

PRAYER ALERT...

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PRAISE REPORTS

■ Street Pastors 'have reduced river deaths'

Street Pastors have been praised by the fire service for their 'immense' contribution in reducing river deaths in Shrewsbury. The volunteers patrol streets at night, helping 'vulnerable' people who may be about to take their own lives. Since they began work in November 2011, no deaths have been recorded along the Shrewsbury stretch of the River Severn. From 2004 until the volunteers began their patrols in 2011, 29 deaths were recorded on the river. Shropshire fire chief John Redmond praised their work. The same week as the volunteers began a training course on water safety. Mr Redmond said the Street Pastors were now receiving training to help people struggling in the water. 'The contribution from Street Pastors to community safety has been immense.'

Praise: God for those who volunteer to work with Street Pastors. (Jdg.5:9)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-shropshire-24007237>

■ 'Revival' in South African schools

'God is moving among the youth of South Africa,' says Matt Hogarty, principal of Oasis Christian Academy in Howick, KwaZulu-Natal. He says that as a result of what God has been doing at Oasis, a team from his school was invited to minister at a Government school in Pietermaritzburg and about 500 (learners) pupils there committed their lives to Jesus and there was a powerful time of ministry during which children opened up about issues of abuse and trauma in their lives. Source: Gateway News.

Praise: God and pray that this movement will continue. (Heb.10:22-24)

More: <http://revivalmedia.org/2013/08/30/revival-in-south-african-schools-319-report-31/>

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Gender abortions: CPS accused of double standards

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) has been accused of 'double standards' over abortion laws as it brought criminal charges against a string of pro-life protesters yet refused to prosecute doctors over illegal practices. One outspoken peer accused the CPS of operating a policy 'worthy of Alice in Wonderland' and subverting the will of Parliament by deciding against bringing charges for 'public interest' reasons, despite there being enough evidence to do so. There were growing calls for a judicial review of the decision of CPS supported by its Director, Keir Starmer QC, not to charge two doctors exposed in an undercover Daily Telegraph investigation agreeing to arrange abortions because the babies were female. In contrast the CPS has taken several recent cases of pro life Christians to trial for their anti-abortion activities. Lord Alton said: 'Holding different people accountable to different standards should not be the basis on which the CPS operates.'

Pray: for clear guidance to be given to the CPS on how they handle such cases to ensure parity and fairness within the legal system. (Pr.18:5)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/law-and-order/10292249/Gender-abortions-CPS-accused-of-double-standards-after-putting-pro-life-campaigners-on-trial.html>

■ Another street preacher arrested

A street preacher was arrested in Basildon on 4 September following a complaint by a member of the public. The Christian Legal Centre (CLC) reports that Rob Hughes was held for seven and a half hours at Basildon police station before being released without charge at around 11:30pm. The CLC reports he was detained under Section 5 of the Public Order Act on the grounds that he 'caused harassment, alarm or distress', an accusation he denied. The Centre assisted him by providing a solicitor to help him during the police interview. 'I am so grateful that the Christian Legal Centre was able to react quickly and effectively in my situation,' said Hughes afterwards. He added that he felt Christian street preachers were being 'presumed guilty until found to be innocent. This is happening alarmingly often now,' said the Christian Legal Centre, which has previously warned of a 'clampdown on freedom of speech' where Christian views on sexual ethics are expressed.

Pray: for the Police to be made fully aware of the guidance previously given that ensures the freedom of speech in these circumstances. (Ps.58:1)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/another.street.preacher.arrested/33876.htm>

■ New era of learning for Methodist Church

The Methodist Church has formally changed its learning structure to offer more training from locally placed staff across 11 regions. The Discipleship and Ministries Learning Network will work through two institutions, Cliff College and the Queen's Foundation in Birmingham, as well as from homes or regional offices. The changes will result in more staff than before being based regionally. Jude Levermore, head of Discipleship and Ministries, believes the changes hold enormous potential for the Church's growth. 'This is a response to the challenge of being a 'Discipleship Movement shaped for Mission'. To be a vital, growing Church, we need to be a learning Church,' said Levermore. 'By having more Connexional Team members in the regions, we can combine the strengths of being a Connexional Church with the strength of local mission. Being closer to where people are allows the Church to get the best out of what is already happening and what will be developed. The potential is huge.'

Pray: for this 'new era' in the Methodist Church and that it will bring the Gospel to even more people. (Eph.4:11-12)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/new.era.of.learning.for.methodist.church/33833.htm>

■ UK retailers warned that 'Rana Plaza could happen again'

The President of the Bangladeshi National Garment Workers Federation has warned eight leading UK retailers that there could be a repeat of this year's Rana Plaza tragedy if they refuse to sign up to an international accord designed to protect Bangladeshi factory workers. Amirul Haque Amin, who is in the UK, addressed the Trades Union Congress Annual Conference this week, saying several high street names are still refusing to commit to the agreement that will make building inspections compulsory at Bangladeshi factories that supply fashion goods to UK stores. These brands include Matalan, River Island, Sports Direct/Republic, Jane Norman, Peacocks, Bench, Mexx and Bank Fashion. The TUC is asking consumers touched by the Dhaka tragedy to use social media to build pressure on the UK clothing brands that are refusing to sign up. The e-action allows consumers to write directly to the companies and tell them to support strengthening health and safety protection for Bangladeshi textile workers.

Pray: for all retailers to recognise their responsibility to the workers who supply them with goods and that they will all sign up to the accord. (Lev.25:53)

More: <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/19013>

■ Christians arrested in blockade at Arms Fair

Five Christians have been arrested for successfully blockading the Custom House entrance in London at an arms fair supplying weapons to repressive regimes. For over forty minutes the group, associated with the activist organisation Christianity Uncut and supported by a range of other NGOs including Christian CND, sat and lay down at the entrance of the Defence and Security Exhibition International (DSEI), which is backed by the UK government and has as its guests a range of dictators and autocrats, including the armers of President Assad in Syria. The protesters recited the Lord's Prayer, and one of the people arrested also announced the 23rd Psalm boldly while being dragged away by police. Superglue was used to secure the gate by the anti-arms activists. The first two people arrested included a trainee Methodist minister and the third was Quaker activist Chris Wood. Two others were removed. All were driven away to be charged.

Pray: for those protesting in this controversial area and give the authorities discernment and wisdom. (Is.2:4)

More: <http://christianityuncut.wordpress.com/news/>

■ Bedroom tax should be axed, says UN investigator

During a visit to the UK the United Nations' special investigator on housing has told the British government it should scrap the bedroom tax, after hearing 'shocking' accounts of how the policy was affecting vulnerable citizens. Britain's record on housing was also worsening from a human rights perspective, Raquel Rolnik, the UN special rapporteur on housing, said in a Guardian interview after presenting her preliminary findings to the Government. After speaking to dozens of council house tenants in Britain during her visit over the past fortnight, Rolnik said she was particularly concerned by the impact of bedroom tax, officially known as the new spare room subsidy. The policy was introduced by the Government in April, and is designed to charge tenants extra for under-occupying homes that are supposedly too large for them.

Pray: that the Government will reconsider its decisions on the so called bedroom tax. (Lk.20:22)

More: <http://www.theguardian.com/society/2013/sep/11/bedroom-tax-should-be-axed-says-un-investigator>

■ **Former Lord Chancellor calls for marriage tax breaks**

Lord Lawson has called for married couples to be recognised in the tax system, saying that the policy was the 'most cost effective' way of helping poor families. Writing in a report commissioned by Christian charity Care, the former Lord Chancellor said that 'the case for transferable allowances remains as strong as ever, arguing that marriage tax breaks would be a better way to help low-income households than increasing personal allowances. 'A transferable allowance is not only family-friendly but provides a far more cost-effective means of reducing the tax burden on low-income households than can be achieved by an across-the-board increase in personal allowances,' he said. The report, entitled 'Independent Taxation – 25 years on, Does it meet today's needs?' argues that the current system results in families facing an unfair tax burden.

Pray: that the authorities will listen to the wisdom available from people like Lord Lawson. (Job.32;7)

More: <http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/family/former-lord-chancellor-calls-for-marriage-tax-breaks-to-support-poor-families>

EUROPE

■ **German Social Services snatch homeschool children**

The Wunderlich children have been taken from their parents because of the decision to homeschool. German social services officials have raided the home of a family and abducted their children on the sole grounds that the parents were exercising their right to home-school. The armed raid occurred on the morning of 29 August. The team of 20 SS personnel, police officers and special agents approached the home with a battering ram after Judge Koenig, a Darmstadt family court judge, authorized force 'against the children' since the children had "adopted the parents' opinions." The four children, ages 7-14, were all forcibly removed and taken to unknown locations, leaving the parents devastated. Home School Legal Defence Association obtained the court documents authorizing the seizure. The documents reveal that the only legal grounds for action against the family was their decision to home-school. There were no allegations of abuse or neglect, nor any concern that the children were receiving inadequate education.

Pray: for homeschool families that the Universal Declaration on Human Rights will be upheld. (Pr.31:9)

More: <http://www.christianvoice.org.uk/index.php/germany-police-snatch-homeschool-children-in-morning-raid/>

WORLDWIDE

■ **NIGERIA: Anglican Bishop kidnapped**

The Dean of the Anglican Church of Nigeria, Archbishop Ignatius Kattey, was abducted at about 10.30pm on Friday, as he journeyed in the company of his wife, Beatrice, from Eleme to Port Harcourt. It was gathered that the abductors later freed the bishop's wife following a chase by the police. The Bishop was taken to an unknown destination. 'It was the hot pursuit by the police that forced the kidnappers to abandon the wife. The police are still combing the axis. Very soon, he will be secured unhurt. I mean very soon. I believe God will assist us and we will rescue him.' A senior member of the Anglican Church said no contact has been established with the suspects, adding that the whereabouts of the bishop remain unknown. As at press time, no ransom demand has been made by the abductors. Church members said they are praying for the victim's unconditional release and would not think of paying any ransom.

Pray: that Archbishop Kattey will be unharmed and released soon. (Ps.146:7)

More: <http://www.ngrguardiannews.com/national-news/132213-anglican-bishop-kidnapped-in-rivers>

■ **Syria: Christians worldwide praying**

Christians around the world are praying today for peace in Syria and the wellbeing of millions of refugees who have left their homes because of the fighting. Pope Francis appealed to the world's 1.2 billion Catholics to join him in a day of prayer and fasting for the country. In a letter to Pope Francis, the Grand Mufti of Syria, Ahmad Badreddin Hassou, spiritual leader of Sunni Islam, welcomed the appeal and said he would be joining in praying and fasting for peace in his country. Orthodox leader the Patriarch of Constantinople Bartholomew I and the head of the World Evangelical Alliance, Dr Geoff Tunnicliffe, have both backed the prayer call. The Bishop of Wakefield, the Right Reverend Stephen Platten, has also encouraged Church of England parishes to join with others this weekend in praying for peace in Syria. The Church of England has also published prayers for Syria. See: <http://www.mnnonline.org/article/18960>

Pray: for Syria, its people, its refugees, its leaders and for the international response to be one that will promote peace. (Mat.5:9)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/christians.worldwide.praying.for.syria/33881.htm#>

■ **India: Church growing stronger despite hostilities**

With Hindu extremists constantly perpetrating attacks against the church, Christians in the northern region of India find themselves in a very hostile environment. Persecution has also come through politics as some states have implemented laws against conversion to Christianity. One such law is ironically called the 'Freedom of Religion Bill.' Similar legislation has been approved by lawmakers in Madhya Pradesh. The Bill, which now awaits the governor's signature, would make it a crime to convert to Christianity without government permission. But Pastor Abraham, who works everyday with ordinary people in the region, says that not everyone is hostile toward Christians. 'When you bring the salvation, the healing, the blessings from Jesus, the common people always respond positively to the Gospel,' he said. 'Otherwise we can't do the work.' Despite the persecution and the challenges, God is moving and the Church is growing, Abraham said.

Pray: for true freedom of religion and for those who do wish to convert to Christianity. (Jn.10:28)

More: <http://www.cbn.com/cbnnews/world/2013/September/India-Church-Growing-Stronger-Despite-Hostilities/>

■ **Afghanistan: MP says 'execute Afghan Christian converts'!**

A member of Afghanistan's Parliament has suggested that all those who have converted from Islam to Christianity should be executed, according to Islamic Sharia Law, in order to stop the rapid growth of Christianity among Afghans within and outside the country, reports Mohabbat News. An Afghani news service, Ava, has published a report stating that the number of Christians is increasing in the country. The Afghan news service quoted Nazir Ahmad Hanafi, Afghani Parliament Member, as saying, 'Afghani citizens continue to convert to Christianity in India. Numerous Afghanis have become Christians in India. This is an offence to Islamic Laws and according to the Quran they need to be executed'. Earlier, another member of Afghanistan's Parliament had acknowledged that an Afghani church had been built in India. He said, 'A church has been built in India called Afghani's Church. Any Afghani, citizen who travels to India would be officially invited to the church'.

Pray: for the protection of those who choose to follow Jesus. (Ps.5:11)

More: <http://www.christiantelegraph.com/issue20961.html>

■ **Philippines: Fighting rages amid hostage crisis**

Fresh fighting is reported as troops in the Philippines have surrounded six villages in the south of the country where hundreds of fighters linked to the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) are holding at least 170 hostages. Six military tanks went into the area. 'The standoff began a day earlier after MNLF fighters marched into Zamboanga city to raise their flag at a city hall', military spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Ramon Zagala said. At least six people, including a naval soldier, were killed when the Philippine Navy tried to block the rebels and about 220 civilians were initially taken hostage by the fighters, military officials said after the pre-dawn attack. Zagala said the hostages were being used as a 'human shield' by up to 300 MNLF fighters.

Pray: for a breakthrough that will bring a resolution to this conflict and peace to this land. (Ps.37:37)

More: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia-pacific/2013/09/20139106147258221.html>

■ **Zimbabwe: Millions at risk of chronic hunger**

Zimbabwe is facing a 'dire' food situation after erratic rains and 'unusual' mid-season droughts triggered critical levels of crop failure, Christian Aid has warned. The World Food Programme estimates the number of people who will need food assistance in the coming months at two million. Christian Aid said the insufficient maize and cereal harvests, low grain stocks and inflated prices have forced the Zimbabwean government to make expensive food imports primarily from neighbouring Zambia and South Africa. Christian Aid's country programme manager for Zimbabwe, Miriam Machaya, said that Insiza district had been particularly hard hit, with partner organisation Zimpro reporting that only three out of the 23 wards recording surplus food. 'The food security situation in Zimbabwe is dire, especially in the arid and marginalised Matabeleland provinces where Christian Aid and our local partner organisations work,' she warns.

Pray: for the people of Zimbabwe and the critical drought situation. Pray that the world will have compassion on them and help to alleviate their needs. (Is.58:10-11)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/millions.of.zimbabweans.at.risk.of.chronic.hunger/33900.htm>

■ **Laos: Christian villagers face deportation for faith**

Some 50 Christians in central Laos faced imminent expulsion from their homes Friday, September 6, for refusing to recant their faith in Christ, representatives told BosNewsLife. The Human Rights Watch for Lao Religious Freedom (HRWLRF) group said the chief of Nongdaeng village in Bolikhamxai province 'summoned representatives' of 11 Christian families to appear before an official meeting at local government headquarters where they were told to abandon Christianity or face deportation. 'In the meeting, officials ordered all 11 families, consisting of 50 individuals, to recant of their Christian faith and return to their traditional animist religion,' explained HRWLRF, which is in close contact with the believers. 'They charged these Lao Christians with believing the religion of a foreign Western power which is considered destructive to the nation.'

Pray: for the believers in Laos that God will strengthen them and help them to stand firm. (Col.1:11)

More: <http://www.bosnewslife.com/30247-laos-christian-villagers-face-deportation-for-faith>

■ **Syria: Terrorists overcome ancient Christian village**

According to Breitbart.com and Daily Mail reports, Syrian rebels connected to al-Qaeda have taken over the mostly Christian village of Maaloula in Syria (near Damascus), and are terrorizing the Christians there; insisting they convert to Islam or die. One resident told the Daily Mail, 'They shot and killed people. I heard gunshots and then I saw three bodies lying in the middle of a street in the old quarters of the village.' Another added, 'I saw the militants grabbing five villagers and threatening them and saying, either you convert to Islam, or you will be beheaded.' There have been conflicting reports as to whether or not the al-Assad regime or the rebels are in control of the city. According to the Daily Mail, the village, built among the mountains, is on the UNESCO list of world heritage sites.

Pray: for believers and all those being terrorized by al-Qaeda linked rebels. (Ps.140:1)

More: http://www.breakingchristiannews.com/articles/display_art.html?ID=12400

PRAYER FORUM OF THE BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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