

Death-Defying Missionary Leads Apostolic Team to ISIS Hot Spot

Victor Marx is an author, speaker, and international child advocate who works with troubled, abused, and trafficked youth all over the world.

He's also a former U.S. Marine and a trained martial arts seventh degree black belt.

Marx takes teams of missionaries and aide workers on what he calls "high-risk missions" trips, going to places where no one else wants to go but where the need is great.

Recently, he led a team to the Kurdistan region of Northern Iraq, where he and his fellow high-risk missionaries spoke with Yazidi men, women, and children who were driven from their homes. Many of them were tortured and their families killed by ISIS.

The Yazidis belong to a religious community that has its own culture. They are not Muslims, nor are they Christians, but they have been viciously attacked by ISIS and driven out of their homes in Northern Iraq, near the Syrian border.

Huge numbers of Yazidis are now living in IDP (Internally Displaced People) camps in Iraq. Countless Yazidi women and girls have been raped and tortured by ISIS fighters.

Marx and his team ministered the love of Christ to the Yazidi victims of ISIS. They also met with members of the Peshmerga, the Kurdish military, who are trying to stop ISIS from advancing further into Kurdish and Iraqi territory.

'Warlock' Slapped With Restraining Order in New Salem Witch Trial

A judge in Salem, Massachusetts, on Wednesday granted a self-proclaimed witch's request for a restraining order to keep a self-proclaimed warlock and business rival from harassing her.

Lori Sforza, 75, who calls herself a psychic and a "hereditary high priestess" had appealed to Salem District Court Judge Robert Brennan to issue an order stopping Christian Day, who calls himself the "world's best-known warlock" and owns magic-themed stores in Salem and New Orleans from making what she said were harassing phone calls.

The two are well-known in Salem, infamous as the site of 17th century trials that led to the executions of 20 people found guilty of witchcraft. Modern-day Salem capitalizes on its morbid reputation with tourist attractions both ghoulish and historic that help the city draw about 1 million visitors a year, with crowds peaking in the run-up to Halloween.

Sforza, who serves as founder and Head Mother of Our Lord and Lady of the Trinacrian Rose Church, in the waterfront city 16 miles (26 km) northeast of Boston, welcomed the ruling.

"I love Salem so much," she told reporters after leaving the courthouse. "No one should ever be abused, man or woman."

Day told reporters he had never harassed Sforza.

"All of this comes from business competition. All of this

comes from when you're the best at what you do, you're going to have people who want you to fail," Day said. "We get people who get jealous. Might I have had a snarky comment on the Internet once in a while? Sure, but that's free speech. Do I call people with private numbers? Never."

Day hosts a "Festival of the Dead" in Salem, where participants can learn to become a paranormal investigator, hear from departed loved ones, or cast a magic circle on Salem Common.

Salem's tourism office estimated that tourism brought \$100 million in economic activity to the city of almost 43,000 people last year. {eoa}

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God Vindicates Evangelists Who Were Egged at Arab Festival

A federal appeals court said police violated the free speech rights of Christian evangelists by telling them to leave a June 2012 Arab-American festival in Dearborn, Michigan after an angry crowd began pelting them with bottles, eggs and other objects.

By an 8-7 vote, the entire 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals on Wednesday said Wayne County, Michigan and two deputy police chiefs were civilly liable to members of Bible Believers for violating their First Amendment rights.

The case now returns to a federal district judge to award

damages and attorney's fees.

Bible Believers is known for signs and messages that communicate what the Cincinnati-based appeals court called "overtly" anti-Muslim sentiments.

Its members sued after police escorted them from the Arab International Festival in Dearborn, which is home to Ford Motor Co and has a large Arab-American population, after they appeared with a severed pig's head and began preaching.

A federal judge dismissed the lawsuit in 2013, and a divided three-judge 6th Circuit panel upheld that ruling in 2014. Wednesday's decision reversed those holdings. It is rare for an entire federal appeals court to hear a case.

Writing for the majority, Circuit Judge Eric Clay said it is "easy to understand Dearborn's desire to host a joyous festival celebrating the city's Arab heritage," but that officials went too far in suppressing the plaintiffs' "disagreeable" speech.

Wayne County "effectuated a constitutionally impermissible heckler's veto by allowing an angry mob of riotous adolescents to dictate what religious beliefs and opinions could and could not be expressed," he wrote. "This, the Constitution simply does not allow."

Lawyers for the county did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

"We're very pleased, and all freedom-loving Americans who enjoy the protections of the First Amendment should be pleased," said Robert Muise, senior counsel for the American Freedom Law Center, who represented Bible Believers, in a phone interview. "Violence cannot be used to suppress speech that the listener dislikes, and the job of the police is to protect the speaker."

Circuit Judge John Rogers, one of the dissenters, said it was “practical and reasonable” for police to act as they did to help stop the violence. “There may have been much better ways for the police to handle this situation, but there was no First Amendment violation,” he wrote.

The case is Bible Believers et al v. Wayne County, Michigan et al, 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, No. 13-1365. {eoa}

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Communist China Ends Controversial 1-Child Policy

China will ease family planning restrictions to allow all couples to have two children after decades of the strict one-child policy, the ruling Communist Party said on Thursday, a move aimed at alleviating demographic restraints on the economy.

The policy is a major liberalization of the country’s family planning restrictions, already eased in late 2013 when Beijing said it would allow more families to have two children providing the parents met certain conditions.

A growing number of scholars had urged the government to reform the rules, introduced in the late 1970s to prevent population growth spiraling out of control, but now regarded as outdated and responsible for shrinking China’s labor pool.

For the first time in decades the working age population fell in 2012, and China could be the first country in the world to get old before it gets rich.

The announcement was made at the close of a key Party meeting focused on financial reforms and maintaining growth between 2016 and 2020 amid concerns over the country's slowing economy.

"China will allow all couples to have two children, abandoning its decades-long one-child policy," the official Xinhua news agency said in a short report.

There were no immediate details on the new policy or a timeframe for implementation.

Under the 2013 reform, couples in which one parent is an only child were allowed to have a second child.

Critics said the relaxation of rules was too little, and too late to redress substantial negative effects of the one-child policy on the economy and society.

Couples who flout family planning laws in China are, at minimum, fined, some lose their jobs, and in some cases mothers are forced to abort their babies or be sterilised.

Wang Feng, a leading expert on demographic and social change in China, called the change an "historic event" that would change the world but said the challenges of China's aging society would remain.

"It's an event that we have been waiting for a generation, but it is one we have had to wait much too long for," Wang said.

"It won't have any impact on the issue of the aging society, but it will change the character of many young families," Wang said. {eoa}

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How Can a Jew Believe in Jesus and Still Be Jewish?

It all depends on who Jesus (Yeshua) is.

The New Covenant presents Yeshua as the Jewish Messiah (John 1:41, 45, 49, etc.). If He's not the Jewish Messiah, then no one should believe in Him, because His credentials as Savior of the World are based on His credentials as the Messiah of Israel.

If He is the true Messiah, then it is kosher that I as a Jewish person believe in Him. And, I would be a Jew in good standing with God, even if no one else agreed.

For argument's sake, suppose that Yeshua is a false Messiah. In the eyes of rabbinical authority, I must still be seen as a Jew. Why? Because, believing in a false messiah does not make any Jew a non-Jew. For example, in 132 c.e., Simon Bar Kochba was as a leader during the Jewish revolt against Rome. Rabbi Akiva (a very famous rabbi) declared Bar Kochba to be the Messiah, although at the time Bar Kochba had none of the accepted credentials.

However, no Jewish authority has ever said, "Akiva is no longer Jewish for believing in a false messiah." If, after endorsing a false messiah, Akiva is still considered to be a Jew in good standing, then one who believes Yeshua is Messiah cannot be considered otherwise.

In a synagogue on Long Island, New York, I once gave a presentation of why I believed Yeshua is the Messiah. Afterward, the senior rabbi stood up and declared, "Nadler, you're no longer a Jew because of your belief in Jesus!"

“Rabbi,” I responded, “If the Bostoner Rebbe says I’m still a Jew, though a wayward Jew, and if the Encyclopedia Judaica declares I’m still a Jew, though a wayward one, then on what basis can you say I’m no longer a Jew?” “Well,” the rabbi said, “perhaps I’m wrong.” “Rabbi,” I quietly responded, “maybe you’re wrong about more than just that?”

To my astonishment, the synagogue audience of over a hundred Jewish people erupted into applause. It was apparent to all who would consider the issues objectively that a Jew who believes in Yeshua is still a Jew, whether the rabbi approves or not.

In the Book of John, the early believers in Yeshua described him as “the Messiah;” “the One spoken of in Moses and the Prophets;” “the King of Israel,” and so on. They consistently saw Yeshua in a Jewish frame of reference, as the centerpiece of Jewish history.

Please notice also how these believers understood themselves. In both Acts 21:39 and 22:3 in the New Covenant, Paul declares first to the Romans, then again to his own Jewish people, “*I am a Jew from Tarsus.*” At this time, Paul had been a believer in Yeshua for well over 20 years.

So, it isn’t that he’s confused or that he’s trying to say one thing to the Romans, and something else to the Jews. Paul doesn’t say that he “was a Jew,” or “an ex-Jew from Tarsus,” or a “former Jew,” etc.—Paul considered himself a present-tense Jew.

In Romans 11:1, Paul reiterates his Jewish identity when he raises the rhetorical question, “*Has God forsaken His people (Israel)?*” He then answers, “*Not at all! For I am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.*” His first “proof” that God has not forsaken Israel is himself. God chose a “Hebrew of Hebrews” (Phil. 3:5) so that the Gentile world would never think that God would forsake “a

people whom He foreknew."

Today it's the same story. Every Jewish believer living his or her present-tense Jewish identity testifies, "Am Yisrael Chai b'Yeshua HaMashiach!"—The people of Israel live in Yeshua the Messiah! For if the Lord would break His promises to Israel, why should anyone else think Him trustworthy regarding the Good News of Yeshua?

A few years back, I was invited to speak on a secular radio call-in show in Miami, Florida. I received a number of "you're-no-longer-a-Jew" calls from Jewish listeners. Then a call came in from a more polite gentleman: "Mr. Nadler, now that you're a believer in Jesus you're no longer a Jew, for the Bible says that 'in Messiah there's neither Jew nor Greek.'" "

I recognized the Scripture portion and responded over the air, "Oh, you mean Galatians 3:28, '*there's neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female; for we are all one in Messiah Jesus*'."

"Exactly," the caller replied.

"Then let me ask you a question. Are you a believer?"

"Yes, I am," he answered.

"Great. Are you married?" I asked. "Well, yes, I'm married," he slowly answered. "Is your wife a believer?" "Yes, she's a believer," he responded after a longer pause.

"Well," I said, pausing to catch my breath. "If you're a believer and still a male, and your wife is a believer and still a female, then I'm a believer and still a Jew. The verse in Galatians is not teaching that we lose our identities in Messiah, but that there's only one way to God for all people."

An extremely long pause, then "You mean... I'm still Jewish?"

“If you were born a Jew,” I responded, “then you’re still a Jew.”

“Hallelujah!” he shouted over the airwaves, “They told me I was no longer Jewish.”

Yes, it has been said that one cannot believe in Jesus and still be Jewish. However, if, as the Bible teaches, Yeshua is the Jewish Messiah, then trusting in Him is the most Jewish decision a person could ever make.

Dr. Sam Nadler is a Jewish believer in Jesus and has been in Messianic Jewish ministry for over 40 years. Sam is the president of Word of Messiah Ministries, which is bringing the Good News to the Jew first but not to the Jew only, and planting Messianic Congregations in Jewish communities worldwide. To encourage and equip the Body of Messiah in our shared calling, Sam is invited to speak in churches across the country, and has written multiple books on Jewish evangelism, discipleship, and the Feasts of Israel. For more information and resources, or to invite Sam to speak at your church, visit .

8 Things Every Parent Needs to Know About Trick-or-Treat

This time of year can be fun for families as kids dress up in their favorite costumes and walk through the neighborhood trick-or-treating.

However, every year health professionals staffing emergency rooms and poison centers from around the country deal with Halloween-related injuries.

Parents can do a lot to prevent their children from getting hurt by sticking to these eight tips provided by the American Association of Poison Control Centers.

1. Inspect all candy. Look for any signs of tampering such as tears, pinholes, or discoloration before allowing children to eat it.

2. Check candy for choking hazards. Children under age 4 should not eat anything that is smaller than one inch around, such as hard candy, gummy candy, popcorn, and gum balls.

3. Avoid homemade treats from strangers. Watch for treats that may contain marijuana or other drugs.

4. Test face makeup. Apply a small amount on the arm first to check for allergic reaction. Avoid putting any substance on any part of the skin that is not intended for the skin.

5. Give it the smell test. Throw out any makeup that has a very bad smell. This could be a sign of contamination.

6. Remind kids not to chew or break glow sticks. A liquid inside glow-in-the-dark products can cause skin irritation. Swallowing it can cause nausea and burning. Eyes are especially sensitive to glow stick liquid. Never put these products in the microwave.

7. Handle dry ice properly. Touching it to the skin or ingesting it can cause serious harm. Do not store dry ice in the freezer or an unventilated area.

8. Save Poison Control number. In case of emergency, call the national **Poison Control** at **(800) 222-1222**.

ORU Celebrates 50th Anniversary with Global Celebration Week

Oral Roberts University (ORU) celebrated 50 years of building Holy Spirit-empowered leaders this fall during a Global Celebration Week Oct. 19-24, 2015. This special week featured many events and opportunities for the ORU community to celebrate the past while looking forward toward the University's bright future.

"ORU's 50th Anniversary Global Celebration Week was a wonderful time of reflection, rejoicing and renewal," said ORU President William M. Wilson. "As a community, we were able to celebrate the past, recommit to the original vision of this great university and embrace ORU's bright future together."

The festivities began with a ribbon-cutting ceremony to unveil a new exhibit in the base of the world-renowned Prayer Tower. This unique exhibit highlights the legacy of ORU. It features memorabilia from the University's founder and highlights important aspects of ORU's past, present and future.

During a chapel service on Wednesday, Oct. 21, ORU forgave the debts of 10 full-time ORU students. The students were randomly selected through a drawing. Winners included: Erin Clothier, Daniel Farias-Alvarez, Leah Foster, Cingza Gin, Elizabeth Gomez, Kimberley Leatherwood, Natalie Persinger, Brittany Reagle, Luke Rentz and Thy Tran.

The celebration continued at the 50th Anniversary Gala on Friday, Oct. 23. Guests enjoyed performances from Dave Brown, David Osborne and Sandi Patty. Additionally, they heard a letter from the Graham family, read by Gigi Graham, and a keynote address from Will Graham, whose grandfather Billy Graham gave the keynote address at ORU's dedication in 1967.

The gala also recognized 50 individuals with Lifetime Global Achievement Awards for their outstanding service to ORU. The 1,200 seat ballroom was sold out for the event.

The 50th Anniversary Global Celebration Week culminated on Saturday, Oct. 24 with a parade and groundbreaking ceremony for the new ONEOK Track and Tennis Complex. This was followed by a 50th anniversary concert featuring performances from ORU alumni through the years, as well as Australian band Planetshakers.

This Church Is Recruiting People to Cast Out Devils

Attention priests, the Archdiocese of Manila is seeking exorcism help.

Father Jose Francisco Syquia tells *Catholic News Service* the Archdiocese of Manila Office of Exorcism (AMOE) has seen the claims of demon possession/harassment triple in the last year.

“You expect that there will be more, what we call, retaliations because you are jumping into enemy territory and retaking ... what truly belongs to God,” Syquia told *NPR*. “And therefore it’s more like maybe a commando raid behind enemy lines.”

According to *Catholic Philly*, priests must possess the following before applying to be an exorcist: discernment of the supernatural; determining psychological vs. spiritual afflictions; seeking prayer before doing anything related to performing an exorcism/prayer of deliverance; and selecting

the volunteers who has “false charisms” vs. “true charisms.”

AMOE was founded in 2006 to address an increase in demonic bondage in the Philippines, according to their website.

“The whole thrust of this ministry is to guide the afflicted person to grow in holiness by bringing him to an intimate relationship with Jesus,” the site reads. “This is the only real goal of the ministry, and the success of the exorcism should be centered on this. This may entail exorcism prayers, guidance and counseling, evangelization of the person and his family, introduction to a community where the patient can find support and regular evaluation of progress in both his spiritual life and liberation.”

Earlier this summer, Syquia told *NPR* there were only consistent five exorcists to handle—at minimum—30 cases at a time. Now, the possession numbers appears to hover around 80-100 at any given time.

However, AMOE utilizes a rotating staff of doctors, psychologists, lawyers and religious laypeople to assist in the spiritual warfare.

Before people seek an exorcist’s help, they often pursue occult healers, which often exacerbates the problem, Syquia says.

**Black Pastors Going to War
With Financial ‘Crack**

Cocaine'

On Oct. 30, during the fourth annual dfree® Financial Freedom Conference, hundreds of black church leaders from around the nation will gather to launch a national strategy to end short-term, high-interest lending (known as payday loans), that has undermined financial capacity among many Black Americans.

Dr. DeForest B. Soaries Jr., senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Lincoln Gardens and author of "dfree®: Breaking Free from Financial Slavery" says "Payday loans are the crack cocaine of the financial services industry. There are more payday loan stores in America than there are Starbucks and McDonald's combined. They are mostly located in black and low-income neighborhoods. This saturation of alternative financial outlets combined with a ubiquitous presence of these predatory products on the Web makes the payday industry the most powerful threat to financial freedom we have ever encountered. It's time for black churches to do to predatory lending what we did to Jim Crow. We will launch our strategy at this conference."

On Friday, Oct. 30, Soaries, who is the founder and chair of the dfree® Global Foundation Inc. will be joined by Keith Corbit, vice president of the Center for Responsible Lending of Durham, North Carolina and Beverly Ruggia, CRA Organizer for New Jersey Citizen Action (NJCA), both of whom will be recognized by the dfree® Foundation for their support for anti-payday lending activities. Tom Byrne, Chairman of the New Jersey Investment Council will also appear at the event to announce the Council's commitment to honor NJCA and Soaries' request to divest the \$50 million that it has invested in a hedge fund that finances payday lending.

Soaries said that this church-led, national effort would also strive to create alternative solutions for short-term loans of small amounts of money that banks do not provide. The dfree®

conference will also feature dynamic speakers, industry leaders, and corporate partners to offer panels, workshops and resources covering a variety of financial topics, as well as practical tools and strategies for church and community leaders that are helping people achieve financial freedom.

The dfree® Financial Freedom Conference will take place at the First Baptist Church of Lincoln Gardens from 7:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 30 and from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 31.

Why Is Pro-Marriage Chick-fil-A Sponsoring an LGBT Film Festival?

Chick-fil-A is one of the sponsors for Level Ground, a faith-based LGBT film festival.

According to their website, Level Ground creates a space for dialogue about faith, gender and sexuality through the arts.

The festival isn't the chain's first open support for LGBT rights.

Earlier this summer, the home of the original chicken sandwich donated food to a gay pride parade in Iowa.

The fast-food restaurant drew controversy in 2012 when CEO Dan Cathy told the *Baptist Press* he was "guilty as charged" for supporting traditional marriage.

But after the anti-LGBT headlines, Cathy appeared to be changing his tune, claiming he recognized he made a mistake.

“Every leader goes through different phases of maturity, growth and development and it helps by (recognizing) the mistakes that you make,” Cathy said. “And you learn from those mistakes. If not, you’re just a fool. I’m thankful that I lived through it and I learned a lot from it.”

According to the Level Ground sponsor kit, 80 percent of attendees identify as some form of Christian.

The festival openly claims prophetic verses, including passages from Isaiah, which enrages bloggers like Geoffrey Grider.

“Shame on you, Dan Cathy,” Grider writes. “Christian Americans stood by you and Chick-fil-A every step of the way back in 2012 when you were persecuted for taking a stand for Jesus Christ. But we will not stand with you on this. No sir. One of my favorite places to get lunch is at one of your restaurants, but that can and will change.”

Petitions circulate the web, demanding Chick-fil-A issue a response to their sponsorship, saying their sponsorship directly contradicts the chain’s stance on gay marriage.