

# Prayer Alert . . .

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## BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

### New Archbishop of York calls for return to life-changing Christianity

The new Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu, the first black Archbishop, called on the Church of England to restore its focus to the life-changing power of Jesus at his enthronement yesterday in York. The Ugandan born and educated Dr John Tucker Mugabi Sentamu was enthroned yesterday as Britain's first black archbishop at a service that pushed aside all traditional protocol. The new Archbishop of York also called on Christians to reconsider "Who is Jesus and what does he mean for those who put their trust in him?" and to return to Jesus' basic plan for the world, 'corporate discipleship' and 'fraternal belonging'. He said: "The trouble with virtually all forms of revolution and modernising strategies is that they change everything – except the human heart. "And until that is changed completely, nothing is significantly different in the long run." Dr Sentamu also criticised the church for losing its life-changing focus. "The scandal of the church is that the Christ-event is no longer life-changing, it has become life-enhancing," he said. "We've lost the power and joy that makes real disciples, and we've become consumers of religion and not disciples of Jesus Christ." He added: For me, the vital issue facing the Church in England and the nation, is the loss of this country's long tradition of Christian wisdom which brought to birth the English nation: the loss of wonder and amazement that Jesus Christ has authority over every aspect of our lives and our nation. [www.christiantoday.com](http://www.christiantoday.com) *Praise God for John Sentamu and let us pray that he will be a powerful influence not just within the Church but within this nation.*

### Leadership changes for the UK government

Conservative leader Michael Howard has used his last Commons clash with Tony Blair to demand to know when the prime minister will join him in retirement. "Everyone knows I'm going next week, they want to know when he is going," said Mr Howard, asking if he still planned to serve a full third term. The prime minister has said he will leave No 10 before the next election but refused to be more precise. Mr Blair said their new leader would be unlikely to improve Tory fortunes. Mr Howard is due to hand over to either David Cameron or David Davis once the results of their Tory leadership run-off are declared next Tuesday. *Let us pray for our government and especially for the leadership. Pray that God will raise up Godly and just leadership.*

### Campaigners gear up for third White Band Day

Campaigners across the UK are gearing up for the third 'White Band Day' in the year of **MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY**, just days before the crucial World Trade Organisation (WTO) meeting begins. The next White Band Day is scheduled for Saturday 10 December - which is set to be a day of global action when trade justice campaigners will stand together as part of an unparalleled mobilisation of hundreds of millions of people. The crunch world trade negotiations in December will impact the lives of millions of people in poverty. Campaigners say that the call will be the same whatever the location. Tony Blair and other leaders of the world's most wealthy countries are being urged to make radical changes to the way world trade is currently managed so it benefits the poor and acknowledges its impact on the environment. [www.ekklesia.co.uk](http://www.ekklesia.co.uk) and [www.whiteband.org](http://www.whiteband.org)

### **Fifty babies a year are alive after abortion**

A government agency is launching an inquiry into doctors' reports that up to 50 babies a year are born alive after botched National Health Service abortions. The investigation, by the Confidential Enquiry into Maternal and Child Health (CEMACH), comes amid growing unease among clinicians over a legal ambiguity that could see them being charged with infanticide. The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, which regulates methods of abortion, has also mounted its own investigation. Its guidelines say that babies aborted after more than 21 weeks and six days of gestation should have their hearts stopped by an injection of potassium chloride before being delivered. In practice, few doctors are willing or able to perform the delicate procedure. According to Stuart Campbell, former professor of obstetrics and gynaecology at St George's hospital, London, a number do survive. "They can be born breathing and crying at 19 weeks' gestation," he said. "I am not anti-abortion, but as far as I am concerned this is sub-standard medicine." *Source; The Sunday Times [www.timesonline.co.uk](http://www.timesonline.co.uk) Pray that these new enquiries will lead to changes that will consider the right to life of the unborn child as well as the mother.*

### **True meaning of Christmas film to be distributed to UK schools**

An animated film entitled, It's a Boy -- created after a child asked why Mary and Joseph had named their baby after a swear word -- is being sent to 26,000 primary schools throughout Great Britain to teach children the true meaning of Christmas, and that the name "Jesus" is not a swear word. The film, which tells the story of Jesus' birth through the eyes of three quails, is being premiered at a cinema in London's Leicester Square on Sunday. Author Steve Legg said: "When I heard about the boy asking why Jesus Christ was named after a swear word, that really hit me. There are more than 12m children in the UK and only 756,000 of them go to church regularly. That leaves a staggering number who don't and are probably not receiving basic Christian teaching." Legg added that it was not an attempt to "ram religion down people's throats" but to ensure a basic level of teaching in schools. [www.breakingchristiannews.com](http://www.breakingchristiannews.com) *Pray that this film will bring enlightenment to many young children as they meet with him in the story of His birth.*

### **Giant mosque for 40,000 may be built at London Olympics**

A massive mosque that will hold 40,000 worshippers is being proposed beside the Olympic complex in London to be opened in time for the 2012 Games. The project's backers hope the mosque and its surrounding buildings would hold a total of 70,000 people, only 10,000 fewer than the Olympic stadium. Its futuristic design features wind turbines instead of the traditional minarets, while a translucent latticed roof would replace the domes seen on most mosques. The complex is designed to become the "Muslim quarter" for the Games, acting as a hub for Islamic competitors and spectators. The east London complex would have by far the largest capacity of any religious building in Britain. The biggest at present is the Baitul Futuh in Morden, Surrey, which holds about 10,000 worshippers. Liverpool's Anglican cathedral, the largest Christian place of worship, has a capacity of 3,000. The new building will be called the London Markaz (Arabic for centre) and will be built in place of an existing mosque on a 10-acre site 500 yards from the Olympic development. It is estimated that the project would cost more than £100m and donations are being sought from Britain and abroad. *Source; The Sunday Times [www.timesonline.co.uk](http://www.timesonline.co.uk) Approval has not been given but let us pray that our God will be glorified at the Olympics. Pray that this will be a wake up call for the Christians Church.*

### **Queen addresses post-Christendom**

The Queen opened the Church of England's General Synod recently by addressing the post-Christendom context in which both church and state find themselves, suggesting the situation presented new opportunities for the church. In a speech, the 'supreme governor' of the Church of England contrasted the enduring nature of Christianity with the rapid changes in society. "For Christians, this pace of change represents an opportunity," she told a packed hall in Church House, Westminster. "When so much is in flux, when limitless amounts of information, much of it ephemeral, are instantly accessible on demand, there is a renewed hunger for that which endures and gives meaning." "The Christian Church can speak uniquely to that need, for at the heart of our faith stands the conviction that all people, irrespective of race, background or circumstances, can find lasting significance and purpose in the Gospel of Jesus Christ." Her words received a standing ovation from the delegates [www.ekklesia.co.uk](http://www.ekklesia.co.uk) *May the challenge of the Queens message bring new life to the Church of England here and worldwide.*

## **EUROPE**

### **Blair ready to reduce EU rebate**

Tony Blair is ready to give up part of the UK's £4bn European Union rebate to secure a deal on a new EU budget. The offer will be made even though Mr Blair believes no fundamental reform of farm subsidies will be negotiated, the BBC understands. The UK may have to increase the amount it pays into the EU but the exact figures will be published next week Mr Blair, who is in the Baltic for EU talks, says the UK must pay its fair share of the costs of EU enlargement. It is believed a "slightly smaller" rebate will be proposed as a way of the UK making a "contribution to the cost of EU enlargement". Under the terms of the proposed deal, the UK would not receive any rebate from poorer countries in central and eastern Europe. Speaking in Kiev before flying to the Estonian capital, Tallinn, Mr Blair said: "If we cannot get a large deal, which alters fundamentally the way the budget is spent, then... we will have to have a smaller EU budget. The UK proposal will be discussed by EU foreign ministers on 7 December, and by heads of state and government at a summit in Brussels on 15 and 16 December - two weeks before the UK ends its presidency. [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk) *Pray that this attempt to find a solution will meet with agreement. Pray for the Foreign Ministers meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> and the Heads of State meeting in Brussels the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, that they will find a solution to the problems.*

### **Six European countries join to declare objection to EU stem cell research funding**

Six European countries have joined together to declare their objection to the European Union's highly controversial plans to fund stem cell research. Six European countries have joined together to declare their objection to the European Union's highly controversial plans to fund stem cell research. On Monday, Malta's Competitiveness Minister Censu Galea held a meeting of the Competitiveness Council in Brussels. During preliminary discussion on the EU's Seventh Framework Research Program, Gales stressed that Malta sternly opposes funding of research on human embryos, according to the Times of Malta newspaper. Together with five other countries - namely Austria, Germany, Italy, Poland and Slovakia - a joint declaration was adopted. They will lobby the European Commission to drop plans to fund research activities that include the use of human embryos, the Times

of Malta reported. In Europe, countries are deeply divided in their opinions on therapeutic cloning and stem cell research. England and Belgium have been shown to be the most liberal, having granted licenses to clone human embryos as a source of stem cells. Switzerland appears to stand in line with the Netherlands, France, Denmark and Spain, allowing research on embryos left over from artificial reproduction. *Pray that the authorities will be guided by the Lord in their decisions on this difficult and emotive subject.*

### **Jesus" film to be shown in public schools across Europe**

A children's version of the "Jesus" film is to be shown in schools across Europe as part of the religious education that schools must provide according to government requirements. Numerous schools across Europe have approved the showing of the "Jesus" film in their schools as part of government requirements to teach religion, reports Mission Network News. The "Jesus" film is being used by the schools throughout Western Europe to help fulfil the quota allotted to the teaching of Christianity, which sometimes gets a greater focus owing to the rich Christian heritage on the European continent. The "Story of Jesus for Children" incorporates 40 minutes of the original "Jesus" film into a new drama about a fictional group of children who lived in A.D. 30, the approximate date of the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ. The children's version has also been translated into more than 40 languages. [www.christiantoday.com](http://www.christiantoday.com) *Again pray that this film will bring enlightenment to all that view it. Pray that they will meet with the living Lord Jesus and find a way to a lasting relationship.*

## **WORLDWIDE**

### **Muslims urge release of Christian peacemakers missing in Iraq**

Palestinian Muslims have called for the release of the four Christian peacemakers who were abducted in Iraq at the beginning of the week. It comes after the Arabic news service Al-Jazeera [aired video footage](#) from a previously unknown militant group showing the four kidnapped peace activists, alongside a statement from the group calling them 'spies'. However, the Palestinian Muslims have suggested publicly that such allegations are mistaken and point out that the peacemakers vigorously opposed the invasion of Iraq. At a press conference yesterday the National and Islamic Forces in Hebron also asked for the release of the four members of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) being held by an Iraqi armed group. [www.ekklesia.co.uk](http://www.ekklesia.co.uk) *Praise God for the reaction of the moderate Muslims and pray that they will be heard. Pray that God will protect His people and that they will be powerful witnesses to their captors.*

### **Controversy clouds World Aids Day**

International disagreement over how to fight the global HIV/Aids pandemic has persisted on World Aids Day. Swaziland, with the world's highest rate of HIV, cut Aids day events, and South Africa's health minister publicly refused to back anti-retroviral drugs. US President George W Bush pledged new funds and called for decisive action. Mr Bush said that extra funds for HIV/Aids relief would be channelled to "faith based" organisations. The EU stressed the need for effective measures to prevent the disease. More than 40m people are infected with HIV/Aids, according to the UN. "The lessons of nearly 25 years into the Aids epidemic are clear. Investments made in HIV prevention break the cycle of new infections," said Peter Piot, executive director of UNAids. "By making these investments, each and every country can reverse the spread of Aids." The UK pledged £27.5m (\$47m) to Aids prevention programmes. [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk) *Continue to pray for all those affected by this horrendous disease. Pray that the governments of this world will recognise the needs of those that suffer and honour agreements to provide money and support.*

### **UK government is neglecting the victims of Africa's longest running war**

The UK government is neglecting almost two million innocent people suffering due to the war in northern Uganda, said eight leading aid agencies today on the eve of the UK presidency of the UN Security Council. Despite being Africa's longest running war, the 19-year conflict between the Ugandan government and the rebel group, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), has never been formally addressed by the UN Security Council. The UK must use its presidency to push the crisis onto the Council's agenda, say aid agencies. 'The war in northern Uganda has uprooted as many people as the Bosnian wars and killed more people than the wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone put together, yet in two decades the UN Security Council has never formally addressed it. As the UK takes over the Security Council presidency, this brutal war must be at the top of Blair's priorities,' said Neill Garvie, Christian Aid's emergency manager for Uganda. [www.christian-aid.org](http://www.christian-aid.org) *Pray for the people of Northern Uganda who have suffered for so long. Pray that the EU and UN will seek an early solution to bring peace to this troubled area.*

### **House Church pastor abducted and murdered in Iran**

According to a November 28 report from Compass Direct, an Iranian convert to Christianity was kidnapped on November 22 from his home in Gonbad-e-Kavus. A few hours later, Ghorban Tori's body was dumped outside of his home. The 50-year-old pastor of an independent house church had been stabbed to death. Ghorban's congregation is made up of Muslim converts to Christianity and in the past year he had received numerous threats from Islamic militants vowing to kill him if he did not stop sharing his faith. Within hours of his murder, the secret police raided Ghorban's home in search of Bibles and other banned Christian books. They then proceeded to raid the homes of all the known Christians in the city. One source states that ten other Christians in several Iranian cities were arrested and tortured in the days following the murder. All were later released. Middle East Concern reports that other house church leaders have been visited by members of the Ministry of Security and Intelligence and warned that they are being watched. *We ask you to plead the case of these Iranian believers before the Father's throne.*

### **Colombia: Church under fire**

'The paramilitary groups control the local markets. Unless you grow coca, you can't sell your other crops, like rice or corn,' says church pastor Hernandez. The church and communities in the rural region in northern Colombia, live under an ominous cloud of threats and intimidation. Hernandez already knows of 12 families in his congregation who have been forced by armed groups to sell their farms to drug traffickers. Others have no choice but to work on coca farms for the drug lords. 'It's impossible to earn money another way,' he says. 'As a pastor I feel bad. I can say, "Don't do this, it's not good for us", but I have no alternative way to suggest. What else can I tell my congregation?' In the latest chapter of the country's 40-year civil conflict, paramilitary groups are controlling new territory by threatening and intimidating church pastors. So Tearfund, and a Christian organisation which can't be named for security reasons, is standing with those who are most affected and giving life-saving help. Fifteen church

leaders have already been killed for refusing to obey the requests of armed groups and using their sermons to denounce violence. 'The paramilitary groups control all the local markets. Unless you grow coca, you can't sell rice or corn. 'In the last five years, more than 400 churches nationally have had to close by order of the armed groups. Church pastors are often called upon as the local spokesperson when conflict sparks – which puts them in an impossible situation. [www.tearfund.org](http://www.tearfund.org) *Pray that the Lord will once again bring about a transformation within this nation. Pray for the Church that it will remain firm against such threats and intimidation. Pray that the authorities will be able to break the hold of the drug cartels.*

### **UN launches largest ever appeal for victims of war and natural disasters**

The United Nations has launched an appeal for a record \$4.7bn (£2.7bn) to help more than 30 million victims of war, famine and natural disaster. The amount is equal to global military spending in 48 hours, UN emergency relief co-ordinator Jan Egeland says. "We can afford to clothe, to feed, to care for all of the children of this world," he told the BBC's World Today. Ten rich countries supply 90% of UN humanitarian aid, he said, adding that oil-rich countries could give more. "The 10 top donors are more or less the same now as a few years ago," he said. "There are growing economies on many continents which should become bigger donors. We expect the oil-rich countries to give more." UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said the international community had the capacity to pay, but now had to display the will to do so. [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk) *Continue to pray that the rich nations will have compassion and remember the desperate needs of those trapped by war, famine and natural disasters.*

## **PRAISE REPORTS**

### **Mother of Anthony Walker tells of Christian forgiveness for son's killers**

The mother of Anthony Walker, who brutally murdered in a racially motivated attack, has spoken of her forgiveness for her sons killers, stemming from her Christian faith. Two men were found guilty yesterday (Wednesday) of the racially aggravated murder of Anthony Walker after a confrontation and terrifying chase led to his gruesome, brutal death. Gee Walker, 49, had listened to every harrowing detail of the ambush that left her son, a gifted black A-level student, with an ice axe embedded in his skull. Within minutes Mrs Walker, a mother of six, emerged from the court arm in arm with two of her four daughters to offer words of compassion to Taylor and Barton: "Do I forgive them? At the point of death Jesus said, 'I forgive them because they do not know what they do'. I have got to forgive them. I still forgive them. [www.ekklesia.co.uk](http://www.ekklesia.co.uk) *Praise God for the powerful witness the Walker family have been over this time to all that have met them. Pray that the Lord will draw alongside and bless them for their faith.*

### **Swedish court acquits anti-gay sermoniser**

The Swedish Supreme Court has acquitted a Pentecostal pastor, the Rev Ake Green, of engaging in a hate speech during a verbal attack on lesbian and gay people made in a sermon. He was threatened with a one-month prison sentence. Green told journalists he was now free to continue preaching as before, though the content of his address is regarded as hateful by many Christians and secular critics alike. [A translation of Pastor Ake Green's sermon is available here](#) Said an unrepentant Mr Green: "This [ruling] means we can continue to speak the way we have, and ... it feels very good that they have ruled in a way that our way of preaching should not be infringed." The judgment is based on a civil rights perspective which says that free speech should overrule offence and hurt to others, unless actual menace or harm is incited. Pastor Green charged with hate speech for denouncing homosexuality as a "cancerous tumour". In his defence he claimed that gay sex was an "abnormality" on a par with paedophilia... [www.ekklesia.co.uk](http://www.ekklesia.co.uk) *Praise God for this judgment that common sense and justice ruled.*

## **LOOKING AHEAD**

**3 December:** *International Day of Disabled Persons* Initiated by the UN in 1984 to promote an understanding of disability issues and mobilize support for the dignity, rights and well-being of persons with disabilities. The theme of the Day is based on the goal of full and equal enjoyment of human rights and participation in society by persons with disabilities. <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/disiddp.htm>

**10 December:** The next *White Band Day* is set to be a day of global action when trade justice campaigners will stand together as part of an unparalleled mobilisation of hundreds of millions of people. [www.whitband.org](http://www.whitband.org)

**18-25 January 2006:** *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity*. Contact: Churches Together for Britain and Ireland (CTBI). Resources available. Website: [www.ctbi.org.uk](http://www.ctbi.org.uk)

**30 January - 2 February 2006:** Belfast. *Kingdom Come ... more than words*. An event jointly organised by the Evangelical Alliance and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, steered by senior church leaders from a range of denominations, and geared for those who have a heart for reaching Northern Ireland. [www.kingdomcomeireland.com](http://www.kingdomcomeireland.com)

**27 February - 1 March 2006:** *Heaven to Earth Intimacy and Warfare*. Swanwick Prayer Conference, The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire. The invitation is for you to come and stand with us in worship, in prayer, in learning, in praise, in declaring, in watching, in receiving, in possessing. Download the booking form (PDF version) [CLICK HERE](#)