

NEWSWATCH

3 October 2008

AN ESSENTIAL NEWS DIGEST FOR BUSY CHURCH LEADERS

Can't see this email? View an online version at www.biblesociety.org.uk/latestnewswatch To make sure emails from Bible Society always arrive in your inbox and are not treated as junk mail, please add newswatch@biblesociety.org.uk to your email address book.

THIS WEEK IN THE WORLD PRESS:

- NORTH-WEST BACKS 'SOCIAL GLUE' OF CHURCHES
- BUSINESSES MOVE TO BE 'FAITH-FRIENDLY'
- TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR BLOGGERS

THIS WEEK IN THE CHURCH PRESS:

- THERE WILL BE TROUBLE AHEAD
- WELCOME FOR NEW PROSTITUTION RULES
- KELLY ATTACKS WESTMINSTER SECULARISM
- SALVATION ARMY IN THE SOUP

CULTURE WATCH:

- NATIVITY GRANDSTAND

New reader? To subscribe to Newswatch visit <http://www.biblesociety.org.uk/newswatch>

THIS WEEK IN THE NATIONAL PRESS:

NORTH-WEST BACKS 'SOCIAL GLUE' OF CHURCHES

Churches play a vital part as 'social glue' in community life, a survey for the North West Regional Development Agency (NWRDA) has shown. In recognition of this, the Agency is to give £300,000 to a charity campaign to raise millions of pounds for churches who need to repair or adapt their buildings. 'The picture that has emerged is one of faith communities often playing a multi-dimensional role in their neighbourhoods that touches people far beyond their own numbers,' the research found. NWRDA chairman Brian Gray said that support for churches was important for communities to flourish and develop as tourist destinations.

Source: Sunday Telegraph (28/9)

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/3089397/Churches-offered-millions-of-pounds-in-new-grants-for-repairs-and-adapting-buildings.html> Back to top

BUSINESSES MOVE TO BE 'FAITH-FRIENDLY'

Recent legislation combined with an eagerness to integrate faith and work among a diverse religious work force are changing practices in the workplace, The Times reports. Since legislation on religious discrimination was introduced in 2003, 600 cases of workplace discrimination have put pressure on employers to become more faith-friendly. Companies are also taking positive steps to recognise employees' beliefs, festivals, diets and wish to network with other believers. A third of companies are developing policies on managing religious beliefs in the workplace and an Employers Forum on Belief allows companies to share best practice. Many large companies, such as accountancy firm PricewaterhouseCoopers, allow Christian, Muslim, Jewish and other faith groups to organise lunchtime activities.

Source: The Times (26/9)

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/global/article4833476.ece>

TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR BLOGGERS

Christian blogs are particularly prone to hate-filled comments, The Times claims. The paper reports that church leaders have now responded to the issue by drawing up ten rules for bloggers based on the biblical Ten Commandments. The guidelines admonish bloggers to apply the principles of integrity, purity, respect and neighbourly love as laid down in the Decalogue to the world of blogging. Krish Kandiah, executive director of Churches in Mission, described the commandments, which were formulated at a 'Godblogs' conference in Kennington, southeast London, as 'virtual rather than set in stone'. The ten rules were 'offered to the blogging community as a way to link the Ten Commandments with the art of blogging', he explained.

Source: The Times (27/9)

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/faith/article4833275.ece> Back to top

THIS WEEK IN THE CHURCH PRESS:

THERE WILL BE TROUBLE AHEAD

Church finance experts have warned that the squeeze on consumer pockets will intensify next year. Credit Action director, Chris Tapp, said 'rising utility bills, unemployment and inflation ... are going to make next year worse than this'. And James Bevan, chief investment officer at CCLA, a body responsible for £3 billion of Church of England investments, said consumers who had borrowed beyond their means would curb their spending, accelerating economic decline and increasing unemployment. Mr Bevan thought that churches should take a long view of their investments, however, as he thought the market is bottoming out. A Church of England Commissioner said that Anglican dioceses were not likely to go bust but some would need to draw increasingly on their reserves.

Sources: Church of England Newspaper (3/10); Church Times (3/10)

<http://www.churchtimes.co.uk/content.asp?id=64319>

WELCOME FOR NEW PROSTITUTION RULES

New government rules intended to curb the exploitation of women trafficked into prostitution have won support from the Methodist Church. Last week Home Secretary Jacquie Smith announced plans to make it illegal to pay, or offer to pay, for sex in cases where the prostitute has been forced into the role and is being 'controlled for another person's gain'. The Government hopes that criminalising the purchase of sex in such cases will increase protection for women who have been groomed or trafficked into prostitution, The Methodist Recorder reports. Margaret Sawyer, the project officer for Methodist body Women's Network said, 'It is great to hear that a serious attempt will now be made to control the demand for buying sex.'

Source: Methodist Recorder (3/10)

<http://www.methodistrecorder.co.uk/mrhlines.htm>

KELLY ATTACKS WESTMINSTER SECULARISM

Ruth Kelly, who announced her resignation from the Cabinet last week, has bemoaned the way politicians with a faith are seen at Parliament. 'It is difficult to be a Christian in politics these days,' she said. 'The public debate has become more secular and believers are portrayed as a bit odd.' This 'doesn't reflect the reality in communities where churchgoing and belief is considered normal,' she added. The Catholic Herald noted that Miss Kelly originally resigned in May when her opposition to the Human Fertilisation and Embryology (HFE) Bill put her at odds with the Prime Minister. However, Mr Brown had asked her to wait until the next Cabinet reshuffle. Parliament is expected to debate this Bill further this month and the Archbishop of Cardiff, Most Revd Peter Smith, urged its opponents to keep writing to their MPs 'who are very often influenced by the size of their postbag'.

Sources: Catholic Herald (3/10); The Universe (5/10)

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/articles/a0000384.shtml>

http://www.totalcatholic.com/tc/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=285:mp-ruth-kelly-to-stand-down-at-next-election&catid=14:uk-and-ireland&Itemid=34

SALVATION ARMY IN THE SOUP

A partnership between the Salvation Army and soup manufacturer the New Covent Garden Food Co is expected to raise £10,000 for homeless and vulnerable people this winter. The soup company's December Soup of the Month will carry the Salvation Army red shield and will support the Army's network of resettlement centres. In the run up to December, the public is being invited to download recipes and serve soup to their neighbours as part of a Soup Kitchen Challenge.

Source: Baptist Times (2/10)

CULTURE WATCH:

NATIVITY GRANDSTAND

The Gospel writers are replaced by sports commentators in this year's Christmas radio campaign developed by the Church Advertising Network (CAN). One of the two commercial radio adverts casts the holy family as players in a football match where Gabriel gives a 'nice pass' to Mary before the 'innkeeper gets in the way'. The other tells the events with a breathless horse race commentator, thundering hooves and the characters referred to as participants in the 'Christmas Day Stakes'. The ads are an attempt 'to engage in a humorous way' with the youth audiences who listen to commercial radio, explains Francis Goodwin, CAN director. The aim is to 'encourage them to go to church to hear the Christmas story in full'. The agency is also inviting entries for the best re-telling of the Christmas story in a 30-second video.

Source: Daily Telegraph (2/10)

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstoppers/religion/3117091/Church-group-tells-the-Christmas-story-in-the-style-of-a-horse-race.html>

A printer-friendly version of this week's Newswatch is available at <http://www.biblesociety.org.uk/newswatch.pdf>

Bible Society is an advocate for the Bible in contemporary cultures, resourcing and influencing those who shape society – making the voice of the Bible heard.

YOUR THOUGHTS

We would be delighted to hear any comments or suggestions you may have to improve this Newswatch service. Simply click here to email us with your thoughts.

For a printer friendly version please visit <http://www.biblesociety.org.uk/newswatch.pdf>

Unsubscribe at <http://www.biblesociety.org.uk/unsubscribe>

Email/address changes – please notify us at <http://www.biblesociety.org.uk/addresschange> or email contactus@biblesociety.org.uk so we can continue to keep you up to date with our latest news.

For further information about Bible Society, visit <http://www.biblesociety.org.uk>

POLICY: Newswatch editorial policy is to reflect how church-related news is treated in the general media and to select a variety of stories across the breadth of church media. Newswatch does not express Bible Society perspectives nor guarantee the balance or objectivity of the stories selected.

Bible Society, Stonehill Green, Westlea, Swindon SN5 7DG T: 01793 418100 F: 01793 418118
<http://www.biblesociety.org.uk> Charity Registration No 232759