

Maine Churches Threatened With IRS Complaints for Marriage Support

✘ A group advocating for gay marriage is leading a campaign seeking to revoke the tax-exempt status of churches that supported the repeal of Maine's gay marriage law.

Maine Marriage Equality reports that 80,000 people have joined its online effort to report to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) churches that advocated for Question One, which revoked the state's same-sex marriage law Nov. 3 with 53 percent of the vote.

Can Jesus Be Blackmailed?

Two weeks ago, just after Maine's successful reversal of the state legislature's decision to sanction same-sex marriage, MSNBC's Contessa Brewer asked me a profound question: "Would Jesus have spent \$550,000 to oppose same-sex marriage?"

The question was exactly what many secular parties had been asking in Portland, Maine, where she was speaking to me by satellite. My answer was that Jesus would have given the money to oppose same-sex marriage. My reasoning was simple: Jesus would have upheld his own teaching; refusing to be a loving, permanent enabler of a misguided local government. I mentioned

in the interview that Washington, D.C. was struggling with the same question.

Bring on the Towels

Have you ever had mixed thoughts and emotions about your spouse? I have-just this morning, in fact.

Today started out as any other day, but for some reason things just affected me differently than they usually do. I got out of bed and began my regular devotional time with the Lord, reading the Word, studying a powerful book, and praying. When I stood to my feet, I was filled with peace and gratitude.

“I feel great!” I thought to myself. And off I went to begin what I thought was going to be a wonderful day.

The kitchen was first on my agenda. I don’t know why, exactly, but I have a plaque over my stove that reads, “A kitchen is the heart of the home.” When I was growing up, my mother always kept a clean kitchen, with a pot of something deliciously fragrant simmering on the stove.

The only thing fragrant about my kitchen this morning was a hot, empty coffee pot, left sitting on the coffee maker with the switch in the “on” position, by my husband.

“I get so tired of this,” I thought. “Why do I have to clean up his mess?”

I picked up the pot and carried it over to the sink. There I discovered the spoon he’d used to stir the sugar in his cup. It had been set beside the sink and now lay in a brown, sugary puddle. I grabbed a cloth and began to wipe the counter-muttering the whole time.

“That man!” I said in frustration. “Why can’t he just put the spoon in the sink where it belongs?”

I decided to tackle the bathroom instead. You can probably guess what I found-beard clippings and blobs of toothpaste in the sink, and puddles of water on the counter top. I turned to grab a towel.

As I did, I looked at my towel, folded neatly in thirds over the rack (Mom said double is allowed, too, but not as nice looking). My husband’s towel was bunched and crumpled, as if he doesn’t care at all about being neat. I stood there staring.

After a few moments, I started to unravel and re-fold his towel. But something happened to change my whole mind-set and along with it, my feelings. I looked from his towel to mine, back and forth.

I felt myself begin to soften. I started to appreciate and praise God for our differences. Feelings of love, softening my heart, began to manifest. I tenderly touched his towel, leaving it as it had been.

Then I went back into the kitchen to clear the table, where he had been sitting and drinking his cup of coffee. My eyes caught sight of his open Bible and a yellow highlighting pen. I remembered the early morning I discovered him sitting in the same chair with closed eyes and folded hands, offering up a silent prayer to God.

A House Full of Angels

Hebrews 13:1-25 This chapter begins with an interesting two verses: “Let brotherly love continue. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels.”

Catching a Glimpse of God's Glory

I have often wondered why some great men and women of faith die young. Recently a great servant of the Lord named Ruth Heflin died. I personally felt she had many more years of service to offer the Lord here on earth. She wrote a book called *Glory*. As I thought about her death, I felt the Lord had revealed the fullness of His glory and the glories that awaited her in heaven. The realms of glory she saw in the **Spirit** made this earth grow strangely dim to her, so the light of her life was transferred into the light of that city where there is no need of light—the city of our God, **Zion**, the New Jerusalem.

The early heroes of our **faith** could not get near the **glory of God**. Moses had to be hidden in a rock while God's glory passed him. When God's glory burned on the mountain, the children of Israel were warned not to come near the mountain, because truly our God is a consuming fire. Because of the cross, however, we can now all be friends with God just as Moses was counted as a friend to God. We now have entrance into the city of the living God, the **heavenly** Jerusalem, and we are welcomed in the assembly of the **saints**.

The thought of seeing some of these great **heroes of our faith** face to face blows me away. We also experience now the great cloud of witnesses on earth, and an innumerable company of **angels** surrounds us. Even though we cannot see these things with our natural eyes, the truth is the **kingdom of God** is at hand. When we reach our hands up in praise to God, we are able to touch the kingdom of God.

Glimpses of **God's glory** are available to us daily. Have you taken a peek lately?

*Lord, I know the things that keep me from experiencing Your glory daily are my concerns and cares. There are so many things on this earth to think about, and these things seem to dull my eyesight. Help me not to be nearsighted. Help me to catch glimpses of Your **glory** daily. I think I caught a glimpse yesterday as I looked at the smiling face of my eleven-month-old grandson. Thank You, Lord. Show me Your glory.*

Read: Ezekiel 31:1-32:32; Hebrews 12:14-29; Psalm 113:1-114:8; Proverbs 27:18-20

Suspect Indicted in Bombing at Messianic Leader's Home

☒ Officials in Israel on Thursday indicted the man accused of sending a bomb to the home of a Messianic minister in March 2008 that nearly killed the pastor's teenage son.

Jack Teitel, 37, was indicted for attempted murder, among other charges, for allegedly sending a bomb hidden in a gift basket to the home of David Ortiz, pastor of a Messianic congregation in Ariel, Israel.

(Photo of Ami Ortiz, Compass Direct News)

The package, opened by Ortiz's 15-year-old son, Amiel, damaged the family's apartment and left Amiel covered with blood and burns, and full of needles and screws contained in the bomb. Now, 20 months later, 16-year-old Amiel is back in school and playing basketball.

When Teitel walked into court, the West Bank settler shouted that God was proud of him. "It was a pleasure and honor to serve my God," Teitel reportedly said. "God is proud of what I have done. I have no regrets."

Police said Teitel is an ultra-Orthodox Jewish nationalist who picked out his targets based on his nationalist philosophy.

Along with the Ortiz case, police said Teitel is responsible for the June 1997 shooting death of Samir Bablisi, a Palestinian taxi driver who was found in his cab with a single bullet wound to his head. Two months later, police said, Teitel shot Isa Jabarin, a Palestinian shepherd who was giving Teitel driving directions to Jerusalem.

Police also said that Teitel attempted to burn down a monastery and unsuccessfully planted several bombs. He is also accused of the September 2008 bombing of Zeev Sternhell of Hebrew University in Jerusalem. The bombing left the emeritus history professor slightly wounded.

Teitel told police he was trying to kill David Ortiz, not injure his son.

In all, Teitel has been indicted for two cases of pre-meditated murder, three cases of attempted murder, carrying a weapon, manufacturing a weapon, possession of illegal weapons and incitement to commit violence.

Adi Keidar, Teitel's attorney, reportedly said his client is "mentally unstable." He cited Teitel's alleged confession to

acts he did not commit. After a psychiatric evaluation by the state, Teitel was deemed fit to stand trial.

Keidar is representing Teitel or behalf of the Honenu organization, a nationalistic law firm endorsed by Mordechai Eliyahu, a rabbi known for his far-right Orthodox views.

Honenu is known for defending, among others, Ami Popper. Popper was convicted in 1990 for shooting seven Palestinian workers who were waiting for a ride at a day labor pick-up site. Popper's attack, like all others cited in Honenu's website, was said to come "in response" to Palestinian aggression. Despite numerous attempts to contact Keidar, he could not be reached for comment.

David Ortiz said he is not surprised by Teitel's claim that God is proud of him. Ortiz cited biblical verses where the early Christians were warned that one day people would kill them and think that they were doing the will of God. Teitel, Ortiz said, saw him as an enemy of the nation of Israel.

"He saw me and the professor as false prophets," Ortiz said.

Police have brought no evidence linking Teitel to any other co-conspirator. But Ortiz's wife, Leah, said she thinks Teitel worked with others. Teitel's neighbor, Yosef Espinoza, was brought in for questioning and later released. Teitel does not speak Hebrew, but when he was arrested he was distributing handouts written in Hebrew criticizing homosexuals in Israel.

When his apartment was raided, police found a cache of illegal weapons he has been indicted for owning. Ortiz also said that a tape from a closed-circuit television camera taken on the day of the bombing shows Teitel was driven to the Ortiz apartment by another person.

Regardless, Leah Ortiz scoffs at the claim that Teitel was politically motivated. Instead, she said, he used politics and religion as a foil to justify murder.

“He is a serial killer,” she said.

In spite of all the pain that the Ortiz family has gone through, Leah Ortiz said she has seen much good come from the tragedy, including miraculous healings. She said that the bombing has helped soften the opinion of people in Israel toward Jews who believe that Jesus is the promised Messiah.

“It has made them face the facts of how they see Jesus,” she said.

Howard Bass, a leader of a Messianic congregation in Beer Sheva, Israel, said he isn't so sure.

“It's not that simple,” he said, adding that such attacks may help tolerant people to eschew violence, but that others will actually be encouraged by the bombings. “It makes people aware of how far they [people set against the Messianic Jews] will be willing to go and abhor them. It's bringing things to light and forcing people to make a decision: What is good and what is evil?”

Hostile Environment

Bass himself was a victim of at least one attack by anti-missionary, Orthodox extremists. On Dec. 24, 2005, several hundred Orthodox Jews mobbed an outdoor service Bass held. The mob destroyed church equipment, terrorized congregants and threw Bass into a baptismal pool.

Bass has since sued Yad L'Achim, an Orthodox, anti-missionary organization he said is responsible for inciting the attack. A court decision in the case is due later this month.

On its website, Yad L'Achim asserts that missionaries are “devious” and are trying to “destroy the Jewish people.” The organization makes no distinction in its website between missionaries and Messianic Jews. The site also goes as far as to accuse Messianic Jews of “playing the victim to the hilt”

in reference to the Ortiz bombing.

Despite numerous attempts to reach members of Yad L'Achim, no one was made available for comment.

According to the 2009 International Religious Freedom Report issued by the U.S. Department of State, there are 10,000 Messianic Jews in Israel. The report documents several cases of violence against Messianic Jews, including one case on May 15 in which "ultra-Orthodox residents of the Tel Aviv suburb of Rehovot attacked and beat a group of Messianic Jews who were handing out New Testament pamphlets on the street."

Additionally, Bass cites a book published this week in Israel titled, *The King's Torah*. Bass said the book encourages the killing of gentiles and anyone else deemed to be a threat to Israel.

"We're seeing a spirit rising," Bass said, "where they feel they have a legitimate right to kill anyone who threatens the Jewish state."

Mentioning the book, David Ortiz agreed with Bass, calling the bombing and recent anti-Christian aggression "a shadow of things to come."

As for what the Ortiz family wishes for Teitel, Leah Ortiz said she hopes he will receive a sentence that is "equal to his crime." Because Israel has no death penalty, this very likely would mean life in prison.

Regardless of what happens in court, members of the Ortiz family say they have forgiven Teitel.Â David Ortiz hopes one day to sit down face-to-face with Teitel and talk. He said he hopes Teitel will become another Apostle Paul.

"There is something inside him that makes him want to kill people. If God has had mercy on me, maybe he'll have mercy on others," Ortiz said. "The Lord forgave David and many people

in the Bible”my goal and my prayer for him is that he will repent and be saved.”

Looking Unto Jesus

Hebrews 11:32-12:13 These heroes of the faith pressed forward to the goal, and they received the gold. As we see by the lives mentioned in this passage of Hebrews 11, many were martyred and tortured for their faith. How did they get through these great trials of faith, which are even more precious to the Lord than gold? The answer is simple: They kept their focus on the Provider, not the problem. We read in Hebrews 12:2, “Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Dozens Run to Free Victims of Human Trafficking

✘ A Florida-based ministry is racing to end human trafficking.

Run for Freedom will host a 5K race in Cocoa Beach Saturday to raise money and awareness about what the United Nations calls one of the fastest growing criminal industries in the world.

“Our main purpose is to raise awareness about human

trafficking,” said Rachel Manzo, whose parents founded Run for Freedom. “Most people think that it only happens overseas ... but [it’s] right here in our own back yard.”

Every year 1.2 million children and teenagers worldwide are abducted or coerced into prostitution, pornography or forced labor. This year the average victim is 13 years old.

Roughly 100 people are expected to walk or run just over 3 miles Saturday. The event is Run for Freedom’s fifth 5K since September.

“[Sex trafficking is] nothing new,” said Mary Ann Manzo, who co-founded Run for Freedom with her husband, Pat. “It’s been around a long time, but in the day and age we live in, it is one of the fastest growing criminal activities happening in our world.”

The Manzos, who launched the ministry earlier this year, plan to use donations from the 5K to open a home for rescued trafficking victims. The ministry seeks to house 14 young women in the Dream Home, which is expected to open on Jan.1.

“It’s not the same as a drug rehab or an abused domestic violence situation,” Mary Ann Manzo told Charisma. “It’s very unique and different.”

The women, rescued by Florida law-enforcement during brothel raids, will be given spiritual rehabilitation through counseling and chapel services, and will be taught a trade. Upon leaving the one-year program, the women will be assisted with job placement.

Mary Ann Manzo says Christians who can’t run for freedom can help victims of sex trafficking through donations and prayer. She notes that some churchgoers also may be unwittingly contributing to the problem by secretly viewing pornography online.

“Unfortunately, statistics are high in Christians being involved in pornography privately online,” Mary Ann Manzo said. “We need to know that anytime we visit a site and click on something to view, whether it’s paid for or unpaid for, we are becoming part of the demand. And the supply will need to be met. As we cut that demand back and become more holy in our style of living before God, we are able to help the problem that way as well.”

What is Real Peace?

Believers around the world look to the Middle East for signs of peace. And the Bible tells us to pray for our enemies, for the peace of Jerusalem and more. Any human attempts to accomplish peace apart from God are futile, a temporary fix to a centuries-old problem. Scripture says, “When a man’s ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him” (Prov. 16:7). There will be no rest without intervention from the Prince of Peace. Click below to watch video.

Ahmadinejad: Obama Must Choose Iran or Israel

✘ Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said President Barack Obama must choose between Israel and Iran. The comment was made Tuesday in Istanbul during an economic address before the 57-nation Organization of the Islamic Conference.

“The support of both Israel and Iran can’t go hand in hand. No change is made unless great choices are made,” said Ahmadinejad. “We will clasp any hand that is extended sincerely toward us, but changes should be made in practice.”