

# Ethiopian Seeks to Preach in Every Nation

*Evangelist Daniel Tassew Haile led the first known outreach to the nation of Somalia.*



When he was 11 years old, Daniel Tassew Haile had a vision of Jesus. In it, he says, God called him to salvation and ministry-but Haile didn't immediately answer the call.

In fact, Haile was 18 before he gave his life to Christ, and even then he

didn't immediately launch into ministry. Instead, the Ethiopian youth earned a

bachelor's degree and served as a mathematics teacher at a French high school.

But after seven years in the educational system, he couldn't shake the burden

for souls.

"The Lord had a purpose for my life," Haile told *Charisma*.

"Prophets

came and told me God wanted to send me to the nations."

It was during a missions trip to Djibouti, a Muslim country in East Africa,

that Haile says God told him clearly and directly: "The time is now. Go ye into

all the nations!"

That was nearly 17 years ago. Haile has been "going" full-time ever since.

Indeed, Haile has preached the gospel in 50 countries, from where the sun rises

in Tonga to where it sets in Samoa. His travels have taken him

through 12  
nations in the Middle East.

Evangelist Reinhard Bonnke credits Haile with being the first evangelist in the world to conduct an evangelistic conference in Somalia. Haile has seen as many as 200,000 people attend his healing and revival meetings, held under the banner of International Revival Ministry based in Hallandale Beach, Fla., with offices in Ethiopia and Germany.

“When I left my teaching position, the director of the school thought I was crazy,” Haile recalled. “I was working with diplomats and ambassadors. I got to travel to Europe every year. The director was right. I am crazy-crazy for the Lord.”

Haile has witnessed plenty of spiritual warfare during his travels. He recalls a visit to India, where there seemed to be “millions of gods waiting to welcome you to Bombay.” He also remembers a trip to Somalia in 2007. There the police sought to arrest him for preaching about Jesus. He left the country before local authorities could take him into custody.

“A month ago, one of my colleagues who ran video for us was shot dead in Somalia,” Haile said. “But I will still go where the Holy Spirit sends me. I am not afraid of the persecution or the prosecution.”

Even more than the spiritual warfare, Haile says the bigger

hindrance to  
widespread revival is the unbelief of Christians, along with  
the spirit of  
religion and divisiveness in the church.

That's why he has launched World Wide Witness, a mission to go  
to literally  
every country in the world and preach the gospel through  
crusades, seminars,  
mass media and the Internet. Haile has joined forces with  
global outreach  
efforts such as the Billion Soul Initiative, which is  
affiliated with the Global  
Pastors Network.

Haile also works with church leaders in Ethiopia. "We have  
prayed and worked  
with Rev. Daniel on those issues that are challenges to our  
country, like  
HIV/AIDS and the drought," said Abba Lesane Christos Matheos,  
secretary-general  
of the Archdiocesan Catholic Secretariat. "I know also that he  
has a vision to  
bring all churches together for the expansion of the kingdom  
of God."

Through his World Wide Witness initiative, Haile plans to go  
into every  
nation, either physically or through the media, during the  
next 30 years. He  
says God has promised him that if he sets his heart to go to  
the ends of the  
earth, and if he partners with like-minded ministries, he can  
make a worldwide  
impact.

Haile is determined, and those who know him say he is already  
influencing

many parts of the world. Pastor Siyum G. Tsadik, general secretary of the Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia, an association of 5,000 churches with more than 10 million members, calls Haile a committed evangelist. “Haile is diligently and faithfully serving the Lord,” Tsadik said. “He is a man of honesty, responsibility and deep integrity who has brought impacts here and abroad.”—**Jennifer LeClaire**

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## California Shuts Down Abortion Clinics

*A network of abortion clinics in a Hispanic community have closed down and its owner could face nearly 20 years in prison.*



[ ] In a major victory for the pro-life cause, a woman abortionist accused of illegally operating as many as 11 abortion clinics has been convicted of nine felony counts of committing abortions without a medical license.

Operation Rescue, a pro-life group that fought for years to close abortion clinics owned and operated by Bertha Pinedo Bugarin, reported on Monday that an “entire abortion empire has collapsed.”

“This is a huge victory for the pro-life movement, and a prime example of how we can use the laws that are on the books to

close abortion mills forever,” said Troy Newman, president of the Kansas-based Operation Rescue.

Bugarin, 48, gave her guilty plea in a San Diego County courtroom last Thursday, just days after pleading no contest to seven comparable felonies in Los Angeles. Sentencing for her crimes is scheduled for early next year.

According to Operation Rescue, abortionists on staff at her Clinica Medica Para La Mujer de Hoy [Medical Clinic for Today’s Woman] were stripped of their licenses for various offenses over the years, including sex crimes convictions for one practitioner.

Leaders at Operation Rescue said in 1999 they began heavily focusing on Bugarin’s clinics, which were located many times in lower income Latino neighborhoods throughout southern California. The group claimed it consistently exposed and reported wrongdoing over the years.

“This criminal preyed on women in the Hispanic community and has now been held accountable,” said Bonnie Dumanis, San Diego’s district attorney. “By passing herself off as a doctor, she put these women’s lives in serious danger.”

One incident used as evidence in the case against Bugarin took place in the summer of 2004, when paramedics reportedly arrived at Clinica Medica Para la Mujer de Hoy in Santa Ana, Calif., to find a young woman lying in a pool of her own blood. According to the *Los Angeles Times* the doctor, who was in his early 80’s, was later accused of aborting the woman’s baby in a “barbaric” way. He surrendered his license the following year.

“Bugarin acted as if she was above the law, as so many abortionists do,” Newman said. “The prosecutors did not agree, and now Bugarin should remain behind bars for many years.”

Operation Rescue, a heavily activist anti-abortion organization, recently made headlines for buying and closing an abortion clinic in Wichita, Kansas. **-Paul Steven**

# Pentecostal Inmate Sues Prison for Banning Preaching

*A convicted murderer, ordained as a Pentecostal minister while in prison, is the subject of a lawsuit aimed at allowing him to preach to fellow inmates.*



[ ] A convicted-murderer-turned-Pentecostal-preacher is the subject of a lawsuit aimed at restoring what he believes is his right to preach to fellow inmates.

Howard Thompson Jr. was ordained a Pentecostal minister at the New Jersey State Prison (NJSP) eight years ago. He preached weekly worship services at the maximum-security facility until prison officials issued a blanket ban last year on all preaching by inmates, according to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), which filed the federal lawsuit on behalf of Thompson on Wednesday.

The NJSP administrator and the commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Corrections are both named in the suit.

“Prisoners do not forfeit their fundamental right to religious liberty at the prison gate,” said Daniel Mach, legal director for the ACLU Program on Freedom of Religion and Belief. “The prison’s absolute ban on inmate preaching clearly violates the law and Mr. Thompson’s right to practice his faith.”

As a preacher at Sunday services, a teacher in weekly Bible studies, and the founder of the prison choir, Thompson’s religious activities have reportedly never caused any security incidents since he was incarcerated in 1986 for robbery and murder. The prison’s chaplaincy staff has supported Thompson’s

preaching since the 1990s when he was asked to fill in for a sick chaplain.

“I have a religious calling to minister to my fellow inmates, and I've done so honestly, effectively and without incident for years,” Thompson said. “All I want is to have my religious liberty restored and to be able to continue working with men who want to renew their lives through the study and practice of their faith.”

Last year, an ACLU-backed lawsuit challenging similar restrictions on prisoner preaching in Rhode Island successfully overturned a statewide ban.

“Ours is a country where people are free to express their religious viewpoints without having to fear repercussions,” said Edward Barocas, legal director of the ACLU of New Jersey. “The New Jersey State Prison may not deny its prisoners their most basic constitutional rights.” **-Paul Steven Ghiringhelli**

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## Conservative Anglicans Launch ‘Reformation’

*The Common Cause Partnership, led by Bishop Robert Duncan, unveiled a provisional constitution on Wednesday to form a conservative branch of the Anglican Church in North America.*



[ ] Conservative Anglicans living in North America took a first step on Wednesday toward forming a denomination separate from the Episcopal Church, the U.S. branch of Anglicanism that has been teetering on the verge of a split since it ordained an openly gay bishop in 2003.

During a news conference in Wheaton, Ill., leaders of the Common Cause Partnership (CCP), a conservative group comprised

of Anglican associations worldwide, unveiled a provisional constitution and the first set of canons for the new Anglican Church in North America (ACNA).

Leaders said the rival denomination represents 700 congregations, or roughly 100,000 people, in the U.S. and Canada.

“The purpose of the province is to share the gospel of Jesus Christ and His transforming love in the United States, Canada and beyond,” said Bishop Robert Duncan, moderator of the CCP.

Duncan, whom Episcopal Church leaders deposed from his position as bishop of the diocese of Pittsburgh in September, will serve as the interim leader of the ACNA. His diocese defected from the Episcopal Church in October to align with Latin America’s Southern Cone based in Argentina.

The ACNA’s formation poses the biggest threat yet to the unity of the England-based Anglican Communion, which boasts roughly 77-million members worldwide. Dozens of conservative congregations have defected from the Episcopal Church to align with bishops in Latin America and Africa amid concerns that the American branch of Anglicanism was breaking with orthodox Christianity by embracing gay bishops and blessing same-sex unions.

If the global Anglican Communion were to approve the formation of a new American branch, it could lead to further defections.

The new ACNA denomination already includes the breakaway dioceses of Pittsburgh, Forth Worth, Texas; Quincy, Ill.; and San Joaquin, Calif.—which each represent dozens of churches. Conservative Anglicans who left the Episcopal Church in the 1970s following changes to the Book of Common Prayer and the ordination of women are also among the new denomination’s supporters.

The Rev. Charles Robertson, canon for the Episcopal Church’s presiding bishop, Katherine Jefferts Schiori, told the *New York Times* on Wednesday that there is room for diverse

perspectives within the church. "We regret that some have felt the need to depart from the diversity of our common life in Christ," he said.

Robertson added that the Episcopal Church, the Anglican Church of Canada and La Iglesia Anglicana de Mexico are "the official, recognized presence of the Anglican Communion in North America."

But Duncan said Anglicanism is experiencing a sort of revolution. "We're going through Reformation times, and in Reformation times things aren't neat and clean," he told the *Times*. "In Reformation times, new structures are emerging."

CCP leaders expect seven Anglican primates to approve the new denomination. Many of those leaders, including the archbishops of Nigeria, Uganda, Rwanda and the Southern Cone, participated in a first-ever Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) in Jerusalem in July, where the primates signed a declaration proclaiming a new era for global Anglicanism.

On Friday, several of the GAFCON leaders are scheduled to present the provision constitution of the North American branch to the Rev. Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury. A spokesperson for Williams said on Thursday that the conservative American leaders had not begun to create a new church, Agence France-Presse reported.

"There are clear guidelines set out in the Anglican Consultative Council Reports ... detailing the steps necessary for the amendments of existing provincial constitutions and the creation of new provinces," the spokesperson said.

"Once begun, any of these processes will take years to complete. In relation to the recent announcement from the meeting of the Common Cause Partnership in Chicago, the process has not yet begun."

Duncan spokesman Rev. Peter Frank said the new denomination would proceed with or without the approval of the archbishop or the Anglican Consultative Council. Duncan spokesman Rev.

Peter Frank said the new denomination would proceed with or without the approval of the archbishop or the Anglican Consultative Council, the group responsible for sanctioning new jurisdictions.

“Certainly the leaders of the largest Anglican provinces are a great place to start, and they’re on board with this,” Frank told *Charisma*. “We also know that we’re past the point where some committee in England is going to be able to unilaterally decide who’s Anglican and who’s not. So that’s where we’re starting, with the support and the encouragement given to us by Anglican leaders around the world.”

Michael W. Howell, executive director of CCP-affiliated Forward in Faith North America, said many conservative Anglicans had been praying for the formation of a new church for decades. “Instead of focusing on things that divide us, we as orthodox Anglicans are focusing on the things that unite us,” he said.

Cynthia Brust, communications director for the Anglican Mission in the Americas, which is also part of the CCP, said that Wednesday marked “the beginning of the healing of the Anglican Communion.”

“The main component to me is the mission focus,” Brust said. “We will be driven by mission, not structure.”

The CCP links eight conservative Anglican organizations across the globe, including the American Anglican Council, the Anglican Coalition in Canada, the Anglican Communion Network, the Anglican Mission in the Americas, the Anglican Network in Canada, the Convocation of Anglicans in North America, Forward in Faith North America and the Reformed Episcopal Church, as well as the bishops and congregations linked with dioceses in Kenya, Uganda and the Southern Cone.

Despite their shared theological conservatism, the groups hold divergent views on significant issues such as liturgical practices and the ordination of women. Frank said the new

denomination will encourage mutual submission while “doing all we can to give each other freedom to follow our convictions.”

The ACNA plans to hold an assembly next summer in Texas, where congregations that choose to align with the denomination will ratify the provisional constitution. **-Adrienne S. Gaines**

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## Christian Artists Rack Up Grammy Nods

*Christian music artists Brandon Heath, Casting Crowns, Steven Curtis Chapman, Ce Ce Winans, Kirk Franklin and others recently racked up nominations for next year's Grammys.*



[ ] Gospel Music Association's New Artist of the Year Brandon Heath received two GRAMMY Award nominations Wednesday during a televised show from Los Angeles. Heath was nominated in the Best Gospel Song category for “Give Me Your Eyes” as well as for *What If We* in the Best Pop/Contemporary Gospel Album category. Mary Mary, CeCe Winans and Kirk Franklin also received two nods each during the broadcast, which included performances from past GRAMMY winners such as Mariah Carey, Christina Aguilera and the Foo Fighters. Other Best Pop/Contemporary Gospel Album nominees were *This Moment* by Steven Curtis Chapman, *Opposite Way* by Leeland, *Hello Love* by Chris Tomlin and *Thy Kingdom Come* by CeCe Winans.

Mary Mary was nominated in the Best Gospel Performance category for "Get Up" as well as for *The Sound* in the Best Contemporary R&B Gospel Album category. Other Best Gospel Performance nominees were "East to West" by Casting Crowns, "Waging War" by CeCe Winans, "Shall We Gather at the River" by Take 6 and "I Understand" by Kim Burrell, Rance Allen, Bebe Winans, Mariah Carey and Hezekiah Walker's Love Fellowship Tabernacle Church Choir. Franklin was nominated in the Best Contemporary R&B Gospel Album category for *The Fight of My Life* and "Help Me Believe" in the Best Gospel Song category. The 51st Annual GRAMMY Awards are scheduled for live broadcast on CBS at 8 p.m. EST, Feb 8. For a complete list of GRAMMY award-nominees, click [here](#).

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## **Leaders of Todd Bentley's Former Ministry Break Silence**

*Months after the revivalist announced he was divorcing his wife and stepping down from ministry, the board at Fresh Fire Ministries gave their perspectives on Bentley's current status.*



[ ] Leaders of the Canadian ministry evangelist Todd Bentley founded a decade ago say the one-time revivalist is "intent"

on divorcing his wife and is yet to begin a restoration process.

In a six-page letter to ministry supporters, the board of Fresh Fire Ministries (FFM) released more details about the circumstances that led to Bentley's departure in August from the Lakeland, Fla., revival meetings he led for four months.

"Todd Bentley has demonstrated himself unfaithful to his wife by entering into a relationship with another woman while still legally married," the board said in a statement issued last Friday. "Todd has yet to enter into a clear system of accountability with the leaders he identified that would be involved in such a process."

The leaders claim Bentley, 32, has no biblical grounds for leaving his wife, Shonnah, and their three children, and that the nature of his relationship with his children's former nanny is "that of adultery."

"The legal separation from Shonnah was initiated completely by Todd and he has not seen her or the children since the last week in July," they stated.

"It also needs to be clarified that Shonnah has in no way initiated this divorce and has no present intention to do so at any time in the future. She is understandably hurt by Todd's infidelity, but is not asking or pressing for a divorce."

On Tuesday, Bentley said there had been no sexual immorality between him and the former nanny. He claimed that for two years no "spark or interest" in the former staff member existed, and that the two developed only an emotional relationship several weeks after July 1, when Bentley filed for divorce.

He admitted, however, that the budding relationship was "absolutely" bad timing.

"I would call it an inappropriate relationship, in the sense

that it was too soon, too quick, and should've never happened the way that it happened," Bentley said. "Emotionally, she had stepped in to comfort me as a friend would.

"But I never left my wife to be with another woman," he said. "There was nothing premeditated or inappropriate in my heart. I had never even entertained the idea that I liked this girl. It never went there."

Claiming to have gone through years of counseling with his wife, Bentley said he is divorcing her over "irreconcilable differences."

He denied disconnecting from his children and told *Charisma* he is in constant phone contact with them and plans to see them as soon as he sorts out issues with his visa.

Bentley said FFM let him review the letter before they made it public and that he was unhappy with portions of it. He said he felt the letter implied that the breakup of his marriage could be blamed on his relationship with his former nanny and the pressures of leading daily nonstop revival meetings in Lakeland.

"I have the utmost respect for my team in Canada and we have had a lot of years together," he said. "[But] I'm not in agreement with my board on this. The point is, [the former nanny] wasn't the cause. And I don't want to blame Lakeland. I want to blame a bad marriage."

Bentley said he is willing to take 100 percent responsibility for his actions and that he readily admits he's guilty of doing a lot of things wrong over the years. "In a lot of ways, the ministry has been my mistress," he said. "That did destroy my marriage. That I have to take responsibility for."

The FFM leaders said they had been on an "emotional rollercoaster" for several months before releasing the statement, seeking to persuade Bentley to abandon his relationship with the former nanny, return to his wife and children, and quickly embrace a process of counseling and accountability.

In the letter, the board thanked leaders of other ministries who have reportedly tried to help implement a process of restoration for Bentley. "But what we have come to realize is that ultimately, the buck stops with the FFM board of directors," they said. "No one knows Todd better, or has more access to all the facts from both sides than we do."

MorningStar Ministries' founder Rick Joyner announced in October that he would be leading a team to help restore Bentley and would be assisted by Revival Alliance member Bill Johnson and Texas pastor Jack Deere, along with pastors John Arnott and Che Ahn serving as advisers.

Bentley said he is still involved at an emotional level with his former nanny and soon plans to move to Joyner's headquarters in Fort Mill, S.C., to "fully embrace a healing and restoration process."

Joyner confirmed that the process could begin as early as January. He did not confirm if abandoning his relationship with the nanny was a precondition Bentley would need to agree to before entering a healing process led by Joyner.

Joyner did express disappointment with FFM's recent statement about Bentley and said he tried to persuade them not to send the letter in its current form.

"There is almost always another side to a story, as there is to many of the things they presented in this letter," Joyner said. "Sometimes the truth is found somewhere between the two sides, but if we're going to ever get to real healing and reconciliation I don't think this kind of thing helps."

The FFM board said they decided to send the letter to supporters after spending months of silence "in deference to [the] leaders" involved in trying to lead Bentley through a restoration process. "We struggled for a while with the question of how to satisfy two important obligations—that of honoring Todd, while believing for his restoration, and at the same time, our obligation to be completely honest and open with you."

Although Bentley experienced a moral failing, the FFM leaders said the Lakeland Revival he led was an authentic move of God. "Through the weakness and failure of man, the enemy seeks to defame and discredit what God has done," they said. "[But] Lakeland was and is an authentic move of God. God poured Himself out in Florida and through the Internet and television around the world."

FFM is in the process of restructuring its ministries with assistance from Johnson's church in Redding, Calif., and Joyner's ministry in South Carolina.

Their letter also stated that Bentley has officially resigned and that the Abbotsford, FFM is searching for another leader. "We love Todd dearly, [and] it is our deep desire that our brother should be restored," they said.

"Please let us make it clear, that although what Todd has done is inexcusable, it is not unforgiveable. We do not judge him unworthy of a second, third or even fourth chance." —**Paul Steven Ghiringhelli**

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## **Vatican to Priests: Don't Offend the Homosexuals**

*The Vatican recently warned Roman Catholic priests not to use any language in their parishes that might be deemed offensive to gays and lesbians.*



[ ] The Vatican released a pamphlet last week warning Roman Catholic priests not to use any language in their parishes

that might be deemed offensive to gays and lesbians reports the Web site.

The brochure, created by bishops and given to those priests under them, instructs priests to no longer assume every parishioner is heterosexual and therefore to refrain from using “heterosexist” language: “Remember that homophobic jokes and asides can be cruel and hurtful—a careless word can mean another experience of rejection and pain.”

The Web site states that priests have also been told to put up posters promoting various “support services” for homosexuals attending church.

“It is things like this that are enfeebling the Church at the moment—the concentration on things that don't matter and missing the things that do,” commented Catholic author and activist Lynette Burrows reports the site. “What is pitiful as well as demeaning is that the Church is running after homosexual opinion but nothing is going to make homosexuals like the Catholic Church. This is because the Catholic Church teaches that homosexuality is a disorder and whatever the bishops say will not change that.”

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## **Tough Economy Hits Churches Hard**

*A survey released Monday found that the country's dire economic situation is now negatively impacting houses of worship and nonprofits across the nation.*



[ ] According to the latest Barna Research survey the world's current economic woes have taken a major toll

on churches and nonprofits.

The Barna survey took a random sampling of more than 1,200 adult respondents

across the country, one of every five households has decreased its giving to

churches or religious organizations in recent months.

Nonprofits have been hit

the hardest, with almost one-third of all adults (31 percent) donating less to

such groups. Among individuals cutting back on their giving, almost one in five

reduced it by as much as 20 percent. Seventeen percent slashed their giving in

half, while 11 percent decreased what they gave away by more than half. The

study showed that 22 percent have stopped giving altogether.

Not surprisingly, those hit hardest by the economic downturn—and subsequently

giving less to churches—are households making less than \$20,000, as well as the

43 percent of families struggling with “serious financial debt.”

Among those surveyed who attend church, more than one-third said their church

had specifically addressed the economic turmoil. A larger percentage of

churches (39 percent among Protestant churches) had offered financial

counseling to those struggling, while about half (52 percent) had created

opportunities for congregants to receive such material assistance as food or

clothing.

“Most nonprofits and churches count on the fourth quarter of the year to

produce at least one-third of their annual income,” said researcher George Barna. “[But] the giving patterns we’re witnessing suggest that churches, alone, will receive some \$3 billion to \$5 billion dollars less than expected during this fourth quarter.”

“The average church can expect to see its revenues dip about 4 to 6 percent lower than would have been expected without the economic turmoil. We anticipate that other nonprofit organizations will be hit even harder,” he concluded.

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## **Kentucky’s Anti-Terror Law Stresses Dependence on God**

*A Baptist pastor and state legislator helped establish a provision in Homeland Security legislation acknowledging the state’s need for God’s protection first and foremost.*



[ ] A Kentucky lawmaker believes God is the state’s first line of defense against terrorism. In legislation organizing the state’s Homeland Security division, state Sen. Tom Riner tacked on a provision that lists the agency’s “dependence on Almighty God as being vital to the security of the Commonwealth” before its other duties, which include analyzing terror threats and distributing millions of dollars in federal grants.

The department is also required to credit God in its annual reports and to post a plaque at the entrance of the state Emergency Operations Center with an 88-word statement that begins, "The safety and security of the Commonwealth cannot be achieved apart from reliance upon Almighty God."

Riner, a Southern Baptist minister, said acknowledging the state's need for God's protection is appropriate. "This is recognition that government alone cannot guarantee the perfect safety of the people of Kentucky," Riner told the *Lexington Herald-Leader*.

Some lawmakers say crediting God distracts from the department's mission. "It's very sad to me that we do this sort of thing," said state Sen. Kathy Stein, D-Lexington, who is a frequent critic of mixing church and state. "It takes away from the seriousness of the public discussion over security, and it clearly hurts the credibility of this office if it's supposed to be depending on God, first and foremost." But Riner says keeping Kentucky safe is too big a job for the government alone. "Government itself, apart from God, cannot close the security gap," he said. "The job is too big for government."

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## **Former Muslim Forms Political Party to Defend Christianity**

*Magdi Cristiano Allam said the party would defend Europe's Christian values against secularism and relativism.*



A Muslim convert to Christianity whose March baptism triggered international death threats has formed a political party

designed to “defend Christian Europe.”

Magdi Cristiano Allam, an Egyptian-born Italian citizen, said his Protagonists for Christian Europe party would defend Christian values, which he believes are being threatened by secularism and relativism, the Associated Press reported. Despite its mission, the party would be open to people of all faiths and would enter candidates in European Union elections next year.

A well-known writer and commentator, Allam, 56, has become a vocal critic of radical Islam and a fervent supporter of Israel since his conversion. His criticism of his former faith has provoked death threats from radical Islamic groups.

Allam credits Pope Benedict XVI with his decision to become Catholic and said the pope baptized him to support religious freedom. The baptismal was held in St. Peter’s Basilica during an Easter vigil.