

Today's News in Light of the Bible

PROPHETIC Newsletter

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World events continue to point us to the return of Jesus Christ! Tensions have escalated in the Middle East while Iran searches for ways to destroy Israel. Anti-Semitism is on the rise.

God promised that the world will turn against Christians, as we see in the articles about India, Duke University and Vietnam.

What can we do? We can PRAY! And we can continue to share prophetic Biblical teachings.

In the enclosed *What the Bible Says*, I answer a timely question about our responsibility to human governments.

Our ministry needs support. Would you send your best gift possible to us this month? We would greatly appreciate and immediately put to good use any amount you give!

Until He returns,

Head of Iranian Guard Says Destroying Israel an “Achievable Goal”

Tensions continue to escalate in the Middle East. Major General Hossein Salami of the Iranian elite Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) said that nation’s ability to destroy Israel is no longer a dream, but instead is now an “achievable goal.”



Speaking at a meeting in Tehran for commanders of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps, Salami was quoted as saying, “We have managed to obtain the capacity to destroy the impostor Zionist regime. This sinister regime must be wiped off the map and this is no longer ... a dream [but] it is an achievable goal.” He claimed Iran has been scheming for four decades to obtain the military might to destroy Israel. Now they are close to having the necessary military power to accomplish this goal. The meeting was being held by Iranian officials amid rising tensions between Iran, Israel and the United States.

Last April, President Trump officially designated the IRGC as a terrorist group stating, “This unprecedented step, led by the Department of State, recognizes the reality that Iran is not only a state sponsor of terrorism, but that

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India Forcing Nonprofits to Stop Religious Conversion

India's Home Ministry recently announced new restrictive amendments to the Foreigners Contribution Regulation Act now requiring employees of foreign-funded nonprofit organizations to sign notarized affidavits saying they will not engage in religious conversions as they work within the country.

The new law will require each member to comply or face being prosecuted for communal disharmony. In the past, when the organization was seeking public grants, only the top office-bearer of the nonprofit had to sign this agreement. Christian advocacy groups fear these rules were created to target Christian ministries that serve the poor and marginalized in India.

Two years ago, other regulations cracking down on foreign aid forced Compassion International to stop working in the nation. At the time, they supported 147,000 children in India. According to the *New York Times*, Compassion International was shut down due to suspicion of religious conversion.

Advocacy groups have noted that since the 2014 election of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a member of the Hindu nationalist-aligned Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), there has been an increase in persecution against Christian and other religious minorities groups. Amit Shah is the head of the Home Ministry that passed these new regulations and is also the president of the BJP. The BJP seems to be trying to eliminate or at least lessen the influence of foreign religious

groups within this primarily Hindu nation.

Sajan George, President of the Global Council of Indian Christians, told *AsiaNews*, "These new modifications will reignite

fears that NGOs will be selectively targeted and their FCRA registration canceled and their bank accounts frozen. Every organization whose goals can be interpreted in the broadest sense of sectarian discord, or with accusations of

conversion or as a simple 'violation' will be included."

George also pointed out that in 2016 the BJP tried to revoke the licenses of 96 different agencies based in the Indian state of Jharkhand. Most of these organizations, such as schools, colleges, hospitals and dispensaries, were located in rural and poorer regions and run by Christian missionaries or funded by entities supported by local churches. Open Doors, an organization that tracks and documents Christian persecution, reported, "In the countryside, open signs of following a faith different to Hinduism (or Islam), will stimulate aggression as it will automatically be linked to evangelism or conversion. Private meetings for worship activities are not safe. Throughout the country, local intelligence monitors all Christian activity."

These assaults on Christian groups will have a massive impact on both missionary efforts and humanitarian aid in some of the



Home Minister and President of the Bharatiya Janata Party Amit Shah

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Discrimination at Duke University

The Student Government Senate of Duke University, located in North Carolina, unanimously voted against giving official recognition to the school's Young Life chapter, claiming that its leadership standards were discriminatory.

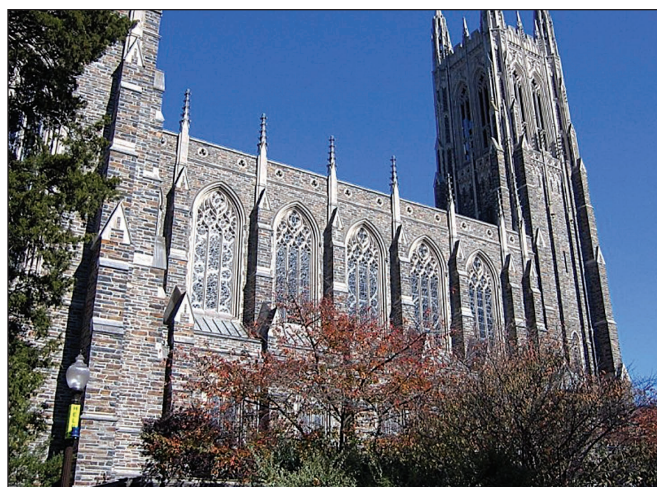
Young Life is a 78-year-old Christian organization with a mission to introduce adolescents to Jesus Christ and help them grow in their faith. It has chapters in middle schools, high schools, and colleges in all 50 states and more than 90 countries around the world.

Young Life was rejected because they have a biblically-based Sexual Misconduct Policy for their leaders. This policy states, "The Scriptures are also clear that sexual activity outside of these creation purposes, either of heterosexual or homosexual nature, is a rejection of the divine creation purpose to reflect the glory of God to the creation.

"With regard to the delicate matter of homosexual lifestyle and practice, in the light of the biblical data regarding creation, Young Life believes such activities to be clearly not in accord with God's creation purpose. We do not in any way wish to exclude persons who engage in sexual misconduct or who practice a homosexual lifestyle from being recipients of ministry of God's grace and mercy as expressed in Jesus Christ. We do, however, believe that such persons are not to serve as staff or volunteers in the mission and work of Young Life."

Because of this ban, Duke's Young Life chapter will not be officially recognized and will not have access to university spaces or funding.

It is ironic that Duke University, from its founding, has ties to the United Methodist Church. And, for the time being, the UMC Book of Discipline does not allow practicing homosexuals to be "certified as candidates,



ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in the United Methodist Church."

It is also confusing because other sanctioned campus ministry groups not only include United Methodists, but also Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox, whose official teachings on marriage and sexuality are the same. Duke also has a Muslim campus group, which presumably affirms Islamic teaching that sex is only for male-female marriage.

While the Duke Student Government Senate has not yet gone after other religious groups, the rejection of Young Life simply because of its adherence to traditional Christian beliefs shows that it will be very difficult for future Christian groups to be allowed on campus. Already established Christian groups, however, may come under fire in the future.

The students are only following what the university itself has propagated. In February, Duke joined other nominally UMC-affiliated schools to denounce the decision by the denomination's governing General Conference to affirm traditional marriage. Across decades, Duke has journeyed from meaningfully Methodist to generically Christian to religiously neutral to increasingly hostile to Christianity.

PRAY: Pray there will be a change in American higher education that will return to its Judeo-Christian roots and turn away from its secular and atheistic tendencies.

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the IRGC actively participates in, finances, and promotes terrorism as a tool of statecraft.”

These comments from Salami come just days after Abbas Nilforoushan, the Deputy Commander of Operations of the IRGC, threatened that if Israel attacks Iran, it will have to “collect bits and pieces of Tel Aviv from the Mediterranean Sea.”

Nilforoushan warned Israel and her allies that conquering Iran would not be easy, “If the enemies could have started a war against Iran, they would have done it.” He added that geography plays to Iran’s favor, “We are not a small



country that could be conquered in one step. If all the Western, Arab and Israeli coalitions’ forces enter our country, Iran’s geography will defeat them before they can do anything.”

He also described Iran’s “deep and long-range missile assault capabilities” and said they would be able to make them operational quickly if attacked.

Iran has been edgy ever since a drone and missile strikes on Saudi Arabia’s oil industry was attributed to the United States. Others claim this attack was instead backed by Houthi rebels from Yemen. Much of the increase in tension between Iran, Israel and the United States stems back to President Trump pulling

the US out of the Iran Nuclear Deal.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was also a major critic of the deal. In September, Netanyahu exposed the existence of a secret nuclear facility in Central Iran in which he said the regime had conducted experiments in the pursuit of nuclear weapons. He claimed that once Iran learned Israel found out about the facility, Iran destroyed it.

This is not the first time high-ranking Iranian officials have either threatened or called for the destruction of Israel. Indeed, it happens quite regularly. Iran sees Israel, with

United States backing, as its major deterrent in the Middle East and has plotted to destroy them for decades. They have also not been pleased with Israel’s intervention in Syria, where thousands of Iranian-proxy Hezbollah fighters have backed Syrian President Bashar Assad since 2011. Israel sees the terrorist group Hezbollah as a direct threat to their existence. Armed with rockets and missiles, Hezbollah has an arsenal larger than those of many small nations.

This tension has created a precarious situation in the Middle East, with war looming at the moment of any misstep on either side.

— PNL

PRAY: Pray for the protection of Israel and her people. Pray for the United States to continue to stand by Israel. And pray for peace in the Middle East and for tensions in the region to deescalate.

Church-Sanctioned Anti-Semitism

This summer, Father Vladimir Tobin received a letter from Archbishop Irénée of the Archdiocese of Canada commanding him to retire from the Eastern Orthodox denomination because of a “Jewish twist in your ministry.”

Father Tobin led St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Church in Halifax, Nova Scotia. He says he was forced to retire because he gave sermons honoring the Jewish roots of Christianity and encouraged his congregation to pray for Israel.



In an interview with the *Canadian Jewish News*, the 77-year-old religious leader said, “I wrote a piece for publication, but was told by my superiors that it was ‘too Jewish.’ That increased my determination that Christianity grew from Judaism.”

Tobin’s parish council wrote a letter opposing his forced retirement and the initial reaction was that he would be reinstated. Ultimately, the Orthodox Church in America decided that he would be placed on retirement after all.

He was not happy about forced retirement and abandoning his congregation. He said, “I don’t feel right deserting the congregation like this. I had planned to retire in a year or so, by my 78th birthday, but obviously wanted to retire on my own terms. I would have been sad. The congregation would have been sad, but everyone would have understood. This way is not the best thing.”

This punishment has not gone unnoticed by various religious freedom groups. Johnnie

Moore, a commissioner for the United States Commission for International Religious Freedom, told the *Christian Post* in an email, “To be clear, this is church-sanctioned anti-Semitism and they ought to be absolutely ashamed of themselves.”

Yael Eckstein, president of the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews, praised the Tobin for being “courageous.” He said, “In case you’ve ever wondered whether the work of the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews is important,

this is exhibit A... Anti-Israel bigotry is unfortunately still alive and well in certain far corners of Christianity. The bridge between Christians and Jews that we have been building for thirty years is nearly built — mainly, because of hundreds of millions of evangelicals — but there is still more work to do.”

The Apostle Paul, himself a Messianic Jew, held out hope for the future of the Jewish people. In Romans 11:1-2, Paul stated, “I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew.” We must care for the salvation and protection of the Jewish people. “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee” (Psalm 122:6). Based on promises found in the Bible, God is not done with the Jewish people or Israel. Pastors or priests should never have to fear for their jobs because they pray for and support that nation.— PNL

PRAY: Pray the rise in Anti-Semitism that has continued to spread, even in Christianity, will be pushed back and subside in our culture.

Christian Girl Beaten into Coma

A family in northern Vietnam was recently driven from their home, beaten, dragged over rocks and left at the city gates because of their conversion to Christianity. Because of this attack, their six-year-old daughter was in a coma for a month. While the young girl has regained consciousness, she has severe memory loss and still cannot even recognize her own parents. Other members of the family were also taken to the hospital and treated for various injuries. Most were released after three days.

The family's conversion to Christianity went against the village practice of worshiping their ancestors. This angered locals who mocked and beat them, tied them with ropes and dragged them over the rocks. They were then left at the village gate as both a punishment for leaving their religion and a warning to any others that

might want to convert to Christianity.

After their pastor directly intervened and talked to the authorities, the family was allowed to return to their home. However, they still are under threat from villagers who continue to curse them and mock them for their faith.

Persecution should not come as a surprise for Christians. Jesus himself warned that persecution would come, as the darkness of a fallen world hates the light. However,

He also said that those who are persecuted for their faith would be blessed. In Matthew 5:11, Jesus stated, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake." We need to be prepared for persecution, but we also need to pray for those throughout the world whose lives are literally in danger every day because of their faith in Christ.— *PNL*



PRAY: Pray those who face persecution around the world will continue to be strong in their stand for the Gospel. Pray for their protection in face of danger.

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poorer sections of India. James 1:27 states, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

Christians for centuries have taken these commands seriously to help the poor and needy. While other religious groups may look

down on the destitute, Christian groups in India serve orphans, widows and the homeless by building orphanages, feeding centers, schools and hospitals.

The Indian government is doing their own people a massive disservice by blocking these groups in an effort to try to limit the influence of Christianity in their region.— *PNL*

PRAY: Pray these policies will be reversed and the Christian mission movement in India will be able to return to full strength.