

Prayer Alert . . .

Draft Issue 51

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FRIDAY 23 DECEMBER 2005

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BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

Intercessor – prepare for Christmas

The following item by Rachel Hickson has been reprinted from www.londonprayer.net and is felt worthy of passing on as a challenge to us all at this Christmas time.

Well another year has almost gone and Christmas is here once again. So Happy Christmas to you all and I trust that you really know the presence of God over your Christmas time. Take a moment in all this Christmas preparation to prepare your home spiritually. We often get so distracted with all the business of the cooking, shopping and eating that we forget the spiritual preparation. So pause - take a breath – and pray for Peace on your earth – your area of geography. Remember that this peace is transferable and you can declare peace. Pray for some of the relationships that you know need peace. Then pray for the favour of God to rest on you. Pray for the favour of God amongst your family. Pray for opportunities to demonstrate His favour upon you. Decorate your house spiritually!

(Isa 62:6 - 7 NIV) I have posted watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; they will never be silent day or night. You who call on the LORD, give yourselves no rest, and give him no rest till he establishes Jerusalem and makes her the praise of the earth.

About 10 years ago now I was on a plane travelling to Norway on the 29th December. I began to talk with the man seated next to me and discovered that he was returning from London after attending a meeting from the 24th – 29th December of witches and warlocks from all over Europe. When I asked him why they were meeting at such a busy time he gave me a fascinating answer. He said - we like to meet over the Christmas time when our enemy is celebrating and relaxing as we find the interference to our cause is minimal and there is a good atmosphere for us to work. We are able to get 'good' communication and it is much better for us when all the churches are having their holidays for their festival. This put a wakeup call inside of me. So, I am asking you to be ready to take time to stand on behalf of London during this Christmas season. Remember your assignment and your part of the place of prayer.

Let us not neglect our assignments" God has posted – assigned watchmen to tasks and we do not get a holiday! Each one of us needs to pray and bless our city over this season. So stand guard and do not let Christmas distract you from your assignment. Let us take some time for spiritual work in the midst of all our activity – Thank you! Have a wonderful Christmas and may God bless you. Rachel Hickson – London Prayer Net

Christians and Muslims show continued support for Norman Kember

A vigil for abducted peace worker Norman Kember, who was kidnapped in Iraq with four Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) volunteers at the end of November, took place in London's Trafalgar Square on Wednesday. The vigil, one of a series taking place across the world, brought together Christians, Muslims, peace campaigners and people of "all faiths and just good faith" who want to see Dr Kember, Tom Fox, Jim Loney and Harmeet Singh Sooden released by their captors – a militant organisation

known only as Swords of Truth Brigades. There has been an unprecedented outpouring of support for the four men – not least by Muslim organisations and Islamist groups – over the past four weeks. Their supporters say that this is helping to create “a new bridge for justice and peace in Iraq”, in contrast both to military occupation and the use of terror tactics. There has been no news of the four since 8 December 2005. Over the past 48 hours a German archaeologist and humanitarian worker, Susanne Osthoff, has been released by the Islamic Army in Iraq group, who some believe may be connected to Swords of Truth – though there is no direct evidence for this. www.ekkleisia.co.uk *Continue praying for this ongoing hostage situation that the light of the Lord will be with them in the darkness of their prison.*

Racial and Religious Hatred Bill update

The Racial and Religious Hatred Bill will now **NOT** receive its third reading in the House of Lords on Monday 19th December. (See *Prayer Alert 50*) No alternate date has been publicised as yet but it is expected to take place in the New Year. This provides us with extra time to pray and to contact Peers expressing our concerns about the Bill and its potential to limit freedom of speech. It also provides extra time to contact MPs, who will review the Bill again after the third reading in the Lords. www.care.org.uk *Please pray that over this extra time Peers and MPs will develop wisdom in considering this Bill, and that the amendments made in the Lords will not be abandoned due to this delay.*

UK atrocities planned - Met chief

Terrorist groups are “currently planning atrocities in the United Kingdom”, Metropolitan Police Chief Commissioner Sir Ian Blair has warned. He told BBC Radio 4's Today he knew this was the case because “we are listening to some of them, and we are watching some of them”. The key question, he said, was whether they were tracking “all of them”. Sir Ian said three plots had been disrupted since July, adding: “The threat is real. It's present with us.” He told the programme police were “carrying out 75% more” anti-terror operations than before the 7 July attacks in London. Unlike bombers of the 1970s and 1980s, groups were capable of “mass atrocity without warning”, he added. Sir Ian said: “There are people in the United Kingdom who are currently planning atrocities in the United Kingdom.... it doesn't mean that they will get through but it does mean that we are facing a new morality.” www.bbc.co.uk *Pray for protection over our nation and that He will hold back those who would wish to harm us.*

Wake up, Britain. Wake up: this shameful ranting must stop

London was host to something called a ‘Global Peace and Unity’ Conference earlier this month presented by the new Islam Channel and sponsored by Emirates Airlines, Western Union and the Metropolitan Police. It was duly reported as a worthy event attracting some 20,000 Muslims from all around Britain. The [Times](http://www.times.co.uk) reported that Ken Livingstone, Michael Mansfield, QC, and the former Pakistan cricketers Saeed Anwar and Imran Khan were among the speakers promoting ‘global peace and unity’. One participant asked if she thought that non-Muslims would feel threatened by such a gathering, replied: ‘No, non-Muslims are more aware that we are here, that we live in this society and that we engage and integrate in a peaceful way.’ Carol Gould also attended this event. [This](http://www.this.co.uk), in her words, is how the cause of ‘global peace and unity’ gets British Muslims to ‘engage and integrate in a peaceful way’: <http://www.melaniephillips.com/diary/> *Carol Gould's report is a definite wake-up call to this nation and an urgent need for prayer.*

UK children vote God number one most famous person

An interesting survey of British children under the age of 10 has emerged from the UK. When asked what they thought were the worst things in the world, children rated drunken people, smoking, litter and graffiti over war and voted shopping as the eighth worst thing in the world. Reporter Paul Lewis notes that the top priorities for children in the survey included football, pop music and animals. Ranked second was being famous, and the names on that “fame list” were quite telling. God came in first, beating David Beckham, the Queen, Harry Potter, Beyonce, Father Christmas and Simon Cowell, among others. While some of the other questions and answers may have left British parents concerned with the direction their society is going, the fact that God topped the list of famous people was a surprising positive. www.breakingchristiannews.com *Praise God that the young put God as number one. Pray that they will keep Him in His rightful place as they grow.*

EUROPE

Latvia cements gay marriage ban

MPs in the Baltic state of Latvia have passed a constitutional amendment ensuring that gay couples cannot marry [reports the BBC](http://www.bbc.co.uk). The change was supported by a majority of parliament - despite criticism of it by the country's president, prime minister and foreign minister. Members of the European Parliament said the move was homophobic and backward. Same sex marriage is already illegal in Latvian civil law, but the constitution will now explicitly state that marriage can only exist between a man and woman. The amendment will change one paragraph of the constitution relating to the state's responsibility to protect the family. www.2-in-2-1.co.uk *Pray that marriage will continue to be honoured despite the pressures.*

German Conservatives unite in plan to outlaw late-term abortions

The Christian Democratic Union and Christian Socialist Union have jointly announced plans to change current abortion laws, making it illegal to obtain an abortion after 23 weeks into a pregnancy. Johannes Singhammer, the parties' spokesman for women's affairs, said plans would “change the scandalous practice in Germany,” in an interview with the Munchner Merkur, Bavarian daily press. “No sensible human being can remain calm when a child, which could live, is aborted shortly before its birth, just because it is handicapped,” Singhammer said. “We must urgently rethink the value of life.” The draft banning late-term abortion may be presented to the German parliament as early as next year. Although in theory German law protects the life of the unborn, in practice abortion is available at any time during pregnancy, under a law allowing abortion when the mother's life is threatened. Abortion is technically illegal in the country, but abortions are not punished, regardless of when they occur in the pregnancy www.LifeSiteNews.com *Pray that the value of life will be upheld and this move will be successful.*

Catholic Church again protests against registered partnership

The Catholic Church again sharply protested against the bill on registered partnership of same-sex couples passed by the Chamber of Deputies on Friday in a statement issued by the Catholic Bishops' Conference today. In the statement they said that the registered partnership bill was one of the several bills debated by the Chamber of Deputies that are not only ethically

sensitive. If passed, these bills would directly threaten the stability of family and the so-far respected level of untouchability of human life, they said. The Catholic bishops pointed to the bill concerning research on human embryonic stem cells because they regard human embryos as human persons, and the bill on euthanasia that they regard as an inadmissible active assistance to killing. They said that the bill on registered partnership could bring a chaos in value orientation, especially for young generations. www.praguemonitor.com *Pray for the Catholic Church as it speaks out against these moves against God's design.*

WORLDWIDE

Poor people betrayed by world trade talks

Millions of poor people have been betrayed by very limited trade deals struck at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) talks in Hong Kong, says Christian relief and development agency Tearfund. After six days of negotiations, developing countries approved a European Union offer to end farm export subsidies by 2013. And a small, welcome step was made towards allowing poor countries to protect crops of vital importance to poor farmers. But overall the deal failed to deliver the significant progress towards development for which WTO negotiators had originally hoped. "Small advances in agriculture are far outweighed by outcomes in other areas such as industrial goods and services," says Mari Griffith, Tearfund policy officer. "The needs of poor countries have been sidelined while rich countries have pushed forward their own agendas in opening up developing country markets. They have refused to make the changes necessary to deliver trade justice." www.tearfund.org *Pray that this betrayal will be realised by those who have pushed their own motives and that they will seek retrospective justice for the poor nations.*

Over one million children in Darfur beyond reach of aid, UN warns

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) announced yesterday that 1.25 million children in Sudan's Darfur region are beyond the reach of help because of the insecurity in certain areas. Darfur is known as one of the world's most troubled areas, with ongoing conflicts threatening more than three million children each day with malnutrition, illness and violence. The region has suffered from a three-year conflict between government, paramilitary and rebel forces that have killed tens of thousands and forced 2 million to flee their homes. Yet largely as a result of humanitarian aid, about 1.75 million children in displaced persons camps and in surrounding towns in Sudan's western Darfur, now have basic social services. "Relief efforts have significantly improved the overall situation in Darfur since 2004, but persistent instability and political stalemate means that children have little hope for any meaningful future," UNICEF country representative Ted Chaiban said in a U.N. report. However, the U.N. announced Tuesday that about 1.25 million children remain unreachable because of security issues and their situations remain largely unknown. www.christiantoday.com *Continue to pray for all those who have been caught up in these ongoing problems.*

Indonesia under high risk of terror attack

The U.S. Embassy in Indonesia warned Americans on Thursday of a high risk of terrorist attacks in the country over the Christmas and New Year holidays. Earlier Indonesian authorities warned that terrorists may be planning to kidnap foreigners in the days ahead. The embassy said a police raid on a Jemaah Islamiyah hideout last month turned up information indicating the al-Qaida-linked group was in the advanced stages of planning attacks on foreigners. "In recent years terrorist attacks have occurred in Indonesia during the Christmas and New Year's holiday season," the embassy said in an e-mail to U.S. citizens. "The possibility of terrorist attacks appears even higher this year." On Christmas Eve 2000 bombs exploded at churches across Indonesia, killing 19 people. Suspicion fell on Jemaah Islamiyah, now blamed for several other attacks since then, including the 2002 and 2005 bombings on the resort island of Bali. More than 250 people have died. www.chron.com *Continue to pray for Indonesia that the Lord will hold back the enemy and continue to bless the good things that are going on (See Prayer Alert 50).*

Nigerian accident claims the lives of seven YWAM missionaries

A team of Mother and Child Health workers have been involved in a tragic road accident outside Port Harcourt, Nigeria. Fourteen girls left on the morning of Sunday, December 11, from Port Harcourt to attend Sunday service with other local YWAMers. Seven YWAMers were killed, five were with YWAM Nigeria, and two were from YWAM Perth. There were seven others injured from YWAM Perth – one critically. Latest reports indicate that six of the seven girls injured are now recovering well with one still in a very serious but stable condition. She has had two operations, both of which have been successful however she remains unconscious although starting to respond a little. www.ausprayernet.org.au *Pray for the ongoing healing of all the girls injured and for their recovery process as they work through the shock/trauma of the accident. Pray also that God would continue to comfort and strengthen those who have lost loved ones*

Zimbabwe archbishop will not be silenced

Catholic Archbishop Pius Ncube of Bulawayo has said he refuses to be muzzled and he does not fear the Zimbabwean government's latest threat to clamp down on its critics. The outspoken church leaders declared: "They [Mugabe's forces] will not silence me and I will continue to denigrate the evil things they have done against their own people." After a four-day tour of the country, the United Nations humanitarian envoy, Jan Egeland, recently described Zimbabwe as being in "meltdown". He estimated that around three million people would be in need of food aid by February. The country's agricultural output has fallen by more than half in the last five years. "We are in the Guinness Book of Records for having the highest inflation in the world," said Archbishop Ncube. In October 2005, Archbishop Ncube predicted that some 200,000 Zimbabweans could starve to death as a result of the Government's destructive policies. He based this figure on the effect of severe food shortages on a population ravaged by HIV/AIDS and extreme poverty at a time of hyperinflation and near-80 per cent unemployment. www.ekklesia.co.uk *Let us continue to pray for this troubled nation. Pray that God will protect Archbishop Ncube and use him to bring justice.*

Asia earthquake: when a white Christmas is no dream

For survivors of the earthquake that devastated large swathes of southern Asia in October, snow this December and January could spell disaster. An estimated five out of six survivors – 2.5 million people – are now living in tents, which are no match for the Himalayan winter. A staggering 400,000 people are still without shelter and at risk from exposure. Living above 5,000 feet, they are the hardest to reach: landslides brought on by aftershocks block roads; rain and snow are keeping helicopters on the ground. Temperatures are -6°C and dropping steadily. www.tearfund.org *Continue to pray for all those in desperate need following the earthquake. Pray that the necessary supplies will get through before the winter and that the Lord will hold back the snows.*

PRAISE REPORTS

Brian Mills: looking back at 2005

I wonder if you have noticed the good news being reported in the press recently. The Queen seemed to start it all off with a very positive defence of the Christian faith at the recent synod. The Archbishop of York's enthronement was a wonderful occasion and received a very positive press. Earlier this week the current Archbishop of Canterbury and his predecessor stood shoulder to shoulder to defend the faith in an uncharacteristically robust way. Amazing proclamations of forgiveness came from a bereaved mother in Liverpool and a paralysed young woman in Surrey and both received extensive coverage in the media. Yesterday in the Daily Telegraph two Muslims wrote letters attacking political anti-Christmas correctness saying that most Muslims far from being offended by Christmas enjoy it immensely. To crown it all, Simon Heffer, an atheist, today writes a strong defence of Christianity and its influences in our nation. www.opinion.telegraph.co.uk Church attendances are reported to be on the increase and nearly half the nation says it will go to church over the holiday period. And the Chronicles of Narnia is filling cinemas. Whilst we are aware of the depth of the battle in which we are involved there does seem to be some cause for encouragement and thanksgiving here - let's not miss it! *We have much to praise God for. Let us not miss what He is doing!*

UK campaign to put Christ back in Christmas distributes over 65,000 posters

Michael Ireland from ANS reports on the UK posters that depict the baby Jesus wearing a yellow arm band that reads "make Christmas His story." According to the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), more than 65,000 posters have been distributed by a Midlands Church of England diocese which says it is fighting back against the "politically correct" approach to Christmas with a new poster campaign. The Bishop of Lichfield, the Right Reverend Jonathan Gledhill, said they were designed to be provocative. The Bishop said people were trying to take the Christ out of Christmas and this addressed the balance. Around 65,000 posters have been distributed across Staffordshire, north Shropshire and the Black Country. www.breakingchristiannews.com *May these posters make a difference and put Christ back into Christmas.*

Prayer makes a difference in Taumarunui New Zealand

As a small town on New Zealand's North Island implements round-the-clock prayer, the testimonies begin pouring in while prayers in the 24/7 prayer house lift the community's needs to heaven. Initiator of the town's prayer room; Gina Sinclair, told about how it started, "We wanted to get all the churches in the area involved because we wanted it to be a community event," she said, adding that a church member offered space in an office building in town for the purpose. "About a week later, there was a front-page news story of how a local methamphetamine lab was discovered by police. The crime rates are going down, which has been documented in an article in the local paper," said Sinclair. "You can just feel it in the atmosphere of this town, something is changing, Christians are waking up, and God is beginning to move. God has totally done all this and I have often been amazed at how this has taken off and how He is working." www.breakingchristiannews.com *Praise God for another example of how prayer can transform a community.*

LOOKING AHEAD

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

29 January 2006: The theme of *Homelessness Sunday* is 'Build happiness Stop homelessness'. This was developed to show how everybody (as individuals or as members of churches) can build happiness and stop homelessness by thinking about the issues and offering practical help. More than 2,000 churches take part in Homelessness Sunday each year and thousands of pounds is raised for local and national homelessness charities. www.housingjustice.org.uk

29 January 2006: *World Leprosy Day Please* encourage your church to join us in prayer and thanksgiving on World Leprosy Day as we celebrate God's blessing on The Leprosy Mission's ministry. www.leprosymission.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

7-14 February 2006: *National Marriage Week* Contact: Futureway Trust www.nmw.org.uk

12 February 2006: *Education Sunday* Theme: Prizes that last. Contact: National Society or any of the main denominational HQs. Resources available. www.natsoc.org.uk/

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](#)

www.prayer-alert.net

Next week: Asian Tsunami one year on!