



PRAYER ALERT...



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BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Unelected quango to decide on mega-mosque for Olympic site

The final decision on a controversial £100 million 'Islamic village' in east London, accommodating up to 70,000 worshippers, will be made by an unelected quango. Plans by the Muslim sect Tablighi Jamaat to build the mega-mosque have aroused concern as the group has been accused of drawing young men towards an extremist version of Islam. When the proposal emerged in July it was envisaged that the first phase of the mosque alone would accommodate 10,000 worshippers. Many experts describe Tablighi Jamaat, whose name means Proselytising Group, as a peaceful, apolitical movement, devoted to spreading Islam, but others accuse it of links with Islamic extremism and even terrorism. According to the website of the architects, Mangera Yvars, the Islamic Centre will occupy 50,000 square metres of the lower Lea Valley at West Ham. A decision on whether it gets the go-ahead will rest not with Newham's elected councillors but with the London Thames Gateway Development Corporation.

Pray: for a meeting taking place on Monday in the House of Lords; 'An examination of the national, legal and political impact of the proposed Olympics mega Mosque' Hosted by Baroness Cox. May those that attend be given His wisdom on what needs to be done to face this challenge. (Prov 11; 3)

More: <http://www.christianconcernforournation.co.uk/mosque/mail270906.php>

■ 'IRA campaign is over' says Blair

Tony Blair has welcomed the Northern Ireland ceasefire monitor's verdict on the IRA, saying its 'campaign is over'. He was speaking after the Independent Monitoring Commission said the IRA had changed radically and some of its most important structures were dismantled. The prime minister said politicians now had a 'unique opportunity' to reach a 'final settlement'. The government hopes the report will help its efforts to restore devolution before the 24 November deadline. The report indicates that a number of key parts of the IRA's structure have been dismantled or substantially reduced. Mr Blair said there was 'now a consensus across all main players in the politics of Northern Ireland, that change can only come through persuasion and not through violence of any sort'. 'The IRA has done what we asked it to do, and while issues like policing remain to be solved, the door is now open to a final settlement, which is why the talks next week in Scotland are going to be so important.'

Pray: for the ongoing discussions as the parties move towards this opportunity of restoring devolution.

More: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/5407646.stm

■ DUP meeting with Church welcomed

The decision by Ian Paisley to meet a Catholic Church leader for the first time has been welcomed by nationalists. The DUP leader is due to hold talks with Archbishop Sean Brady at Stormont later this month. Sinn Fein's Martin McGuinness said he would like the meeting to mark the beginning of Mr Paisley saying 'yes after saying no for so long'. Alban Maginness of the SDLP said he hoped it signalled an end to the days of 'fiery anti-Roman tub-thumping'. A spokesman for the DUP confirmed

that Mr Paisley will lead a delegation to meet church leaders on 9 October as part of a series of talks. Speaking on the BBC's Politics Show, Martin McGuinness said 'I hope this is the beginning of a process which will lead to Ian Paisley, the DUP, Sinn Féin, the SDLP and the Ulster Unionists in government together.'

Pray: for this significant meeting on Monday and pray that it will be a step towards lasting peace. (Ps 133: 1-3)

More: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/5397146.stm

■ People-smuggling leader is jailed

A ringleader of one of Europe's biggest people-smuggling operations has been jailed for eight and a half years. Turkish national Ramazan Zorlu, 43, had pleaded guilty to trafficking. Zorlu was arrested alongside Ali Riza Gun, 47, in raids in London last year. Gun had also pleaded guilty and will be sentenced at a later date. A judge at Croydon Crown Court said Zorlu should be deported once he finished serving his sentence. The smuggling network run by Zorlu, Gun and another Turkish national, Hassan Eroglu, ran into millions of pounds. Det. Ch. Supt. Maxine de Brunner said the police could not quantify the exact number of people smuggled into the UK before the network was finally smashed. Eroglu, 47, one the main ringleaders running the network along with Zorlu and Gun, was jailed for six years at an earlier hearing. Another eight defendants arrested in connection with the investigation have already admitted offences and some have been jailed.

Pray: that now this ring has been broken, the authorities and governments will be able to find solutions to the causes of the problem.

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/london/5405870.stm>

■ Church schools in 'inclusive' vow

The Church of England has promised that all of its new schools will offer at least 25% of places to pupils from non-Christian families. The chairman of the Church's board of education, the Rt Rev Kenneth Stevenson, makes the pledge in a letter to Education Secretary Alan Johnson. The Catholic Church also said it would be more open about the proportion of non-faith groups within its schools. Bishop Stevenson said 'the Church was committed to providing schools which were Christian and, at the same time, inclusive'. Dr Stevenson, who is Bishop of Portsmouth, says in the letter that there is no opposition between the two aims. Part of a school's Christian commitment is to reach out, to include, not with the purpose of indoctrination but in order to offer education clearly based on Christian values to the wider community,' he states. The Church of England cites statistics showing that, of 22 of its recently opened secondary schools, most serve in advantaged communities and have 'inclusive' admissions policies.

Pray: for our Church schools that the opportunities of sharing Christian values with the young will be fruitful. (Prov 22: 6)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/5400276.stm>

■ Trumpet Call V launching a year of prayer through 2007

Trumpet Call V on 21st October is the 5th national day of prayer and proclamation hosted by the World Prayer Centre at the NEC Arena in Birmingham. Thousands of Christians are expected to travel from all over the UK – and some are coming from overseas – to attend. It will be a day of worship and prayer with opportunity to hear stories including what has happened since the launch of Redeeming our Communities (www.redeemingourcommunities.co.uk). Many church and organisations leaders are joining for the day to launch a year of prayer for Hope 2008 across the UK (www.hope08.com). When we hear of so many amazing stories of transformation in other parts of the world, we are asking the question 'why not in our nation.' Please join us in prayer wherever you are and come if you can!

Pray: Let us not just pray for this day but seek the Lord for His transformation of our nation as we launch this year of prayer Hope 2008. (Ps 24: 1)

More: www.worldprayer.org.uk

EUROPE

■ EU praised on halted Turkmen deal

A prominent human rights group has praised the European Parliament for not pursuing a trade agreement with Turkmenistan on human rights grounds. Human Rights Watch said the decision showed that the EU would not allow abusive governments to profit from it. An EU committee said it would not approve the deal without sustained improvement on human rights. The EU called for the release of political prisoners and freedom for non-governmental organisations. Turkmenistan is effectively a one-party state run since Soviet times by Saparmyrat Niyazov, and has no independent media. Human Rights Watch says the human rights situation has deteriorated in recent months. A Turkmen journalist, Olgusapar Muradova, died in custody last month. Family members who saw her body said she had sustained a wound to her head. Ms Muradova was arrested in June together with several other people. In a closed trial, two of the defendants were sentenced to seven years in prison, while Ms Muradova received a six-year sentence.

Pray: that this action will lead the Turkmenistan government to consider its policies and make acceptable changes.

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/5407698.stm>

■ Italian companies feature worst in EU for bribery

A survey of companies from 10 EU countries has found that overseas bribery is still a feature of everyday business life with Italian companies coming off the worst in the European rankings. The Transparency International (TI) bribery survey, which covers 30 countries worldwide, found that no country scores perfectly on the bribery front although Swiss - non-EU - and Swedish companies emerged at the top of the ladder with companies least likely to offer bribes. The worst ranking EU

members are Portugal coming in at number 16 and Italy at number 20 on the list, while EU hopeful Turkey followed by Russia come in at 27 and 28 on the list. This survey indicates the success and failure of governments to control corruption abroad by companies headquartered in their national borders it concludes. The ten EU counties of the 30 surveyed were Sweden (2nd highest ranking), Austria (4), UK (6), Germany (7), Netherlands (8), Belgium (9), Spain (13), France (15), Portugal (16) and Italy (20).

Pray: that governments and businesses will take up the challenge to deal with bribery and corruption at all levels. (Prov 11: 1)

More: <http://euobserver.com/9/22564>

WORLDWIDE

■ Forgiveness, not anger, after Amish school massacre

This Amish town showed more forgiveness than anger on Tuesday; a day after a 32-year-old dairy truck driver stormed a one-room school and tried to execute all the girls, killing five. The third deadly U.S. school shooting in a week shattered the calm of an Amish farm community where there is little crime and where the sight of horse-drawn buggies, bearded men in straw hats and suspenders, and women in bonnets conjures up a bygone age. Several Amish interviewed by Reuters said they were sad but not angry and emphasized the need for forgiveness of gunman Charles Carl Roberts, who as a non-Amish person was what the locals refer to as 'English.' 'It's just not the way we think. There is no sense in getting angry,' said Henry Fisher, 62, a retired farmer with five grown children and 33 grandchildren who has lived all his life in the town some 60 miles (100 km) west of Philadelphia.

Pray: With the third such shooting in a week let us pray that the government will learn the lesson and tighten up the gun law. Pray for the Amish community at this time and thank God for their Christian witness for the world to see. (Pro 19: 11)

More: http://today.reuters.co.uk/news/articlenews.aspx?storyid=2006-10-04T150005Z_01_N03251356_RTRUKOC_0_UK-CRIME-SCHOOLS-SCENE-SIDEBAR-1.xml&type=worldNews&WTmodLoc=World-C3-More-9

■ Zimbabwe Churches call for national debate to end crisis

Churches in Zimbabwe have called for a national debate in a bid to end the worst economic and political crisis to hit the country since it gained independence 26 years ago. 'Our nation is desperately in need of a physician, and that physician is none other than us the people of Zimbabwe,' Roman Catholic, Protestant and Evangelical leaders stated in a document entitled The Zimbabwe We Want: Towards A National Vision For Zimbabwe. The call comes as the country's Agriculture Minister, Joseph Made, admitted that the country did not harvest enough food last season and that an army-led programme to produce food had failed. David Coltart, a white member of Zimbabwe's divided Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) party, has also listed a high AIDS death rate, a running inflation of 1,200 per cent and widespread malnutrition as just some of the challenges rocking the country.

Pray: Continue praying for this troubled nation that the 'divine physician' will have compassion on them. (Ps 90: 16)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/zimbabwe.churches.call.for.national.debate.to.end.crisis/7847.htm>

■ Three more attacks on Iraqi Churches in Baghdad and Mosul

The latest anti-Christian violence in Iraq saw a car bomb outside a cathedral in Baghdad which killed 2 and injured at least 17 others, and two attacks on a church in Mosul. On Sunday 24th September a cathedral of the Ancient Church of the East suffered a double attack apparently designed to maximise casualties. These two explosions resulted in two people being killed, one a security guard for the church and the other a child. The cathedral itself was badly damaged. On the same day in Mosul a church was attacked when armed men fired around 80 shots. Some damage was done to the church building and some windows were broken. Christians courageously went to the church for an evening service later in the day. Two days later the same church was attacked with rockets and an explosive device detonated outside a door. Largely unreported in the Western media, attacks on Christians in Iraq have been occurring frequently. As a small minority Iraqi Christians are very vulnerable.

Pray: for our Christian brothers and sisters that God will strengthen them in times of adversity. (2 Chr 16: 9)

More: http://www.barnabasfund.org/archivenews/article.php?ID_news_items=226

■ Millions still waiting for homes one year after Pakistan earthquake

Many of the three million people left homeless after last year's devastating earthquake in Pakistan are facing another harsh winter without a new house, according to Christian Aid. The process of rebuilding after such a huge disaster always takes several years and in Pakistan this year's particularly heavy monsoon rains have hampered the reconstruction effort. In addition, a government scheme to involve survivors in rebuilding their own homes has been slow to get off the ground. The government has encouraged people to use wood, mild steel and corrugated iron sheets and asked them not to use concrete for roofs, to avoid casualties in future quakes. Some 30,000 people are living in tents; while most survivors are living in transitional shelters made of wood and corrugated iron sheets and will not be able to build a new permanent home until after the winter. The weather could also force people from remote villages high in the mountains to come down to the cities during the winter, increasing the number of people in tents.

Pray: for all those who are still not able to have a safe roof over their heads and that the authorities will release the necessary funding and support.

More: <http://www.christian-aid.org/news/media/pressrel/061004p.htm>

■ Breaking down walls and meeting need in Lebanon

Churches in Lebanon moved with speed and compassion when the recent conflict hit their country. As food aid was received and churches provided sanctuary to the displaced, barriers between Christian and Muslim communities were toppled. With much work still to be done in stabilising the region, Tearfund continues to work with its Jordanian partner Jecrad. Their efforts have provided the vital relief-aid still needed by communities. Church response to the crisis was swift. Christian relief-support to both Muslim and Christian communities has broken down old animosities and united the two sides. 'The walls that rose between Christians and Shiite Moslems during the 1975 - 1990 civil war in Lebanon collapsed,' says Vera Haddad, director of Jecrad. With aid from Jecrad, churches were able to distribute food. Medicine and hygiene provisions were given out to stop the spread of diseases and churches gave refuge to people during the shelling. Many Muslim refugees from south Lebanon and suburbs of Beirut found sanctuary from the conflict in church buildings.

Pray: that the Church will continue in the role of breaking down walls and bringing healing. Pray for peace and stability in this nation as it takes on the role of security in the border region in the South.

More: <http://www.tearfund.org/News/World+news/Churches+bring+hope+in+Lebanon.htm>

■ Philippines bishop's murder linked to criticism of government

As concern continues about the death and mistreatment of church and human rights workers in the Philippines, news of the murder of Bishop Alberto Ramento of Tarlac, former Prime Bishop of the Philippine Independent Church, or Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI), has been greeted with sadness and concern. Bishop Ramento was found stabbed to death at his rectory on the morning of 3 October 2006. The initial police report said that he may have been killed by robbers, but others suspect that Ramento, an outspoken critic of the Philippine government, could have been the victim of a political killing, the Manila Times reports. Those who knew Ramento and his advocacy work for peace and human rights joined in mourning his death, while vigils have been planned in Tarlac and at the cathedral in Manila.

Pray: that Bishop Ramento's work for peace and human rights will bear much fruit and not be wasted that many will take up the baton. (1 Cor 16; 13)

More: http://www.ekkleisia.co.uk/content/news_syndication/article_06104phil.shtml

PRAISE REPORTS

■ Evangelicals are growing twice the pace of Islam

A report in the Christian Post says young Christian leaders from around the world met at a Lausanne gathering in Malaysia this week to listen to mission experts discuss the rapid growth of global evangelicalism. Lausanne is a missions-initiatives organization started in 1974. Nearly 500 young leaders from over 110 countries gathered in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, for six days, Sept. 24-30, for Christ-centred leadership development. Jason Mandryck, co-author of the mission prayer guide Operation World, is quoted as saying that although Christianity has barely kept pace with world population growth over the last century, evangelicalism is 'far and away the fastest growing major religious movement in the world today.' Evangelicalism he says, is growing at twice the pace of Islam and three times as fast as the overall world population. Most significantly, the global growth is seen in countries such as Brazil, China, Bangladesh and Nigeria which have 'exploding' Christian populations. Indeed, states Mandryck, the Mongolian church is now sending one missionary for every 222 Christians.

Praise: God for this growth and long may it continue! (Rom 14: 11)

More: <http://www.christianpost.com/article/20060928/24860.htm>

■ 'Miracles' boost Indian Christians

More than 100 years after the first waves of a great Welsh religious revival reached faraway north-eastern India, Christian church leaders are claiming a religious reawakening in the region. Leaders of the Presbyterian Church in the north-eastern Indian states of Meghalaya and Mizoram - sandwiched between Muslim Bangladesh and Buddhist Burma - say there have been miracles occurring. A church at Malki, in Meghalaya's capital Shillong, has been receiving a steady stream of devotees ever since word spread that a cross here has been glowing and radiating the image of Lord Jesus. This, combined with recent reports of several school students 'convulsing, behaving abnormally and even fainting', has prompted the talk of a revival. 'The Holy Spirit is here to reawaken people,' says Reverend Laldawngliana, a spokesman for the Presbyterian Church of India in Shillong. He says similar religious experiences proclaimed the beginning of a reawakening in the region in 1906, just two years after the last great revival in Wales.

Praise: God for his abundant grace and the work of the Holy Spirit in reviving power.

More: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/5381394.stm

PRAYER ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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