



# PRAYER ALERT...

An initiative of the Prayer Association of the British Isles & Ireland  
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## BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

### ■ Teachers 'stressed' by websites

Teachers in Northern Ireland are being caused 'a lot of stress' by websites which allow pupils to post their opinions of them, it has been claimed. Sites such as [ratemyteacher.co.uk](http://ratemyteacher.co.uk) and [bebo](http://bebo) give pupils the chance to anonymously praise or castigate their teachers from their own homes. Fern Turner, regional officer of the National Association of Head Teachers, said the situation was 'unacceptable'. Among the posts on one of the sites, [ratemyteacher.co.uk](http://ratemyteacher.co.uk), were ones which read: 'A useless piece of garbage who wouldn't know chemistry if it ran him over.' Ms Turner said her organisation did not condone bad teaching, but there were better ways to deal with problems. She commented: 'I think part of being a teacher is training young children, and indeed sometimes adults, to respect others and respect their feelings and not to go out of their way to damage people. We need students to be active, we need them to be involved in their education.'

**Pray:** that such web-site abuse would be curtailed, and godly respect and purpose in education restored. (Pr 22: 6)

**More:** [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern\\_ireland/6142596.stm?ls](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/6142596.stm?ls)

### ■ Churches welcome Nuffield Report on disabled newborns

Nuffield's report on the 'Critical care decisions in foetal and neonatal medicine: Ethical issues', published today, recommended that babies born before or at 22 weeks should not be routinely resuscitated or receive intensive care. The report was drawn up by the Nuffield Council in response to the increasing number of extremely premature babies being born in the UK. It said it was 'extremely rare' for babies born before 22 weeks to survive as only around 1 per cent of babies born at this age survive to leave hospital. The Rt Rev Tom Butler, Bishop of Southwark, and the Most Rev Peter Smith, Catholic Archbishop of Cardiff, released a joint statement today on behalf of the Church of England House of Bishops and the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. They welcomed Nuffield Council's further recommendation that 'the active ending of life of newborn babies should not be allowed, no matter how serious their condition,' which they said reaffirmed the validity of existing laws prohibiting euthanasia.

**Pray:** that church leaders continue to unite on the euthanasia issue and that medical staff would wisely and sensitively apply Nuffield's recommendations. (Ps 139:15 - 16)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/churches.welcome.nuffield.report.on.disabled.newborns/8346.htm>

### ■ Charles' hopes of multi-faith coronation dashed by Church

Prince Charles' hopes of a multi-faith coronation suffered a blow when the Church of England asserted the historic importance of a solely Christian service when he becomes King. In a rebuke to the Prince's hopes of inviting Muslims, Hindus and others to take an equal role in Westminster Abbey, the Church declared that Archbishop of Canterbury Dr Rowan Williams will design the coronation service. The highly unusual statement was the Church's first official pronouncement on how the coronation will be handled and it comes amid intensifying controversy over the role of non-Christian faiths and non-Anglican Christian denominations. Dr Williams has insisted that the Prince must restrain his interest in other faiths and stay within the 'constitutional framework' that makes him Supreme Governor of the Church of England.

The intervention from the Church made plain that Charles will be on his own if he tries to introduce other faiths into the religious coronation service at the Abbey.

**Pray:** that Prince Charles would heed this Christian advice, reconsidering his future role and responsibility with all due seriousness. (Pr 21:1- 2)

**More:** [http://www.dailymail.co.uk/pages/live/articles/news/news.html?in\\_a](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/pages/live/articles/news/news.html?in_a)

#### ■ Leave Christmas alone, say Muslims

Muslim leaders joined their Christian counterparts yesterday to launch a powerful attack on politicians and town halls that play down Christmas. They warned that attempts to remove religion from the festival were fuelling Right-wing extremism. A number of town halls have tried to excise references to Christianity from Christmas, in one case by renaming their municipal celebrations 'Winterval'. They have often justified their actions by saying Britain is now a multi-faith society and they are anxious to avoid offending minority groups. But the Muslim leaders said they honoured Christmas and that local authorities were playing into the hands of extremists who were able to blame Muslim communities for undermining Britain's Christian culture. The unprecedented broadside was delivered by the Christian Muslim Forum, which was launched this year by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, with the support of Tony Blair.

**Pray:** that this united campaign would be effective and all strongholds determined to dilute the true Christmas message would be broken. (Is 60: 3)

**More:** <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2>

#### ■ Do not adjust your sets: An alternative view of the world

Lights, cameras, salaam. In the heart of old London, a stone's throw from Buckingham Palace, the inhabitants of a state-of-the-art television studio are preparing to make broadcasting history. Today, the Arabic television network Al Jazeera launches one of the most ambitious television ventures of recent times: an English-language channel, to bring rolling news, from a Middle Eastern perspective, to a global audience of millions. The new channel, Al Jazeera International, already boasts star quality. A host of big names, from Sir David Frost to former-BBC and ITV stalwarts Rageh Omaar and Darren Jordon have joined from rival broadcasters. Tony Blair is expected to provide the station's first major 'scoop', with an exclusive interview on Friday's debut edition of Sir David's new weekly show, Frost Over the World. Four studios - in London, Doha, Kuala Lumpur and Washington DC - will allow AJI to broadcast around the world via satellite television and the internet, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

**Pray:** that this news channel would not be allowed to drown out the message of God's love and truth for His world (Rev 1:2)

**More:** <http://news.independent.co.uk/media/article1984447.ece>

#### ■ Time to put the lights out on Christmas say activists

Their calls come in the wake of the 'I Count' rally in Trafalgar Square, which challenged the government to take a lead in keeping global warming below a two degree Celsius increase. On the Saturday night of the rally, lights around London were switched off for two hours to make a symbolic statement encouraging people to change their energy consumption. The organisers, Blackout London, also want to hit the consumerism of Christmas in its most public display - Christmas lights in all shapes and forms be they on a tree, as a rope or a big neon sign outside on homes. It is hoped that on the December 4th 2006, people will be turning off for one whole day by switching out lights and keeping off as many electrical appliances as possible, and that public buildings will also take part, with churches turning off their floodlights. The campaign is a light hearted attempt at delivering a serious message. Activists want people to re think their ideas and practices even at such a time of celebration.

**Pray:** for individuals and organizations to exercise restraint in energy consumption and for the humble wondrous message of Christ's birth to be given its rightful place. (Pr 21: 20 and Jn 1: 9)

**More:** [http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/content/news\\_syndication/article\\_061115blackout.shtml](http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/content/news_syndication/article_061115blackout.shtml)

## EUROPE

#### ■ WHO ministers to agree on obesity charter

The World Health Organisation (WHO) European Ministerial conference on counteracting obesity is taking place in Istanbul on 15-17 November 2006. The concrete outcome of the conference will be the signing and adoption, on 16 November 2006, of the European Charter on Counteracting Obesity aiming to provide political guidance to strengthen action in the WHO European Region. They highlight the promotion of healthy diets and physical activity as the priority areas where governments must take immediate action by, for example, restricting the marketing of foods high in fat, sugar and salt to children and establishing a simple nutrition labelling scheme on food packaging. The Commission's Green Paper on obesity (December 2005) states that 'unhealthy diets and lack of physical activity are the leading causes of avoidable illness and premature death in Europe, and the rising prevalence of obesity across Europe is a major public health concern'.

**Pray:** for the success of the conference and for governments to swiftly implement its charter (1Cor 6:19)

**More:** <http://www.euractiv.com/en/health/ministers-agree-obesity-charter/article-159718>

#### ■ Kazakhstan: Expelled for 'missionary activity without registration'

South Korean pastor Kim U Sob, leader of the Love Presbyterian Church in the southern Kazakh town of Kyzyl-Orda [Qyzylorda] for the past eight years, has been forced to leave the country. Local Migration Police refused to extend his visa after he was found guilty in June of carrying out 'missionary work without registration.' Pastor Kim was accredited to carry out missionary work in the town of Kyzyl-Orda, but not in the wider region. Although Pastor Kim was among Kyzyl-Orda's

religious leaders invited to speak at an official celebration marking the Day of Spiritual Unity and Conciliation, on 18 October, he was then accused of illegal activity after police raided the home of a church member he was visiting, socially, outside the town itself. In 2005, Kazakhstan's President, Nursultan Nazarbayev, signed 'extremism' legal amendments restricting religious freedom and ordering missionaries' registration. Further restrictions on religious freedom, through changes to Kazakhstan's Anti-terrorism Law, are being planned for later in 2006 by the KNB secret police.

**Pray:** for the protection of christian leaders in Kazakhstan, and for the growth of the church in the face of restrictions. ( John 17: 15)

**More:** [http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article\\_id=871](http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article_id=871)

## WORLDWIDE

### ■ Tearfund rebukes UN for 'staggering complacency' of climate change proposals

Proposals put forward at the UN Climate Change Conference in Nairobi, Kenya display 'staggering complacency', UK Christian relief and development agency Tearfund has said. Tearfund has expressed its disappointment at the UN proposals that have emerged at the Nairobi conference, held to help reduce rich countries' emissions after 2012 when the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol ends. The proposals contain no plan to agree a global target and no adequate timetable to reach agreement on emissions cuts. Bishop Paul Mususu, from the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia, a Tearfund partner, said: 'I did not expect such weak action on African soil after all the promises about emissions cuts from rich countries. What have they come here for? Millions of people on this continent are among the most vulnerable people to the droughts, floods and erratic rains that come with a changing climate. We need urgent action from the ministers and Heads of State arriving at this conference to radically transform these proposals.'

**Pray:** Continue praying, especially for the rich nations, that they will seriously consider their actions and the inevitable catastrophic results.

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/tearfund.rebukes.un.for.staggering.complacency.of.climate.change.proposals/8342.htm>

### ■ Christian exodus on upswing in Bethlehem

The exodus of Christian Arabs from Palestinian Authority (PA) controlled areas has gained momentum amidst increasing Muslim anti-Christian incitement, the Associated Press reported. According to a story carried by [www.israelnationalnews.com](http://www.israelnationalnews.com), the dwindling Christian Arab population in Bethlehem parallels a similar phenomenon in other Arab countries. 'Most of the Christians here are either in the process of leaving, planning to leave or thinking of leaving,' Sami Awad, executive director of the Holy Land Trust, said 'Insecurity is deep and getting worse.' To get into Bethlehem from Jerusalem you have to go through a checkpoint. Nowadays it looks more like a border crossing. The barrier goes up, and you drive in through a gap in the 30-foot high concrete wall that Israel says it has built to keep out suicide bombers. The wall now separates Bethlehem and Jerusalem - two towns that have been linked for centuries.

**Pray:** for the Christians in Bethlehem and other areas where they are marginalised for their faith that they will be given strength to stand firm. ( Math 10: 32 - 33)

**More:** <http://www.crosswalk.com/news/religiontoday/1448033.html>

### ■ Leaked document reveals alarming plans to 'subdue' Protestant Church in Vietnam

Details have been acquired of an internal Vietnamese government training manual, which outlines a plan 'to resolutely subdue the abnormally rapid and spontaneous development of the Protestant religion' among ethnic minorities in the northwest highlands, Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) has reported. The manual, entitled 'Training Document: Concerning the task of the Protestant Religion in the northern mountainous region', appears to have been issued by a government department, the Central Bureau of Religious Affairs, in revelations that are sure to shock religious organisations operating in the region. The news has been even more shocking as the document emerges at a time when Vietnam was widely expected to be taken off the US blacklist of 'countries of particular concern' for religious freedom violations. It creates a vast loophole whereby local authorities are empowered to arbitrate on the legitimacy of congregations, and to force newer Protestant Christians to renounce their faith.

**Pray:** for our Vietnamese brothers and sisters that the Lord will protect and bless them despite persecution. (Eph 6: 10 - 11)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/leaked.document.reveals.alarming.plans.to.subdue.protestant.church.in.vietnam/8325.htm>

### ■ Urgent action: Two pastors assassinated in El Salvador

CSW have asked for your urgent prayers and action following the assassination of two Lutheran pastors in El Salvador as they left a church service on Saturday evening. According to the news service, [Noticiacristiana.com](http://Noticiacristiana.com), Francisco Carillo and his wife were both shot to death as they left a service they had just conducted at the Montes de Pensbert Lutheran Church. According to [NoticiaCristiana.com](http://NoticiaCristiana.com), three young men approached the couple as they exited the church and then opened fire. The motivation behind the assassination is unclear, although some church representatives suspect that they may have been targeted because of their work in defence of the poor and on human rights. The assassination has left Christians in the country saddened, shocked and deeply concerned about the situation in their country. In September, a Catholic priest, Antonio Romero, was brutally beaten to death. Many believe that his murder was also in response to his work on human rights and work with the poor.

**Pray:** for comfort and healing for the children and other relatives as well as for the church of Pastors Francisco and Jesus de Carrillo. (2 Cor 1: 3 - 5)

**More:** <http://www.csw.org.uk/>

#### ■ Life as a secret Christian convert

Abandoning Islam for Christianity is such a sensitive issue in Malaysia that many converts find themselves leading a secret, double life. Maria - not her real name - is a young Malaysian woman who has lived a secret and sometimes fearful life since she converted from Islam to Christianity. Maria became a Christian over a decade ago when she was 18. She says no-one forced her to convert, that she made the decision after studying different religious texts. If my family find out I am no longer a Muslim they will completely cut me off. Conversion is deemed so sensitive in Malaysia that even the priest who baptised her refused to give her a baptismal certificate. Even now the church she attends asked her to sign a declaration stating the church is not responsible for her conversion. Not even Maria's family know she has converted.

**Pray:** for Maria and all Christians who are living their faith out in secrecy, may their 'salt' bring new life. (1 Cor 2: 9)

**More:** [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/crossing\\_continents/6150340.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/crossing_continents/6150340.stm)

#### ■ Annan presents Darfur force plan

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan has opened a conference on the crisis in Sudan's Darfur region with a new plan for the peacekeeping force there. Analysts say it is unclear if Sudan will accept the plan, being discussed at the conference in Ethiopia. The BBC's Adam Mynott in Addis Ababa, where the conference is taking place, says the meeting followed acceptance by the UN that Sudan was not going to allow the replacement of African Union (AU) peacekeepers by a UN body. Mr Annan wants firstly to reinforce the existing AU contingent, which has been under-resourced and ineffective, by supplying extra money, troops and equipment. Then the UN would deploy several hundred soldiers and police officers to help the 7,000 AU troops in Sudan. The third step is an AU-UN hybrid peacekeeping force.

**Pray:** Continue praying for this troubled region that these peacekeeping initiatives will bring forth much fruit leading to peace. (Is 32: 16 – 17)

**More:** <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/6153208.stm>

## PRAISE REPORTS

#### ■ Gay Pride march in Jerusalem cancelled

Following deliberations within the haredi (orthodox) community concerning a compromise proposal offered by the gay community on Thursday last week, it was decided that the gay parade will not take place in its original format. Parade organizers announced that the parade was officially cancelled. The final version consists of only a rally at the Hebrew University Stadium at Givat Ram. (See also Prayer Alert 4206)

**Praise:** God for this answer to prayer leading to this controversial march being cancelled. Pray for those caught up in this movement that they will find the light of Christ. (1 Jn 1: 5 – 7)

**More:** <http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1162378356781&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull>

#### ■ Children's 24/7 spirituality highlighted in Methodist research

Despite the waning interest in institutional religion among the young, new research by the Methodist Church in the UK has found that children are getting stuck into activities outside traditional structures during the week. An online survey conducted by MethodistChildren found that mid-week groups for children were nearly 100% bigger than Sunday groups and that, among the 43% of churches that had such groups, an average of 38 children attended. 'Many churches are doing great work on Sundays but it's clear from our results that children want church to be more than just that – they want to go to activities during the week,' said Steve Pearce, the Church's Children's Secretary. 'Sundays are special, but we're called to be Christians every day of the week and this survey shows that children and young people have a 24/7 spirituality that needs to be fed all the time.'

**Praise:** God for this trend among the young people who want more than just Sunday worship. (Heb 10: 25)

**More:** [http://www.ekkleisia.co.uk/content/news\\_syndication/article\\_061114children.shtml](http://www.ekkleisia.co.uk/content/news_syndication/article_061114children.shtml)

#### ■ Prayers and iPod players

Ulster players Neil Best and Andrew Trimble have spoken of their pre-match preparations ahead of games such as that against South Africa on Saturday. Both players were named in Eddie O'Sullivan's Ireland side to face the Springboks at Lansdowne Road. 'It may not be the stereotype of a rugby player's preparation but I like to get away from it all and read God's Word,' said Trimble. Best says he often joins his team-mate to 'pray for safety' before a match. 'Andrew is a devout Christian and it is nice to have someone like that on the team. He reads his Bible before he plays and we pray together before we play.'

**Praise:** God for the witness of Christians in sport and there living testimony to team-mates and supporters alike. (1 Jn 5:9 – 12)

**More:** [http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport1/hi/rugby\\_union/irish/6125988.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport1/hi/rugby_union/irish/6125988.stm)

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