

Sharp Concepts

Brilliant Publicity, Media Relations & Marketing Solutions

Contact:
Anne Sharp
Sharp Concepts
P: 818-994-2309
C: 310-600-9247

Email: info@annesharp.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Muslim Convert Preaches Politics, Predicts Democracy in Iran

Former Iranian Shiite Muslim Donald Fareed, now an evangelical Christian pastor and head of Persian Ministries International, has preached a radical religious and political message to millions of Muslims over satellite television in the face of religious persecution. He predicts that Iran, not Iraq, will undergo regime change and become the first democracy in the Middle East, and urges America to support the Iranian pro-democracy movement.

San Jose, CA - December 30, 2004—Donald Fareed, a former Iranian Shiite Muslim and founder of the San Jose-based Persian Ministries International (PMI) (www.PersianMinistries.org), today announced his prediction that Iran, not Iraq, will undergo regime change to become the first democracy in the Middle East within just a few years.

In the face of political and religious persecution that includes the torture and martyrdom of associates, and being blacklisted by the Iranian government, Fareed, now a U.S. citizen and evangelical Christian pastor, has preached a radical, combined message of religion and politics. For years, his non-profit organization Persian Ministries International (PMI) has had a weekly series of television programs through which he reaches up to 30 million Farsi-speaking Muslim viewers not only with the message of the Christian gospel, but also with the message of democracy, encouraging them to press the fundamentalist Iranian regime for religious freedom and referendum using Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s principles of civil disobedience and non-violent, passive resistance.

Fareed's programs broadcast into the heart of the "10-40 window" around the Persian Gulf in Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and the Southern part of Iraq where nearly 90 million Farsi-speaking Muslims live. His unique, combined spiritual and political message has attracted many to hear the Christian gospel in the context of what is relevant to their struggles with Islam, particularly the fundamentalist version.

"The situation in Iraq has led many Americans to believe that having democracy in the Middle East is impossible," says Fareed. "But Iran is ready for democracy, and America needs to know that." In claiming Iran is ripe for regime change, Fareed points to its predominantly pro-West, secular population, which is fed up with Islamic fundamentalism. He also points to 70 percent of Iran's population, which consists of young intellectuals under age 30 and women who have suffered under fundamentalist Islamic law, with whom his message is especially resonating.

Recently, Iran has undergone many internal changes. The constitution is being re-written by pro-democracy groups, people are protesting for regime change through civil disobedience, and there is a huge movement for referendum. PMI is also planting home churches inside Iran, where one of the largest house church movements in the Islamic world is growing among students, according to a December 4 issue of Voice of the Martyrs.

"With the positive response we are getting, and growth of home churches in Iran, we are making significant strides in the Muslim world. I believe we will have one million Muslim converts in Iran by the end of 2007, and that Iran will be a model of democracy in the Middle East in just a few years," Fareed says confidently.

Fareed is also convinced that the defeat of Islamic fundamentalism as a premise for government in Iran will greatly contribute to the defeat of Islamic fundamentalism everywhere, but insists that time is of the essence. "The majority of Iranians are pro-democracy, and claim their only hope is

President Bush. As Americans, we need to encourage our government to actively support the Iranians," urges Fareed. "If America supports the pro-democracy movement in Iran, it will lead to the downfall of the current Iranian regime, and that will send shockwaves throughout the entire Muslim world. It will be a huge wakeup call that Islam, particularly the fundamentalist version, isn't working," he says enthusiastically.

Although Fareed has been involved in the evangelism of Muslims since he converted to Christianity 14 years ago, he only felt compelled to add a political agenda to his message after the martyrdom by the Iranian government of a close associate, the Bishop of the Assemblies of God Church in Iran. Fear of meeting the same fate as a Muslim apostate kept him from preaching politics actively for years, but a later diagnosis with an incurable muscular disease made him realize he had nothing to lose.

Facing certain death, Fareed did not hesitate to confront the Islamic government of Iran with their atrocities, encourage Iranians to push for religious freedom and referendum, and talk about his religious conversion from Islam to Christianity. As a result of his courageous broadcasts, millions of Muslims around the world have heard the Christian gospel, and thousands have converted to Christianity, and the pro-democracy movement in Iran has been encouraged.

Preaching against the Islamic-controlled Iranian government put Fareed in a precarious position, however. His first convert in Iran was caught by the Iranian secret service and tortured. Once released, there were two attempts on his life, forcing him to flee the country. Soon the Iranian government blacklisted Fareed, and Iran National TV aired his photograph, accusing him of "anti-Islamic activities with the intent to topple the government of Iran." "Due to several incidents at one point, I told my board of directors, 'I think my time is up,'" recalls Fareed.

Iran has made tremendous political strides within a short time, and Fareed's health has improved as well, yet he continues to deal with the inherent risk of his activities as well as chronic pain. Each day brings new battles. Fareed found himself in the middle of a media controversy a few weeks ago after being invited to preach a message entitled, "[Why I Am Not a Muslim](#)" at the Sunnyvale Nazarene Church in Sunnyvale, CA. Some community members considered the message "offensive," and [AP News](#) picked up the story, as did the network affiliates in the San Francisco Bay area.

About Persian Ministries International (PMI)

Persian Ministries International (PMI) is an evangelistic non-profit Christian organization with a vision of reaching over 100 million Persian-speaking Muslims for Christ worldwide, and encouraging Muslims around the world to press their governments for religious freedom and democracy. PMI is also encouraging Muslim-Christian dialog, working to bring the Church to an awareness of the needs and opportunities for ministering to Muslim people in the U.S. and around the world, and challenging and equipping the Church to love Muslims and reach them for Jesus Christ. For more information, please visit www.PersianMinistries.org.



Pastor Fared (middle) as a recent TV guest speaking about Muslim-Christian dialog on “Monday Night LIVE,” one of the most popular secular Muslim satellite television shows that reaches million of Muslims in the Persian Gulf and the rest of the world. (December 12, 2004)



“Why I am Not a Muslim” – the “offensive” church sign. AP - Nov 27 4:18 PM.
Read the Associated Press story at <http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/news/archive/2004/11/27/state1513EST0037.DTL>