

PRAYER ALERT...

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PRaise REPORTS

■ Google and Microsoft agree on measures to block abuse images

Leading search engine companies Google and Microsoft have agreed on measures to make it harder to find child abuse images online. As many as 100,000 search terms will now return no results that find illegal material and will trigger warnings that child abuse imagery is illegal. PM David Cameron has welcomed the move but said it must be delivered or he would bring forward new legislation. Child protection experts have warned most images are on hidden networks. In July, Mr Cameron called on Google and Microsoft's Bing - which together account for 95% of search traffic - to do more to prevent people getting access to illegal images. He said they needed to ensure that searches which were unambiguously aimed at finding illegal images should return no results. (See Prayer Alert 27-2013)

Praise: that this first step in the battle against child abuse will be adopted around the world by all search engine providers. (Dt.11:19)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-24980765>

■ Burkina Faso: 80 churches planted, 1000 baptised

Timeline: In 2002 three American missionary families moved to Burkina Faso and settled among the unreached Dagara people to learn the language. By 2004 they were welcomed into three communities - meeting under trees to share Bible stories. In 2005 news of the gatherings spread. People walked miles to participate in worship, prayer, Scripture reading, and offerings. They asked for similar groups in their villages. New Dagara believers became teachers themselves. In 2006 the first church planted by a new Dagara believer led to over 30 churches by 2010. However, they suffered physically without safe water - then a new missionary family led a well rehab outreach and in 2013 80+ churches are now entirely Dagara run with outreach increasing. 1,000 were baptised last Easter.

Praise: God for Bible translators, outreach programmes and all the work that He provides for use with unreached people groups.

More: <http://blog.godreports.com/2013/11/burkina-faso-80-churches-planted-1000-baptized/>

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Christianity at risk of dying out in a generation, warns Lord Carey

Christianity is just a 'generation away from extinction' in Britain unless churches make a dramatic breakthrough in attracting young people back to the faith, the former Archbishop of Canterbury Lord Carey has warned. Clergy are now gripped by a 'feeling of defeat', congregations are worn down by 'heaviness' while the public simply greets both with 'rolled eyes and a yawn of boredom', he said. His comments at a Christian conference came as a stark report laid before the Church of England's General Synod warned that its position as a 'national institution' will be in doubt if numbers in the pews drop much further. Lord Carey's warning came as he addressed the Shropshire Light Conference at Holy Trinity Church in

Shrewsbury at the weekend discussing how the church could be 're-imagined'. The former Archbishop said while the Church is doing much important work, it faces an existential challenge.

Pray: for the Church to take up the challenge and pray against this feeling of defeat. (Rev.19:11)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/10458380/Christianity-at-risk-of-dying-out-in-a-generation-warns-Lord-Carey.html>

■ Evangelise or fossilise – John Sentamu's call for evangelism

Without evangelism, the Church is going to die. This was the message from Dr John Sentamu, Archbishop of York, in his address to the General Synod of the Church of England on Monday. He opened his speech by saying that England was in need of 're-evangelisation' to return to a previous level of general understanding and acceptance of the Gospel. 'All people in Britain experience weather, and they talk about it readily and repeatedly. If only disciples of Jesus Christ in England did the same thing about Him,' he said. Quoting the late Canon David Watson, he repeated the phrase 'evangelise or fossilise' repeatedly throughout his opening speech. At various points he compared the situation to that of the early northern English saints, Aiden, Cuthbert, Paulinus, Hilda and Chad. 'What was it that drove these tough men?' the Archbishop asked, '...sustained by a diet of prayer, study and manual labour.'

Pray: that the people of God will put on the armour of God and move out in faith to win others to faith in Him. (Eph.6:11)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/evangelise.or.fossilise.john.sentamus.call.for.outreach/34734.htm>

■ Warsi: Christianity faces extinction in Middle East

Faith and communities minister Baroness Warsi told the BBC Radio 4 Today programme: 'I'm concerned that the birthplace of Christianity, the parts of the world where Christianity first spread, is now seeing large sections of the Christian community leaving, and those that are remaining feeling persecuted. One in 10 Christians live in a minority situation and large numbers of those who live in a minority situation around the world are persecuted.' In some cases, Christians were targeted for 'collective punishment' by majority groups in retaliation for what they perceived as the injustices committed by western powers,' she said. The Archbishop of Westminster, Vincent Nichols, agreed saying, 'I think in some parts of the Middle East that is probably true. There are real challenges for Christians in this part of the world.'

Pray: for believers throughout the world to stand firm in their faith. (Lk.21:19)

More: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/15/christianity-risk-extinction-persecution-minority-warsi>

■ NSS seeks to block Christian coronation

The National Secular Society (NSS) has announced a campaign to try to block Prince Charles from having a Christian coronation. The group of radical secularists will be working with the Leigh Day law firm to mount a challenge to the coronation oath, which declares that 'the whole world is subject to the Power and Empire of Christ our Redeemer.' They will also be seeking to remove the monarch's historic position as head of the Church of England. The coronation service, which goes back at least to the time of King Egbert in the ninth-century, allegedly violates human rights, the NSS claims. Up until now, the Secular Society has shown extreme ambivalence towards protecting religious freedom. In a bizarre twist, the NSS is arguing that the coronation oath violates the monarch's religious freedom as well as the freedom of the populace who have the 'right' to live in a society governed on stringently secularist grounds.

Pray: for those who oppose the Christian faith that God will draw them close to Himself. (Ps.21:11)

More: <http://www.christianvoice.org.uk/index.php/nss-seeks-block-christian-coronation/>

■ Christian radio station continues to fight advert ban

Premier Christian Radio took out a full page advertisement in Wednesday's Telegraph, labelling Tuesday's Court of Appeal decision an 'attack on freedom of speech for Christians'. In May 2011, Premier planned to run an advert asking listeners to report their experiences of marginalisation in the workplace as a result of their faith. The Radio Advertising Clearance Centre (RACC) refused to let the advert air, claiming that it had a political objective and therefore fell under the broadcasting prohibitions on political advertising. The RACC's decision was challenged by the radio station, and they were granted a judicial review, but the objection was upheld. Premier made a second appeal this Tuesday but the High Court again upheld the ban. In response Premier ran an advertisement in Wednesday's Telegraph stating that, 'Christians have been banned for giving their opinion. Yours could be next,' under a photograph of a taped up mouth. It then reproduces a copy of the banned ad, with the heading 'Would you have banned this advert?' and invites readers to vote in a poll on the Premier website.

Pray: that despite the action of the judges there would be a change of heart. (Ex.18:22)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/christian.radio.station.continues.to.fight.advert.ban/34750.htm>

■ Christians must stand up to payday lenders, says bishop

Following the lead of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of Ludlow has joined in the campaign to support credit unions as a fairer alternative to payday loan companies. Bishop Alistair Magowan, lead bishop in the Diocese of Hereford, is urging congregations to support their local credit unions. He has spoken out against the strategies of payday loan companies who target those on a low income and encourage them to take out short-term loans with huge hidden charges and extortionate rates of interest. In a letter that has gone out to all parishioners in his diocese, he calls for Christians to actively work against the debt that leads to borrowers becoming bound and entrapped. He added that everyone had a duty to be concerned about the ways in which unscrupulous loan companies conduct their businesses.

Pray: for the growth of local credit unions providing an alternative to expensive payday loans. (Ex.22:25)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/christians.must.stand.up.to.payday.lenders.says.bishop/34647.htm>

■ Call for more action over bullying

The charity Barnardo's Cymru, wants schools to improve their response to the issue of bullying after 84% of those surveyed wanted more be done. Some questioned said many children were resigned to bullying and felt nothing was going

to stop it. Barnardo's Cymru sent out an online questionnaire between September and November and published the results on Monday to mark the start of Anti-Bullying Week. Almost 60% of respondents said they had witnessed bullying due to sexuality, disability and special needs and 51% because of race or cultural background. Vikki Butler, Barnardo's Cymru policy and research officer, said the strong response showed the issue of bullying was 'very serious and at the forefront of children's minds'.

Pray: for all children throughout the UK who are victims of bullying and that schools and other groups will take the matter seriously to create an anti-bullying culture. (Dt.31:6)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-24983745>

EUROPE

■ Norway: TV presenter sacked for wearing Christian cross on air

Siv Kristin Sællmann, who reads NRK's regional news for southern Norway, last month came on air several times wearing a discreet 1.4cm long gold cross, studded with tiny black diamonds. Immediately, viewers began to call in with complaints, pushing Anders Sårheim, the regional editor, to instruct her not to wear the symbol in future. 'What I don't like is that people out there can just call in and tell my boss what I should and I shouldn't wear,' Sællmann told The Local. She claims that she never thought of the cross, which her husband bought her on a recent holiday in Dubai, as more than a piece of jewellery. 'I didn't wear the cross because I wanted to be provocative,' she said. 'I am a Christian, but right now I see the cross everywhere. It's part of the catwalk. It's part of fashion. It's not like only Christians wear the symbol. I didn't think that people would react.'

Pray: that the directors of NRK would reconsider and be granted wisdom over their decision. (Job.12:13)

More: <http://www.thelocal.no/2013/11/04/norways-nrk-bans-newsreader-from-wearing-a-cross>

■ Launch of Euthanasia Prevention Coalition - Europe

A new coalition was launched in Brussels this week to combat the growing threat of euthanasia across Europe. The Euthanasia Prevention Coalition Europe (EPC-Europe) brings together organisations and individuals from across the continent to campaign against the erosion of laws that protect people from euthanasia. This new campaign group will act as a powerful voice against attempts to change laws across Europe that protect people from euthanasia and assisted suicide. The UK, France and Germany are currently considering legislation, but overwhelming evidence from jurisdictions where euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide is legal, such as Belgium and the Netherlands, demonstrates beyond doubt, how quickly and easily euthanasia is extended to others, especially disabled people and elderly people. High-profile cases here have provoked international outrage leading commentators to think of Belgium as the new world leader in exploiting euthanasia against those with disabilities and mental health issues, for example.

Pray: for success of this initiative that will bring wisdom and life, not death. (Ps.36:9)

More: <http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/end-of-life/new-european-group-launched-to-halt-%E2%80%98growing-threat%E2%80%99-of-state-sanctioned-eu>

WORLDWIDE

■ Philippines: Healthcare

It is now estimated two million people are homeless after the typhoon. Many are in areas receiving little or no help so far. As ministries and relief agencies gather speed to organise themselves to meet the needs the following is just one example of the process. A ministry of Christian Medical & Dental Associations (CMDA) based in America will be joining a team to provide medical care to the people affected. A five-member scout team left on Wednesday Nov.20th to assess medical needs in the Baybay City area with a population of 100,000+. Following the assessment CMDA will coordinate waves of medical teams to provide assistance over the next months as needed. They will be working with the International Office of the Salvation Army and the World Health Organization focusing on areas that have received little help so far. There are more than 7,000 islands in the Philippines, and the UN estimates 12,000 people have been injured, overwhelming the local healthcare system which has also been badly damaged.

Pray: against disease due to decomposing bodies; pray for effective spraying of chemicals against mosquitoes in an attempt to prevent disease, which is the greatest threat to people's health at this point. (Mic.7:8)

More: http://www.cmda.org/wcm/CMDA/MISSIONS/Global_Health_Relief/CMDA/Navigation/Missions/Global_Health_Relief/Global_Health_Relief.aspx?hkey=21e736c8-ddbd-4e29-a002-850c6eb94e5b

■ Cameroon: Priest 'kidnapped' by Boko Haram

The latest kidnapping of Father Georges Vandenbeusch, a French Priest working in northern Cameroon, raises fears that Cameroon has become terrorists' second home. 'I can confirm that the French priest is in the hands of Mujahideen [fighters] from Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad (Boko Haram's Arabic name), who carried out the operation that was co-ordinated with Ansaru,' an anonymous source told the AFP news agency on Friday. Ansaru is a Boko Haram splinter group that has attacked several Western and Nigerian targets. It claimed responsibility for the kidnap and murder of seven international construction workers earlier in 2013. Last week, the USA named Boko Haram and Ansaru as Foreign Terrorist Organisations, making it a crime for any US national to provide them with material support. Father Georges was kidnapped last Thursday night in Goza by 20 gunmen near his parish of Nguetchewe 30km from the Nigeria border. The attackers spoke English and Hausa as they attacked nuns and asked for money.

Pray: for God to help French and Nigerian authorities to break the Boko Haram strongholds along the 1600 km border from the Atlantic Ocean to Lake Chad. (Hab.2:2)

More: <http://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2013/11/2824693/>

■ Australia: Foodbanks in the midst of wealth

A portion of Australia's Prayer Network report states:- many Australians have to struggle to put food on the table yet Australians are the world's richest people according to the Credit Suisse 2013 Global Wealth Report. The nation's

household wealth per adult grew by 2.6% last year. Yet demand for food aid was 10% up on last year with the children of the working poor frequently going hungry. The nation's leading food assistance charity reveals that despite an upswing in corporate donations, the charity still needs 65% more food donations to address the soaring demand. Services are strained since the government cut welfare benefits for single mothers and released 10,000 asylum-seekers into the community without work rights. A Canberra Church spokesperson said, 'I don't think the government puts a lot of thought into the repercussions of making these decisions that hurt people who are just trying to make a new start. For many it's a decision between charity or crime. What's the choice? Foodbanks feed 473,000 people a month, 35% are children.'

Pray: for the Government and leaders of Australia's commerce and industry to recognise the needs of the vulnerable and weak and demonstrate a spirit of generosity with God's provision. (Deut.8:17-19)

More: <http://auspraynet.org.au/>

■ China: Police detain pastor of 'state-approved' Church

A major Christian church in central Henan province was 'paralyzed' after its pastor, his sisters and dozens of church workers were detained. 'Up to Nov 20th a total of 20+ workers of the Nanle County Christian Church have been arrested. The daughter of detained Pastor Zhang Xiaojie said, 'Because all the church workers were caught my sister and I fled and are in hiding.' She suggested that the number of detained believers may be higher - the exact figure is difficult to determine yet. The detentions began on Sat. November 16th when Pastor Zhang was tricked by local security chief Li and others into talks with officials at his church. This was a trap - a dozen police officers came and tied up Pastor Zhang, without a warrant or other relevant legal procedures. The Pastor's daughter said the exact whereabouts of the detainees are unknown. 'His parents and one of my aunts are in hospital.'

Pray: against the current crackdown by authorities on popular churches and congregations. (Is.9:7)

More: <http://www.bosnewslife.com/31174-breaking-news-china-detains-dozens-of-church-workers-pastor>

■ Egypt: Troops die in Sinai attack

Ten soldiers have been killed and 35 wounded in a car bomb attack on a convoy of Egyptian soldiers in North Sinai. The death toll is likely to rise. Attacks on security forces in the Sinai have increased since July. Recent attacks include 24 dead on 19th August and 6 killed on 11th September in Rafah; 3 killed at checkpoints on 30th September; 3 killed by car bomb on 7th October; 4 died in a car bomb on 10th Oct. Wednesday's attack was the bloodiest. 35 of Egypt's Second Field Army were wounded. They were deployed to destroy tunnels along Egypt's border with Gaza. Interim Prime Minister Hazem Beblawi said the government was looking at all the options to deal with the on-going terrorist incidents. Meanwhile, a Sinai-based jihadist group linked to al-Qaeda has admitted killing a high-ranking member of Egypt's National Security Agency outside his home in eastern Cairo earlier this week.

Pray: against what Egypt calls 'black terrorism', Ask God to bring His peaceful resolution to the current unrest in the region. (1Sa.2:9)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-25013655>

■ USA: Storms, tornadoes and a Christian response

The fury of a tornado is an incredibly hard thing to deal with. Some will seemingly pick and choose homes to target and others will cut a wide and disastrous swathe through an entire community. Either way they leave a trail of pain, suffering and destruction in their wake for those who have lost everything as well as those who are dealing with survivor's guilt. Crisis-trained chaplains with the Billy Graham Rapid Response Team in co-ordination with Samaritan's Purse are on the ground this week in Illinois following the storm front that spawned dozens of tornadoes and destroyed hundreds of homes across the Midwest. News reports indicate six died in Illinois, 200 were injured and seven counties declared disaster areas. The chaplains will be based near Washington Ill where as many as 500 homes were damaged or destroyed.

Pray: for the people of Washington, as well as all of those affected in the many other areas of the Midwest that were devastated by the same massive storm system. (Ps.23:4)

More: <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/2013/s13110075.htm>

■ Pakistan: Church under attack

The following is part of a sad letter received today: 'This morning church staff were in church, some were in the parking area and the Church watchman and the police security man were outside near the gate. As the church watchman came inside to put his tea cup back in the kitchen he heard a sound of gun fire. He and others ran out and saw the police man on the ground with blood around his head. One man was running away holding two guns. Another police man and two church young boys ran after the killer but he was on a motor bike and got away. The church people took the police man to hospital but he did not survive and died on the way. He was a fairly young man aged 38 and has a daughter of 6 years and a son aged 2 ½. This is the second incident of this type recently. Please pray for the protection of church branches and that the spirit of fear will not prevail among us after a very difficult year.'

Pray: that God will keep His mighty hand over the Church in Pakistan and protect them against all the spiritual and physical attacks.

More: no link

PRAYER FORUM OF THE BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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