



PRAYER ALERT...

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BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Court victory for Misbah's mother

A 12-year-old schoolgirl must return to her mother in Scotland, a judge in Pakistan has ruled. Misbah Rana, also known as Molly Campbell, is at the centre of a custody battle between her estranged parents. The case ended up in the high court in Lahore after the girl flew to Pakistan to be with her father in August. Her mother, Louise Campbell, said that her daughter would have a chance to say who she wants to live with. The ruling in Lahore concerned whether an order by the Court of Session in Edinburgh last June giving interim custody to Ms Campbell, from Stornoway, was violated. The judge ruled that Misbah must be handed over to the custody of the British High Commission within the next seven days. Ms Campbell said she was overjoyed that her daughter would be coming back to Scotland but added that Misbah would be 'confused and scared'.

Pray: that the ensuing custody battles will result in God's best solution for this young girl. (Mal.4:5-6)

More: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/highlands_and_islands/6192406.stm

■ Bishop warns of closures of youth clubs and welfare projects in wake of gay rights laws

The Bishop of Rochester, the Right Reverend Michael Nazir-Ali, has warned that Anglican youth clubs, welfare projects and charities may close because of new gay rights laws, in the wake of the protest by Roman Catholic Archbishop of Birmingham Vincent Nichols against Government interference in the moral beliefs of Christians. Although the new laws are meant to prevent discrimination against gays, the Church of England has said they mean priests could be sued for refusing to bless same-sex unions and Catholics say they will close their adoption agencies rather than give children to gay couples. Due to become law next April, ministers are faced with a united front of hostility from churches over the Sexual Orientation Regulations. Leaders of the increasingly influential black churches added their voices to the protest, saying that pastors and churchgoers will go to jail rather than accept rules that will mean they must open their meeting halls to gay lobby groups.

Pray: Thank God for such a united stand by church leaders against these regulations that could adversely affect the poor and the marginalised in particular.

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/bishop.warns.of.youth.clubs.and.welfare.projects.closures.in.wake.of.gay.right.laws/8537.1>

■ UPDATE - Legal action not inevitable for CU's says report.

A report published by the think tank Ekklesia suggests that the high-profile conflict between a number of Christian Unions and Students' Unions need not end in legal action. The report also warns that the proposed legal action could result in Christians taking other Christians to court.

Pray: for Holy Spirit wisdom for CU's as they stand firm on biblical principles. (See Prayer Alert 4506)

More: http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/content/news_syndication/article_061129christianunions.shtm

■ **UPDATE - Christian lawyers criticise Northern Ireland Sexual Orientation Regulations**

The NI Sexual Orientation Regulations can only be amended now if the government agrees to withdraw and amend them, or if a member of the House of Commons or House of Lords seeks an annulment of the SORs and sufficient time is granted for the appropriate debate and vote to take place. 'This all emphasises the need to pray and act on the issue now,' says the Lawyers Christian Fellowship.

Pray: Continue to pray urgently that God would raise up members to bring an annulment and that government would allow a full debate. (Ez.22:30 – See Prayer Alert 4506)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/christian.lawyers.criticise.northern.ireland.sexual.orientation.regulations/8546.htm>

■ **Protest centre inmates moving out**

About 150 detainees are to be released from asylum centres to make space for inmates caught up in protests at an immigration complex in west London. The 500 capacity Harmondsworth centre near Heathrow airport will be partly evacuated, the Home Office said. The detainees will be transferred to centres around the UK as other people are released on bail. Asylum seekers started fires and spelt out Help and SOS with sheets in a day of protest over living conditions. Police were alerted at about 0040 GMT Wednesday as unrest which spread to all four wings of the centre, housing 482 residents. The unrest erupted following the publication of a report raising concerns about poor relations between staff and detainees at the centre. Chief Inspector of Prisons Anne Owers said her latest report on Harmondsworth gave it the poorest rating she had yet issued on such a facility.

Pray: for improved relations in the centres to which detainees are moved and for improved conditions for both staff and inmates in the already overstretched prison system. (Ex.22:21)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/london/6157111.stm>

■ **Citizens of Scottish town hold prayer vigil in high school**

Troubled citizens in the northern Scottish town of Buckie have taken the 'bull by the horns,' so to speak, and organized a prayer vigil in the local high school for the area youth following a series of deaths and tragedies involving youth in the region. The Rev Scott Middleton, of the town's Church of Christ, helped to organize the event on behalf of numerous parents who came to him to share their concerns. 'We have had a series of tragedies that have involved drug overdoses, alcohol and car wrecks. There is no agenda other than to pray for the youth of Moray and for those working with them: scout leaders, Boys' Brigade, youth club volunteers, teachers. We want to come together to pray for good things to happen to our young people, and to pray against the bad things. That's definitely the feeling that has emerged in the last few weeks.'

Pray: that young peoples' lives will be turned around and that this prayer initiative would spread from one town and region to the whole of Scotland. (2 Chr.7:14)

More: http://www.breakingchristiannews.com/articles/display_art_pf.html?ID=3326

■ **Muslim law reaches Britain**

Last night politicians and religious leaders expressed outrage that sharia law is gaining an increasing foothold in our society. They insisted Labour was allowing a chaotic two-tier legal system to flourish in the name of political correctness. Yesterday experts insisted the Government had already allowed elements of sharia law to be introduced. The Treasury has brought in measures including interest-free loans and mortgages which comply with the Islamic law. The scandal was outlined on BBC Radio 4's Law in Action programme which uncovered evidence that Muslims are using their own laws here. A Scotland Yard source said it was common for the police not to proceed with assault cases if victims did not press charges. Dr Patrick Sookhdeo of the Institute for the Study of Islam and Christianity said: 'Sharia courts now operate in most larger cities, with different sectarian and ethnic groups operating their own courts that cater to their specific needs according to their tradition.'

Pray: that all UK citizens would uphold the laws of the land and not create infrastructures based on sharia law. (Gal.5:14 & Rom.10:4)

More: http://www.dailypress.co.uk/news_detail.html?sku=793

EUROPE

■ **Vatican calls for an end to violence in the name of God**

Responding to a statement from al-Qaeda in Iraq denouncing Pope Benedict XVI's bridge-building visit to Turkey as a 'crusader campaign' against Islam, the Vatican has issued a strong statement calling for peace among the religions. In a statement on a militant web site, the armed insurgent group accuses the head of the world's 1.2 billion Catholics of trying to 'extinguish the burning ember of Islam' in the Turkish people. The Pope has since made it categorically clear that he was not approving the source he cited in his academic lecture, and as part of his current visit to Turkey he has emphasised the common roots and bonds of Islam and Christianity, while acknowledging their differences. In a response issued today, the Vatican has said that al-Qaeda's statement shows the need for all faiths to bring an end to 'violence in the name of God.'

Pray: for the Pope's visit and that it will lead to an understanding that will end the violence.

More: http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/content/news_syndication/article_061129pope.shtml

■ **Norway moves to dissolve state Church system**

The general synod of the (Lutheran) Church of Norway has voted for the first time to radically change the church's relations with the State, the denomination's information service has reported - writes Oivind Ostang for Ecumenical News International. A total of 63 out of 85 synod delegates voted that the church should no longer be referred to in the country's constitution as a State or National Church. As the governing body of the church, the synod has in it the Church of Norway's 11 bishops and 11 diocesan councils. The synod decided that the church should be founded on a separate act passed by parliament. The general synod said it should itself assume all church authority now resting with the king and the government. 'The synod's decision is historic', said Jens Petter Johnsen, director of the Church of Norway national council.

Pray: for the Church in Norway as it moves towards disestablishment. (Col.1:17-18)

More: http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/content/news_syndication/article_061129norway.shtml

WORLDWIDE

■ **Christians targeted by mobs as violence escalates in Sri Lanka**

As fighting between the Sri Lankan army and Tamil rebels continues, Sri Lankan Christians face a recent trend of mob violence against Churches and individuals. On 22 November 2006, the Lighthouse Church, Mawatura, Gompola in Kandy District was attacked while the Pastor and a Church worker were inside. Rocks were thrown at the building, shattering the front window, and the Church worker was seriously injured when a rock hit him on the head. Ten days earlier members of the AoG Church in Yakkala, Gampaha District, were prevented from attending a church service by a mob of over 100 people, some of whom were armed with clubs. Four Buddhist monks accompanied the crowd of attackers and anti-Christian posters appeared on the walls. Only two policemen were sent to the scene initially, and were unable to control the crowd. They had to ask for reinforcements twice before twelve other officers arrived.

Pray: that ethnic violence will diminish in Sri Lanka, and citizens will have the opportunity to practice their chosen religion. (1Ki.4:25)

More: <http://www.csw.org.uk/latestnews/article.php?id=576>

■ **China 'secretly' executes religious leaders**

The international Christian community stands in shock as reports circulate of China secretly executing three religious leaders from a highly controversial Christian group. The lawyers and families of the three men had not received a final verdict from their appeal and had not been told about the executions when they were carried out, Christian Solidarity Worldwide has told Christian Today. Mr Li Heping, one of the lawyers for the church leaders, told China Aid Association that the three men were executed at some point last week and said that he was deeply disturbed by the secret and arbitrary execution. The case has been of particular concern as evidence emerged at the trial that severe torture and sexual abuse had been used against the defendants to extract confessions, CSW reported. 'The secret executions and the evidence of harsh torture once again shine the spotlight on the lack of justice in the country.'

Pray: for God's protection for all the Christian population, and implementation of just laws. (Lev.19:15-16)

More: http://www.christiantoday.com/article/international_community_in_shock_as_china_secretly_executes_religious_leaders/8551.htm

■ **Fiji army head sets coup deadline**

Fiji's military chief Cmdr Frank Bainimarama has warned he will overthrow the government on Friday, unless his demands are met. Cmdr Bainimarama accused Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase of stalling on a pledge to scrap controversial legislation. Fiji has been tense for weeks amid a stand-off between the two men. 'I think it's about time we end this impasse,' Cmdr Bainimarama told a press conference, adding that it would be a 'peaceful transition'. Prime Minister Qarase had earlier appeared to back down by agreeing to suspend work on the laws, one of which would grant amnesties to those involved in a 2000 coup. He also hinted that possible sedition charges against Cmdr Bainimarama could be dropped, and Fiji's police chief's work contract might not be renewed when it expired. But Cmdr Bainimarama - who wants the police chief removed immediately - appeared to reject the concessions at a press conference. Updates from the Fiji Times online click on <http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?id=52643>

Pray: that this stand-off between the military and the Government would be peacefully resolved. (Mat.5:9 & James 3:18)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/6158619.stm>

■ **Kenyan Catholic Archbishop condemns free condoms**

Ahead of the World AIDS Day today Friday December 1, the premier Catholic Archbishop in Kenya lashed out at distribution of free condoms claiming that the move promoted promiscuity. Nairobi archbishop Ndingi Mwana, a Nzeki, told a national religious leader's conference that advertisement and distribution of free condoms was creating more problems than it solved because many were encouraged to engage in sex. 'There are no two ways about it, when condoms are provided anyhow, chances of promiscuity increase since a majority of our people end up engaging in casual sex,' he said. Similar sentiments were also expressed by the head of the Anglican Church of Kenya Archbishop Benjamin Nzimbi who further challenged churches to speak out boldly against stigma and discrimination against those infected with HIV/AIDS. The church leaders were speaking at a national religious leader's conference on combating stigma, denial and discrimination which was also attended by Muslim leaders.

Pray: that all NGO's would give Godly guidance as they work together to combat AIDS.

More: <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/s06110142.htm>

■ **Abbas calls for international conference on Israel**

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas called for an international conference to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict and urged Israel to drop its opposition to a meeting that would address all outstanding issues. He said on Wednesday the so-called Quartet of key international players trying to promote Mideast peace — the United Nations, the United States, the European Union and Russia — should 'play the role of an honest intermediary and guarantor' of the agreements reached at the conference. Abbas made the proposal in a speech to the UN General Assembly on the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. A fragile cease-fire went into effect early Sunday between the Palestinians and the Israelis, ending a five-month offensive in Gaza that has killed hundreds. Abbas said more than 510 Palestinians have been killed since June, bringing the total since September 2000 to more than 4,300 people, about a third of them children.

Pray: for the right atmosphere for negotiations and the realization of a just solution. (Gen.26:31)

More: http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticleNew.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2006/November/middleeast_November565.xml&sec

■ **Iraq kidnappers free priest**

Anonymous kidnappers released a Chaldean Catholic priest in Baghdad last night, nine days after he was last seen celebrating mass in his Baghdad parish. He is the fifth priest kidnapped in five months, four of them Chaldean Catholics. Christian authorities emphasized that the kidnappings were not part of a larger plan by Islamic extremist groups targeting Christians. 'This is not against priests or churches, it is because they are kidnapping many other people, not only priests.' Kidnappings and executions of Muslims carried out weekly by Sunni and Shia militias dwarf the number of incidents against Iraq's Christians. Extremists might be targeting young 'courageous' Christians to discourage the community from staying in Iraq. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reported 24 percent of Iraqi refugees registered with its offices in Syria were Christians, though the tiny religious minority makes up less than 3 percent of Iraq's total population. Info. Escalating violence in Iraq; www.barnabasfund.org/xPFU_index.php#Iraq:%20Escalating%20Violence

Pray: that God will refresh the weary Christians living in war torn Iraq, and strengthen the faint hearted.' (Jer.31:25)

More: <http://www.compassdirect.org/en/display.php?page=breaking&lang=en&length=long&idelement=4655> 'More' Hyperlink

PRaise REPORTS

■ **Cross gains victory, BA withdraws controversial ban**

British Airways has withdrawn its controversial ban on workers wearing a visible cross, following widespread condemnation and criticism from within the UK and around the globe. Airline chief executive Willie Walsh made the announcement five hours after the Church of England threatened to sell its £6.6 million share in BA in response to the ban, the Daily Mail reports. The airline had defended the ban by saying the rule applied to all visible jewellery, and that Miss Eweida was free to wear the cross so long as it did not show. Critics condemned the policy as a double standard that openly discriminated against Christian employees, as Muslim and Hindu employees were permitted to wear headscarves and turbans. In a statement on Friday, Mr Walsh said it was clear that policy would have to change, saying the airline would look at adapting the rules to 'allow symbols of faith to be worn openly'. (See Prayer Alert 4506)

Praise: God for answered prayers and for Nadia Eweida's powerful witness.

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/cross.gains.victory.ba.withdraws.controversial.ban/8525.htm>

■ **Church leaders prepare for huge 'Year for London' prayer event for 2007**

Around 100 church leaders from across London gathered Tuesday evening to plan for a massive 24/7 prayer initiative for 2007 that will see churches of all denominations and traditions join in a 365-day prayer relay for the capital. 'A Year for London' is the brainchild of Pastor Jonathan Oloyede of Glory House, one of the largest Pentecostal churches in London. His dream is to unite all churches in the capital in continuous prayer for transformation every day of 2007 – including Christmas day - and he already has the full support of Nicky Gumble at Holy Trinity Brompton, who is urging all of the Alpha churches to take part. The vision is to see the church united every single hour of every single day. Each Friday will be set apart as a special day of both prayer and voluntary fasting. The initiative will also encourage involvement from people across the world who are praying for transformation in the city.

Praise: God for this initiative and pray that the call to prayer will be answered by His Church across London and beyond. (Jer.29:7)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/church.leaders.prepare.for.huge.year.for.london.prayer.event.for.2007/8536.htm>

PRAYER ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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