

Persecution Watchers Keeping Closer Eye on Vietnam

- ✘ It's a sad day when governments use Christmas as a vehicle for persecuting believers.

Of course, it's not a new strategy. But it's one that the Vietnamese government used in December—and it's causing persecution watchers to start monitoring Vietnam more closely again.

According to International Christian Concern (ICC), Vietnam used the Christmas holiday to crack down on Montagnard believers. Claiming that peaceful Christmas services were a political threat, Vietnamese officials surrounded gatherings and enforced a law making it unlawful for Montagnard Christians to gather. Consider these three incidents:

Are Too Many Missionary Groups Entering Haiti?

- ✘ Many organizations have initiated ministry in Haiti over the last year in direct response to the massive 2010 earthquake. The Mission Society has been considering work in Haiti for years, but they have been careful not to jump hastily in.

The Mission Society's Jim Ramsay says Haiti has been on his heart for a while. But after meeting Haitian Yvan Pierre, leader of International Christian Development Mission (ICDM), Ramsay was finally able to embark on an exploratory trip to

the country.

Ramsay recently returned from Haiti full of ideas—yet still rightfully cautious—and in search of God’s will for The Mission Society. Ramsay says too many groups have gone into the country with their own agenda, and The Mission Society will not be one of them.

Moscow Terrorist Attack Drives International Prayer

Terrorists have attacked in Moscow. The BBC is reporting carnage at Russia’s Domodedovo airport, where at least 34 people lie dead and more than 100 are injured. Officials report a suicide bomber set off his blast in the arrivals hall.

“We were walking out through the exit of the arrivals hall towards the car, and there was this almighty explosion, a huge bang... my colleague and I looked at each other and said ‘Christ that sounds like a car bomb or something’, because the noise was, literally, it shook you,” Briton Mark Green, who was on a British Airways flight that landed at the airport before the explosion, told BBC News.

Christian Leaders Urge Senate

to Prevent Iran Nukes

✘ In light of the meeting this weekend in Turkey during which the Iranian regime refused to seriously engage the six powers about its nuclear program, a coalition of religious and civic leaders sent a [letter](#) to the U.S. Senate urging members to enact tough sanctions against the Iranian regime to intensify pressure on its leaders to halt their drive to build nuclear weapons.

Christian Leaders for a Nuclear-Free Iran, an ad hoc coalition of evangelical, Roman Catholic and other faith leaders, is urging Americans to support additional legislative efforts aimed squarely at compelling Iran to abandon its program to develop and deploy nuclear weapons.

Cali High School Forbids Bible-Based Brick Pavers

✘ Brick pavers are at the center of a new Christian controversy in La Quinta, Calif.

Two Christian women purchased brick pavers through a school-directed fundraiser. The women were later told they would not be included in the sidewalk alongside other similarly inscribed inspirational, commemorative, and tributary messages on the Palm Desert High School campus because of their religious content.

Alliance Defense Fund (ADF) attorneys filed a lawsuit on Thursday against the Desert Sands Unified School District Board of Education on behalf of the two women.

Prayer Vigil at D.C. Chinese Embassy Shines Light on Gendercide

☒ Was Chinese President Hu Jintao's visit to Washington a concern or a cause for celebration? China expert Steven W. Mosher, the first American social scientist allowed into China in 1979, remains concerned.

Mosher points to China's abominable human rights record, repressive government regime and unfair economic policies as reasons for outrage at the recent state visit.

"As Hu Jintao is feted by President Obama, China continues to persecute Christians, lock up dissidents, and brutally enforce the one-child policy," says Mosher. "I was recently in China, gathering evidence of human rights abuses in China's infamous population control program."

While some are going political, others are turning to prayer.

Does MTV 'Skins' Violate Child Porn Laws?

☒ MTV is known for its provocative, even controversial reality TV shows. Now, some are concerned that the music television network has crossed the line into child pornography and obscenity.

At the heart of the debate is "Skins." MTV describes the new show as "a wild ride through the lives of a group of high school friends stumbling through the mine field of adolescence...and stepping on most of the mines as they go." Characters include Tony, who is attractive, witty and manipulative, Michelle, who is beautiful and clever, and the dysfunctional Cadie.

On Monday, Morality in Media called for MTV and Viacom to stop airing the show to avoid the exploitation of children and because it may violate U.S. child pornography and obscenity laws. Morality in Media's call follows a move by the Parents Television Council (PTC). The PTC petitioned the chairmen of the U.S. Senate and House Judiciary Committees and the Department of Justice to immediately open an investigation regarding child pornography on Skins.

WV University Stands Against Graduation Prayer

Will West Virginia University-Parkersburg officials reverse their decision to eliminate all student speakers from its nursing program's pinning ceremony on account of a prayer request? Alliance Defense Fund (ADF) attorneys have sent a second letter strongly urging the school to do just that.

University officials decided to ban all student speakers because one of the speakers played a lead role in the graduating students' plea to allow the traditional invocation and benediction at the event. ADF attorneys are giving the university until 5 p.m. Thursday to comply or face a federal lawsuit.

“Christian students shouldn’t be censored for expressing their beliefs. Retaliating against students who simply asked to exercise their freedoms at a public graduation ceremony by removing all student speakers is simply unacceptable,” says ADF Litigation Counsel Travis Barham.

GOP House Gets Healthcare Reform Bill Passed

✘ A Republican-controlled U.S. House of Representatives had no trouble repealing Obama’s proposed healthcare legislation. By a vote of 245-189, the House reversed the controversial health care form Obama signed into law last March.

The White House went into high gear with a media blitz trumpeting the voices of health reform and speaking out about how editorial boards across the country agree that repealing the Affordable Care Act is a bad idea.

Conservatives are pleased, but not quite pleased enough.

NRB Asks Obama to Stand Up for Free Speech

✘ President Barack Obama offered a touching eulogy at a memorial event for the victims of the Tucson shooting on Jan. 8. Obama asked Americans to channel their emotions toward

the pursuit of a more perfect union, saying that “If this tragedy prompts reflection and debate—as it should—let’s make sure it’s worthy of those we have lost.”

But some wanted to hear more from Obama about free speech. Craig L. Parshall, senior vice president and general counsel of the National Religious Broadcasters, is among them. Parshall has published an open letter to the president, hoping for a response. The following is the text of Parshall’s letter: