

PRAYER ALERT...

An initiative of the Prayer Forum of the British Isles & Ireland
www.prayer-alert.net editor@prayer-alert.net

Issue 36-2013

Website

Contact Us

Donations

Thursday 05 Sept 2013

■ Praise Reports

- ✦ [Guatemala: President names Jesus Christ Lord of Guatemala](#)
- ✦ [Indonesia: 24/7 Prayer nationally](#)

■ British Isles & Ireland

- ✦ [Methadone bigger killer than heroin in Scotland](#)
- ✦ [Churches welcome Government's decision on Syria](#)
- ✦ [Norwich pastor under investigation for 'homophobic' language](#)
- ✦ [Charity calls for a new generation of shared ownership for 'forgotten families'](#)
- ✦ [Lobbying Bill threatens free speech and campaigning](#)
- ✦ [Racial Justice Sunday - 8 September](#)
- ✦ [Unite wants Super Puma suspension to remain amid inquiries](#)

■ Europe

- ✦ [Germany: Excerpts from a prayer letter](#)
- ✦ [Finland: Church in Helsinki defaced with Islamic slogans](#)

■ Worldwide

- ✦ [NIGERIA: Child brides](#)
- ✦ [USA/ Syria: US House leaders back Obama on Syria strike](#)
- ✦ [Russia/Syria: We won't 'exclude' action if chemical weapons proven](#)
- ✦ [Egypt: Update](#)
- ✦ [Central African Republic - and other warzones: Killings and displaced people](#)
- ✦ [Global: Floods, wildfires, heat waves and landslides](#)
- ✦ [Pakistan: 40 Christian families face hunger after elopement dispute](#)

PRaise REPORTS

■ Guatemala: President names Jesus Christ Lord of Guatemala

The President of Guatemala, Otto Perez Molina, declared Jesus Christ as the Lord of the country last week during their first national prayer breakfast. Leaders from government, economic, religious and indigenous backgrounds gathered in Guatemala City to pray for their nation's peace and to have God as the centre of the universe. 'Today we name Christ as Lord of Guatemala and we declare in His name that each of our generations will be generations that will live in a prosperous Guatemala,' said Molina, according to Hispanic news outlet, AcontercerCristiano.net. During the meeting, leaders were also encouraged to implement principles and values within their businesses, universities and neighbourhoods. In addition, speakers, including Manuel Espina, president of Guatemala Prospera, an organization that trains national business leaders on how to foster developmental change within their community, asked leaders to embrace prayer as the sole method by which their country can succeed.

Praise: God for this bold stand by the President and other business leaders embracing God and prayer as central. (Ps.33:12)

More: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/guatemalan-president-names-jesus-christ-lord-of-guatemala-103040/>

■ Indonesia: 24/7 Prayer nationally

A powerful prayer movement is rising in Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim nation. Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, Indonesian Christians intercede for their country. It is something never witnessed before. One of the leaders within the movement said, 'We can see the zeal, not only among the evangelical or Pentecostals but also in the mainline protestant and Catholic churches.' Global prayer leaders are amazed at the Indonesian believers' unity in praying for their country and the world. 'I just think the Father is looking out on the corridors of heaven and He's saying, 'Hey, Jesus, come here. Look! Look! Look down at Indonesia.' Tom Victor with the Great Commission Coalition exclaimed. 'He is blowing His Holy Spirit across the country and everything is going to a new dimension, something we don't understand in the natural. There's favour, there's faith, there's grace and they are transforming a nation.' Also last week in Indonesia thousands of Muslims gave their life to Jesus. For the story go to <http://www.charismanews.com/world/40812-despite-death-threats-blasphemy-charges-youngren-gospel-festival-reaches-thousands> (See also Prayer Alert 3202013)

Praise: God for His spiritual transformation of Indonesia, may it spread across the nations. (Rev.22:14)

More: <http://www.cbn.com/cbnnews/world/2013/August/Historic-Non-Stop-Prayer-Sweeps-Muslim-Indonesia/>

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Methadone bigger killer than heroin in Scotland

Methadone has killed more people in Scotland than heroin for the second year running, according to the latest Government figures. The findings come after a review commissioned by the Scottish Government raised concerns about the £36 million methadone programme. Methadone, the heroin substitute, caused 237 deaths last year, amounting to 41 per cent of all drug-related fatalities. Methadone is provided by medics to addicts as a legal substitute for heroin, funded by the taxpayer. It is supposed to reduce dependency on heroin, but critics say users just become 'parked' on methadone instead. The

review chaired by Dr Brian Kidd, an addictions expert, said they found little evidence of a 'real impetus' for addicts using methadone to recover. A Times newspaper investigation in 2010 concluded that addicts were pleading with the Government to help them get off drugs completely instead of just parking them on the heroin substitute.

Pray: for an effective programme to help addicts quit drugs completely. (Php.4:13)

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/methadone-bigger-killer-than-heroin-in-scotland/>

■ Churches welcome Government's decision on Syria

Leaders from the United Reformed Church, the Methodist Church and the Baptist Union in Great Britain have given thanks for the decision of the UK Parliament to reject military action in Syria. They said 'We are thankful that our MPs carefully considered the difficult matter of military intervention in Syria - and decided to reject it. Our prayers now are that all diplomatic means are used to bring government and opposition leaders to the negotiating table and that divided parties are encouraged to seek a future they can inhabit together. We also urge that priority is given to a quick and effective humanitarian response to the thousands of Syrian people affected by the violence.'

Pray: for the United Kingdom to unite in prayer for Syria and for our leaders to be granted the wisdom to do the right thing. (1Co.14:33a)

More: <http://www.methodist.org.uk/news-and-events/news-releases/churches-welcome-governments-decision-on-syria>

■ Norwich pastor under investigation for 'homophobic' language

A Norwich pastor is under investigation for using 'homophobic' language after sending an email expressing his disapproval of the city's gay pride event, held in June this year. Dr Alan Clifford sent the message to the organisers of Norwich Pride, which subsequently reported his comments to the Police as a 'hate incident'. The Police has now referred his case to the Crown Prosecution Service, which will decide whether or not to act on the complaints made against him. Writing in the Spectator, academic and theologian Adrian Hilton said: 'Dr Clifford may exercise his freedom of speech – especially in regard to religious liberty and preaching the Word of God – even if this might cause offence. I find myself now feeling not much less than contempt for those gays who persecute and prosecute elderly hotel owners and B&B proprietors, or call in the Police when they receive 'Good News for Gays' in their inbox. It is deeply and profoundly intolerant.'

Pray: for Dr Clifford and that the CPS will recognise his freedom of speech. (2Ti.2:24-26)

More: <http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/religious-freedom/norwich-pastor-under-investigation-for-homophobic-language>

■ Charity calls for a new generation of shared ownership for 'forgotten families'

The housing and homelessness charity Shelter says that England needs a massive expansion of shared ownership homes for a generation of 'forgotten families' – the 'squeezed middle' priced out of home ownership and with no hope of social housing. The new report shows a swathe of 'squeezed middle' families facing years of private renting, or trapped on the first rung of the property ladder. An estimated 1.8 million families fall into this group, yet the study shows that almost three-quarters of these families are priced out of the traditional market. Even with the coming Help to Buy mortgage guarantees, 78 per-cent of these families will still be unable to afford the repayments on a family-sized home, says Shelter. The only option for many will be years in the private rented sector, paying out dead money in rent. Shelter is calling for a major new house-building programme of shared ownership homes to revolutionise ownership for 'forgotten families'.

Pray: that the Government will not forget the needs of those in the lower end of the housing market and build suitable low-cost social housing. (Tit.3:14)

More: <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/18981>

■ Lobbying Bill threatens free speech and campaigning

A new lobbying Bill could stifle free speech and severely restrict the liberty of Christian groups to engage in the democratic process during election time. The Bill sets strict limits on campaigning in the year preceding an election, and gives sweeping new powers to the Electoral Commission. But the Commission, which regulates elections, says it does not want the new powers and it has major doubts over the Bill's 'workability'. MPs are debating the Bill for the first time, but it has already drawn fierce criticism. Charities like The Royal British Legion, the Salvation Army and Tearfund have raised concerns about the proposals. Leading human rights lawyer, Helen Mountfield QC, says it would create a 'chilling effect'. The National Council for Voluntary Organisations says the Bill would catch legitimate campaign groups. And former Tory MP, Paul Goodman, has raised concerns about the Bill's unintended consequences.

Pray: that the Government will give this new Bill serious and wise consideration. (Pr.9:9)

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/lobbying-bill-threatens-free-speech-and-campaigning/>

■ Racial Justice Sunday - 8 September

Racial Justice Sunday on 8 September 2013 offers Christian communities across Britain and Ireland the opportunity to focus on the issue of ending racism and racial inequality. Churches, schools, groups and individuals are invited to mark the day by praying and acting to raise awareness of the 50th Anniversary of the 'I have a Dream' speech by Dr Martin Luther King and to ask 50 years on, where are we now? The speech, delivered on 28 August 1963, called for liberty, equality and justice for all people, regardless of their racial heritage. Dr King's dream centred on a 'Beloved Community', a society built on justice, equality and freedom for all God's people which was rooted in Scripture, particularly in Revelation 7:9. The speech remains an inspirational call for us to work for a fairer and more equitable world now. Despite changes in the law, Black and Minority Ethnic communities still regularly experience worse services in education, health, housing and criminal justice sectors compared to the White British population.

Pray: for the UK to be aware of the current issues and changing patterns around racism, racial inequality and identity. (Lev.19:15)

More: <http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=23143>

■ Unite wants Super Puma suspension to remain amid inquiries

At least one offshore helicopter company has begun passenger flights to oil and gas installations nine days after a Super Puma crashed off Shetland killing four. Super Pumas account for 70% of the North Sea fleet and are currently undergoing pilot-only operations as Air Accidents -Investigation Branch (AAIB) lead a probe into the crash. AAIB in the past has given early indications of the causes of crashes and insists after its initial investigations it was too early to draw conclusions on the cause of the crash. Now Unite regional industrial officer John Taylor has said the Super Pumas should remain grounded until there is a clear indication about what caused the crash. Mr Taylor said, 'All I know is the helicopter came down, we don't know what the reasons are, and until we do, we should keep them grounded.' On Tuesday Chancellor George Osborne flew on a Super Puma to the Montrose oil platform, one of the oldest in the North Sea.

Pray: that the government, the oil industry and the investigation authorities would make wise and cautious decisions. (1Tim.2:1)

More: <http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/home-news/unite-wants-super-puma-suspension-to-remain-amid-inquiries.22058182>

EUROPE

■ Germany: Excerpts from a prayer letter

An intercessor in Germany writes:- September is a big election month in Germany and we need your prayers for 'the formation of a government that will enable our society to live together according to the good ordinances of God'. September's internal politics will be dominated by the final phase of the election campaign. After the elections on September 22nd the coalition negotiations will then be extremely important. There will be many special prayer meetings in Germany to pray for these national and state elections. Please pray that many citizens will exercise their right to vote and that Christian brothers and sisters will receive sufficient financial support for their candidature (especially from Christian sources) so that they can come into the parliament for the well-being of the city and country. Pray also for grace and mercy for the formation of a government that will enable our society to live together according to the good ordinances of God.

Pray: for God to encourage and anoint Christians involved in Germany's political system. (Ex.20:1-17)

More: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/aug/30/german-election-angela-merkel-peer-steinbruck-tv-debate>

■ Finland: Church in Helsinki defaced with Islamic slogans

It's happening here in Finland. It's amazing that it took so long. The Seurakuntalainen (The Congregationist) states that there's 'no information about the background of those responsible', but it's plain to see, the perpetrators are Muslims, the giveaway is the 'Jesus is a Muslim' graffiti. No non-Muslim would have written it, let alone come up with the thought. The premises of the Helsinki, The Living Word Church has been the target of long-term vandalism. The windows of the church's assembly have been repeatedly defaced with texts idealizing Islam and the public spaces have been vandalized during August at least three times. The windows of the church premises are painted with slogans glorifying Islam and criticizing Western culture and values. The incident was first reported on Nuotta.com. The Living Word Church is located in Eastern Pasila, right next to the Helsinki Islamic Centre.

Pray: for the protection of God's Church and His people. Pray that God's Spirit will move amongst the Muslim people. (Ps.5:11)

More: <http://europenews.dk/en/node/71166>

WORLDWIDE

■ NIGERIA: Child brides

Though child marriage is prohibited under Nigerian law, a toxic blend of routine and religion continues to ruin young lives. Ibrahim Kanuma winces as he recalls the moment a 63-year-old man asked him for his teenage daughter's hand in marriage. The proposal was not unusual in north-western Nigeria's remote, dust-blown state of Zamfara, but he considered the suitor too old for his only daughter, Zainab, 13. 'Even if he had been aged up to 50 - OK. But that old - he'll soon die and leave her lonely,' says the civil servant in his peeling office in Gusau, the state capital. To protect his school aged child from the crushing stigma of widowhood, Kanuma instead gave his blessing to a union with a 'reasonably aged' colleague in his 40s even though such a betrothal is illegal. Zainab's marriage is prohibited under Nigeria's Child Rights Act, which bans marriage or betrothal before the age of 18. But federal laws compete with age-old customs, as well as a decade of state-level sharia law in Muslim states.

Pray: for all in Nigeria to recognise and adhere to the laws of the land and walk away from ungodly traditions. (Amos 5:14)

More: <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2013/sep/02/nigeria-child-brides-religion>

■ USA/ Syria: US House leaders back Obama on Syria strike

Following President Obama's decision this weekend to seek Congressional approval for a military response to Syria's chemical weapons, leaders in the House of Representatives - both Republican and Democrat - expressed their support and backing for such a strike against al-Assad's regime. According to the Washington Post report, House Speaker John A. Boehner told reporters, 'I'm going to support the president's call for action; I believe my colleagues should support this call for action. These weapons have to be responded to. Only the United States has the capacity and the capability to stop Assad or warn others around the world that this type of behaviour will not be tolerated. I appreciate the president reaching out to me and my colleagues in Congress over the past few weeks.' House Minority Leader, Nancy Pelosi agreed noting that al-Assad had acted 'far outside the norms of civilized behaviour' saying 'I believe the American people need to hear more about the intelligence that supports this action. And that the responsibility for this chemical weapons use is clearly lies at the feet of al-Assad.'

Pray: for God to give a double portion of wisdom and discernment to all in positions of authority within the American government. (Ps.90:12)

More: http://www.breakingchristiannews.com/articles/display_art.html?ID=12370

■ Russia/Syria: We won't 'exclude' action if chemical weapons proven

In an interview with The Associated Press and Russia's state Channel 1 television, President Putin said Moscow has provided some components of the S-300 air defence missile system to Syria but has frozen further shipments. Putin said he

felt sorry that President Barack Obama cancelled a one-on-one meeting in Moscow prior to the G20 summit but hoped the two would have serious discussions about Syria and other issues. He also said he 'doesn't exclude' backing the use of force against Syria at the United Nations if there is objective evidence of proof, but strongly warned Washington against launching military action without UN approval. Asked what kind of evidence on chemical weapons use would convince Russia, Putin said 'it should be a deep and specific probe containing evidence that would be obvious and prove beyond doubt who did it and what means were used.' He also said it was too early to talk about what Russia would do if the US attacked Syria.

Pray: for positive frank and constructive communication between President Putin and President Obama. (Ps.94:15)

More: <http://www.timesofisrael.com/putin-we-wont-exclude-un-backed-syria-action-if-chemical-weapons-use-proven/>

■ Egypt: Update

Believers in Egypt are putting Jesus' words into practice after the Muslim Brotherhood left many churches, bookstores and a Christian orphanage, charred beyond recognition. As horrendous as the attacks are Christians have been meeting the hate with Christ's love. After a Coptic Christian orphanage was destroyed leaving 200 children without any shelter, the ones running the orphanage left a message for the attackers on an exterior wall saying, 'You meant to hurt us, but we forgive you. God is love. Everything works out for good.' and, 'Love your enemies.' As the Muslim Brotherhood targeted over 60 Christian churches Christian believers said that some of their Muslim neighbours actually defended and protected them from the violence. The Christians are responding with forgiveness and pressing on in the face of persecution. They are also continuing to meet together for prayer and teaching in what remains of their burned-out buildings and the children are seeing their Sunday School stories and teachings of love come to life.

Pray: for God's continued presence amongst Egyptian believers. (Ja.4:6)

More: http://www.breakingchristiannews.com/articles/display_art.html?ID=12369

■ Central African Republic - and other warzones: Killings and displaced people

Christians are under attack in CAR. An Islamist rebel coalition seized control of the country in March and Islamist rebels are on a rampage killing many Christians and displacing thousands. Rebels are sparing Muslim villages and homes as they go on a killing, looting and raping spree in the country. On 6 August the President of CAR's evangelical Alliance was briefly arrested for openly criticising the new regime in a sermon. We are asked to pray that violence against Christians would end and for God's protection over all displaced people in the country. According to the UN Refugee Agency internally displaced persons in CAR and other trouble hotspots globally need protection. Most are unable to return to destroyed villages. They need shelter, water, health and education assistance. In CAR harmful traditional gender-based violence endangers women and girls. Displaced people globally lack access to justice, legal advice and non-violent mechanisms for conflict resolution. They are at risk of statelessness as they do not possess civil-status or identity documents. See:

<http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=23104>

Pray: for Jesus' comforting presence upon those grieving the loss of loved ones and homes in CAR. Pray also for the millions globally who are now being displaced by fighting and wars. (Ps.12:4-5)

More: <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e45c156.html>

■ Global: Floods, wildfires, heat waves and landslides

UN experts and universities around the world said recent 'extreme weather events' prove global warming is already happening. Almost 14 million people are affected by Pakistan's torrential rains. It's a more serious humanitarian disaster than the South Asian tsunami and recent earthquakes in Kashmir and Haiti combined. The disaster was driven by a 'supercharged jet stream' that also caused floods in China and a prolonged heat wave (the worst in 130 years) in Russia where wildfires are raging. This follows flash floods in France and Eastern Europe that killed 30+ people this summer. Floods in Pakistan caused the greatest humanitarian crisis in recent history, China's floods have killed more than 1,100 people this year and caused tens of billions of dollars in damage across 28 provinces. Vice-president of the UN body monitoring global warming said the 'dramatic' weather patterns are consistent with changes in the climate caused by mankind.

Pray: for governments to recognise and act upon the part they can play to avoid further man-made disasters. (Ps.102:25-26)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/pakistan/7937269/Pakistan-floods-Climate-change-experts-say-global-warming-could-be-the-cause.html>

■ Pakistan: 40 Christian families face hunger after elopement dispute

When a 20-year-old Christian man and a 17-year-old Muslim woman eloped it resulted in a charge of rape and the loss of livelihood for 40 Christian families. Umair Masih eloped with his girlfriend Nadia Shabir on July 27. Both were residents of Chak village which consists of 40 Christian families and 500 Muslim families. In Pakistan's rural communities arranged marriages still happen. However young couples often leave home together in an attempt to have their affection for each other taken seriously by their families or as an act of desperation. In these elopements families manage to bring them back and the aftermath is confined within the families. However this elopement attempt spiralled out of hand. Christians were violently attacked and every Christian worker in the village is no longer hired by the Muslim landlords in their fields as a boycott style reprisal. The families risk starvation.

Pray: for God to watch over and provide for those persecuted unjustly in Pakistan. (Col.4:1)

More: <http://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2013/08/2679948/>

PRAYER FORUM OF THE BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

Prayer Alert is distributed free of charge – Donations towards running costs are gratefully received.

To donate, please visit www.prayer-alert.net

Please feel free to distribute Prayer Alert to anyone you feel will benefit from its ministry. All we ask is that you do not edit or change it in any way or charge for its use without contacting us for written permission.

Prayer Alert is a partnership project of the Prayer Forum of the British Isles and Ireland
C/O World Prayer Centre, Cornerstone House, 5 Ethel Street, Birmingham, B2 4BG, England