Religion in the News

Ramadan controversies

Muslims worldwide fast from dawn until sunset during the month of Ramadan. However, observing Ramadan is a challenge for Muslim inmates in many Western prisons. Breakfast is usually served after sunup and the evening meal before sundown, leaving these inmates with little choice but to violate their religion or starve for 30 days. However, this past Ramadan (June 28–July 28) Los Angeles (LA) County accommodated its Muslim prisoners with breakfast before sunrise and supper after sunset.

Unfortunately, Iran has not been as accommodating to its Christian minority as the LA County Sheriff’s Department is to its Muslim minority. When a Christian man was seen eating food during Ramadan’s daylight hours, an Iranian judge sentenced him to have his lips burnt with a cigarette. The sentence was carried out in a public setting.—Los Angeles Times, MailOnline
Interfaith house of prayer

It’s difficult to imagine a church, a synagogue, and a mosque all under the same roof. But it will happen in Berlin if a Christian pastor, a Jewish rabbi, and a Muslim imam can raise the funds to build a common house of worship. The “House of One,” as it is to be called, will include a place of worship for each religion with a joint meeting hall in the center that will seat up to 380 people. The church, synagogue, and mosque will be constructed on the site of Berlin’s St. Petri Church, which was heavily damaged during World War II and torn down by the East German Communist regime in 1964. The estimated cost of constructing the facility is US$58.3 million. As of August 1, a fund-raising campaign that began in June had raised nearly $47,000.

—Associated Press

Obesity rates reach historic highs in more US States

Based on Federal data, rates of adult obesity increased in six U.S. states and fell in none last year, and in more states than ever - 20 - at least 30% of adults are obese... these numbers suggest the problem may be worsening despite widespread publicity about the nation’s obesity epidemic... “-Reuters

To meet this growing crisis Signs of the Times® has prepared a special issue of Life Matters called Lose Weight, Feel Great. It offers advice and encouragement for people who need your help.
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**Religious affiliation of U.S. presidents**

- Episcopalian - 25%
- Presbyterian - 18%
- Baptist - 9%
- Methodist - 9%
- Quaker - 5%
- Catholic - 2%

Source: Pew Research Center

**Discount for praying in public**

Be sure to visit Mary’s Gourmet Diner the next time you’re in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and be sure to pray when your meal is served, because you’ll get a 15 percent discount off the price of your meal. That’s right! Just for praying in public.

For the past four years, everyone whom a server spots saying grace gets it. Restaurant owner Mary Haglund says, “For me, every plate of food is a gift. And I never take that for granted and when I see someone in a restaurant honoring their gratefulness at my table . . . it touches my heart.”—Christian Today

**Tell The World About Jesus**
“The world needs today what it needed nineteen hundred years ago—a revelation of Christ.”

This line from Ellen White is truer now than ever before and she goes on to suggest that it would be good to place a copy of the Desire of Ages in every home.

To accomplish this mission Pacific Press has launched an initiative to Tell the World About Jesus in 2014. It’s easy and inexpensive to join the movement and share this awesome book with the people in your life.

To get copies call (800) 765-6955 or visit The Desire of Ages online.

No offering plate

You can pay your tithe or give an offering at Westside Church in downtown Vancouver, British Columbia, but don’t expect a deacon to hand you an offering plate. Just walk up to a volunteer who’s holding an iPad, hand him your credit card, and tell him the amount of your gift and how you want it to be used. He’ll process the transaction for you, and all you have to do is sign your name with your finger on the iPad. You’ll be e-mailed a receipt immediately, and your donation will go straight into the church’s bank account. The volunteer will then smile and thank you for your donation. —ChristianWeek

As Quoted

“In the world we live in we have two possibilities: war or peace. Peace is a process, and in order to achieve it, you have to talk to each other.”

—Rabbi Tovia Ben Chorin, commenting on a planned Christian, Jewish, and
Muslim worship center in Berlin—Associated Press