

Afghan Christian Freed, Flees Country

✘ Shoaib Assadullah, an Afghan Christian who was imprisoned for five months and threatened with execution for his conversion to Christianity, was released from prison in late March and recently fled Afghanistan to safety.

Assadullah was arrested on October 21 in Mazar-e-Sharif for giving a Bible to a man who later reported him to local authorities.

“I am under emotional pressure from being in prison. Add to that the threat of being executed, constant insults and accusations, cursing and being forced by other prisoners and by prison guards to do work for them all because of prejudice against my different beliefs and my different ethnicity,” Assadullah wrote on March 11 from Qasre Shahi Prison in Mazar-e-Sharif.

Missions Group Sends Nearly 100,000 to Preach Gospel

What started out as a family and a few friends getting together in a garage to lick envelopes and send out invitations to mission trips has turned into a movement of people bringing the Kingdom to earth.

After 22 years, Adventures in Missions (AIM) will reach the major milestone of sending 90,000 people out onto the mission field. Founder Seth Barnes launched AIM in 1989 with a mission

trip to Montego Bay, Jamaica.

“We would lick the envelopes in his garage,” says Rosie Watson, AIM’s first mission trip participant.

Watson, who is originally from Jamaica, suggested the location. She said she never dreamed the organization would grow into what it is now.

More Americans Favor Same-Sex Marriage?

- ✘ Support for same-sex marriage is gaining momentum. So says a new CNN/Opinion Research survey.

More than half of Americans are buying into the notion that marriages between same-sex couples should be lawful.

Specifically, 51 percent of survey respondents say the unions should be legally recognized.

CNN Polling Director Keating Holland noted that more than 60 percent of Democrats approve of same-sex marriage, while more than half of Independents give the nod. Republicans remain staunchly against it, with 70 percent disapproving of same-sex marriages.

Created Equal Launches to Combat Abortion

✘ Training up the next generation of leaders to take on the culture of death and win. That's the goal of Created Equal, a new group founded by Mark Harrington, the former executive director of the Center for Bio-Ethical Reform (CBR) Midwest.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. offered on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. As Harrington sees it, this phrase summarizes the pro-life message quite well. Abortion is age-based discrimination.

"I owe CBR a debt of gratitude for helping to pioneer some of the most effective projects in fighting abortion," Harrington says. "The experience of applying the proven methods of historical social reform to the abortion battle has uniquely prepared me for the next phase of my service in the pro-life movement."

Mumbai Man Delivered of Insanity Spirit

✘ Sabhya Halia left for Mumbai in search of a well-paying job so he could take care of his family, but days after his arrival, his sanity unexpectedly left him. Instead of working as a laborer or with a company, Sabhya found himself roaming the streets like a mad man. He slept on the sidewalks, unaware evil spirits had taken control of his body and mind.

When his parents and wife found out about his condition, they

felt devastated and were distraught. They approached a witch doctor and spent around 20,000 rupees (US \$500) for Sabhya's healing.

"He will come back home within 10 days," the witch doctor told them. With eager expectation, Sabhya's family waited. But the 10 days came and went, and still Sabhya did not return. Finally, his father, Salim, decided to go search for his son. When he found Sabhya, he convinced him to return home. However, on the bus ride back, Sabhya suddenly jumped from the moving vehicle and hid himself. Salim went looking for him among the mass of people, but with a heavy heart, he returned home—without his lost son.

Lady Gaga, Catholic Church Exchange Blows

✘ Judas Iscariot is no Bible believer's favorite. So it's no surprise that Lady Gaga's controversial video for a song that goes by the name of *Judas* is drawing the ire of the Catholic church.

And it's not just the video, which features Lady Gaga dressed up like a gothic Mary Magdalene. It's the timing of the video's release—over the Easter holiday.

"In the most biblical sense I am beyond repentance. Fame hooker, prostitute wench. Vomits her mind," Lady Gaga sings in the video, donning a black cape. The song is part of Gaga's latest CD dubbed *Born This Way* set for release on May 23.

Larry Stockstill Hands Pastoral Torch to Son

✘ Pastor Larry Stockstill is throwing his mantle to the next generation.

On Sunday, Stockstill told Bethany World Prayer Center's south campus that he would hand the pastoral baton to his son, Jonathan.

Jonathan is the worship leader at the Baton Rouge-based church and also heads the Christian band Deluge. But when Oct. 2, 2011 rolls around, Jonathan and his wife, Angie, will take on another assignment: lead pastors of Bethany World Prayer Center.

"Jonathan and I fasted together for 21 days in January to confirm what our board of overseers and our family was sensing as a direction from the Lord," Stockstill told the congregation. "Since 2006, my life has become focused more and more on the Remnant movement for pastors and the Surge movement for worldwide church planting."

Violence Erupts in Nigeria After Christian President

Elected

☒ Deadly violence. That's the scene across the northern states of Nigeria in the wake of the April 16 presidential elections. The deadly violence is impacting churches, Christian homes and businesses, and mission compounds and pastors, according to Open Doors.

What sparked the violence? The election of a Christian president. Nigerian citizens voted in Goodluck Jonathan, a Christian politician from the People's Democratic Party. But Muslims are lashing out. The violence comes as no surprise, considering the pre-election violence.

The violence is erupting in predominantly Muslim states, including

Adamawa, Bauchi, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Sokoto, Gombe, Yobe and Katsina.

There are reports of rampaging youths taking to the streets in protest against the President Jonathan's victory.

Indeed, the backlash is growing worse. According to Open Doors, more than 60 churches were torched, thousands of houses belonging to Christians were destroyed, and both pastors and church workers killed. Christians in the villages were not spared. Many Christians were seen fleeing, abandoning their homes for fear of attack.

Beirut Church Takes Gospel to

Fellow Arabs

✘ Amid political upheavals, protests, and the radical religiosity, the gospel is moving forward in the Middle East, thanks in no small part to one devoted church.

The Free Evangelical Church of Beirut has been shining brighter and brighter light into the Arab world since pastor Joseph took a job there in 1994, reports ReachGlobal, the international missions arm of the Evangelical Free Church of America.

The church's first mission was to establish a home for girls whose parents were either killed or unable to care for them as a result of the 15-year civil war in Lebanon. The home, Beit al Safa, or "Home of Serenity," now houses between 12 and 20 girls at a time. "It was a girls' home because we felt this was the weak element in our society," says Joseph.

Beit al Safa was the start to delving into several other areas where the Arab world could use strengthening. Joseph felt that God was calling him to move forward with the gospel not just in Beirut, Lebanon, but throughout the Middle East.

Gay Students Come Out of Christian University Closets

Openly gay students at Christian universities might be a somewhat shocking notion to some, but gay students who are actively battling for gay rights at Christian universities is perhaps jaw-dropping for others.

The New York Times is reporting that scores of Bible colleges and evangelical [Christian universities are home to a growing gay rights movement](#) on campus. Apparently, gays and lesbians are coming out of the Christian closet and rejecting notions that they should seek help with same-sex gender issues.

Most college administrators are not embracing the movement with open arms, denying campus recognition of clubs oriented toward gays and lesbians, the Times reports, but others are allowing gay student groups. Baylor University is one that does not allow gay clubs, while Belmont University does.