

# Ahmadinejad: 'Israel Can't Do a Thing to Stop Iran'

✘ Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said Wednesday Israel and its Western backers “cannot do a ... thing to stop Iran’s nuclear work.”

In a televised speech at an Iranian uranium conversion plant in Isfahan, Ahmadinejad rejected the “illegal” censure of his nation by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). He said the agency was “under pressure from a few superficially powerful countries.”

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## Saying 'I Do' in the Holy Land

✘ Christians have long made pilgrimages to the ancient Village of Cana where Jesus performed His first miracle. More recently, couples have begun visiting the Franciscan Wedding Church to get married or renew their marriage vows.

Jesus performed His first miracle, turning water into wine at a wedding, thereby validating and blessing the covenant of marriage.

Father Garret Edmunds, a pilgrimage leader to the Holy Land, points out that Jesus’ primary reason for being there was for the wedding.

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# The Love Test

**1 John 4:1-21** The whole counsel of God's Word exhorts us not to judge others. However, we can give the love test to others. The Bible says you shall know them by their fruits. The fruit of the Spirit is love. John talks about the love test. "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us" (vv. 11-12).

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## Former KKK Leader Ordained in Black Pentecostal Denomination

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A former imperial wizard of the Ku Klux Klan is now an ordained minister in one of the nation's largest African-American denominations.

Johnny Lee Clary was ordained a minister in the 6 million-member Church of God in Christ (COGIC) on Saturday during a service led by Bishop George McKinney, pastor of St. Stephen's Cathedral Church of God in Christ in San Diego and a member of COGIC's 12-member general board.

Clary, who is based in Oklahoma, will serve as an evangelist under McKinney's oversight, and his ministry will emphasize racial reconciliation.

"Bishop McKinney and I both felt like racial reconciliation was needed now more than ever," said Clary, who befriended McKinney in the early 1990s when the two spoke during a Promise Keepers event. "We feel like it makes a huge statement that the former national imperial wizard of the Ku Klux Klan would join the Church of God in Christ and reach out with the Church of God in Christ to bring racial reconciliation to America."

"We want to take this back to where it was when William Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival was happening, when blacks and whites were together," added Clary, who preached at St. Stephen's on Sunday. "This is what's needed for this nation now to overcome racism."

After joining the Ku Klux Klan during his teens, Clary eventually became leader of the White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. But he grew increasingly dissatisfied and eventually resigned from his post. With two failed marriages, no friends and little money, Clary says he turned to the God he'd been introduced to as a child and accepted Christ in 1990.

Since then he has shared his story on talk shows including *The Phil Donahue Show*, *Geraldo*, *The 700 Club* and *Sally Jesse Raphael*, and he preaches in churches in the U.S. and Australia.

"I know the answer to racial reconciliation, and that's Jesus Christ," he said. "They all come to me, even secular people are saying, 'What changed you?' I tell them, 'The only thing that changed me was the Word of God.' Because when I accepted Christ ... I had to get my mind renewed, and that was through God's Word."

Both Clary and McKinney say the church has an opportunity to

address racism, which they say did not disappear with the election of the nation's first African-American president.

Clary notes that white supremacist groups saw an upsurge in interest after President Obama was elected, with many of the organizations using nationalist labels to draw not only racists but also those who are fearful of the president's policies.

McKinney says failing urban schools and the disproportionate percentage of minorities in prison are also reflective of ongoing racism in the nation. "There continues to be tremendous strongholds of racist activity in the U.S., and the church has the responsibility, I believe, to be salt and light in this situation," McKinney said. "So the church has an awesome responsibility to speak truth in every area, every arena of life."

During the civil rights era, many white evangelical leaders didn't see the fight for racial equality as their cause and did not get involved, McKinney says. He doesn't want history to repeat itself today when he says Christians are needed to fight not only for racial equality but also to preserve traditional marriage and end abortion, which he said is impacting black communities disproportionately and becoming "a kind of genocide."

"It's all the way through the Bible, that the children of God are to be advocates for justice and practitioners of love and forgiveness and mercy," McKinney said. "But somehow we didn't get that on our agenda, and we allowed the whole [civil rights] era to pass without many of those who were leaders in the evangelical church becoming involved at all. They stood on the sidelines.

"I hope that that doesn't happen again because we still have some serious fights, and we need all the people of good will, all of God's people. ... So we need Johnny Lee Clary and we need

all the people who at one time were on the wrong side of the fence to come on and help us with the fight for righteousness [and] holiness.”

McKinney said churches will remain largely segregated until they become welcoming to everyone—“the homeless, the aliens, to anybody who has a hunger for God.”

Clary agrees. “I’m interested in seeing the church portrayed the way the first church was in Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost,” Clary said. “When the Holy Spirit came, all races were gathered together under heaven. Also in Revelation 7:9 ... every race was there gathered before the throne in front of the Lamb in heaven. People ... better learn to get along down here on earth or they won’t be able to get along up in heaven.”

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# Big Things Always Start Small

☒ Amighty oak tree began as a small acorn. A baby started as a small embryo. A river began as a few small drops of water that trickled into a ravine. You may be standing in a place where your life, your finances or your healing appear to be small. Yet, the seed of increase is within your situation.

I read the story of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's determination to work his body so that his mind would function well. His father told him, "You have the mind, but you have not the body, and without the help of the body the mind cannot go as far as it should. You must make the body." Roosevelt began exercising everyday. He worked out with weights, hiked, ice-skated, hunted, rowed, boxed and rode horseback. He worked his mind through reading about people who were fearless and those he admired.

Roosevelt knew that he possessed a sickly and puny body. He also knew that he could start where he was with something small. He could turn his status in life into something big and powerful if he would continue to press forward all the time. Roosevelt could not merely dream of something big for his life. He had to act on what he possessed.

Years later, after many major accomplishments in his life, Roosevelt died. At the time of his death they discovered a book under his pillow. He was faithful to continue in his pursuit as long as there was breath in his body. You can do the same thing. Take another look at the small thing in your life, your ministry or your business. What can you begin to do

today? What can you do everyday that can result in increase? You were destined for increase. Begin a new habit today by acting rather than merely dreaming. Watch your small thing become big.

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## **No Name It and Claim It!**

**1 John 3:7-24** During my lifetime, there was a movement that many coined as “name it and claim it.” Many preachers and teachers were saying you could have anything you asked God for—all you had to do was believe and claim it by faith. It is true that even Jesus says whatever you pray about, believe that you have it and you will receive it. However, one must read this promise in context. Jesus also shares that for this to come to pass in our lives, we must fulfill a condition. That condition is to abide in Him and allow His love and Word to abide in us. Jesus tells us we must keep his commandments. He says, “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you-.-.-.-. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:7, 12-13, KJV).

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## **N.Y. State Senate Rejects Gay Marriage Bill**

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- ✘ The New York state Senate rejected a bill Wednesday that would have legalized same-sex marriage.

In a 38-24 vote, lawmakers struck down a gay marriage bill that had been pushed by Gov. David Patterson. No Republicans supported the measure. But even with a one-seat majority, Democrats still did not have enough votes to pass the measure.

Democratic state Sen. Ruban Daaz Sr., a Pentecostal pastor in the Bronx, has been a strident opponent of the gay marriage bill, arguing that marriage should be the union of one man and one woman. In May, he participated in a rally protesting Patterson's moves to push gay marriage. The event reportedly drew some 10,000 people.

"Not only the evangelicals, not only the Jews, not only the Muslims, not only the Catholics, but also the people oppose it," Daaz said before Wednesday's vote, the *New York Times* reported.

Five states have legalized gay marriage, all of them through legislation or court ruling.

The New York State Assembly approved the gay marriage legislation shortly after midnight on Wednesday, the *Times* reported, and Patterson had said he would immediately sign the measure if it made it to his desk.

Voters in Maine and California repealed their states' gay marriage laws through referendum. But New York does not have a referendum process that allows voters to overturn an act of the Legislature. All 31 states that have voted on the issue have banned gay marriage.

Daaz told *Charisma* in May that he would block moves to legalize gay marriage in his state even if the bill were reintroduced every year. "I'm a preacher. I'm not only a state

senator," he said. "I would not vote for that."

The vote was an answer to prayer, said Tom Stiles, director of church relations for New Yorkers Family Research Foundation, which is affiliated with New Yorkers for Constitutional Freedom, a group that lobbied against the bill.

"We're very thankful," Stiles said. "This is not about hating anybody. It's about preserving marriage as we know it."

He said the traditional marriage supporters would have to fight the same battle next year, when Democrats who opposed the measure will likely face a tough re-election battle.

"They're looking at the elections, and they'll target the Democratic senators who voted against the bill," Stiles said of gay marriage supporters. "Christians need to be praying for those men and women."

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## **Christian Counselor Who Refused to Offer Gay Sex Therapy Loses Case**

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A Christian marriage counselor in London who lost his job for refusing to provide sex therapy to gay couples lost a discrimination lawsuit on appeal.

Gary McFarlane, 48, was fired from Relate, a marriage counseling service in Bristol, England, in 2008 after refusing

to help same-sex couples improve their sex lives because it violated his Christian beliefs.

Photo: Christian Legal Centre

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# Pentecostal Inmate Allowed to Preach Again

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- ✘ A New Jersey State Prison inmate has won back the right to preach to his fellow prisoners.

Howard Thompson Jr., an ordained Pentecostal minister, had been prohibited from preaching in 2007 when prison officials banned inmates from preaching, even when supervised by prison staff.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) filed a lawsuit on Thompson's behalf last year, arguing that the ban was unconstitutional. On Monday, the group announced that it reached a settlement with prison officials that allows Thompson to preach at weekly worship services and to teach Bible study classes.

"The decision by prison officials in New Jersey to allow Mr. Thompson to resume practicing his faith is a welcome acknowledgement that religious freedom in this country extends to all," said Daniel Mach, director of litigation for the ACLU Program on Freedom of Religion and Belief. "The ban on prisoner preaching was clearly at odds with the law and the American value of religious liberty, and this decision was

long overdue.”

Thompson, who was convicted of murder in 1985 and sentenced to 30 years to life in prison, has been active in the prison’s Christian community since his incarceration in 1986. Ordained in 2000, he preached at Sunday services, taught Bible studies and founded the prison choir. Then two years ago, prison officials issued a blanket ban on such preaching by prisoners.

The ACLU said the prison’s chaplaincy staff actively supported and encouraged Thompson’s ministry work, believing he was a positive influence on other inmates.

Thompson said the ban kept him from fulfilling his ministry calling, which he had done “honestly, effectively and without any incident for years.”

“All I have ever wanted was to have my religious rights restored so that I could continue working with men who want to renew their lives through the study and practice of their faith,” Thompson said.

The settlement does not allow Thompson to lead services, but permits him to preach with the consent of a prison chaplain or approved volunteer. It also requires him to provide an outline of his sermon or Bible study lesson to the chaplain or volunteer in advance for review and approval.

If approval is denied, Thompson must be given a written explanation of the reason.