations on June 27.

The South Sumatra Muslim Forum (FUI Sumsel) organized the demonstration. Carrying a copy of a mayoral decree dated May 2009 ordering a halt to construction, the protestors gathered outside the building site, listened to speeches and then destroyed a bridge leading to it before demanding that the government ban the building project.

Applications for church permits are often fraught with difficulty in Indonesia, leaving many congregations no choice but to worship in private homes, hotels or rented conference facilities. Such gatherings leave churches open to threats and intimidation from activist groups such as the Front Pembela Islam (Islamic Defenders Front), in recent years responsible for the closure of many unregistered churches.

Dreaming Big in Argentina

✘ Although their congregation is small, Assemblies of God pastors Quique and Betty Cruz are not afraid to dream big. “When the heart of God is really in something, God will bless it,” Quique Cruz says.

Seven years ago, donations from *Charisma* readers helped the church, located in Escobar, Argentina, near Buenos Aires, build a kitchen for their outreach ministry. Today with assistance from the Atlanta-based ministry A Time to Build, that initial construction has blossomed into a home for up to

60 children.

Cruz said Argentina's legal system does little to help children who are abused in their own homes, so he is working to gain legal rights to care for such children. The Cruzes feed 25 to 35 children every Saturday and permanently care for two young girls who now live in the home. As construction is completed and legal negotiations are worked out, more children will be served. The Cruzes also plan for the home to include a school.

"Quique and Betty's heart is evident in everything they do," says Jerry Willis, co-founder of A Time to Build. "From running their church to caring for orphans to overseeing construction projects, they do all as unto the Lord."

The Cruzes hope the home will impact their community for generations. "The project started with us, but it doesn't end with us," Quique Cruz says. "We want more generations to continue it."

Your Success is Determined by Others

You are successful to the degree that you empower others! Too often, in today's world, success is defined by the size of your organization, the amount of money you accumulate or how influential your name is. Although each of these things may be found in a successful person's portfolio, they are not true indicators of real success. Success as a leader is measured by the degree that you empower others.

How to Kick Porn

❌ *Question:* Doug, what can I do to kick this hunger for pornography? I'm so ashamed and frustrated. Seems like my life would be much less complicated if I didn't have a sex drive.

Answer: You asked the right guy. I have been clean from pornography and self-sex behavior for more than 18 years. I remember feeling trapped, hopeless and overwhelmed. You too can get free your entire life, but you are going to need to make behavioral changes. Here's how to kick porn:

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