



Holy mobile – prayer enters the text age

William Green

IS NOTHING sacred? The call to prayer and quiet reflection has entered the mobile phone age, worshippers being summoned to their devotions with the "ping-ping" of text messages.

The Salvation Army is embracing mobile phone technology to reach young hearts and minds, and has employed a Leeds company to help in its quest.

Mobile communications firm AQ is providing a special text alert service for the Salvation Army's youth ministry unit, which is hoping to complete 50 days of non-stop

prayer for young people and youth work.

Under the Prayer Wave initiative, participants will register for a prayer slot via a website and have their mobile phone number recorded.

They will then receive a text message saying "You're It" – as with the children's game of tag – to alert them when it is their turn to pray and ensure the circle remains unbroken.

AQ spokesman Adam Beaumont said using text to remind people to pray was one of the most unusual uses for the technology he had come across and added it was

more commonly used for dental appointments.

But he also said: "It demonstrates how texting has become an integral part of today's society."

Mr Beaumont added: "For an organisation like the Salvation Army, communication is critical so it is important for them to tap into new media such as texting which are user-friendly and that people can relate to."

The Salvation Army's UK leader, Commissioner Alex Hughes, said the organisation was forward-thinking and wanted to make Christian values as accessible as possible.

He said: "Of the 1,200 prayer

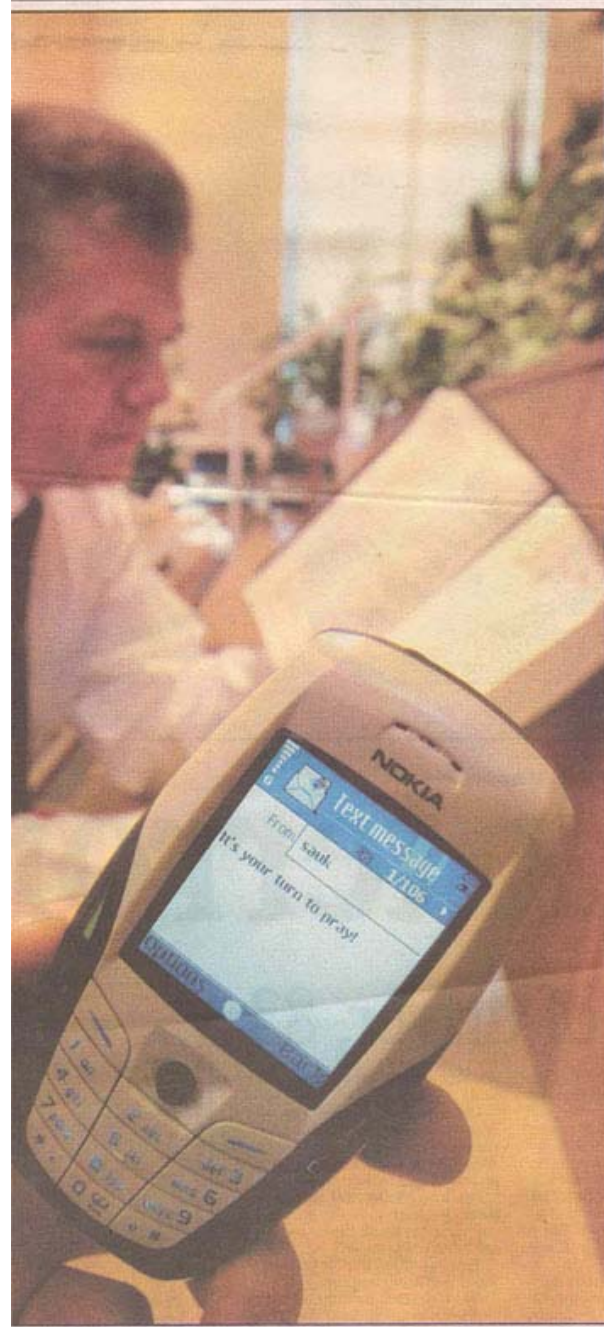
slots we need, 600 have already been filled and lots of our members have told us that they've found the text alerts really helpful in reminding them to fulfil their commitment."

The pastoral canon at Ripon Cathedral, Michael Glanville-Smith, last night said the use of technology was one way of reaching out to younger people and giving them a sense of God.

The Prayer Wave initiative is running until 20th March.

For more information on the scheme visit the website at www.youthministry.co.uk/prayerwave.

THE COMPANY'S RINGING PEOPLE TO THEIR KNEES



Text is new call to prayer

BY NIGEL SCOTT
BUSINESS EDITOR

A YORKSHIRE phone company has been called to higher things.

Mobile communications firm (aq) limited has won a contract to send out mobile messages to remind people to pray.

Based in Park Square in central Leeds, (aq) limited specialises in providing text messaging services for business and corporate use.

But it is now organising a special messaging service for the Prayer Wave initiative, organised by The Salvation Army's Youth Ministry Unit.

The initiative aims to complete 50 days of non-stop prayer for young people and youth work.

As part of the campaign, volunteers have been signing up for Tag 24 – an electronic form of prayer which aims to create a continuous, unbroken prayer chain.

Participants register for a prayer slot via the initiative's website www.youthministry.co.uk/prayerwave.

Their mobile phone number is recorded and they then receive a text message saying

"You're it" to alert them when it's their turn to pray.

Boss Adam Beaumont of aq said: "This is definitely one of the most unusual uses of our service but it demonstrates how texting has become an integral part of today's society."

"For an organisation like The Salvation Army, communication is critical so it's important for them to tap into new media, such as texting, which is user friendly and that people can relate to."

Commissioner Alex Hughes, UK Leader of The Salvation Army, added: "We are a very progressive and forward-thinking organisation and are keen to make Christian values as accessible as possible for everyday lives."

"The Tag 24 idea has really worked well – of the 1,200 prayer slots we need, 600 have already been filled and lots of our members have told us that they've found the text alerts really helpful in reminding them to fulfil their commitment."

The Prayer Wave started on February 1 and runs until March 20. Further information is available from the initiative website.

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PICTURE: A 50-day prayer cycle is being prompted by texts PICTURE: JAMES HARDISTY