



August 8, 2018

CALIFORNIA WILDFIRES

Please continue to pray for all those who are caught in these horrific firestorms in California. Download our free one page prayer guide: [Praying God's Word in Times of Crisis](#).

Call on Me in the day of trouble; I will rescue you, and you shall honor and glorify Me. (Ps 50:15 AMP)

VIDEO: <http://www.cbn.com/tv/5818746432001>

Two wildfires blazing in California, known as the Mendocino Complex fire, became the largest recorded in state history on Monday, crossing a grim milestone.

The fire, in Colusa, Lake and Mendocino counties, has killed two people and burned almost 283,800 acres as of Monday. It has destroyed at least 143 structures, including 75 homes, according to Cal Fire officials. More than 9,000 structures remain under threat.

The Mendocino complex fires, which encompass an area the size of Los Angeles, surpassed the Thomas wildfire in Ventura and Santa Barbara counties, which burned 281,893 acres last year.

The Northern California fires are burning a few miles apart and have been ablaze since July 27, officials said.

Hotter weather attributed to climate change is drying out vegetation, creating more intense fires that spread quickly from rural areas to city subdivisions, climate and fire experts say. But they also blame cities and towns that are expanding housing into previously undeveloped areas....

Crews made progress over the weekend against one of the two Mendocino Complex fires with help from water-dropping aircraft, Cal Fire operations chief Charlie Blankenheim said online.

The other fire, however, is growing after spreading into the Mendocino National Forest.

The complex of fires has been less destructive to property than some of the other wildfires in the state because it is mostly raging in remote areas. New evacuations were ordered over the weekend, however,

as the flames spread throughout the area. (Excerpts from Nicole Darrah article on [Fox News](#) - Associated Press contributed to this report.)

PRAY ABOUT IRAN

Thank God for the firm actions the U.S. has taken with Iran. Pray for political and religious freedom for the people of Iran and for the U.S. to pursue wise and effective policies in dealing with Iran.

Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. (Ps 2:10-11)

VIDEO: In May, a small group of IFA intercessors joined IFA staff for the National Day of Prayer and a celebration event at the Embassy of Israel in Washington, DC. We were very impressed with Ambassador Ron Dermer's succinct explanation of what was wrong with the Iran Nuclear Deal. Click [HERE](#) to watch him explain.

President Trump made clear when he ended United States participation in the JCPOA (Iran Nuclear Deal) that his Administration would be reimposing tough sanctions on the Iranian regime.

On August 7, sanctions will be reimposed on:

- The purchase or acquisition of United States bank notes by the Government of Iran
 - Iran's trade in gold and other precious metals.
 - Graphite, aluminum, steel, coal, and software used in industrial processes.
 - Transactions related to the Iranian rial.
 - Activities relating to Iran's issuance of sovereign debt
 - Iran's automotive sector.
 - The remaining sanctions will be reimposed on November 5, including sanctions on:
 - Iran's port operators and energy, shipping, and shipbuilding sectors.
 - Iran's petroleum-related transactions.
 - Transactions by foreign financial institutions with the Central Bank of Iran.
- (WhiteHouse.gov)

Iranian Christians Testify About Being Imprisoned for Christ: Two Iranian Christians are pleading with the world to hear the cries of the Iranian people as they recounted their own ordeal of being imprisoned for their faith.

In remarks before hundreds gathered at a plenary session at the State Department for the Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom, Maryam Rostampour and Marziyeh Amirzadeh explained how Jesus Christ sustained them and miraculously intervened when they were jailed. The women were born into Muslim families who became Christians as young adults; the two friends met in Turkey while studying theology in 2005.

The two women were arrested in 2009 by the Iranian regime because of their Christian faith and spent 259 days in one of the nation's most notorious prisons. They were subjected to daily interrogations and mental torture, were said to have committed various offenses — apostasy, blasphemy, promoting Christianity in Iran — and were sentenced to execution by hanging. During their ordeal, Iranian officials

also routinely threatened their lives and the lives of their families in order to pressure them to recant their faith, but they refused.

"Since Islam is the only official religion in Iran, government authorities forbid other religious minorities from practicing their faith," Amirzadeh said, noting that persecution against Christians has been rising in recent years.

Men and women who leave Islam for the Christian faith are deemed "infidels" and "dirty," she continued, and such individuals often face the death penalty and various kinds of torture....

"Hundreds of Christians have been arrested by Iranian authorities and charged with disrupting national security for being a Christian and participating in home churches, receiving prison sentences of 2 to 10 years," Rostampour explained Wednesday.

Despite these pressures, Christianity is spreading in Iran, she continued, and the majority of Iranians are tired of their current government as they regard it as corrupt and oppressive.

"Our hope and prayer for our country is that one day Iran will be a free country," she said to applause, "ruled by a democratic government."

"We hope for a day when all religious minorities can meet together in peace without having the fear of getting harassed, arrested, tortured or killed by the government."... (Excerpts from Brandon Showalter's article on [Christian Post](#))

U.S. JUDGE RULES AGAINST TRUMP POLICY RESTRICTING TRANSGENDER TROOPS

Pray for our military and our nation. President Trump's administration has issued several executive orders that promote biblical values. Pray through them with our prayer guide—download [HERE](#).

Troubled about the movement in our culture away from biblical sexual values? Pray through the issues with our prayer guide on the subject. Download [HERE](#).

But since sexual immorality is occurring, each man should have sexual relations with his own wife, and each woman with her own husband. (1 Cor 7:2)

A U.S. court on Monday ruled the Trump administration could not enforce an updated policy barring certain transgender people from serving in the U.S. military, becoming the second court in the country to rule against the government since it unveiled the policy in March.

President Donald Trump announced on March 23 that he would endorse a plan by Defense Secretary Jim Mattis to restrict the military service of transgender people who experience a condition called gender dysphoria. The policy replaced an outright ban on transgender service members that Trump announced last year on Twitter, citing concern over military focus and medical costs.

U.S. District Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly in Washington denied a request by the administration to lift an injunction she had issued against Trump's original ban....

The administration argued that the new policy, which also bars anyone who requires or has undergone gender transition, was no longer a categorical ban.

Kollar-Kotelly disagreed. The new policy effectively implements the original ban “by targeting proxies of transgender status, such as ‘gender dysphoria’ and ‘gender transition,’ and by requiring all service members to serve ‘in their biological sex,’” she wrote in Monday’s ruling.

The U.S. Department of Justice declined to comment....

Monday’s ruling came in a lawsuit filed last August by several aspiring service troops and current members of the U.S. Army, Air Force and Coast Guard. Last October, Kollar-Kotelly ruled that the original ban likely violated the U.S. Constitution’s guarantee of equal protection under the law....

Trump’s ban reversed Democratic former President Barack Obama’s policy of allowing transgender troops to serve openly and receive medical care to transition genders....

The new Trump policy exempts those diagnosed with gender dysphoria during the Obama policy, allowing them to remain in the military and serve according to their gender identity. (Excerpts from Andrew Chung's article in [Reuters](#))

COACH ORDERED TO STOP PRAYING; FIRING UPHELD

Please pray that this court decision will be overturned and that religious freedom will be restored.

Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment. (John 7:24)

"WE'LL FIGHT TO THE SUPREME COURT"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2&v=-ek0ccQ0e2c

Attorneys for First Liberty Institute and Kirkland & Ellis LLP filed a petition for writ of certiorari with the Supreme Court of the United States on behalf of former high school football coach Joe Kennedy, asking the nine Justices to reverse a lower court decision that allowed a school district to fire him because fans and students could see him take a knee in silent prayer after football games.

“Banning all coaches from praying just because they can be seen is wrong and contradicts the Constitution,” said Kelly Shackelford, President and CEO of First Liberty. “We must protect the right of every American to engage in private religious expression, including praying in public, without fear of getting fired.”

Paul Clement, former U.S. Solicitor General, partner at Kirkland & Ellis LLP and First Liberty network attorney said “We hope the Supreme Court will review the Ninth Circuit’s decision. This is an important case that could determine whether teachers and coaches lose their First Amendment rights at the schoolhouse gates.”

A copy of the petition can be found [here](#).

Case History

Kennedy was head coach for the Bremerton High School junior varsity football team and an assistant coach for the varsity team. Before he even coached his first game, this Marine Corps veteran turned

football coach made a commitment to God that he would give thanks after every game—win or lose—for the opportunity to be a football coach and for his players.

So after his very first football game in 2008, Coach Kennedy waited until the players cleared the field, then took a knee and silently thanked God for his players. Coach Kennedy continued doing this after every game for seven years and no students, coaches or parents ever complained about it. In fact, it was a compliment that started the problems.

The School District Bans Prayer

After receiving a compliment from a school administrator about how they were grateful for Coach Kennedy's leadership and great example for the team through his prayers, Bremerton High School responded with a demand letter to the coach threatening his fundamental right to free speech and religious exercise. The Bremerton School District superintendent sent Kennedy an official letter from the school district, telling him that he must stop praying after the games....

First Liberty Legal Action

Coach Kennedy filed a charge of religious discrimination with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) against Bremerton School District. In response to Coach Kennedy's EEOC complaint, the U.S. Department of Justice issued a right-to-sue letter to Coach Kennedy and First Liberty Institute filed a lawsuit against Bremerton School District.

A federal district court dismissed the lawsuit and First Liberty filed an appeal with the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

Ninth Circuit Approves of Coach Kennedy's Termination

The Ninth Circuit issued a ruling against Coach Kennedy. The court argued that Coach Kennedy's prayers were not protected by the Constitution because, according to the Ninth Circuit, Coach Kennedy was praying as a public employee rather than in his private, personal capacity.... The case is on appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court. (Excerpted from [First Liberty](#).)