

# Prayer Alert . . .

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## BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

### ACEA and Evangelical Alliance members defend freedom of speech for all

A weekend of prayer and protest is planned by leaders representing over 100 Christian groups, churches and denominations. It will begin with a prayer rally near Speakers' Corner in Hyde Park on Saturday 8 October from 12 noon for those able to reach London and will be followed by a day of prayer in local churches throughout the nation on the Sunday, concluding with a mass protest rally on Tuesday (11th October) in Parliament Square, commencing at 1pm, when as many Christians as possible are urged to be there. The African and Caribbean Evangelical Alliance and the Evangelical Alliance is urging its combined membership of over a million Christians to take time off work next month to protest publicly against the proposed Racial and Religious Hatred legislation. They are urging people to gather outside the Houses of Parliament on the 11th October to coincide with the Bill's first full debate in the House of Lords. The Evangelical Alliance, as well as entertainers and secularists, fear the proposed Bill will restrict the longstanding tradition of the right to freedom of speech in Britain. The House of Commons has so far approved the proposed legislation and it only remains for the House of Lords to give its consent for the Bill to become law. Further information about the proposed legislation, plus guidance on how to frame a letter of protest to MPs and members of the House of Lords, is available from the Public Affairs pages of the Alliance website at <http://www.eauk.org>. *Let us join our brothers and sisters in Christ and support the protesters. Prayer for the Lords as they consider this Bill, that they will be given true wisdom.*

### Evangelicals to be dominant force in UK Church development, research finds

Evangelicals will be a key body in the future development of the Church in the UK a new report has found. Christian Research, a member organisation of the Evangelical Alliance UK, has revealed the findings in its latest issue of their journal Religious Trends 5. The research indicated that by 2020 evangelicals will be the dominant force in all denominations. The research was titled, 'Churchmanship', and the editor of Religious Trends, Peter Brierley stated that by 2020, "Evangelicals dominate". This deduction is based on figures over recent years revealing that larger evangelical Church of England churches have increasingly been taking the lead. The journal stated that the majority of the Church of England's large churches, with more than a 350-strong congregation, are evangelical. The UK Director at the Evangelical Alliance, John Smith said, "Right across the UK there is evidence that the Church is alive and well. Alpha continues to make its mark. Citywide mission projects like Soul in the City and Merseyfest motivate armies of young Christians to love their communities in Jesus' name. The burgeoning black church phenomenon continues to rewrite the landscape of UK churchmanship. Countless experiments in emerging church demonstrate that while there may be impatience with the Church as we may have known it, rumours of its demise are

greatly exaggerated." [www.christiantoday.com](http://www.christiantoday.com) *As evangelicals in the Church grow let us pray that the Lord will continue to build His Church and bless all those who are open to His Spirit.*

### **Loyalist violence condemned by Evangelical Alliance Northern Ireland**

Protestant and Roman Catholic Church leaders have joined in condemning rioting by militants. Stephen Cave, general secretary of [Evangelical Alliance Northern Ireland](http://www.evangelicalalliance.org), said: "We are simply appalled at the continuing violence on the streets, and ashamed that some who share our faith will not condemn it." The Alliance also emphasised that churches and Christian organisations must take seriously their responsibility to call those within their membership and congregations to live at peace with one another and show proper respect for everyone, even those with whom they may disagree. *May we pray that this will become true and the Church in all its diversity will join in condemnation of this violence.*

### **Alpha course ads in UK cinemas**

A new ad campaign will soon hit 2,000 cinemas in the UK, but the sponsors are not advertising soda, clothing or credit cards - they're advertising courses in Christianity! The "Alpha Course - Introduction to Christianity," offered at over 7,000 UK churches, will be advertised in the UK theatres using model Kim Johnson, footballer Linvoy Primus and mountaineer Bear Grylls. All three celebrities have taken the Alpha Course and will be shown in each of their respective environments prior to asking the viewer, "Is there more to life than this?" Originating from Holy Trinity, Brompton, a London Anglican church 20 years ago, the Alpha Course gives the basics of Christianity and is now being taught in prisons, schools and workplaces with over 30,000 courses circulating around the world. [www.breakingchristiannews.com](http://www.breakingchristiannews.com) *Continue to pray that many more seekers will be drawn into a relationship with the Lord. Praise God for this very successful initiative which has brought much fruit.*

### **British Missionaries desert the Dark Continent to convert the secular French**

Traditional image of the British missionary simmering in a cannibal's cooking pot or trekking through the African bush can finally be laid to rest. New figures show that the modern missionary is eschewing countries such as Nigeria, Papua New Guinea or India in favour of that unlikely heart of darkness: France. The latest edition of Religious Trends, a compilation of Christian statistics published last week, shows that France overtook Kenya last year as the leading destination for British mission agencies. In further evidence that Europe is increasingly seen as more spiritually needy than Africa or Asia, in third place is another country with strong Roman Catholic roots, Spain. France is now considered one of the world's most secular countries, partly because of its clear separation of Church and state." There has been a crisis of confidence in Christianity across Europe," said Martin Thompson of the Church Mission Society. "We are beginning to see Europe as a strategic priority." According to France Mission, there are more mediums and occult practitioners in France than there are registered doctors, and practising Muslims outnumber practising evangelical Christians by 12 to one. [www.telegraph.co.uk](http://www.telegraph.co.uk) *Let us pray for all those who have been called to minister to Europe's spiritual needs. Let us seek the Lord's blessings and breakthrough.*

### **Parents face jail as ministers target rising truancy**

The parents of 8,000 serial truants are to face fast-track legal action after figures revealed that the average number of pupils missing school each day jumped by almost 5,000 in the past 12 months. Statistics published yesterday show that despite government spending of almost £900m on initiatives to improve behaviour and attendance, the number of children skipping lessons has reached a new high. Ministers blamed a hard core of around 8,000 pupils at 146 schools who, they said, were responsible for a fifth of all truancy. The schools minister, Jacqui Smith, said these schools - mainly inner-city state secondary - had been asked to draw up a list of persistent truants in the next week. Their parents will be given 12 weeks to improve their children's attendance or face "automatic prosecution". The families will also receive support from a dedicated truancy officer, but if there is no improvement they could face a fine of up to £2,500 or jail for three months. [The Guardian](http://www.guardian.co.uk) *Pray for our young people and those responsible for their education – parents, teachers and authorities, even Churches – and pray for wisdom and guidance in their roles that the Lord will help them in the task.*

### **Equality chief warns of 'racial nightmare'**

Britain's race relations chief is warning that the country faces racial segregation with Muslim and black ghettos dividing cities. Commission for Racial Equality chairman Trevor Phillips believes the July terror attacks have exposed a racial "nightmare" where some districts are becoming "fully-fledged ghettos - literal black holes" where people fear to go. In a speech to Manchester Council for Community Relations, Mr Phillips will warn that Britain risks "sleepwalking" into New Orleans-style segregation and calls for controversial measures to address the problem. [www.chanel4.com](http://www.chanel4.com) *Let us pray that we will not fall into the trap of racial segregation and that we will be open to God's diversity.*

### **Prayer tour along the course of the Thames**

'Turn of the Tide' a wave of prayer from the estuary to the source of the River Thames. Over the past few months, churches and prayer groups of many denominational backgrounds along the course of the Thames, across south Essex, north Kent, London, Reading, Oxford and beyond have signed up to prayer for 24 hours each over a period of 28 days, 2 - 30 October 2005. Contact: Tim Harrold - 24-7 Prayer East London Boiler Room. Email: [tim@harrolds.wanadoo.co.uk](mailto:tim@harrolds.wanadoo.co.uk) *Let us join the wave of prayer along the Thames and support those involved.*

## **EUROPE**

### **Herrnhut Germany: 24-7 leaders gather at Round Table**

Forty key catalysts within the 24-7 Prayer movement are gathering this week in the historic German village of Herrnhut. The leaders have come together from all over the world at this, the most multinational 24-7 gathering to date, with people travelling from the UK, Sweden, the USA, South Africa, Portugal, Canada, Spain, Germany, France, New Zealand, Switzerland, Finland, Ireland, Australia, Macedonia and Mexico. [www.24-7prayer.com](http://www.24-7prayer.com) *The leaders have specifically asked us to pray for them at this year's Round Table as they discuss major opportunities of the community at this time*

### **Update on German elections**

Elections on 18 September did not deliver a clear result. Angela Merkel's Christian Democratic Party emerged as the largest party in parliament but without enough seats to form a majority. Frau Merkel has until October 18 to find enough support from the smaller parties to form a government. If she fails, the current Chancellor, Social Democrat Gerhard Schroeder, can make a bid for power with an alternative alliance. If neither is able to win a majority, Germany's President, Horst Koehler, may be forced to call a new election. Both Germans and leaders of other European countries have expressed concern at the paralysis in the country and its effect on the reform process in Europe. *Pray that God would guide the process as German leaders seek to form a new government and that Germany would have a righteous and just government. Pray that the reform process in Europe would not be derailed.*

### **EU membership for Turkey**

EU leaders remain divided over Turkey's bid to join the EU. The UK government wants to open talks with Turkey to discuss terms of entry on 3 October. UK Foreign Secretary said that "by welcoming Turkey we will demonstrate that Western and Islamic cultures can thrive together as partners in the modern world – the alternative is too terrible to contemplate" (<http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk>) But Turkey still refuses to accept the government of Cyprus which effectively controls only the Greek part of the island and Cyprus has said that it will therefore block the talks. Austria is also opposed and leaders in France and Germany have expressed serious doubts. *Pray that in these last 2 weeks before negotiations with Turkey are due to start EU leaders will reach agreement on a way ahead which is in accordance with God's will both for Turkey and EU countries. Pray also that God would heal the deep wounds in Cyprus and bring reconciliation between the two communities.*

### **Spanish political party to appeal gay "marriage" ruling**

Spain's opposition Popular Party (PP) announced last Sunday their decision to appeal the new same-sex "marriage" and adoption laws as unconstitutional. PP secretary general Angelo Acebes said the party "never doubted the unconstitutional nature of the law and had instructed its legal office to make the appeal." Spain's Socialist-led government legalized same-sex "marriage" June 30. The measure, which passed by a margin of 187-147 in Spain's Congress of Deputies, also legalized the adoption of children by homosexual couples, and granted same-sex couples inheritance rights. [www.LifeSiteNews.com](http://www.LifeSiteNews.com) *Pray that the authorities will be guided in their ongoing discussions and decisions.*

## **WORLDWIDE**

### ***BREAKING NEWS* Hurricane Rita triggers mass US evacuation**

More than one million people have begun to evacuate the Gulf Coast of the United States ahead of Hurricane Rita. The storm, which has been upgraded to Category Five, is heading towards Texas with winds of 165mph (265km/h). Meteorologists say the hurricane could be the most intense ever to hit Texas, and one of the most powerful ever seen on the US mainland. President George Bush has declared a state of emergency in Texas and neighbouring Louisiana. He called on people to heed evacuation orders, adding: "We hope and pray that Hurricane Rita will not be a devastating storm, but we've got to be ready for the worst." [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk) *Pray that God will dissipate the storm and have mercy on those who have already suffered much.*

### **Basra to stop dealing with British forces**

Basra city authorities last night declared they would no longer co-operate with British forces in southern Iraq, as the row caused by Monday's confrontation between UK troops and Iraqi police escalated. Amid anti-British riots in Basra led by Iraqi police in uniform, the British and Iraqi governments yesterday tried desperately to paper over the rift triggered by Monday's violent scenes. Speaking in London, John Reid, the Defence Secretary, insisted the dispute over the capture and forcible release of two SAS soldiers on Monday "will not affect the relationship between Iraq and Britain". But a few hours later in Basra, the provincial city council held an emergency meeting and voted unanimously "to stop dealing with the British forces working in Basra and not to cooperate with them because of their irresponsible aggression on a government facility". [www.scotsman.com](http://www.scotsman.com) *Let us pray that the rift between the peoples, authorities and military will soon be resolved and a return to the good relations that had been evident over recent months.*

### **Ukraine president Yushchenko seeks to find way out of crisis**

President Viktor Yushchenko met with parliamentary faction leaders Wednesday to try to find a way out of the deepening political crisis triggered by the break-up of his Orange Revolution team. Yushchenko said he wants to bury the hatchet with ousted Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, but stopped far short of accepting his former ally's proposal to return to the government. All political forces, including Bloc Yulia Tymoshenko, should take part in forming the government; Yushchenko said a day after parliament refused to approve his choice of acting Prime Minister, Yuriy Yekhanurov, for the nation's No. 2 job. Ukraine has sunk into a political quagmire since the Orange Revolution team that brought Yushchenko to power disintegrated two weeks ago amid mutual allegations of corruption and infighting. Yushchenko dismissed the government on September 8, a move that has left him politically vulnerable in a parliament still dominated by communists and his former foes. The opposition has grown even larger however, with lawmakers expressing loyalty to Tymoshenko. For many Ukrainians, Tymoshenko symbolized their revolution, a charismatic orator with charm and appealing ethnic symbolism. (See *Prayer Alert 16 & 20*) A born-again Christian she rallied hundreds of thousands who massed in Kiev last year to denounce fraud by the former government in the presidential election and force a new vote, which Yushchenko won. [www.guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk) *Pray that these problems will soon be resolved and that there will be a return to the hopes that followed the unity of the orange revolution.*

### **Convoys of Norwegian Church aid ambushed in Darfur**

Convoys of food and material supplies by Norwegian Church Aid have been raided for the second time in Darfur, as the security situation there shows signs of deterioration. The convoy was held at gunpoint in an ambush by criminal gangs, an increasingly regular occurrence in Sudan's unstable western province. "We are extremely thankful to know that our colleagues

are safe and well. But the growing trend of ambush, both of clearly marked aid vehicles and hired trucks, is frightening," said Bjørg Mide, Director of the NCA/ACT/Caritas relief programme, which currently operates in 35 different locations across the region. He added: "Hundreds of thousands of people rely entirely on the life-saving services we provide in Darfur. We provide these people with services that they actually have a right to receive – but we need relatively secure conditions to be able to deliver." [www.christiantoday.com](http://www.christiantoday.com) *Continue to pray for Sudan and the ongoing problems caused by the war and drought.*

#### **Nigerian move deepens Anglican rift over homosexuality**

Nigeria's Anglican Church has purged its constitution of any reference to the mother church in England, deepening a rift over homosexuality. A statement on the Nigerian church's Web site says "all former references to 'communion with the see of Canterbury'" have been deleted. Instead, Nigerian Anglicans affirm their ties with churches that maintain the historic "faith, doctrine, sacrament and discipline." Nigerian Archbishop Peter Akinola, leader of more than a fifth of the world's Anglicans, has emerged as a leader of Anglican conservatives who oppose any church acceptance of homosexuality. The Nigerian and Ugandan churches broke ties with the U.S. Episcopal Church over its 2003 consecration of a gay bishop. A dispute over same-sex marriages in England has deepened divisions. [www.cbn.com](http://www.cbn.com) *Continue to pray for the Anglican Church as it goes through these difficult times. Pray that they will be able to find a way forward that would bring about a resolution.*

## **PRAISE REPORTS**

#### **Artists raise £23,000 to fight global poverty**

Work by top British artists including Tracey Emin, Gavin Turk and Keith Coventry raised £23,800 for Christian Aid when it was auctioned by Sotheby's at the Fine Art Society on Thursday, 15 September. The auction, which also included work donated by Tim Noble and Sue Webster, Simon English, Rob and Nick Carter, Dan Macmillan and Michael Nyman, consisted of eight specially designed globes and original artwork, inspired by the UN's Millennium Development Goals. The exhibition, called Global Warning, can be viewed at [www.pressureworks.org](http://www.pressureworks.org) Christian Aid spokeswoman Karen Hedges said: 'We are delighted that the auction has raised so much money for Christian Aid and we're very grateful to all the artists for helping us to highlight the importance of the Millennium Development Goals. Christian Aid works in more than 50 countries on a range of projects that tackle many of the issues addressed by the goals and the money raised will be used to support those programmes.' [www.christianaid.org](http://www.christianaid.org) *Praise God for the kindness of those who have donated their skills in support of those less fortunate.*

#### **Speed-read Bible aims to spread the word**

A new, highly compressed summary of the Bible aimed at people reared on fast food, instant credit and the high-paced lifestyle was launched today, in the comparatively timeless setting of Canterbury Cathedral. As its name suggests, the Hundred Minute Bible reduces the 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament to a volume which a busy reader could get through in around an hour and 40 minutes. The Hundred Minute Bible was put together over several years by the Rev Michael Hinton, a retired school head teacher. He explained, "We have majored on Jesus because, for Christians, he is the central figure in the Bible." As well as going to bookshops, nearly 12,000 copies of the Hundred Minute Bible have been produced for distribution to churches and to schools. [The book is also being sold online.](#) *Pray that His Word, even in such limited portions, will help lead people to faith in the living God.*

## **LOOKING AHEAD**

**2<sup>nd</sup> October:** *Disability Sunday* organised by Through the Roof. Resources available (online and by post) Tel: 01372 749955 Email: [info@disabilitiesunday.org](mailto:info@disabilitiesunday.org) Website: [www.disabilitiesunday.org](http://www.disabilitiesunday.org)

**2<sup>nd</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> October:** '*Turn of the Tide*' a wave of prayer from the estuary to the source of the River Thames. 2005. (See report above) Email: [tim@harrolds.wanadoo.co.uk](mailto:tim@harrolds.wanadoo.co.uk)

**5<sup>th</sup> October – 3<sup>rd</sup> November:** *30-Days of Prayer for the Muslim World.* For the latest "30-Days" news and for prayer materials during Ramadan 2005 [www.30-days.net](http://www.30-days.net)

**8<sup>th</sup> October:** *Day of Prayer for Nigeria.* At All Souls Clubhouse, 141 Cleveland Street, London. 10am - 3pm. Admission is free. Tea and Coffee will be provided, please bring a packed lunch

**19<sup>th</sup> -26<sup>th</sup> October:** *National Parents' Week.* Register for resources on website or by phone to The National Family and Parents Institute (NFPI) Tel: 020 7424 3460 Website: [www.nfpi.org](http://www.nfpi.org)

**23<sup>rd</sup> October:** *Bible Sunday.* Resources available from The Bible Society contact: Website: Tel: 01793 418100 [www.biblesociety.org.uk](http://www.biblesociety.org.uk)

**29<sup>th</sup> October:** *Trumpet Call III* - Back to the NEC Arena for a third National Trumpet Call Day of Prayer. Make sure the date is in your diary [www.worldprayer.org.uk](http://www.worldprayer.org.uk)