Indian PM defends religious freedom

The Indian Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has been known in the past for persecuting Christians and other minority religions in the predominantly Hindu nation. However, in the political campaign leading up to his election, Prime Minister Narendra Modi pledged that his government would not discriminate on the basis of faith. Nevertheless, prejudicial statements by some leading members of the BJP led his opponents to accuse Modi of making the promise simply as a ploy to win the election.

In an interview with the news agency United News of India, Modi acknowledged that while “some unfortunate statements have been made, which were totally uncalled for, our constitution guarantees religious freedom to every citizen and that is not negotiable.”—Times of India

A feather in his cap

The Pit River Native American tribe in Northern California considers eagle feathers to be sacred and symbolic of a significant achievement. Because of this, Christian
Titman, a senior at a Clovis, California, high school wanted to wear a feather in his hair during his graduation ceremony this past June and attach it to his cap for the traditional tassel turn. However, when he asked the school’s administration for permission, they refused. So Titman sued. His attorneys argued that the district’s refusal violated Titman’s freedoms of expression and religion that are stipulated in California’s constitution. The judge in the case suggested that Titman and the school district try to negotiate a settlement, and the school district agreed to let him wear the feather. —Associated Press

Top 15 Super foods for People Over 50

This headline recently appeared on the AARP website. What makes the story notable is that 14 of the top 15 super foods were plant based! Fifty years ago we could hardly have guessed that society would warm to the vegetarian lifestyle but that is exactly what is happening.

Why not leverage the moment and share this amazing lifestyle message with friends and neighbors? This Signs Special, Why Be a Vegetarian will help people improve their health and feel good about life!

Try these sharing ideas:

- Fairs
- Bible Study Interests
- New Believers
- Pastor’s Class
- Community Services
- Evangelistic Meetings
- Food Baskets
- Neighbors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-9</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>100-999</td>
<td>$.39/ea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000 plus</td>
<td>$.25/ea</td>
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</table>
Israeli soldier’s ham sandwich

Jews consider all pork products to be unclean and therefore unfit for human consumption. That’s why the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) serves only kosher meat to its soldiers. One day an unnamed American Jewish soldier who lives in Israel brought a ham sandwich onto his army base that his grandmother had made. The military authorities sentenced him to 11 days in a military prison, which prompted a media frenzy. The IDF reduced the soldier’s sentence to confinement on the base and later dropped all charges. In an unusual apology, an IDF spokesman said, “We were wrong. . . . There is room for everyone in the IDF.” — Religion News Service

Americans on the nation’s moral values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Getting worse</th>
<th>Getting better</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gallup’s Values and Beliefs poll conducted each May since 2002

U.S. Muslim community threatened

About 150 miles northwest of New York City lies a Muslim community called Holy Islamberg, population 200. The community was formed by African American
Muslims who followed the instructions of their Pakistani cleric that they should leave large cities and establish religious communities out in the country. Everything was peaceful for the next 30 years—until recently, when a man from Tennessee named Robert Doggart started organizing a militia to attack Islamberg. Federal authorities learned of the plot and began wiretapping his phone calls and sending disguised FBI informants to meet with him. When confronted by the evidence this past May, Doggart pled guilty to plotting an attack on Islamberg.—Reuters

**Giant cross rises in Pakistan**

Pakistani businessman Parvez Henry Gill said that God came to him one night in a dream and told him to find a way to relieve Christians in the country from the fear of persecution. He wasn’t sure how to fulfill God’s instruction till one morning he woke up with the distinct impression he should build a giant cross that would be higher than any other on earth. Today the cross, which is 140 feet tall and 42 feet wide, is nearing completion. It’s located at the entrance to a 200-year-old Christian cemetery in the center of Karachi, the largest city in Pakistan. Gill is aware that the Muslim community will object to the cross and may try to tear it down, but it has a 20-foot underground base and is made from tons of iron, steel, and cement.—Christian Post

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**A Time to Forgive**

It’s more than just the most powerful, moving story you’ll read this year; it is a journey to forgiveness. The book is titled, *A Time to Forgive*, and it chronicles Darold and Barbara Bigger’s journey to forgiveness in the wake of their daughter’s murder.

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As Quoted

“Christians should be gracious in the midst of persecution, but at the same time we have a right to submit a legal defense.”

—Pastor Rob Hughes, a British street preacher who was accused of making homophobic statements. He was arrested, but he had recorded his sidewalk speech, which did not mention homosexuality. He sued and was awarded $3,800 in an out-of-court settlement.
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