

Presbyterians May Ordain Gay Ministers

The Presbyterian Church USA may begin letting gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in the pulpit.

In 2010, the Presbyterian Church approved an amendment that would allow LGBT people to seek ordination based on their spiritual call to ministry and their abilities instead of their sexual preferences.

Gay Presbyterian pastors aren't a done deal yet, though. The controversial amendment is now making its way to 173 regional presbyteries across the United States for a vote. These regional presbyteries have the power in their hands to open the door to LGBT ministers or slam it shut. If half of the presbyteries vote to open the door, the amendment stands.

Christian Radio Impacts Middle East and North Africa

✘ A French human rights group estimates up to 2,000 people could have died in the revolt against Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi. As reports of human rights abuses continue to emerge, Christian radio broadcasters say the message of the Prince of Peace is still being beamed into Libya and other North African nations.

President of HCJB Global Wayne Pederson says, "We know that satellite signal is going into those countries, but we're not hearing much coming out because internet and cell phone and

texting have all been blocked, so we're not hearing out. But we know that we have at least 1.5 million households listening to us in that part of the world."

Afghan Christian Released from Prison

Prayer works—and so do international diplomatic efforts. Charisma News has reported about the ongoing saga around Afghan Christian Said Musa. Now, the persecuted ex-Muslim has been freed at last.

Musa was arrested in May and it appeared as if he would be executed for converting from Islam to Christianity. But International Christian Concern (ICC) says it has learned that Musa was released from prison last week.

Even while Musa's family celebrates and thanks God, however, Shoaib Assadullah, an Afghan Christian who was arrested for giving a Bible to a man who later reported him to authorities, remains behind bars.

Stop Trying So Hard to Humble Yourself!

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."—1 Peter 5:6-7

We've tried as we might to humble ourselves by responding the right way when folks treat us the wrong way—but if we're honest we'll admit that it hasn't always worked. Indeed, we've often left the scene of the offense with a bad attitude, complaining to God about how Sister So and So got it all wrong.

We've tried as we might to cast our cares upon the Lord—but if we're honest we'll admit that we've often attempted the task in our own strength. Indeed, we've often cast our cares (or our complaints, in many cases) onto a friend instead of the Lord and walked away still trying to carry the oppressive bundle on our already-aching backs.

What's the problem? Sometimes we take Scriptures out of context. In doing so we lose the fuller meaning. First Peter 5:6-7 offers a strong case in point. Here, the apostle is exhorting us to humble ourselves. But that exhortation comes with a practical how-to instruction that we often forget to employ because we have memorized verse 6 as an individual command and verse 7 as a separate individual command. But the reality is that we humble ourselves in this context by casting our cares on the Lord.

Libya's Bloody Uprising Worse Than News Media Reports

The headlines coming out of Libya paint a pretty dire picture. Moammar Gaddafi is blaming Osama Bin Laden for protests—and he vows to “die as a martyr” rather than giving up his power.

Meanwhile, at least 23 have been killed in clashes in north-western Libya. Foreigners are fleeing the nation as fast as

they can. Gas prices are rising—and nobody is sure what will happen next.

But for all the reporting coming out of Libya and the Middle East, Open Doors is certain that it's much worse on the ground than what mainstream media is chronicling.

Zimbabwe Arrests Activists Over Protests

Zimbabwe's government arrested nearly four dozen people for allegedly plotting an Egyptian-styled coup.

However, news reports indicated that those arrested were watching videos of the protests. There is some concern that the exposure to the uprising could plant similar seeds in Zimbabwe, where discontent is rife.

President Robert Mugabe has been in power since 1980, but in the last decade his country has been in an unprecedented economic crisis. Over the last few months, proposed election plans led to clashes between supporters of the ruling party and those of the main opposition, but whether or not they were enough to oust Mugabe is doubtful because of tight control of the security forces.

Threat of Prosecution Remains for Some Christians Freed in Iran

✘ Iranian authorities have released about half of the Christians arrested for their faith across the country in December and January, as well as one held in Shiraz since June, sources said.

In December and January authorities arrested up to 120 believers after Iranian religious and political figures acknowledged the existence of home fellowships and condemned them as a threat to the state. Sources estimate at least 62 of those arrested during late December and January have been released, some on bail. A typical bail amount in Iran can range between a few thousand dollars and the deed on a house.

Some of the Christians who were released reported they were subjected to solitary confinement and harsh interrogation, according to a statement by Elam Ministries on Feb. 4. The statement said some Christians held at Section 209 of Tehran's notorious Evin Prison suffered up to 34 days in solitary confinement.

Obama Fails to Defend Traditional Marriage

✘ In the latest threat to traditional marriage, the U.S. Department of Justice and President Obama are indicating they will no longer defend a key component of the federal

Defense of Marriage Act.

Passed by Congress in 1996, DOMA defines marriage as a legal union between one man and one woman for purposes of all federal laws, and provides that states need not recognize a marriage from another state if it is between persons of the same sex.

Afghani Christian's Execution is Imminent

While unrest continues in the Middle East, reports from human rights activists are flooding in about an Afghani Christian who is facing the death penalty for committing "apostasy" in converting from Islam. Charisma has reported on Said Musa in the past, but now his martyrdom for the Kingdom God appears imminent.

Here's the back story: Musa was arrested on May 31, 2010, along with other Islam-to-Christianity converts, after footage of a baptismal service aired on national television.

In the nine months that the father of six young children has been imprisoned, he has been beaten, tortured and sexually abused on a daily basis, according to Paul Marshall, Senior Fellow at the Hudson Institute's Center for Religious Freedom.

Cross-Border Homeschooling Helps Students Learn Spanish

✘ Ron Fortin was living a comfortable life as an IT consultant in Texas when God called him to leave everything he knew, travel to a foreign country, and serve as principal of a non-profit school for impoverished youth.

Of course, Fortin didn't know a word of Spanish at the time. A year after making the move, he's fluent—and he's helping homeschoolers get fluent with the Homeschool Spanish Academy he birthed during his Guatemalan adventures with the Lord.

The story of Homeschool Spanish Academy begins when Fortin, a former U.S. Marine Corps sergeant and Trinity University graduate, received a prophetic word from an old Bible study friend. The prophecy encouraged Fortin to quit his 9-to-5 job and move to Jocotenago, Guatemala to minister at The Scheel Center, a school in one of the city's most desperate neighborhoods.