

ARC Founder Billy Hornsby Dies

✘ Church-planting pioneer Billy Hornsby, who worked for more than 30 years with church leaders nationally and internationally, passed away on March 23 after a battle with cancer.

“On March 23, 2011 at 9:44 p.m., our father and friend Billy Hornsby went to be with the Lord. Billy’s passion for God, family, life and leaders around the world will be long remembered,” announced Chris Hodges, founding and senior pastor of Church of the Highlands in Birmingham, Ala. Hodges is also Hornsby’s son-in-law.

Married for more than 40 years to his wife, Charlene, Hornsby was a published author who directed a nationwide church planting organization, the Association of Related Churches (ARC)—one of the most successful church-planting organizations in the world—and served as the senior European consultant for EQUIP, John Maxwell’s global leadership training organization. Since Hornsby formed ARC in 2000 with a handful of pastors, the network’s congregations have often been recognized among the fastest growing churches in the nation.

Bombed: Jerusalem Targeted in Terrorist Attack

✘ A package exploded outside of Jerusalem’s central bus station on Wednesday, killing one and wounding at least 39. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack.

Before the terror attack, Palestinian militants targeted southern Israel late Tuesday and early Wednesday with the rockets fired from the Gaza Strip. Israel responded with airstrikes targeting a Hamas training camp in Gaza, killing three and wounding five.

“Since we established the government, we have had a clear stance on our security measures and have stated that we would take severe action against terror should it become necessary,” said Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Apple Pulls So-Called ‘Gay Cure’ iPhone App

✘ In the face of an online petition and hundreds of complaints, Apple on Tuesday night pulled an iPhone application widely known in secular circles as the “gay cure” app.

Exodus International, a Christian ministry that works to help people struggling with unwanted same-sex attraction break free, launched the app last month. Apple initially approved the app, which provided mobile access to information available on the ministry’s Web site.

“We are extremely disappointed to learn of Apple’s decision to deny equal representation in the public square,” says Alan Chambers, president of Exodus International. “Discrimination of thought and belief obstructs essential dialogue and authentic diversity.”

Does Japan Quake Signal Second Coming is Imminent?

☒ Damage from Japan's earthquake, tsunami and subsequent nuclear meltdown may rise to \$309 billion—that's equal to four times the damage of Hurricane Katrina.

Meanwhile, radiation from the compromised Fukushima nuclear plant has already seeped into the food supply as workers continue trying to cool the reactors.

The death toll from Japan's earthquake now tops 9,000. And there is continued talk about the ripple effect on the economies of the world.

Few charismatic believers doubt we are living in the end times, but there are open questions searching for credible answers: Was the earthquake the judgment of God as some claim? What about the Mayan 2012 end-of-the-world prophecy? Previous generations expected the Lord to come in their lifetime—what's different this time?

How Churches Can Be a Light in Libya's Darkness

☒ An unknown number of civilians were killed on Tuesday in the fight between Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi and opposition forces.

According to Reuters, Gaddafi's tanks shelled Misrata—the last rebel-held town in the west—on Tuesday night. The Associated Press reports that Gaddafi's forces had been patrolling the streets in Misrata, filling the city with tanks and snipers all day. Four children were killed in a civilian car.

The situation is growing increasingly grave for Libyan civilians. A Libyan dissident was in touch with his father who lives in Misrata. He told the Associated Press that people are living off canned food and rainwater tanks and have virtually no access to communications or electricity.

The fluid situation continues to change and grow from minute to minute. U.N.-sanctioned attacks have added to the fighting, but it is unclear how long they will remain. Many are beginning to suspect that the conflict may be slow in ending.

NYC Sued Over Pregnancy Care Centers Law

✘ Planned Parenthood remains in the crosshairs of pro-life advocates, but there's a new twist in the battle for life—and the Empire State is the battleground. Pro-life pregnancy centers are under legal attack in New York City.

A new law threatens non-medical, pro-life centers with hefty fines and the risk of shut down if they don't post signs and publish the New York State Department of Health's view in their ads. The signs must be bilingual and posted in multiple places. The viewpoint that must be included: The health department encourages women to go somewhere else.

“To ensure that women are fully informed of the services

provided by pregnancy service centers, this bill requires the centers to inform their clients whether they have a licensed medical provider on staff and disclose whether they provide certain pregnancy-related services or not," said Mayor Bloomberg at a public hearing on local laws last week. "This bill also requires centers to provide confidentiality protections for their clients' personal and health information."

Will Egypt's Constitutional Change Usher In Extremist Government?

✘ In what was supposed to be a move toward democracy, Egypt voted on constitutional amendments over the weekend. The vote appears to pave the way for Islamic extremists to take over a youth-inspired freedom-seeking revolution.

More than 14 million Egyptians, or 77.2 percent of eligible voters, chose to accept proposed constitutional amendments, which were drafted by lawyers and judges Egypt's military sponsored.

The new amendments would limit the presidency to two four-year terms and ease restrictions on independent political party participation, according to the Wall Street Journal. The former works to prevent a dictatorship. The latter, however, could open the door to political rule by organizations that sponsor terrorism.

Japan's Relief Effort Intensifies

- ✘ Concerns are mounting over the economic fallout of Japan's triple disaster scourge.

Damage assessments are just beginning, but some areas are so fragile that the assessors can't get close enough to investigate. It is clear, however, that the destruction will rise into the hundreds of billions of dollars.

For some of the survivors, rebuilding is far off in the future, and the immediate concerns involve restoring heat, electricity, running water, and finding shelter, food and communications.

The official death toll nationally rose to 8,277 on March 20, with 12,272 still missing. Nearly 500,000 people are homeless.

Saudi Arabia Police Beat, Imprison Indian Christians

- ✘ Even as the world waits and watches to see if the storms of revolution will hit Saudi Arabia—riot police there arrested protesters on Monday—Christians working in Saudi Arabia are actively suffering for spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the Muslim nation.

According to International Christian Concern (ICC), two Indian

Christians were arrested and beaten in Batha, Riyadh, then sentenced to 45 days in prison. Vasantha Sekhar and Nese Yohan were accused of proselytizing in the name of Jesus. However, ICC contacts in Saudi Arabia believe the duo was arrested to keep them from practicing Christianity privately in their home.

ICC reports that Sekhar's and Yohan's apartment was ransacked while they sat in prison awaiting trial. One of the men has reportedly lost his job and will be expelled from the country when he is freed from prison. The other is awaiting information about his legal and employment status post-arrest.

"These two Christians have faced false charges and false evidence," says Logan Maurer, ICC Advocacy Director. "The Saudi government continues to engage in an array of severe violations of human rights as part of its repression of freedom of religion."

Indeed, Saudi Arabia has a long history of below-the-radar Christian crackdowns. In 2004, 28 Indian workers were arrested in Messriam for practicing Christianity, according to ICC. The charges were dropped, but in 2010 they were reintroduced. One Christian was deported, and one has been arrested.

In another case, ICC reports 16 Indian workers were arrested in February 2008. The workers were released after three days. In 2010, eight of the 16 chose to leave Saudi Arabia, but three were issued deportation orders and expelled.

School District Backs Down on

Christian Song Ban

A fifth grade student with cerebral palsy just wanted to glorify the King of kings—but the Los Angeles Unified School District blocked the youngster's praise.

Here's the background: Superior Street Elementary School Principal Jerilyn Schubert told the student's mother that the song *We Shine* was "offensive." Schubert insisted the so-called offensive lyrics violated the "separation of church and state" and had the gall to suggest the child choose a song that "does not say 'Jesus' so many times."

Now, the district is back pedaling on the talent show rules. Just hours before the talent show curtains dropped, the district changed the policy that was threatening to silence the fifth-grader's voice.