

THE LONDON MEGA-MOSQUE

BIGGER THAN ST PAULS!!!

April 20, 2007. A huge mosque is being planned for Newham, London, which will be so big that people flying in from all over the world for the 2012 Olympics will see it as the biggest landmark in London. It will be, bigger than St Pauls Cathedral, Westminster Abbey, and Wembley Stadium. It could hold up to 70,000 Muslims at any one time.

The proposed Mega Mosque continues to be a very important issue in Newham, East London but also nationally and internationally.

The most recent development has been that the Islamic Group *Tablighi Jamaat* have turned to a specialist public relations firm, *Indigo Public Affairs*, to promote the whole project. This is rather striking, especially for a group that claims to shun the tools of a modern Western secular society.

Following the appointment of *Indigo*, there have been recent reports that the government is now against the mosque, and this was covered well in the national press. But the reports were vague and unsubstantiated. It is likely that this has been a public relations strategy to diffuse debate around the issue.

There have also been media reports that, in recognition of the effective opposition to the mosque, it will be now downsized to a capacity of 12,000 – which is still huge. We will know more when the mosque master plan is published later this year – probably in September or October.

Alan Craig of the *Christian Peoples Alliance* has been leading the campaign against the mosque in Newham. Most recently this has involved bringing the debate on to *YouTube* (www.YouTube.com), where 6 videos on the topic have been produced. The videos have focused on some of the key issues such as security, community impact, social inclusion, funding and the Olympics.

Although *Tablighi Jamaat* for a very long time have managed to stay out of media attention, claiming that they are apolitical and non-violent, recent research has shown that they certainly have been linked with militant Islam and terrorism. In the UK, shoe bomber Richard Reid, London 7/7 suicide bombers Mohammad Sidique Khan and Shehzad Tanweer, and a number of suspects arrested and charged in connection with the August 2006 airline terror plot have all belonged to *Tablighi Jamaat*. The main point is that terror experts have found that the way in which *Tablighi Jamaat* is organised has helped terrorist cells use *Tablighi* members for their own devices. This means that *Tablighi Jamaat* has become – actively or passively – a gateway to

terrorism, both in the UK , Europe and farther a field.

Tablighi Jamaat's current European headquarters mosque is in the Savile Town area of Dewsbury, west Yorkshire . The mosque was built over 25 years ago and as a result the area has become 95% Muslim according to local observers. This clearly shows that there are serious implications for the community. In many places where the *Tablighi Jamaat* have established their mosques, the area has become Islamised, forcing local residents out. It has become a parallel society.

Tablighi Jamaat spokesmen have been using the language of social inclusion when promoting the mosque. They claim that the project's main intent is "to benefit the local community...to break down barriers...to bring the people of Newham together." According to the main architect of the mosque, the principle behind its construction is Dawa. This simply means invitation. A closer look at this shows that it is no ordinary invitation, but rather an invitation to convert to Islam, with the ultimate aim of the islamisation of society. There is a growing body of Muslim critics of the mosque saying that there is no other *Tablighi Jamaat* mosque in Britain that has this inclusive objective, and that *Tablighi Jamaat* mosques normally promote cultural, theological and territorial barriers between the TJ 'we' and the kufr (infidel) 'other'.

The Saudi royal family-supported Muslim World League paid for the *Tablighi Jamaat* headquarters mosque in Dewsbury in the late 70s and many observers believe the West Ham mosque will be also Saudi-financed. Even though the new mosque may not be funded directly by the Saudi government, there is nothing to stop donations coming in from Islamic organisation which have often been linked to the sponsoring of terrorism. If the mosque is to be Saudi-funded, there should be some formal/governmental level of reciprocity. Respect and dialogue require reciprocity in all spheres, especially in that which concerns basic freedoms, more particularly religious freedom. The imbalance between the basic freedom of Muslims in the West to worship as they choose versus a range of de jure and de facto restrictions on Christians and other groups in many Muslim nations is abundantly documented. Furthermore, by accepting Saudi funding, it would further indirect approval of the Saudi State's record on human rights which is to be abhorred.

The mosque complex is a mile from the site of the main Olympic stadium and will be designed to create an 'Islamic quarter' for the Olympic Games in 2012, with dining and residential accommodation and an Islamic garden for relaxation. It is intended to be a hub for Muslim competitors and spectators. This is in direct opposition to the Olympic ideal, which encourages people of all faiths and backgrounds to come together and enjoy competitive sports. There has never been a need for different groups to segregate themselves.

There have been a number of Petitions issued on this subject. Because there are so many Petitions on so many issues at the moment it is difficult to assess

their impact.

ACTION:

Pray that the Mega Mosque will not be built as planned. Pray for those in positions of authority to have wisdom and to make Godly and courageous decisions. Pray for protection, courage and favour on those who speak out against the mosque.

Be alert! Look out for coverage of this issue in the media and any developments that take place. Be prepared to join the debate, both nationally and in your local area.

Show the love of God. Love Muslims, demonstrating the love God has for them, and reach out to them with the wonderful truth of the gospel.