

# PRAYER ALERT...

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## PRaise REPORTS

### ■ Kidnapped Archbishop Kattey freed

An Archbishop in the Church of Nigeria who was kidnapped over a week ago is 'safe and well' after being released, the Anglican Communion Office has said. Archbishop Ignatius Kattey was kidnapped with his wife, Beatrice, on August 6 close to their home in Eleme, Port Harcourt. Mrs Kattey was released soon after but Archbishop Kattey was held until his release on Saturday. Archbishop Kattey oversees the Niger Delta Province, a region where kidnappings for ransom have reportedly become common. Police said the Archbishop was released without a ransom on Saturday evening. His kidnapping was condemned by Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan and the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Reverend Justin Welby. A statement on the Archbishop of Canterbury's website said he 'gives thanks' for the release of Archbishop Kattey. Suffragan Bishop of the Diocese in Europe the Rt Reverend David Hamid said, 'We give thanks for his freedom and return to his wife, family and Church community.' (See last week's Prayer Alert)

**Praise:** God for this answer to our prayers. (Ps.20:6)

**More:** <http://pmnewsnigeria.com/2013/09/15/kidnapped-archbishop-kattey-freed/>

### ■ Hungary: 'Night of Churches' spreads light at festival

Hungary has been holding a 'Night of Churches' as part of a Catholic-backed festival aimed at raising public awareness about faith and the arts. Younger and elderly Hungarians assembled suddenly in the heart of Budapest's Castle District near the Catholic Matthias Church on a hill overlooking the Danube river. The many tourists watched with amazement as they sang 'The Evening Prayer' a folk song that was adapted by Hungarian composer Zoltán Kodály in his choral work. 'This is my first flash mob,' said a smiling black man. 'Thank you,' shouted a female spectator. It is part of an attempt to promote the annual Ars Sacra Festival, or Sacred Arts Festival, an initiative organizers say was inspired by late Pope John Paul II. Launched some seven years ago, it encourages visitors to open up their hearts for faith and its creative expression in the arts.

**Praise:** God for the light that shines in His people and gives cause for celebration. (Ps.33:2)

**More:** <http://www.bosnewslife.com/30429-hungarys-night-of-churches-spreads-light-at-festival>

## BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

### ■ International Day of Prayer for Peace

Each year on 21 September the World Council of Churches calls churches and parishes to observe the International Day of Prayer for Peace. 21 September is also the United Nations-sponsored International Day of Peace. As it approaches, the World Council of Churches invites people to offer prayers for peace. This year we would like to invite you to pray for the upcoming World Council of Churches 10th Assembly. The theme of the assembly is a prayer for peace: 'God of Life, Lead

Us to Justice and Peace'. Churches from all over the world will gather in Busan, South Korea, 30 October to 8 November 2013, for the event. We would like to ask you to pray the theme – pray it for the world, pray it for the church, pray it for the churches attending the WCC assembly, pray it with the assembly.

**More:** <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/events/international-day-of-prayer-for-peace>

#### ■ **Bishop of Durham-designate focuses on church growth, poverty and young people**

The next Bishop of Durham, current Bishop of Southwell and Nottingham, the Right Reverend Paul Butler, has identified his priority issues as growing the church, tackling poverty, and addressing the role of children and young people in the church. Bishop Butler was announced as the Bishop of Durham-Designate this week, taking over from the Most Reverend Justin Welby, who left the post to become Archbishop of Canterbury earlier this year. He said 'growing the church in numbers, depth and discipleship was the 'highest priority' for the Diocese of Durham. It will not be an easy task but a healthy, growing church is good for the community. I want the church to be good news for the area. I know it already is but I want it to be better and people to talk more positively about it.' He added: 'Tackling poverty together must also be a priority.'

**Pray:** for Paul as he prepares to take up his new role and also that he will be successful in leading the church in the North East towards his declared goals. (Ac.20:28)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/bishop.of.durham.designate.focuses.on.church.growth.poverty.and.young.people/33979.htm>

#### ■ **36% of children don't know whose birthday is celebrated at Christmas**

Recent surveys yet again paint a gloomy picture of how little many people know about Christmas and the birth of Jesus. According to polls, 51 per cent of people now say that the birth of Jesus is irrelevant to their Christmas. Just 12 per cent of adults know the nativity story in any depth; and 36 per cent of children do not know whose birthday is being celebrated during the festival. It makes it all the more important therefore that Churches and Christians do what they can to get the real message out. Leading Christian groups, including the Church of England, Traidcraft, the Methodist Church, the Bible Society, and the Evangelical Alliance are coming together and putting their weight behind Christmas starts with Christ because they recognise something needs to be done. We should expect to be seeing quite a lot of this logo and the accompanying adverts in the run up to Christmas.

**Pray:** for the true story and meaning of Christmas to be widely told this year so that many more people may learn about Jesus. (Jn.3:16-17)

**More:** <http://www.anglican-mainstream.net/2013/09/14/36-of-children-don%e2%80%99t-know-whose-birthday-is-celebrated-at-christmas-time-for-an-advertising-campaign/>

#### ■ **Kirk claims it 'may stop weddings' over gay marriage**

Church of Scotland has said that they may have to stop conducting wedding ceremonies if plans to redefine marriage go ahead. A representative from the Kirk told the Equal Opportunities Committee that the prospect of 'years of exhausting legal challenge' is 'very concerning'. Rev Alan Hamilton of the Church of Scotland Legal Questions committee said the Kirk's General Assembly had asked him to look into whether it is worth them continuing to offer marriages in Scotland. He said they are, 'concerned that this is an invitation to take religious bodies in particular through the court system'. He added: 'It gives us considerable problems internally and we're deeply concerned about the threat externally.' MSPs were warned about churches being challenged through the Equality Act and the European Convention on Human Rights. This follows a statement in July saying that Sikh temples have been advised to halt all civil marriage ceremonies on their premises to protect them from possible legal challenges for refusing to conduct same-sex weddings.

**Pray:** for all faith groups to be free to conduct marriages according to their beliefs and not feel pressured to abandon marriage services. (Ps.25:21)

**More:** <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/kirk-claims-it-may-stop-weddings-over-gay-marriage-2/>

#### ■ **Christians forced to hide their faith by equality laws**

Christians feel that they are being forced to hide their religion because of 'silly' interpretations of equality laws, a senior MP has said. Sir Alan Beith, chair of the Commons Justice Select Committee, has likened the misunderstandings to those surrounding health and safety regulation, where the rules can be over zealously applied for the wrong reasons. Referring to recent high profile cases involving people being told not to wear religious symbols in the workplace, Sir Alan said that many Christians feel that they have to keep their faith 'under wraps'. But rather than being an issue of the law, the 70-year-old MP for Berwick-upon-Tweed said that an ill-informed sense of what it means for the state to be secular often led officials to try and hide anything relating to religious views while in civil society. You get silly things happening, which were not the intention of any legislative change.

**Pray:** for a clearer understanding of the law and of the freedoms of speech and religious faith by all quarters of our society. (Jn.14:27)

**More:** <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/christians-forced-to-hide-their-faith-by-equality-laws-says-senior-liberal-democrat-mp-8817694.html>

#### ■ **'Majority of British women want new laws to tackle web trolls'**

The majority of British women (75%) support David Cameron's proposal to make internet porn 'opt-in' and want new laws to tackle web trolls, according to a study. Despite relatively few people having actually been victim to trolling online, new research from Kantar, a global research firm, found that 85% of the British public think there needs to be new legislation to deal with the issue – with women feeling more strongly about this matter than men. 67% of women strongly back calls for new laws to police the activities of internet trolls, compared to 48% of men. Despite three quarters of British women supporting the new opt-in system to internet porn put forward by the Government, with 59% 'strong in favour', British men's enthusiasm for the proposal is not as strong.

**Pray:** that the government would take steps to introduce new laws to deal with this problem. (Ps.119:39)

**More:** <http://www.mediawatchuk.com/latest-news-september-2013/>

### ▣ Acid attacks on British girls in Zanzibar 'linked to al-Qaida'

Some of the gang are believed to be members of the Islamic extremist group Al-Shabaab, which is linked to al-Qaida. Brits Kirstie Trup and Katie Gee, both 18, suffered face and body scarring after acid was thrown at them from a moped. They were victims of one of five acid attacks in the area in less than a year – the latest of which was on a Catholic priest. The motive for the attacks was initially unclear, but reports now suggest it might have been the work of terrorists. Police also seized 29 litres of acid, which they fear was to be used in future attacks.

**Pray:** that the girls will recover and that the authorities will trace the perpetrators. (Pr.21:15)

**More:** <http://europenews.dk/en/node/71788>

## EUROPE

### ▣ Number of children sleeping rough on the rise

There has been an alarming rise in the number of children sleeping rough across Europe, which is why the system needs an overhaul, writes Kate Moss. The number of rough sleeping children across Europe is on the rise. These are young people who have mostly run away either from home or from sheltered accommodation. They may also include minors who have made border crossings in search of a better life and improved opportunities or for any number of other reasons. Financed by the EU Daphne programme, the pioneering two-year children rough sleepers research project which we at the University of Wolverhampton are currently leading has been tasked with conducting precisely this study, for which ongoing collaboration is currently underway among a team comprising ten partner countries from around Europe. There is very little information about children who sleep rough. Figures show that 100,000 children go missing every year in the UK.

**Pray:** against this trend and the dangers that sleeping rough brings to young people. (Pro.22:3)

**More:** <http://www.theparliament.com/latest-news/article/newsarticle/number-of-children-rough-sleepers-on-the-rise-according-to-new-study/#.UjcNu39kln4>

### ▣ Nederland: Muslims appropriate football fields for jihad propaganda

We're used, by now, to the idea of Mohammedan influence gradually infiltrating its way into the media, government, the police, the military, academe. But here's a new one: football fields. Maybe it shouldn't be a surprise after the Muslim take-over of the French national football team (followed by the French people's almost total loss of interest in it) or the beating to death of a Dutch referee by Mohammedan players. But in the Hague, in the Netherlands, as recent incidents attest, football fields seem to have been appropriated as instruments for the jihad. ADO Den Haag [a Dutch football team] announced on Monday that it had nothing to do with the flag of the Islamic terror group ISIS, which was shown on a football field with the ADO logo. The club says it is 'very shocked' to be on the picture.

**Pray:** against the Islamist influence in French and Dutch sport. (Ps.34:16)

**More:** <http://europenews.dk/en/node/71789>

## WORLDWIDE

### ▣ NIGERIA: Five Christians executed in road-side ditch by Muslim gunmen

Five Christians were shot dead near Jos, Plateau State, on 29 August by Muslim gunmen, who had stopped the bus they were travelling in and separated them from the other passengers. They found out who among them were Christians and forced the five to lie down in a ditch. At this point, another Christian man became embroiled in the scene when the Islamists stopped his motorbike. He said: The gunmen asked me about my religion, and when I told them I was a Christian, they asked me to join a group of people already ordered to lie down by the side of the road. It was when the gunmen started shooting and killing those of us that were Christians grouped together that I ran into a nearby maize farm, because it was already dark. Four other Christians, including a pregnant woman, were injured in the attack.

**Pray:** for God's people that they will be protected and their enemies will be held back. (Ps.68:1)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/kidnapped.nigerian.archbishop.freed/33990.htm>

### ▣ Millennium Development Goals have had 'little impact' on lives of leprosy sufferers

The Millennium Development Goals have had a huge influence on international development but 'little impact' on the lives of leprosy sufferers, according to The Leprosy Mission. The organisation said 'there was no drive to address the inequalities and discrimination faced by the world's leprosy sufferers, despite an estimated 10 per cent of the world's population' - or 650 million people - being disabled, according to the United Nations. 'People affected by leprosy face a triple blow of disease, disability and discrimination and for tens of thousands, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), launched at the UN General Assembly in 2001, have had little impact on their lives,' the organisation said. 'The comments come ahead of the 18th International Leprosy Congress, taking place in Brussels. The congress will be joined by more than 800 people from around the world who work with or represent people affected by leprosy. They will be discussing what leprosy sufferers think should replace the MDGs when they expire in 2015 and how the perspectives of leprosy sufferers can shape the post-2015 goals.'

**Pray:** for the Leprosy Congress and that they can define meaningful goals that will help leprosy sufferers in a practical way. (Mat.11:5)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/millennium.development.goals.have.had.little.impact.on.lives.of.leprosy.sufferers/33977.htm>

#### ■ USA: Deaths and hundreds missing in Colorado floods

Rescue teams responding to the Colorado floods have warned residents to evacuate their homes or face being stranded for weeks without electricity, water or basic supplies. Amid apocalyptic scenes across the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, at least four people have died and hundreds remain unaccounted for. Some areas have seen more than 15 inches (38.1cm) of rainfall in three days – above the average expected for a whole year – in what a county commissioner has called a “500- to 1,000-year flood”. State authorities say that with more rain forecast for the next two days, further fatalities are all but inevitable. With thousands more people stranded in rural canyon towns, and rescue teams impeded by waters washing away the state’s transport infrastructure, the authorities have issued a stern warning to anyone thinking about trying to stay in their homes and weather the storm.

**Pray:** for the communities affected by these floods and for those trying to provide help. (Ps.31:2)

**More:** <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/colorado-floods-residents-warned-to-evacuate-or-face-weeks-without-power-running-water-or-basic-supplies-8817739.html>

#### ■ Egypt: Christians forced to pay Jizya Tax

Word comes from the Minya area city of Dalga that many of the town's 20,000 Christians are now being forced to pay the Jizya tax required by Islamic law. Islamic extremists have controlled the town since police were forced out July 3--the day the Egyptian people and their military deposed Mohammed Morsi from the presidency. According to a Voice of The Martyrs contact in Egypt, Muslims have forced at least 140 Christians to pay a daily jizya tax starting at 200 Egyptian pounds per day. That's the equivalent of \$29, or \$203 per week! I've met with many Christians over the years in Minya and elsewhere in Upper Egypt. Many of them earn less than \$5 per day. Two Coptic Christian government employees have been shot dead for refusing to pay Jizya, the Muslim poll tax on Christians. <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/2013/s13090067.htm>

**Pray:** for the Christians of Dalga who are living in constant fear and pressure from Islamic extremists. Pray that God, not the Jizya tax, will give them the protection and security they need! (Ps.122:7)

**More:** [http://www.openheaven.com/forums/forum\\_posts.asp?TID=44122&PN=1](http://www.openheaven.com/forums/forum_posts.asp?TID=44122&PN=1)

#### ■ Vietnam: Christian Churches targeted

Two churches in Vietnam caught the attention of local authorities who later ordered their closure, Open Doors USA reports. In May, a group of believers were on their way to a church in an undisclosed village in south-western Vietnam when the police stopped them. The pastor was also summoned and questioned as to why he had church members from other villages. The authorities warned him, saying that he was ‘in violation of the law.’ A month later, local authorities in another village in southern Vietnam forced a pastor to close down his church, which has existed for many years, and stop his Christian activities. His house also stood on land that was earmarked for a government project, but his family was not compensated like his neighbours were.

**Pray:** for God's Church that it will be given wisdom as it faces persecution. (Eph.4:16)

**More:** <http://www.religiontoday.com/blog/christian-churches-targeted-in-vietnam.html>

#### ■ Cuba: Church closed and pastor attacked in Havana Province

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) has learned that the Full Gospel Church was forcibly closed in Havana Province at the end of February, confiscating all of the church's belongings, including chairs and musical instruments. This left more than 200 people without a place of worship. A week before the church closure, the pastor of the church, Jesus Hernandez, was attacked by an armed mob as he was sleeping in his home. According to Caridad Diego, the head of the Cuban Communist Party Office of Religious Affairs (ORA), which oversees all religious activity in Cuba, the church and everything inside were confiscated because of a dispute over ownership of the church. This account is contradicted however, by members of the church, who told CSW that the church has existed in its present location for more than 15 years, led by the same pastor and without problems.

**Pray:** that a resolution will be found to restart the Church. (Eph.2:21)

**More:** <http://au.christiantoday.com/article/cuba-church-closed-and-pastor-attacked-in-havana-province/15097.htm>

#### ■ Bolivia: New law to control Churches' beliefs

Protestant church leaders in Bolivia are bucking a new law that they claim imposes religious beliefs contrary to their own and denies them the right to be a church. As a result, the National Association of Evangelicals of Bolivia intends to file suit this week asserting that Law 351 is unconstitutional and demanding it be revoked, according to Morning Star News. Law 351 stipulates a standardized administrative structure for all religious organizations that would force churches to betray their true ecclesiastical traditions, legal advisor Ruth Montano told Morning Star News. The law requires all churches and not-for-profit organizations to re-register their legal charters with the government; this process requires data on membership, financial activity and organizational leadership. Protestant leaders claim that the new law gives the Bolivian government regulatory power over the internal affairs of their denominations to the point of defining what is and isn't a church.

**Pray:** for the Church in Bolivia that it will be able to meet the requirements of Law 351. (Is.44:3)

**More:** <http://www.worthynews.com/12566-new-bolivian-law-to-control-churches-beliefs>

## PRAYER FORUM OF THE BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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