

Tunisia's Upheaval Unlikely to Improve Lot for Believers

Protests erupted in Tunisia's streets Monday as the prime minister announced a national unity government.

Although the new unity government negotiated with the opposition parties and would appoint ministers of the interior, state, finance and defense from the old ruling party, people still protested the new coalition government.

It took one month for Tunisia—long considered stable—to disintegrate. It started on December 17 when an unemployed graduate set himself on fire. Soon, thousands were in the streets demanding more job opportunities and a higher standard of living.

Christian Doctor Murdered, Obama Invited to Church, and More

✘ Martin Luther King dominated many of the headlines on Monday. But serious and interesting news was also reported across the World Wide Web. Here are four headlines I found noteworthy as I set out to report on the stories that matter most to Charismatic believers.

A Muslim stormed into an Iraqi hospital and shot a Christian doctor point blank in the head in yet another [targeted attack against Christians](#). Fox News reports.

Poll: Lack of Civility Problematic Before Arizona Shootings

☒ While some are moving to politicize the Arizona shootings, others are simply trying to understand it how everyday Joes feel about the way America discusses politics.

A new poll reveals that the public viewed the lack of civility in American politics as a serious problem even before the Tucson shootings.

The PRRI/RNS Religion News Survey found that a whopping 80 percent of Americans say the lack of civil or respectful discourse in our political system is a “serious problem”—and Americans across the religious and political spectrums share this view. Nearly half of Americans (49 percent) said that the lack of civility was a “very serious problem.”

Bible.com Relaunches as Interactive Community Hub

☒ Thanks, in part, to its traffic-generating domain name, Bible.com is one of the most visible Bible resources online. Now, Bible.com has a fresh new look with a redesign of its Web site.

“This effort is all about putting the Bible into the hands and

hearts of a global audience,” says Stacy Fornara, CEO of Bible.com, “Our Christian Web site has grown from 172,000 unique visitors per month in 1997 to over 1.5 million today without much promotion. We have invested significant resources to continuously gift the Bible and provide cutting-edge online resources; our overall goal is to positively impact worldwide exposure of the Bible.”

MLK Niece Calls Civil Rights Leader a ‘Social Conservative’

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a social conservative. At least that’s the way one of his surviving family members is characterizing him on the 25h anniversary of the holiday that bears his name.

MLK’s niece, Dr. Alveda King, director of African American Outreach for Priests for Life, says advice columns her uncle wrote for *Ebony* magazine in 1957 and 1958 reveal a man who today would be regarded as a social conservative.

“In advising men and women on questions of personal behavior 50 years ago, Uncle Martin sounded no different than a conservative Christian preacher does now,” says King. “He was pro-life, pro-abstinence before

marriage,
and based his views on the unchanging Word of the Bible.
Today, Planned
Parenthood would condemn Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as part
of the
'religious right'."

In advice
columns written for the African American-oriented magazine,
MLK told a
young man who had impregnated his girlfriend and refused to
marry her,
resulting in a "crime," that he had made a "mistake." He urged
another
reader to abstain from premarital sex, noting that such
activity was
contributing "to the present breakdown of the family."

"Dr.
Martin Luther King, Jr. was a man of peace, justice, and most
of all a
man of God," King says. "Were he alive today, he would be
working to
secure peace and justice for those in the womb and healing for
a nation
that is still pained by over 50 million missing lives."

Have you read any of those original Ebony magazine columns?

Was MLK's Civil Rights Cause

Misrepresented?

✘ As MLK parades get under way from coast to coast to honor the slain civil rights icon, more than 40 African-American religious and political leaders gathered this morning at the Freedom Baptist Church in Hillside, Ill. to contest what they see as a misrepresentation of King's legacy and civil rights.

The group has taken issue with the recent passing of a "civil unions" bill in Illinois has been heralded by some lawmakers as a win for civil rights—and others have even suggested that King's civil rights interests would have included homosexuality.

Obama Proclaims Jan. 16 Religious Freedom Day

✘ In a move to commemorate the 1786 day when the State of Virginia adopted Thomas Jefferson's Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, President Barack Obama has proclaimed Jan. 16 as "Religious Freedom Day." Jefferson's document was the root of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, guaranteeing freedom of religion in America.

In the proclamation, Obama cited the right of Americans to worship and practice any religion or no religion at all. He also noted his administration's defense of the cause of religious freedom around the world and condemned attacks on any people of any belief.

More Mysterious Bird and Fish Deaths

The strange animal deaths continue.

According to the AP, California wildlife officials are trying to figure out what caused the death of more than 100 birds found clustered together off Highway 101.

Meanwhile, The Daily Mail is reporting up to 300 dead birds found on the side of an Alabama highway. And Grackles have been found dead by the hundreds in Louisiana and Kentucky. Finally, the Chicago Sun-Times is reporting a bizarre scene on a Chicago Lakefront, where Canadian geese and mallard ducks are eating dead or dying gizzard shad.

Are these animal deaths really all that unusual? Or is the media just picking up on every incident now in a quest to drive ratings? Are they prophetic or just coincidental?

Read our earlier story “Are Mysterious Bird and Fish Deaths Prophetic?” for more answers. Then let me know what you think.

Persecution in Iran, Christian Pilgrims, Haiti

Orphanages and Gospel Films

What is secular media reporting about the Christian world this week? Here are some interesting stories worth reading as we head into the weekend.

Iran has arrested about 70 Christians since Christmas in a crackdown

that demonstrates the limits of religious tolerance by Islamic leaders

who often boast they provide room for other faiths, the Associated Press

reports.

Israel is inviting tourists to retrace the footsteps of the Virgin Mary, officials said Tuesday, in the latest campaign to bring Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land. Check out the full story in ABC News.

Even before the earthquake that devastated Haiti a year ago, Chris and Kelli Wilson felt a strong urge to build an orphanage. Learn more about their work in Haiti in The Beacon News.

Ahwatukee musician Thomas P. Morrissey is debuting film this weekend that he produced with some impressive help. The film will benefit starving children. Check out the rest of the story in .

Black Children Positioned as

'Endangered Species

☒ Endangered Species. Those two words are at the heart of a new campaign that aims to raise awareness of the abortion of African-American babies.

The statistics are troubling. According to the Centers for Disease Control, the black abortion rate is three times that of whites and twice as high as all other races combined.

“The impact of abortion in the African-American community is the Darfur of America,” says Walter B. Hoyer II, president of the Issues4Life Foundation. Hoyer’s research shows 50 million babies have been aborted since 1973, 18 million of which are African-American.