

# Prayer For Bangladesh Cyclone Victims

*The Gospel for Asia ministry is seeking prayer for the millions affected by the recent Bangladesh cyclone.*



Cyclone Sidr barreled through Bangladesh last week and left more than 3,000 people dead and 95 percent of the affected area's rice crops destroyed—the second natural disaster to hit the Muslim nation this year, reported Gospel for Asia (GFA), a ministry dedicated to church-planting in Asia.

GFA immediately deployed 125 missionaries and volunteers to distribute food, blankets and other emergency supplies.

“These are poor, simple people who live in homes they make themselves out of mud and wood,” said GFA President K.P. Yohannan. “There is no way those homes could withstand the strength of this storm. Now they are eating grass to survive and crying out for milk for their babies, so we are doing everything we can to help them.”

GFA is calling on Christians worldwide to pray for those people who are hungry, displaced, injured and grieving in the wake of last week's storm, one of the worst to hit the South Asian country in 30 years.

Many of the nation's 130 million people have lost their main source of food due to the destruction of the rice crops. At least 500,000 homes were reportedly destroyed.

The GFA Web site ([http://www.gfa.org](#)) requested that Christians around the world pray for their group's ministry workers to “be able to minister effectively to those who lost family members, homes and their means of livelihood in the storm.”

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# ORU Provost Vows to Resign if Roberts Returns

*The provost of Oral Roberts University, told the Board of Regents that he was willing to go as far as resigning his top academic post if Richard Roberts, the school's president, was reinstated.*



Mark Lewandowski, provost of Oral Roberts University (ORU) since May, told the Board of Regents on Thursday that he was willing to go as far as resigning his top academic post if Richard Roberts, the school's president, was reinstated, the Associated Press (AP) reported.

In an adamantly written letter to the chairman of the ORU Board of Regents, Lewandowski claimed some regents were "waffling in their decision-making ...even in the face of overwhelming information of a management style that promotes fear and has done nothing to address the increasing debt of the university."

He said he could not "in good conscience" serve under Roberts were he allowed to return, reported the AP.

Roberts, who asked for a leave of absence last month while an investigation into the school and his leadership is underway, received a vote of no confidence by tenured faculty at the university last Monday.

The vote comes after a wrongful termination lawsuit was filed against Roberts and the school in October. The lawsuit includes accusations that Roberts and his family used university funds to support a lavish lifestyle.

Last week, Oral Roberts called an emergency meeting at ORU in

which his son, Richard, reportedly asked faculty for a second chance, claiming that if he stepped down it would be tantamount to admitting to wrongdoing. But several faculty members refused to acquiesce, the AP reported.

Lewandowski asked the Board of Regents to vote at a Nov. 27 meeting on the issues his letter raises regarding a perceived lack of openness and transparency at ORU.

Donald Vance, professor of biblical languages who has taught at ORU for 13 years, said a key issue is ensuring faculty and the Board of Regents are both on the same page. "We see the Board of Regents as allies wanting to do the right thing," he said. "But we're not sure they know everything and we're not sure they knew how the faculty felt."

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## **Study: Churches Not Protecting Children**

*According to a recent Barna Group study, churches are doing a poor job of protecting children and youth in their congregations.*



According to a recent Barna Group study, churches are doing a poor job of protecting children and youth in their congregations.

The survey found that nearly one out of every four pastors admitted that their congregation has an inadequate or nonexistent screening process for the those working with the younger crowd.

Only 57 percent of pastors confirmed that their church conducts "thorough background or reference checks of the people working with children and youth." Another 20 percent

described their efforts as “somewhat thorough.”

“Our research consistently shows that how a church treats children is one of the keys to drawing and retaining new families,” says Barna President David Kinnaman, who directed the study.

“Sadly, churches expose themselves to all kinds of potential problems by failing to screen the people who will have contact with and responsibility for the children of strangers during church events.”

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## Rain Falls After Prayer Service

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Just one day after Georgia Gov. Sonny Perdue hosted a multi-faith prayer service asking God to send rain over the drought-stricken Southeast, a quarter inch of rain fell over the state.

The governor believes it is heaven’s answer to the citizens’ prayers, reported the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*.

“This is hopefully the beginning of more. One rain won't refill the reservoirs,” Purdue said Thursday. “It is great affirmation of what we asked for.”

On Tuesday the governor stood outside the state capitol and prayed for God to send the rain to the area.

The Baptist governor has often publicly mentioned the need for prayer during this dry season. "As we do all we can from a conservation standpoint, virtually all of us know we are dependent on rain," he told the *Journal*.

"I am just a person who believes it comes from God."

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## Pastor's told to Preach their Own Sermons

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More than 1,500 pastors from at least 50 countries have pledged not to "short circuit" their sermons by using the words of other preachers. They're part of "The Pledge" campaign launched by in response to the increasing number of pastors relying on readily available sermon aides or even plagiarizing the sermons of others while skimping on their own preparations.

SermonCentral, which provides online sermon materials, says the campaign is an attempt to restore the centrality of the Bible in preaching. "We introduced The Pledge because we think preachers must engage the Bible in their sermon preparation and not simply short circuit the process with someone else's study," said SermonCentral general editor Ron Forseth. "Our site is a valuable supplement but not the primary source for a sermon. God's Word is."

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# Colorado Approves Initiative Defining Fertilized Egg as a Person

*The state Supreme Court ruled Tuesday to allow a proposed initiative defining a fertilized egg as a human to circulate for voter approval.*



The Colorado state Supreme Court unanimously ruled on Tuesday to allow a proposed initiative defining a fertilized egg as a human being to circulate for voter approval, reported the *Rocky Mountain News*.

Anti-abortion leaders must now obtain 76,047 signatures over the next six months in order for the initiative to become a constitutional amendment on the November 2008 ballot.

If passed, anti-abortion activists believe the amendment would weaken pro-abortionists' argument that a baby is not considered a human being until birth.

"The right to life is not a right that comes to us when we're born but when we're created," said Republican presidential candidate Alan Keyes, according to the *Rocky Mountain News*. "This will be, I hope and pray, one of the first of many steps taken to reclaim our godly principles."

The measure would give fertilized eggs the state constitutional protections of inalienable rights, justice and due process.

Supporters say that because Colorado was one of the first states in 1967 to relax its abortion laws, it is appropriate that it leads the way in overturning the landmark *Roe v. Wade*

decision legalizing abortion.

Kristi Burton, 20, a leader in the effort, told the *News* that God was on their side. "If it's a human being, it's a person," she said. "And, hey, they deserve equal rights under our law."

Similar initiatives are being attempted in other states, including Georgia, Wisconsin, Michigan, Montana, Mississippi and Oregon.

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## China Denies Reports of a Bible Ban at Olympics

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Organizer of the upcoming Beijing Olympics scrambled last week to invalidate reports that Bibles would be prohibited at the Games this summer, reported the Associated Press (AP).

Attempting to avert a public relations nightmare, the Beijing Olympics' official media center called the report "an intentional distortion of truth" and said foreigners will be admitted into China so long as their Bible is for personal use.

It added, however, that all texts of the Falun Gong, a spiritual movement considered an illegal cult by Chinese authorities, are strictly forbidden.

Among the many to immediately protest reports out of China placing the Bible on a list of "prohibited objects" at Olympic Village was U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham, who telephoned the

Chinese ambassador for an explanation, the AP reported.

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## Religious Leaders Fight Homosexuality in Schools

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Recently Religious conservatives in California launched a referendum to overturn a new law that they believe will promote homosexuality in the schools, reported the *San Diego Union-Tribune*.

Less than a month after Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed the gay rights Senate Bill 777 into law in October, conservative voters began the expensive initiative, which would require more than 400,000 signatures to be placed on the ballot.

Karen England, executive director of Capitol Resource Institute, a California group that opposed Bill 777, said the new law basically meant “getting rid of ‘mom and dad’ in textbooks or adding homosexual couples.”

Photo by Anissa Thompson

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## Seeking a Higher Authority

*Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue will host a multi-faith prayer service outside the state capitol in Atlanta, Nov. 13, asking*

*God to send rain over all of the drought-stricken Southeast.*



Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue is seeking a higher authority for a solution to his state's drought problems: God. The Peach State leader will host a multi-faith prayer service outside the state capitol in Atlanta today, Nov. 13, asking God to send rain over all of the drought-stricken Southeast.

"The only solution is rain, and the only place we get that is from a higher power," Perdue spokesman Bert Brantley said, according to the Associated Press. Perdue, who is Baptist, has often publicly mentioned the need for prayer during this dry season and was recently involved in an association of farmer's day of prayer for agriculture.

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## **Fighting for Marriage**

*Marriage in the black community is under attack and what we are seeing is foreshadowing of what will happen in the rest of the nation says Pastor Harry Jackson.*



A special glow surrounded my oldest daughter as we celebrated her 25th birthday. She was beyond the legal age of accountability, poised to be treated as a real adult. Nothing could have spoiled this day for me except one lingering question: Where will she find a husband?

A great number of black men are in prison, others have contracted HIV/AIDS, an increasing percentage are down-low (quietly gay) and some have prematurely died. In addition, many black men can't relate to her Ivy League education.

I don't like it, but here are the statistics. Blacks account for more than one-third of all abortions in the U.S., though we represent 12 percent of the population. Seven out of 10

black babies born in 2006 will be born out of wedlock. Forty percent of African-American adults are single.

I thought about these facts as I was reading a poignant Washington Post article, "Marriage Is For White People" by Joy Jones. It confirmed that marriage in the black community is under attack. But the writer noted that what we see among African-Americans is a foreshadowing of what will happen in the rest of the nation.

Liberals see black family decline as a natural result of poverty. They insist economics can solve the problem. Conversely, conservatives think that a "pull yourself up by your boot straps" mentality will save the day. Unfortunately, both underestimate the huge problem.

Looking at the liberal argument first, we find that during the early 1950s, before the civil rights movement, there were fewer out-of-wedlock births and divorces among blacks than today. Therefore, poverty alone is not the issue.

The conservative argument is also flawed. Although marital breakdown stems from personal choices, we are all challenged by the sinfulness of our culture. Unmarried couples living together, out-of-wedlock births, divorce and remarriage have changed the social landscape.

Jones noted that "sex, love and childbearing have become a la carte choices rather than a package deal." This moral confusion would only worsen with the introduction of gay marriage.

For this reason, the same-sex marriage battle requires concerted, unified action by all Christians. Solving the problem of black family disintegration will take courageous effort. The following story illustrates the hurdles you may face in sounding the alarm.

I sat on an 11-person panel at a nationally televised summit

called the State of the Black Union with Tavis Smiley. I expressed my concerns about the black family. I shared also that same-sex marriage had the potential to devastate the institution of marriage. Jesse Jackson interrupted me with a verbal attack.

He purported that whites had put me up to this "anti-gay" agenda. Later a gay activist snarled several derogatory remarks my way.

So what can you do to make a difference in the battle for marriage? First of all, you can live the truth. Christians should remain committed to heterosexual marriage. Second, you can warn people that everywhere same-sex unions exist out-of-wedlock births and divorce rates increase.

Third, you can contact your elected officials and urge them to support a federal marriage amendment to the Constitution. Finally, you can vote against anyone who opposes this much-needed piece of legislation.

Let's take action now so that my daughter, your daughter and our grandchildren will be able to choose biblical marriage as a way of life.

Harry R. Jackson Jr. is senior pastor of 3,000-member Hope Christian Church in the nation's capital. Jackson, who earned an MBA from Harvard, is a best-selling author and popular conference speaker. He leads the High-Impact Leadership Coalition.