



# PRAYER ALERT...

An initiative of the Prayer Association of the British Isles & Ireland

[www.prayer-alert.net](http://www.prayer-alert.net)

[editor@prayer-alert.net](mailto:editor@prayer-alert.net)

Issue 4806

Website

Contact Us

Donations

Friday 15 December 2006

## ■ British Isles & Ireland

- [Christian group responds to Ipswich prostitute murders](#)
- [Tories warn on couple break-ups](#)
- [Family centre could lose local Council funding over Christian beliefs](#)
- [Online banking fraud 'up 8,000%'](#)
- [Right to protest legally upheld for UK anti-war demonstrators](#)
- [NI Assembly split on vote over Sexual Orientation Regulations](#)

## ■ Europe

- [Romania: Sudden secretive rush to adopt controversial religion law](#)
- [EU summit to reconsider expansion](#)

## ■ Worldwide

- [Church agencies help with aftermath of Philippines super-typhoon](#)
- [UN body to probe abuses in Darfur](#)
- [Dalit Christians rally at Indian parliament for human rights](#)
- [Christian satellite network nearing a new channel launch for Iran](#)
- [Gunmen in uniforms kidnap 20-30 in Iraq](#)
- [S. Africa's future depends on tackling HIV/AIDS](#)

## ■ Praise Reports

- [Good news from North Staffs prison](#)
- [Sainsbury's goes bananas over Fairtrade](#)

## BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

### ■ Christian group responds to Ipswich prostitute murders

The National Christian Alliance on Prostitution (NCAP) has issued a response to the confirmed murders of three prostitutes in Ipswich as police announced the discovery of two more bodies on Tuesday prompting fears that a 'ripper'-style serial killer is at large in the area. Police said they now believed that five sex workers had been found dead in the last ten days as they continue hunting a possible serial killer targeting prostitutes. As the murders continue to generate enormous national interest, the NCAP appealed to the media to avoid stigmatising the women victims in its reportage of the murders. 'All too often we read 'prostitute murdered' and in doing so take a step away from the fact that first and foremost they are women, daughters, sisters, partners and friends,' it said in a press release Tuesday. NCAP affiliated projects work with over 4,000 individuals involved in street prostitution, including Ipswich, and all five of the women in question were known to the Ipswich Project.

**Pray:** against the fear generated by this situation and pray for the friends and relatives of the victims. Pray for the Town Pastors and all Christians as they work within the community.

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/christian.group.responds.to.ipswich.prostitute.murders/8707.htm>

### ■ Tories warn on couple break-ups

The break-up of co-habiting couples leads to severe social problems, a Conservative report has warned. Half of co-habiting parents split by their child's fifth birthday, while only one in 12 married couples did, the social justice group report says. It puts the cost of this family breakdown - in poverty, drug abuse and debt - at £20bn a year. The report, Breakdown Britain, will also warn of the collapse of what it calls 'the welfare society', the informal support network within families and communities. [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk\\_politics/6161155.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/6161155.stm) The Evangelical Alliance and Christian social action charity CARE have welcomed the Conservative Party's comments that the UK would be better off with more marriage and fewer divorces. This follows the release of the 'Breakdown Britain' report, produced by the Conservative Party's Social Justice Policy Group. In their own major 'Faith & Nation' report, the Evangelical Alliance has called on the government to promote laws, policies, and financial incentives that strengthen marriage and family life as foundational for civil society.

**Pray:** that this Conservative Party report will be effective together with EA and CARE's initiative in reinstating marriage as central to family life. (Heb.13:4)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/evangelical.alliance.welcomes.david.camerons.comments.on.marriage/8719.htm>

### ■ Family centre could lose local Council funding over Christian beliefs

The Lawyers' Christian Fellowship (LCF) has spoken out against Haringey Council in London after it threatened a local family centre last month with the withdrawal of vital funds unless it agreed to renounce all expression of Christianity from the voluntary services it provides. Gosia Shannon, the organiser of a family centre for Eastern European migrants who have

settled in London, received numerous letters from Haringey Council warning her of funding withdrawal after the centre sought to change its name from 'The Polish Drop-In Centre' to 'The Polish and Eastern European Christian Family Centre'. The Council warned that the use of the word 'Christian' in particular in the name of the organisation could damage current funding. Ms Shannon set up the voluntary centre as an expression of her faith in Jesus Christ, offering among other things mother and toddler groups to help and meet the needs of Eastern European migrants as they seek to integrate and settle into life in London.

**Pray:** Once more we see another attack against public declarations of our faith. Pray that Christians will remain strong and courageous and that the Haringey Council's motive and attitude behind this will be exposed. (Dt.31:8)

**More:** [http://www.christiantoday.com/article/family\\_centre.could.lose.local.council.funding.over.christian.beliefs/8728.htm](http://www.christiantoday.com/article/family_centre.could.lose.local.council.funding.over.christian.beliefs/8728.htm)

#### ■ Online banking fraud 'up 8,000%'

The UK has seen an 8,000% increase in fake internet banking scams in the past two years, the government's financial watchdog has warned. The Financial Services Authority (FSA) told peers it was 'very concerned' about the growth in 'phishing'. Phishing involves using fake websites to lure people into revealing their bank account numbers. The amount stolen is still relatively small but it is set to go up by 90% for the second year running, peers heard. Between January and June 2005, the number of recorded phishing incidents was 312, the Lords science and technology committee was told. The figure for the same period this year was 5,059, according to banking trade body Apacs figures. The amount of cash stolen in the first half of 2006 was £23.2m, the committee was told, and was likely to be £22.5m in the second half of the year. The increase was put down by Apacs security chief Philip Whitaker to better detection.

**Pray:** for the authorities and service providers that they will find ways of counteracting this evil.

**More:** [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk\\_politics/6177555.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/6177555.stm)

#### ■ Right to protest legally upheld for UK anti-war demonstrators

Peace and civil liberties campaigners have welcomed a legal victory by a group of UK anti-war demonstrators who have established that their rights to public protest were violated when police stopped them from attending a non-violent action against the Iraq war at an airbase. The High Court and the Court of Appeal had already ruled that the police acted unlawfully in holding protesters on their coaches – which they claimed was done to 'protect their lives' from the consequences of a protest on a military installation. This week the Law Lords went further by ruling that the police also violated the right to freedom of expression and lawful assembly, overturning a previous High Court ruling and dismissing a cross-appeal by the police against the unlawful decision to hold protesters on the coaches. The case goes back three years. Some 120 anti-Iraq war protesters were held on coaches by police near RAF Fairford in Gloucestershire, in March 2003.

**Pray:** that these new rulings will lead to the rights of freedom and protest being upheld and that any abuse will be avoided.

**More:** [http://www.ekkleisia.co.uk/content/news\\_syndication/article\\_061213antiwar.shtml](http://www.ekkleisia.co.uk/content/news_syndication/article_061213antiwar.shtml)

#### ■ NI Assembly split on vote over Sexual Orientation Regulations

On Tuesday a debate in the transitional Northern Ireland Assembly took place on a motion requesting that the Northern Ireland Secretary, Peter Hain, withdraw the increasingly controversial Northern Ireland Sexual Orientation Regulations. After a debate outlining the procedural and substantive flaws with the Government's fast-tracked proposals, Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) were split with 39 voting to demand the withdrawal of the Regulations and 39 voting to keep them. Outlining a clear desire to protect the rights of homosexuals, but also to safeguard faith groups, MLAs who opposed the Regulations represented concerns that the proposals were ill-thought through, had not been properly consulted on, were dangerously broad, and would have the unintended consequence of being 'a charter for persecution of any of those with a moral conscience'. With 50% of the Northern Ireland Assembly openly criticising the Government's approach to these Regulations, the pressure will grow on Peter Hain, who has been reported as having caused a Cabinet split after refusing to reconsider his approach (The Independent, 8th December). (See also Prayer Alert 4506 & 4606)

**Pray:** Praise God for this result. Continue praying that this vote will be the necessary pressure for parliament to reconsider and give these regulations full debate. (Col.4:2)

**More:** <http://www.christianconcernforournation.co.uk/sor/12dec6.php>

## EUROPE

#### ■ Romania: Sudden secretive rush to adopt controversial religion law

Human rights activists and members of religious minorities have expressed concern to Forum 18 News Service over the apparent sudden rush to pass the controversial new Religion Law through Romania's Parliament. The government-backed Law - approved without discussion in the Senate, the upper house of Parliament, in December 2005 - is to go to the lower house, the Chamber of Deputies this week, the Chamber's website announced on Tuesday. This sudden rush is despite the fact that a joint report on the Law by two of the Chamber's committees has not yet been made public. Even the dominant Romanian Orthodox Church - which has given strong backing to the draft Law - only found out at midday Tuesday (12 December) that it was about to be discussed in the Chamber of Deputies, as spokesperson Fr. Constantin Stoica told Forum 18 from Bucharest. 'In two weeks time Romania will be a member of the EU and this law is necessary for this,' he explained.

**Pray:** for the Chamber of Deputies that they will make the right decision and not force through a bad law.

**More:** <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/s06120060.htm>

### ■ EU summit to reconsider expansion

The heads of the 25 European Union states are expected to make it harder for new members to join, when they meet for their annual summit in Brussels. This, they will argue, will allow time to reform the EU's key institutions. Arguments are expected over a call by the EU's executive, the Commission, for the veto over justice and home affairs to be dropped, our correspondent says. The UK, Germany and the Netherlands are expected to oppose the proposal which is meant to help fight terrorism. EU leaders are expected to call for issues such as judicial reform and fighting corruption to be tackled early on when considering new applications for membership. The summit comes after EU foreign ministers decided on Monday to partially suspend accession talks with Turkey. Finnish Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen who will chair the summit, told Reuters news agency, that his purpose was to find some kind of consensus about enlargement.

**Pray:** for the EU annual summit as they make decisions that will affect us all, that they will be given wisdom. (Pr.3:13)

**More:** <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/6178337.stm>

## WORLDWIDE

### ■ Church agencies help with aftermath of Philippines super-typhoon

Church and development agencies are battling against more typhoons and heavy rains in their efforts to bring relief to poor communities across the central Philippines regions hit by last week's super typhoon. Unseasonal typhoons forced thousands over the weekend back into overcrowded evacuation centres in Albay province, Bicol, as the second major storm in ten days wrought more havoc across the disaster-stricken country. 'In Albay, half the affected population had already moved into evacuation centres after homes were destroyed by the landslide 10 days ago,' said Jessica Bersilla, the UK-based international development agency Christian Aid's emergency officer in the Philippines. 'But the other half had chosen to set up makeshift tents and shelters because they weren't comfortable with the conditions in the evacuation centres,' she added. This year, with 19 typhoons so far striking the Philippines, the storm season has reportedly been unusually long. Typhoons are usually expected between July and October 2006, explains Christian Aid.

**Pray:** for the people affected by these typhoons and the authorities as they face the huge task of bringing aid to the disaster areas. (2Cor.9:8)

**More:** [http://www.ekkleisia.co.uk/content/news\\_syndication/article\\_061212typhoon.shtml](http://www.ekkleisia.co.uk/content/news_syndication/article_061212typhoon.shtml)

### ■ UN body to probe abuses in Darfur

The UN Human Rights Council has agreed to send a team to investigate abuses in Sudan's war-torn Darfur region. But the world's top human rights body refrained from criticising Sudan's government over the violence. Sudan has been blamed for killings, rapes and destruction, but says it is being unfairly targeted by the West. Meanwhile, the US and Britain are considering the imposition of a no-fly zone over Darfur if Sudan does not allow a UN force there, officials say. An estimated 200,000 people have died in Darfur since 2003, when rebels took up arms against the government. More than two million people, mostly black Africans whose villages have been attacked by pro-government Arab Janjaweed militias, have fled their homes. The 47-member council, which was set up this year, has been heavily criticised for its reticence on the Darfur issue. The decision was taken during the second day of an emergency session in Geneva on Darfur.

**Pray:** for the UN as it faces the difficult task of steering the middle road but seeking justice and peace for all the people of Darfur.

**More:** <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/6176781.stm>

### ■ Dalit Christians rally at Indian parliament for human rights

The All India Christian Council held a massive prayer rally on Parliament Street on Monday calling on the Indian government to do justice to the Christian Community by restoring the human rights of Dalit Christians. A unique point of the day's rally was the participation by a large number of Hindu and Buddhist Dalits, showing their solidarity with their Christian brothers and sisters. This gave the lie to the argument advanced by some sectors that Dalits now in Hinduism were opposing the inclusion of Christians in the Scheduled caste list. Speakers point out that there was scope for Dalits of every religious belief to benefit by affirmative action programs in the private and public sector. The Council and the Confederation called upon the government to take suitable legal measures to end anti Christian regulations in states of Rajasthan, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh in particular where the state governments were functioning in a manner that violated constitutional provisions safeguarding minority rights.

**Pray:** that the prayers of the people will be answered and lead to the rights of Dalit Christians being recognised.

**More:** <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/s06120050.htm>

### ■ Christian satellite network nearing a new channel launch for Iran

A new merger at SAT-7 allows the Christian Satellite television ministry to launch its new Farsi-language channel on Monday, December 18. The Board of Iranian Christian Broadcasting (ICB) announced this week that ICB would become part of SAT-7. As a result, SAT-7's David Harder says they're moving toward a becoming a network. 'It's been a dream from the very beginning of SAT-7 to be in the major languages of the region in Arabic, in Farsi and in Turkish, and now to have a full 24-hours designed specifically for that region is extremely important.' The new channel, SAT-7 Pars (a commonly used term in and around Iran to refer to Persians and things Persian) will offer 20 hours of Farsi Christian programming daily and another four hours a day in Turkish. It's designed to meet the spiritual needs of people who live in and near Iran.

**Pray:** for SAT-7 as it tries to extend its coverage over the Middle East and bring the Good News to the Arab world. (Is.52:7)

**More:** <http://www.mnnonline.org/article/9377>

#### ■ **Gunmen in uniforms kidnap 20-30 in Iraq**

About 20 or 30 Iraqis were kidnapped by armed men wearing outdated Iraqi National Police uniforms in a central Baghdad shopping area Thursday morning, according to an official with Iraq's Interior Ministry. Previous mass kidnappings by uniformed gunmen prompted the Iraq government to issue redesigned military and police uniforms earlier this year. Two Iraqi police explosives experts died Wednesday evening when a car bomb they were attempting to defuse detonated in eastern Baghdad's Sadr City, Iraqi police said. A second car rigged with explosives found in the same area was successfully defused. Another car bomb, targeting an Iraqi army convoy exploded in western Baghdad. Iraqi Vice President Adel Abdul Mehdi survived an attack on his convoy in north-western Baghdad an official with the Interior Ministry said. Guards fired back at gunmen who shot at the convoy as it passed. The vice president was not hurt and there were no reports of others being injured, the official said.

**Pray:** Continue to pray for this troubled nation and against these daily acts of terrorism. Seek God on your knees to break the hold the enemy has over the peoples. Pray that the Lord will raise up an army of intercessors to cover this nation in prayer.

**More:** <http://edition.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/meast/12/14/iraq.main/>

#### ■ **S. Africa's future depends on tackling HIV/AIDS**

With more than 3.3 million children in southern Africa already orphaned by HIV/AIDS, the region's future depends on governments' halting the disease's effects and ensuring that orphans receive good nutrition, education and care, a senior United Nations humanitarian official said yesterday. James T. Morris, Secretary-General Kofi Annan's Special Envoy for Humanitarian Needs in Southern Africa, told a news conference in Johannesburg, South Africa, yesterday. 'Countries need also to embrace crop diversification, improve access to clean water and sanitation, and improve the plight of women who are disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS and carry the burden of household and farming responsibilities,' he added. The region has nine of the 10 highest HIV/AIDS prevalence rates in the world and this, combined with the more than 3.3 million AIDS orphans, is straining government budgets for health care and social services, food security, education, communities and extended families. According to the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the proportion of orphans in southern Africa is growing faster than anywhere else in the world.

**Pray:** against the spread of HIV/AIDS across Africa especially amongst the children and that ways will be found to alleviate this problem. Pray that the nation will wake up to the causes of this crisis and cry out for national transformation.

**More:** <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/WO0612/S00264.htm>

## PRAISE REPORTS

#### ■ **Good news from North Staffs prison**

Dovegate Prison, near Uttoxeter, was the scene of a really encouraging spiritual breakthrough recently (26 Nov- 2 Dec) when over 120 prisoners gave their lives to Christ during a week long mission to be televised in the near future by God TV. Ray Duckworth, Deputy Director of the prison, reported that the mission was a huge success and that in the eight days 124 prisoners made a commitment to Jesus Christ. Ray said 'It was awesome! God is moving massively at Dovegate changing the lives of prisoners and staff.' Around 20% of the total 830 inmates are now Christians. Ray testified to miraculous healings, changes in personality and real peace amongst those who have made a Christian commitment but he says he now needs prayer support for the follow-up Alpha courses that will be run. To hear a recording of an interview with Ray Duckworth on Cross Rhythms Radio click on the 'More' link.

**Praise:** for God's continuing blessing on all the Christian staff, chaplains and prisoners in Dovegate Prison. Pray also for God's favour so that other UK prisons be open to this model of Christian mission. (Ps.146:7)

**More:** <http://www.crossrhythms.co.uk/radio/soundroom/>

#### ■ **Sainsbury's goes bananas over Fairtrade**

The Fairtrade Foundation has confirmed an announcement by supermarket chain Sainsbury's that all its banana supplies will be Fairtrade certified, which is the biggest ever commitment to date by a single company anywhere in the world. Sainsbury's sells 2000 tonnes of bananas (or about 10 million individual bananas) each week. This move, when completed, will more than double the volume of Fairtrade bananas bought by Britain's increasingly Fairtrade-minded shoppers and extend the unique benefits of the Fairtrade guarantee to thousands more farmers and workers in Central & South America and the Caribbean. Producer organisations will receive a stable price that covers their full costs of production, plus an extra 1 US Dollar per box of bananas (18 kilos) for investment which is known as the 'Fairtrade premium'. As a key part of its commitment to Fairtrade, Sainsbury's has also strengthened its commitment to maintaining long-term relationships with Fairtrade certified small-scale farmers in the Windward Islands and the Dominican Republic.

**Praise:** May this example by Sainsbury's lead to more supermarkets taking up the Fairtrade challenge.

**More:** [http://www.ekkleisia.co.uk/content/news\\_syndication/article\\_061212fairtrade.shtml](http://www.ekkleisia.co.uk/content/news_syndication/article_061212fairtrade.shtml)

## PRAYER ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

Please feel free to distribute Prayer Alert to anyone you feel will benefit from its ministry. All we ask is that you do not edit or change it in any way or charge for its use without contacting us for written permission.

Prayer Alert is a partnership project of the Prayer Association of the British Isles and Ireland  
C/O World Prayer Centre, Cornerstone House, 5 Ethel Street, Birmingham, B2 4BG, England