

# PRAYER ALERT...

An initiative of the Prayer Forum of the British Isles & Ireland  
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## PRaise REPORTS

### ■ Revival in crime-infested park

'A man in our church was in terrible condition. We prayed for him. Later, the doctors took another ultrasound and found his liver to be perfectly healthy. They couldn't understand it!' said Pastor Daniel Day. The First Assembly of God congregation of about 100, isn't the first church to hold revival meetings in a park, but in Delaware (the sixth most dangerous state in the nation) and in Wilmington (its crime capital) holding evening revivals in Judy Johnson Park the most dangerous park in the city was a risk few others have been willing to take. They were conducted over the weekend of September 27th -29th, and after effects are still being felt. People were being shot and raped in that park all the time but the choice of location was really a matter of prayer. The result of obedience to God's leading and miraculous things took place during the week. People were set free. Another event is already being planned.

**Praise:** God for churches that catch His vision for their area and do whatever He tells them to do.

**More:** [http://www.breakingchristiannews.com/articles/display\\_art.html?ID=12645](http://www.breakingchristiannews.com/articles/display_art.html?ID=12645)

### ■ Scotland Pastor forgives his families' killers

A Church of Scotland pastor who lost his mother and close relatives in a suicide attack on a Pakistani church said he forgives their killers. Reverend Aftab Gohar's 79-year-old mother, nephew, niece, two uncles and other friends and relatives were among the 171 people killed in the September 22nd blasts at Peshawar's All Saints Church. On Sunday, October 20th Gohar resumed his duties at Abbotsgrange Church in Grangemouth after making an emotional statement about the militants linked to one of the deadliest attacks against Pakistan's minority Christians. 'It is wrong what these people did but I forgive them. Forgiving is what we learn from the Lord Jesus Christ. That is why I forgive,' He added, 'We pray that they may one day develop the wisdom to understand that it is not right to kill children and other innocent people.'

**Praise:** God for Gohar's faithful witness; ask God to continue to strengthen him and all who are affected by terrorism and persecution. (Ma.5:11)

**More:** <http://www.bosnewslife.com/30958-scotland-pastor-forgives-his-mothers-killers-in-pakistan-blasts>

## BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

### ■ Christian woman to sue for right not to work on Sundays

Celestina Mba, 58, from south London was forced to leave her job after refusing to work Sundays. She told Merton Council she was unable to work Sundays before accepting a job but she was later told she would have to work full weekend shifts, so she resigned. Merton Council said it required carers who were 'available to provide round the clock care over the weekend'. Ms Mba hopes to overturn an employment tribunal ruling which said she was not constructively dismissed. Ahead of the hearing she said, 'I gave my life to Jesus when I was 19 and that was my commitment and I've lived it. To start changing my faith to line up with what the employer wants is not possible because my faith is who I am and I'm not prepared to compromise on that.' She told the tribunal she was prepared to work night and Saturday shifts, or to have accepted less pay, to be able to observe Sunday as a day of rest.

**Pray:** that Ms Mba would be able to explain clearly to the Court of Appeal that an employer has a duty to 'reasonably accommodate' the beliefs of a Christian employee. (Gen.2:2)

**More:** <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-24609584>

#### ■ Police bribe mother to drop assault case

Hayley Clayton spent a night in hospital with ten stitches to a serious head wound following an unprovoked attack. Three weeks later police told her they had found the culprit but would not prosecute because 'it would be a waste of taxpayers' money'. She was offered £100 and an apology from her attacker or have the offender cautioned by police. She found both offers unacceptable. She didn't want the money she just wanted justice and the offender punished so she would learn the error of her ways and not go on to hurt somebody else. The compensation offer was increased to £150. She refused the offer. Last year 7,243 criminals with more than ten previous convictions only received a caution or warning for a serious offence. A spokesperson for the Centre for Crime Prevention said, 'Most police have no confidence that serious repeat offenders will get a proper prison sentence if they go to court, so there is no point in going through all the paperwork.'

**Pray:** that the Ministry of Justice would clamp down more severely on simple cautions and short cuts to avoid paperwork. Pray for a justice system in which both the public and victims can have confidence. (Dt.27:19)

**More:** <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2470138/Mother-knocked-encouraged-Lincolnshire-police-accept-150-compensation.html>

#### ■ Britain's jails facing 'growing problem' of forced conversion to Islam

British prisoners are increasingly being forced to convert to Islam by their fellow inmates, the prison officers' union has warned. Muslim gangs are growing in power and influence among prisoners and there are concerns that they are targeting vulnerable new arrivals – making prisons a breeding ground for extremism. 'It is a concern, and there's been clear evidence from a variety of different incidents. Young men are being targeted and then coerced into converting to Islam,' the association's general secretary, Steve Gillan, told Sky News. One woman, whose brother is being bullied by a gang trying to force him to convert, told the broadcaster: 'He just looks like a broken man, he's tearful on visits. I'm just really scared for him. He's been physically assaulted. He's had black eyes. In the shower, he got threatened with a knife. He's not going to back down. He's not going to convert for anyone.'

**Pray:** against the growth of Muslim extremism in our prisons and the pressure they exert to convert to Islam. (Mt.23:15)

**More:** <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/britains-jails-facing-growing-problem-of-forced-conversion-to-islam-officers-warn-8892645.html>

#### ■ Broken families blighting children, says Ofsted boss

Children are suffering because 'hollowed out' and fragmented families are failing to teach them properly about right and wrong, Ofsted's chief inspector has warned. Society is 'pussyfooting around' and 'making excuses' for poor parenting, Sir Michael Wilshaw added. He further commented: 'Some people will tell you that social breakdown is the result of material poverty – it's more than this'. He said: 'These children lack more than money: They lack parents who take responsibility for seeing them raised well. It is this poverty of accountability which costs them. These children suffer because they are not given clear rules or boundaries, have few secure or safe attachments at home, and little understanding of the difference between right and wrong behaviour.'

**Pray:** for our children and for stability of family life. (Est.8:6)

**More:** <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/broken-families-blighting-children-says-ofsted-boss/>

#### ■ Archbishop of Canterbury attacks big six energy firms over 'inexplicable' price rises

The recent energy price hikes make people understandably angry, says the Archbishop of Canterbury, who called on big power companies to be 'conscious of their social obligations'. Justin Welby insisted the Big Six power companies had an obligation to behave morally rather than just maximising profit. Last week Scottish and Southern Electricity announced an 8.2 per cent price rise, and British Gas followed that with the announcement that its electricity prices were to surge by 10.4 per cent and its gas prices by 8.4 per cent from 23 November. The rises would mean £125 a year added to the bills of almost eight million customers. Whilst blaming a range of external factors, the company said it 'understood the frustration' of consumers. Speaking to the Mail on Sunday, Mr Welby said: 'The impact on people, particularly on low incomes, is going to be really severe'.

**Pray:** that the energy firms will consider their moral obligations rather than just maximising profit. (Lk.12:15)

**More:** <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/archbishop-of-canterbury-attacks-big-six-energy-firms-over-inexplicable-price-rises-8892524.html>

#### ■ Churches challenged over money and ethics

With church investments in the national spotlight, a website launched on 17 October will provide church groups and individual believers with a host of new resources to make ethical and spiritual decisions about their use of money. Your Faith Your Finance website – [www.yourfaithyourfinance.org](http://www.yourfaithyourfinance.org) – contains facts, links and case-studies covering issues ranging from banking and shopping to biblical parables about money. The new website provides quotes and explains a range of different views on the subjects in question and includes resources for personal reflection and group discussion. The site was launched at an Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility (ECCR) debate on church investment. It has been developed jointly by ECCR and Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW). They aim to meet the growing demand from faith groups for help with the complex ethical and practical questions around the use of money.

**Pray:** that this new website will provide insight in making ethical and spiritual decisions about the use of money. (Ps.37:30)

**More:** <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/19231>

#### ■ Young net users engage in 'risky' behaviour

Many children aged nine to 11 are indulging in very risky behaviour online, suggests a survey. Many are sharing personal information and playing games rated for much older children, the survey drawn up by the ISC2 IT security group found in

addition, 18% of the 1,162 children queried said they had arranged offline meetings with friends made via the web. Meanwhile, a second survey suggests 55% of young people in England accept cyber-bullying as part of everyday life. Security experts have urged parents to help their offspring stay safe by being more involved with what they do online. 'Many primary school children know far more about the internet than their parents do,' said Tim Wilson, an information security worker who carried out the survey for the ISC2 organisation which helps schools educate children about web safety. In total, 15 schools in south-east London, Kent and Guernsey took part in the survey.

**Pray:** for our young people that they will be protected against the evil elements that pervade the internet. (Am.5:14)

**More:** <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-24580139>

## EUROPE

### ■ France: US ambassador summoned over 'spying'

France called in the US ambassador to protest against allegations in Le Monde newspaper about large-scale spying on French citizens by the US National Security Agency. France and Mexico have demanded prompt explanations from Washington following allegations leaked by former US security contractor Edward Snowden of 70.3 million taped phone calls in France over a 30-day period between 10 December 2012 and 8 January this year. It was reported that NSA automatically picked up communications from certain phone numbers in France and recorded text messages under a programme code-named 'US-985D'.

**Pray:** for constructive, honest and open international relationships to prevent and apprehend computer-generated terrorist activities. (Pr.16:7-8 & Is.29:5)

**More:** <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2013/10/france-summons-us-ambassador-over-spying-2013102183224174263.html>

### ■ EU motion promoting abortion, homosexuality and paedophilia defeated

Tuesday heralded a human rights victory when the European Parliament decided by 351 to 319 votes with 18 abstentions to refer the controversial 'Estrela-Report' (named after its author, the extreme left-wing MEP Edite Estrela from Portugal), back to the parliamentary committee that originated it. A resounding victory for the pro-life cause, given that there is a structural majority in the European Parliament of members belonging to socialist, communist, green, and liberal parties, who usually vote in favour of anything that presents to promote 'women's rights'. The vote still needs to be carefully analysed; however, many socialist and liberal members refused to go along with their official party line. Formally speaking, the result of today's vote is not that the Estrela draft is dead - it has been referred back to the Committee and could resurface at a later stage. The task is now for the Committee to come back with something less controversial, and more worthy of consideration than Mrs Estrela's draft.

**Pray:** for the proposed report to be permanently adjourned and receive a silent burial.

**More:** <http://www.turtlebayandbeyond.org/2013/abortion/european-parliament-the-motion-promoting-abortion-homosexuality-and-paedophilia-is-defeated-a-great-victory-for-human-rights/>

## WORLDWIDE

### ■ Global: November - prayer for the persecuted church

In the traditional Church calendar All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day in the month of November are set apart to remember the saints and the souls of departed Christians. The modern Church has set apart November 3-10 to remember and pray for the persecuted Church during the international days of prayer for the persecuted Church' (IDOP). November 3rd is the day set apart in the UK and Ireland, however individuals are free to choose another date if they wish. Believers in Egypt, Eritrea, India, Iran, Nigeria, Pakistan and Vietnam face violence, imprisonment and even death because of their faith in Jesus Christ. In North Korea hidden acts of persecution take place. 2013's focus includes Indian Christians suffering increasing persecution by militants wanting a Hindu-only nation. We can pray that this year many thousands will stand alongside the persecuted Church praying that they will be able to stand firm and to continue making known the mystery of the Gospel to their neighbours.

**Pray:** for God to strengthen, encourage and protect those Christians living in places where faith costs the most. (Ro.1:16)

**More:** <http://www.idop.org/>

### ■ Australia: Bushfires in the most populous state

The warmest winter and hottest September on record plus half the normal amount of spring rainfall left the land tinder-dry. Compounding matters is widespread lightning accompanying storms with little to no rain. One in three Australians lives in New South Wales. Local officials fear that three large fires spreading through the Blue Mountains could merge to form one huge inferno. 1,000+ firefighters (mostly volunteers) are battling blazes across an area the size of Los Angeles. A state of emergency gives firefighters and police the authority to cut off water, power and gas and order mandatory evacuations of areas at risk. A total fire ban is in place for the Greater Sydney region - meaning no fire may be lit in the open, and all fire permits are suspended. The Rural Fire Service said an investigation had found a department of defence training exercise was responsible for causing the blaze, which has burnt out more than 46,000 hectares in one of the fire areas.

**Pray:** for the hundreds of families who are now homeless, those living in shelters having lost everything and pray also for God's protection over the firefighters.

**More:** <http://edition.cnn.com/2013/10/21/world/asia/australia-fires/>

### ■ Northern Iraq: No longer safe for Christians

An increase in violence against Christians in northern Iraq has increased the flow of Christians leaving the country. The north, generally considered a relatively safe area of the country, had become home for many Christians fleeing from the tumultuous central and southern regions. However, several bombings in the north in recent months have caused panic

among the Christian community. On September 22nd a suicide bomb went off outside the home of a Christian politician in the Kirkuk province, injuring 19 people, including three children. Several bomb attacks have also taken place in the northern city of Erbil, for which Al-Qaeda claimed responsibility. In early September, Christians in the village of Deshtakh complained that they were facing harassment from local police. A group of Christian young people said that policemen told them that they 'should not be in Iraq because it is Muslim territory'.

**Pray:** for the future of Christianity in this country and an end to the present trend of increased violence. (SoS.2:12)

**More:** <http://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2013/10/2763837/>

#### ■ Israel: Elections and racism

On Tuesday Mayoral candidates in Jerusalem started the morning with prayers at the Western Wall. In Tel Aviv flyers calling for replacement of the incumbent mayor referred to him as 'Don' Huldai. On Tuesday Israelis voted for mayors and other local officials in 191 cities, towns and local authorities. In some areas votes were cast not on how well their municipality will be run but on how to 'save' Jewish women from the clutches of Arab men. While the far-right rise in Israeli national politics has made headlines, less attention has been paid to how this has played out in day-to-day relations between Israeli Jews and the country's Palestinian-Arab minority that comprises a fifth of the population. Israel's local elections have brought a tide of ugly racism to the fore, especially in a handful of communities known as 'mixed cities', where Jewish and Palestinian citizens live in close proximity.

**Pray:** against racist language and fear-mongering in Nazareth, Karmiel, Tel Aviv, Jaffa, Galilee and wherever communities are segregated on an ethnic basis. (Is.9:1-3)

**More:** <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/10/israel-elections-bring-racism-fore-2013102184217401251.html>

#### ■ Madagascar: Elections and education

Madagascar parents' desire to send their children to school is strong. When President Tsiranana came to office in 2009 his main priorities were to reform primary education. It was conducted in a disorderly fashion leading to a dramatic reduction in teacher training and professional development for primary school teachers. As the demands for teachers grew, parents' associations recruited unqualified children's parents to teach. These teachers are called 'FRAM teachers'. FRAM teachers now constitute about two-thirds of all primary teachers and the education system is failing. Teachers are insufficiently qualified, have received no or only very little training and face difficult working conditions. On Friday October 25th Madagascar holds its first presidential elections since the 2009 military coup. We can pray that this event will end years of political crisis that, amongst other things, has failed the education system. See also

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/08/22/us-madagascar-elections-idUSBRE97L0YE20130822>

**Pray:** that the new government of Madagascar will ensure future primary school education prepares children for life and higher education through math, reading, and other diverse lessons. (Ps.72:3,4)

**More:** <http://www.issa.int/Observatory/Good-Practices/Access-to-social-protection-for-community-teachers>

#### ■ Nigeria: Officials portray slaughter of Christians as 'cattle theft'

Muslim Fulani herdsmen killed 10 Christians in three villages in Plateau State last week in what authorities called cattle-rustling. A visit to the home where eight were killed revealed the presence of no cows. A state official was quick to deny the attack was rooted in the ethno-religious violence that has convulsed the State. Military officials asserted that security forces recovered 20 cows and killed five of the rustlers in thwarting an attempted theft. However a news reporter found no evidence of cattle ownership there. Fulani Muslims also attacked the villages of Zatsitsa-Kudeson and Chehwyangang killing two Christians.

**Pray:** that the Muslim Fulani herdsmen attacking Christians will be brought to account for their crimes against the innocent. Pray also for accurate and unbiased reporting by the government, and all in position of authority. (Ps.90:15-17)

**More:** <http://morningstarnews.org/2013/10/officials-in-nigeria-try-to-portray-slaughter-of-christian-family-as-cattle-theft/>

#### ■ Global: Combatting human trafficking

30 million people are held as slaves today. Global awareness is rising but there is no major breakthrough. The survivors need healing and jobs with dignity. Jobs are also essential for adequate prevention of human trafficking. A Business as Mission (BAM) think tank's report explores ways to combat slave trade with concrete and practical steps for businesses to engage in. This report helps Companies understand how businesses can become Freedom Businesses. Martin Luther King said, 'When we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we're free at last!'

**Pray:** that this call to freedom through businesses working together would ring out, be heard and acted upon globally. (Ps.133)

**More:** <http://www.matstunehag.com/2013/10/19/let-freedom-ring-let-freedom-businesses-trumpet-a-new-call/>

## PRAYER FORUM OF THE BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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