

CRAWFORD  
BROADCASTING  
COMPANY



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Donald B. Crawford, President

### **THE STAND** **FAITH AND FREEDOM**

There is nothing, NOTHING like freedom. To be free is to be fully human and conversely, not to be free is not to be human. To be free to believe whatever one wishes is perhaps the most fundamental human right. To believe and to be a person of faith is a fundamental constitutional right for every American. NO law can be made in this great country which in any way abridges the freedom of religion.

And then there is Afghanistan. More than 99% of its 28 million people are Muslim and most of the remaining 1% are Hindu and only a very small part of that remaining 1% are Christian. Muslims predominate.

And so do their laws. The Islamic laws in Afghanistan make it a crime to convert from Islam to any other religion, including and especially Christianity. Having once been Muslim and forsaking the faith for another is not only against the law, but regarded by Muslims as an attack on Islam. Once a Muslim, always a Muslim, so says the law. The Constitution of Afghanistan is based on Shariah law which is interpreted to require that any Muslim who rejects Islam be sentenced to death! Not reprimanded or ostracized, or punished in any low level civil or criminal way. But, conversion to another faith and the rejection of Islam is an act to be punished by DEATH!

Abdul Rahman, 41 years of age, was arrested recently when his family accused him of forsaking Islam and converting to Christianity. Rahman admits the conversion and is proud of his faith and belief. He admitted he was Christian and “would always remain one.” So, a conservative Muslim prosecutor offered to drop all charges if Rahman would renounce the Christian faith and return to Islam. When he refused, the prosecutor brought charges and the trial began. The prosecutor stated:

“We are Muslims and becoming a Christian is against our laws. He (Rahman) must get the death penalty.”

So, a human being in search of faith becomes a Christian and the very act of becoming a Christian will in Shariah-driven Afghanistan earn this believer the death penalty. It seems incredible that the world would not rise up in horror and protest, and even more importantly, recognize how extreme Islam can be and how determined the extremists are to preserve the faith and punish non-believers. Yet, persecution of Christians happens in so many countries of this

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world. A man was arrested and sentenced to a significant jail term for carrying the Judeo-Christian Bible. Merely carrying the Bible! It is extremely dangerous to be Christian in Iran, or Iraq and of course Syria. Or Indonesia, or anywhere in the world where Muslims rule or are otherwise in the majority. China has meted out some significant persecutions of Christians and has officially done its best to limit or even end the belief and practice of Christianity. It seems dangerous indeed to be Christian in this 21<sup>st</sup> century, or in many places in this world, something other than MUSLIM! We hear constantly about moderate Islam and moderate right-thinking Muslim believers. There are undoubtedly many, perhaps millions, but where is their voice? Where is their voice of protest in the face of such extremism and religious persecution? How can so-called moderate Muslims sit back and allow Islam to be governed by Shariah law with such extreme potentiality? Violence and death should be unacceptable to any right-thinking human being. It is a contradiction in terms, an oxymoron to justify or engage in a thing called a holy war. No war is holy, and every act of war, no matter the country comes with incredible and dire human consequences. Whether killing one human being with a death sentence, or thousands in a bombing or other act of war, it is the ultimate commandment ignored and defiled:

THOU SHALT NOT KILL!

Especially for believing in the tenets and doctrine of one faith as opposed to another. The hunt for faith is an essential part of American life, rooted deep in the basic rights of man, and something we take for granted. We can believe or not at any time, and change our minds at any time without fear of consequence. We can embrace Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism or Islam with all our heart, or not at all. In America, we can convert from Islam to Christianity, or from Christianity to Islam without the slightest fear of consequence. And, that is RIGHT! It is not right to put a man to death because he converts from one religion to another. That is simply not right and the worldwide community of human beings should rise up and protest. For, if that barbaric practice exists in Afghanistan, or any other part of the world, it may very well someday come to America in time, which would be the very end of our free society. Those who govern in our country are forbidden by our Constitution from making any law which abridges freedom of religion. No law can be made of any kind which in any way infringes upon the inalienable right of men and women to believe as they will.

We should hope the world follows the trial of Abdul Rahman and if he is convicted and sentenced to death, the whole world should protest. The whole world should do anything possible to prevent any harm much less execution of this man of faith. It is better, we say, that 99 guilty men go free rather than one innocent man be punished. Rahman is innocent by any other law other than Shariah and that man should not be prosecuted for his beliefs, much less punished, and much, much less put to death. Perhaps there was a message long ago from Jesus of Nazareth to Rahman that the way of Christianity is the way of the cross. Rahman has indicated that he will follow the way of the cross for he will not renounce his Christian faith. What incredible courage and conviction, and I wonder how we would react as Americans if we were in that situation. One could renounce and save a life here and now, but lose a life hereafter. That seems an unworthy tradeoff. But it is done every day by so many, in little ways or large. It seems all too easy to compromise the faith. Whatever you believe, I trust you will more than ever

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protect your right to that belief and perhaps be ready, like Abdul Rahman, to pay the ultimate price for what you practice and truly believe.

YOUR LIFE!

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