

PRAYER ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

Prayer Alert . . .

Draft Issue 44

CONTACT US: info@prayer-alert.net

FRIDAY 28 OCTOBER 2005

- **British Isles & Ireland**
 - [Government suffers massive defeat from House of Lord's vote](#)
 - [Reclaim Halloween as Lite-Nite, says bishop](#)
 - [Poll finds 75% of British youth want gestational limit on abortion lowered significantly](#)
 - [BBC under fire over religious shows](#)
 - [Women march after city violence](#)
- **Europe**
 - [EU threatens Poland for electing pro-family President](#)
 - [Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly – Women & Religion Report](#)
 - [EU heads of state meet at Hampton Court](#)
 - [EU increases commitment to emergencies and long term development](#)
 - [Make poverty history: fair trade and the WTO Development Agenda](#)
 - [Sugar reform](#)
 - [EU Budget](#)
 - [Christian groups call for inquiry after migrants killed at EU borders](#)
- **Worldwide**
 - [Egypt: Riots, threats and a stabbing in Alexandria](#)
 - [Iraq's constitution adopted by majority vote](#)
 - [Churches in Indonesia send out a call for prayer amid rising persecution](#)
 - [UN raises quake aid appeal target](#)
- **Praise Reports**
 - [Thailand: new churches in Khao Lak after the tsunami](#)
 - [Kabyls and Chinese find Jesus in Algeria](#)
- **Looking Ahead**
 - [Dates for your diary](#)

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

Government suffers massive defeat from House of Lord's vote

The Government has suffered a massive defeat in the House of Lords over its religious hatred plans. Peers have voted to introduce safeguards to the Bill. The Lords voted by 260 to 111 in favour of a cross-party amendment. Under the amendment: nobody can be found guilty of the new religious hatred law unless it is proved they intended to stir up hatred; only threatening words would be banned by the Bill, not those which are only abusive or insulting; there would be a specific part of the Bill saying the law should not restrict evangelism, discussion, criticism of expressions of antipathy, dislike, ridicule, insult or abuse of particular religions or beliefs. There will be a crucial vote in the Commons probably within three weeks' time. The amendment could yet be removed in the Commons, but the Lords' majority of 149 is highly impressive and it will put huge pressure on the Government. I believe this large Lords vote is due, in no small part, to the high level of Christian pressure on the political parties. There has also been increased media interest in this issue. God has answered our prayers. Please also remember in your prayers the Equality Bill which is currently going through Parliament. Proposals in this Bill would outlaw 'religious harassment'. These proposals, like the religious hatred Bill, have great potential to meddle with religious freedom. We can be thankful to God that Peers in House of Lords have voted in such large numbers to introduce safeguards to the Religious Hatred Bill. This is a good result, but the fight is not over yet. We must pray and work to see MPs accept the Lords' amendments. www.christian.org *Pray that the proposed amendments too the Religious Hatred Bill will pass through the House of Commons, un-hindered. Pray that the 'Equality Bill' will have the same kind of opposition in the Lords and the wording which affects Christian Freedoms be removed or permanently changed*

Reclaim Halloween as Lite-Nite, says bishop

Halloween has become associated with the occult and should be reclaimed by Christians and even renamed "Lite-Nite", a Church of England bishop says. The Bishop of Bolton, the Rt Rev David Gillett, says that Halloween was not originally an occult celebration but has picked up "dangerous" traits over the centuries. He also criticises the practice of trick or treat, in which children knock on neighbours' doors and threaten to play practical jokes unless they are rewarded. In an article in Crux, the Manchester diocesan magazine, he says that many people worry about intimidation and violence when they open their doors. His comments follow growing concern among some Christians that Halloween is promoting an unhealthy fascination with devil worship and encouraging children to wander the streets at night. Some schools have banned parties to mark the festival, traditionally held on 31 October. www.telegraph.co.uk *Pray that the Lord will protect the minds of the young people at this time. Pray also that Halloween can be reclaimed.*

Poll finds 75% of British youth want gestational limit on abortion lowered significantly

Eight in ten adults in Great Britain regard Britain's annual count of 200,000 abortions as too many and want ways to be found of reducing that figure, say a new poll conducted by CommunicateResearch on behalf of campaign group Alive & Kicking. A

representative sample of 1005 GB adults was polled, by the professional polling company from October 21-23. The findings, published to mark the eve of the Abortion Act's 38th anniversary yesterday, noted that young people and women were strongest in their support for reduction of the gestational limit of 24 weeks, until which abortions are considered legal in England. The poll found that of those offering an opinion more than six in ten (62%) believe the 24-week abortion limit should be lowered 'significantly' given that more than 80% of babies born at that age survive. Among the 18-24 age group support rises to 75% and among women support stands at 66% (compared to 58% of men). Also attracting massive support (89%) was the proposal that the government 'should put in place an automatic regular review of abortion law to account for advances in medical knowledge'. "As we mark the tragedy of more than 6.2 million British abortions since the 1967 Act we can at least take comfort from the fact that younger age groups - and women - are the strongest supporters of change," said campaign spokesman Citra Abbot. "This poll demonstrates just how out of date and out of step with public opinion the abortion law has become." www.LifeSiteNews.com *Praise God for this trend and pray that those in power will bring about a changes to the abortion law soon.*

BBC under fire over religious shows

As we are bashed by banal reality TV shows, it would appear religion has no place on our screens. But the BBC religion and ethics department is expected to receive a major dressing-down. Sources say senior governors, in a report due to come out in weeks, will criticise the lack of attention devoted to religious broadcasting within the Corporation. There is a feeling within the BBC that not enough emphasis is given to 'landmark' religious programmes. Programmes in the same vein as the acclaimed *Son of God*, shown two years ago, has not been delivered, while general complaints are circulating of a fundamental religious deficit in public service broadcasting. The BBC Annual Report 2004/5 identified problems with religious broadcasting on TV. Radio, however, was praised for its work in the area. The report said: "Our review found that the so-called 'landmark approach' to religious broadcasting had not succeeded in delivering higher impact religious programming on BBC1. Management has now begun a programme of work to address this issue." www.christiannewspaper.com *Pray that the BBC will address the deficit within its broadcasting for Christians.*

Women march after city violence

Up to 70 women and children took part in a march to call for positive action after two deaths during violent clashes in Birmingham last weekend. The peaceful demonstration took place in the Lozells Road area - the scene of disturbances at the weekend. They marched from Heathfield Road to Carlyle Road, where Isaiah Young-Sam, 23, was stabbed to death on Saturday. The women said they wanted to send a message that black, white and Asian people in the area were united. They walked through the rain carrying placards which read United in Grief, United for Peace and We Are One Community. www.bbc.co.uk *Pray that these racial conflicts will cease and a spirit of reconciliation will pervade the area.*

EUROPE

EU threatens Poland for electing pro-family President

The European Union may try to deny Poland its EU voting status because its newly elected President-elect, Lech Kaczynski, opposes the celebration of homosexuality. The EU is calling Kaczynski's actions as the mayor of Warsaw, where he banned a "gay pride" parade two years in a row, a potential contravention of article 6 of the Treaty of Nice, which states that countries must protect the rights of minorities. He is also under fire for supporting reintroduction of the death penalty. Under Article 7 of the Treaty, a country that violates human rights - as defined by the EU - can be deprived of voting rights. "We are going to follow the situation very attentively," said Jonathan Todd, the principal EU spokesman. <http://www.lifesite.net/ldn/2005/oct/05102408.html> *Let us pray that this threat will not succeed and the EU will not try to impose regulation against the will of the people.*

Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly – Women & Religion Report

Unfortunately MP's [MEP's] at the Council of Europe, [EU Parliament] Parliamentary Assembly this week failed to either amend or refer back this unhelpful Report which smears all three monotheistic faiths as being generally 'not benign' towards women's interests and calls for women's 'rights' (an undefined term) always to take precedence over the human right to freedom of religion and its expression. It specifically calls on Member States to 'ensure that women are not subjected to religiously inspired policies and laws (e.g. in the area of family, divorce and abortion law)' and for 'underage girls' not to have their 'freedom of movement' or 'access to contraception' curtailed by their families. This Resolution will now be referred to the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers for decision. Please consider writing to Europe Minister Douglas Alexander or Rt. Hon. Jack Straw MP expressing your concerns. A copy of the Report is available on our website <http://www.careforeurope.org/index.htm> *Let us pray against this further attack on Christian values within the European Union.*

EU heads of state meet at Hampton Court

EU Heads of State met at Hampton Court on 27 October. The purpose of the meeting, chaired by Prime Minister Blair, was an informal and strategic discussion of the future of Europe. Blair's letter of invitation to EU leaders stated that his agenda was to consider how Europe should rise to the challenge to provide growth and jobs as well as social justice for its citizens and to increase their personal security. For further details see eu2005.gov.uk. The UK Presidency continues to be criticised for a lack of vision and leadership. *Pray that God will give EU leaders wisdom as they continue to debate the future direction of the EU in the light of the rejection of the Constitutional Treaty. Give them wisdom as they face the challenge of a global market and its impact on employment in Europe, and the threat of international terrorism and its effect on security. Pray that God will be sovereign over all these issues.*

EU increases commitment to emergencies and long term development

At an informal meeting of EU Development Ministers on 24-25 October in Leeds, a further £54 million was committed to the South Asian earthquake, in addition to the £70m already given by the Commission and Member State governments. At the same time it was agreed that the meeting of Development Ministers in Brussels on 21-22 November should discuss a new Development Policy Statement setting a new framework on European aid spending (which they have agreed to double by 2010). Also on the agenda for the November meeting is a debate on how the EU should support stability, prosperity and development in Africa. The aim is to agree a new EU Africa strategy at the key European Council of Heads of Government in December. *Pray that the EU will be generous in its giving to disaster relief and to development. Pray that aid will be given wisely and effectively and that there will be a genuinely helpful partnership with Africa that will be of real benefit to African countries.*

Make poverty history: fair trade and the WTO Development Agenda

At an extraordinary External Relations meeting in Luxembourg on 18 October, the EU Council stated that reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is Europe's main contribution to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Development Agenda. This week Peter Mandelson, the EU Trade Commissioner, addressed EU Development Ministers in Leeds. EU Ministers agreed in Leeds that the EU could do more to help developing countries by providing better access to EU markets for producers in developing countries and could provide more assistance to producers affected by changes to the world trading system. *With only six weeks to go before the meeting of the World Trade Organisation in Hong Kong, 13-18 December, please pray for agreement on reform of the CAP and for concrete proposals for better access to the EU market for producers from developing countries.*

Sugar reform

The EU Council discussed reform of the EU rules on pricing and marketing of sugar at a formal Agricultural Council in Luxembourg on 24-25 October. The Council agreed that outstanding issues should be addressed before the next Agricultural Council on 22-24 November when it aims to reach political agreement on the measure. Reform of the sugar sector is one of the main UK Presidency priorities. *Please continue to pray for a genuine reform of the sugar sector which provides a fair and just balance between the needs of EU producers and producers from developing countries.*

EU Budget

Tony Blair has committed himself to reach agreement on the future financing of the EU by the end of the UK Presidency and this issue will certainly be on the agenda for the Council of European Heads of State in December. Major issues to be resolved before then are the funding of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the future of the UK's budget rebate. *Please pray for wisdom for our government as they discuss these issues with other EU governments. Pray for a fair settlement. Pray that our government will make a right and just decision about the budget rebate.*

Christian groups call for inquiry after migrants killed at EU borders

Two Christian organisations and four Catholic groups have called for a judicial inquiry after at least 13 illegal migrants were killed and dozens injured while attempting to enter Spanish territory in North Africa, reports the Catholic Explorer. The Christian groups made the call in a letter to the European Union's Justice and Home Affairs Council last week. Signatories to the letter included representatives of the Commission of the Bishops' Conference of the European Community, Caritas Europe, the Jesuit Refugee Service, the International Catholic Migration Commission, the Quaker Council for European Affairs and the ecumenical Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe. The letter read: "As churches and Christian organisations working on migration and asylum, we are deeply concerned about the dramatic events at Ceuta and Melilla. "These events at the EU-Moroccan border represent the latest example of more and more people's desperate, often deadly, attempts to reach the European Union. "The Christian representatives said even those attempting to enter the EU illegally had "inalienable dignity", adding that the incidents called into question the European Union's claim to be a "community of justice", committed to "promoting respect for fundamental rights". (See Prayer Alert 43) www.christiantoday.com *Let us continue to pray that the authorities will find a just solution for the sake of these desperate people.*

WORLDWIDE

Egypt: Riots, threats and a stabbing in Alexandria

Massive Muslim riots, Islamist web threats, and the stabbing of a Coptic nun have forced Egyptian authorities to place an armed guard around St George (St Girgis) Coptic Orthodox Church in Muharram Bik, Alexandria on the Egyptian Mediterranean coast. The sudden eruption of aggression against the Church demonstrates the extremely fragile nature of religious harmony in Egypt where Muslim hostility and contempt towards the Christian minority simmers just below the surface and very little provocation is required to make the volcano blow. In this case, the provocation consisted of totally unsubstantiated reports that a theatrical production performed in St George Coptic Orthodox Church had defamed Islam. Seven churches in Alexandria were attacked by a violent mob of Muslim youths that Friday evening. Reports are coming from Alexandria that tells of significant damage to church property, including broken gates, doors, windows, and furniture. Pews were reportedly burned and Bibles were thrown into the street to be trampled by angry crowds. Families, especially pastoral families who live in the churches, have been traumatised. Many from the congregations were too afraid to meet on Sunday. www.assistnews.net *Pray that the Lord will protect his people from persecution and against the enemy's lies that have deceived those that persecute.*

Iraq's constitution adopted by majority vote

Quelling fears of having to "go back to the drawing board," with Iraq's new constitution, the 10-day audit shows it passed. In the next step of democracy, Iraqi officials confirmed today that they have adopted their new constitution by a majority of votes in the October 15th referendum. Such was the result of the ordered 10-day audit after an allegation of voter fraud. Sunni Arabs, hoping to defeat the constitution, failed to come up with enough votes to do so. The passing of this charter clears the way for the election of a new full-term parliament, to be voted on December 15th. According to the Iraqi election commission, the vote on the constitution was 78.59 for its ratification, and 21.41 against. Among other articles, the newly adopted charter states that . . . * Arabic and Kurdish are the two official languages. * Iraqis are guaranteed the rights of free expression, assembly, movement, privacy and to peaceably demonstrate. Although the official religion is Islam, the constitution also guarantees the "full religious rights of all individuals to freedom of religious belief and practice." To view the raw data of Iraq's new constitution, follow the link below. <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,113576,00.html> *Now that the constitution has been agreed pray that this will now bring stability and peace to this nation. Continue to pray for those attempting to keep the peace – the Iraqi police, British and American forces.*

Churches in Indonesia send out a call for prayer amid rising persecution

According to a report by ASSIST News Service, the churches in Indonesia have sent out an "S.O.S." for prayer, as they continue to face escalated violence and harassment because of their faith. Pastor Johan Bandi, Secretary of the Indonesian Churches Together in Perth, issued "an urgent call for solidarity for the persecuted churches in Indonesia." Bandi attributed the severe increase in terrorism and intimidation to the implement of Islamic Sharia Law in the nation. The ANS report stated that "some of the

radical Islamic groups that are publicly known, such as the Defence of Islam (FPI) and the Alliance Against Apostasy (AGAP), have broken into churches in the middle of services, demanded the pastor stop preaching, ordered him and the congregation out of the church, and forced him to sign a statement that the building would no longer be used for church services. Many times they carried out their intimidation and terror with letters of authorization from the mayor and chief of police in their hands, and accompanied by government officials and police, who stood by doing nothing." "This is a national problem facing every church group throughout the country." (See Prayer Alert 43) www.breakingchristiannews.com *Pastor Bandi urged believers everywhere to take action in two important ways. First, believers "should pray earnestly for our fellow persecuted brothers and sisters in Indonesia. Secondly, Christians worldwide should express their concerns in concert to their government leaders to move them to exert pressure on the Indonesian government 'to sincerely implement their commitment to uphold its constitution which guarantees the freedom of religion*

UN raises quake aid appeal target

The United Nations has almost doubled its appeal target for the South Asia earthquake to £309.3m. It says more resources are urgently needed to save the lives of more than three million people in remote mountain villages who lack food and shelter. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan told a donors' conference a "winter without pity" was looming for survivors. Less than 30% of the UN's original target of \$312m has been pledged, according to UK-based charity Oxfam. However in total more than \$700m is estimated to have been promised to Pakistan - most of it outside the remit of the UN Relief workers say they face a race against time to provide shelter and food stocks for hundreds of thousands of people in Pakistani-administered Kashmir. As if to underline the problems, bad weather grounded the vital international helicopter aid fleet at the main airbase near the Pakistani capital, Islamabad, on Wednesday. New aftershocks also sparked fears of more landslides in the quake zone. There have been more than 970 such shocks following the 8 October disaster. www.bbc.co.uk *Continue to pray for the situation in India and Pakistan. Pray that the necessary relief supplies of food and shelter will reach those in need before the onset of winter.*

PRAISE REPORTS

Thailand: new churches in Khao Lak after the tsunami

The 30-mile coast between Thaimuang and Takuapa was devastated by the tsunami at the end of December 2004. Khao Lak, which everyone heard of in the weeks following the catastrophe, is in this region. Hundreds of volunteers assisted the locals and the Thai army with reconstruction. Many of these volunteers who invested their time and money were Christians, and their living witness caused many to think about Jesus; over 20 new churches have started in this area since the flood, mostly small house churches led by nationals who take good care of the people's needs. "Christians have never been so involved in any region in Thailand," commented one pastor. www.buften.net/fridayfax. *Praise God for this growth of His Church in Thailand.*

Kabyls and Chinese find Jesus in Algeria

"People meet daily in their houses for prayer. They tell of dreams and visions, and experience healing and deliverance. Ex-terrorists and spirit healers accept Jesus as their Lord. Churches are formed. This is not an excerpt from Acts, but is happening today among the Kabyls in North-east Algeria," writes Operation Mobilisation's Debbie Meroff. "The Algerian population of around 35 million is composed mainly of two people groups: the Berbers, and the Muslim Arabs, who later conquered the land. After the French left in 1962, the new government tried to unite Algeria under one language, religion and culture. That was difficult, particularly for the Kabyls; they had Christian roots, and their protests were often answered with military force. This oppression had a side-effect: their anger towards anything Arabic prepared their way to Jesus. New Christian churches are forming all over the Kabyls area. So far, they have been able to resist denominational influences and foreign leadership. Many people hear the gospel through Christian radio and television programmes, and up to 274 people contact the Christian staff each month. Christians hope to gather the scattered believers in new churches, and aim to plant churches in all of Algeria's 48 larger towns." www.buften.net/fridayfax. *We give thanks for this wonderful news and pray that the Lord will continue to bless them.*

LOOKING AHEAD

5th October – 3rd 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

29th 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

6th November: *International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church.* What began as a core group of about 7,000 churches, the IDOP has grown to be the largest prayer day event of its kind in the world. Last year, an estimated 200,000 churches experienced the spirit of unity by taking part in this Day of Prayer. Information

10 November: *Hope for London Leaders' Prayer Breakfast.* Over the past two years, increasing numbers of Christian leaders in London have been gathering together at the Hope for London Leaders' Breakfasts to lift the capital before God. Pete Broadbent will be the speaker this time on 'Confidence in our Unity' and Noel Robinson will lead worship. www.eauk.org
Visit: www.idop.org or www.worldevangelicalalliance.com

10 November: *Hope for London Leaders' Prayer Breakfast.* Over the past two years, increasing numbers of Christian leaders in London have been gathering together at the Hope for London Leaders' Breakfasts to lift the capital before God. Pete Broadbent will be the speaker this time on 'Confidence in our Unity' and Noel Robinson will lead worship. www.eauk.org