



PRAYER ALERT...



An initiative of the Prayer Association of the British Isles & Ireland
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Issue 5006

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BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ The Year of Prayer 2007

The vision for a year of prayer has grown out of hearing about 'Hope08'. It was clear to the World Prayer Centre in

Birmingham that there needed to be a strong prayer foundation for 'Hope08' to have a real impact on every village, town and city across the UK. They approached Andy Hawthorne and the Hope Board and proposed the idea of a Prayer launch and a Year of Prayer in 2007. The Hope Board responded very positively. At 'Trumpet Call V' on 21st October 2006 (a national day of prayer and proclamation hosted by the World Prayer Centre at the NEC in Birmingham) 'Hope08' was launched in prayer and an invitation extended to join in with a Year of Prayer through 2007. The 2007 Year of Prayer invites all Christians to join together in prayer across the nation as individuals, Churches and groups in homes, workplaces and the community. The World Prayer Centre will act as a 'communications hub' posting relevant information.

Pray: that this call will find growing response over the weeks and lead to His transforming grace and hope for the future. (Isa.62:6-7)

More: <http://www.worldprayer.org.uk/pagesys.cfm?plD=110>

The Year of Prayer 2007

■ Friday Focus

Friday Focus provides prayer themes for each Friday during 2007 and is published quarterly starting on 5th January. Each Friday has a special theme, scripture passage, items for thanksgiving and prayer and an opportunity to respond by taking practical action to reach out with God's love. It can be used by individuals, groups or in church services to help focus prayer for those we want to see touched by the love of Jesus as well as for local and national issues. (See next weeks Prayer Alert)

Pray: As we focus on prayer throughout 2007 seek the Lord for His guidance and direction. (Eph.3:14-21; Isa.55:6-7)

More: <http://www.worldprayer.org.uk/pagesys.cfm?plD=123>



■ Hope2008

In more than 500 villages, towns and cities across England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland churches will work together like never before.

In over a dozen urban centres the church will engage in town & city wide mission initiatives that will impact the whole community. In hundreds more neighbourhoods there will be localised events and activities that will bring words of truth and acts of service to many thousands of people across the UK. By working in partnership with the police, local authorities and primary care trusts as well as other local churches, your church could help provide services to address issues such as debt dependency, hunger, homelessness and drug and alcohol addictions. There will be many schools and university missions, fun days, BBQs, kids' clubs, estate clean-ups and much, much more.



Pray: for this initiative as we lay the foundations of Hope08 in prayer. (Pro.23:18-19)

More: <http://www.hope08.com/>

■ **London Church leaders unite in Year for London vision 2007**

Around 100 church leaders from across London gathered 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 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 saying Thy Kingdom Come, Thy will be done. If we can say that prayer 365 times in the Spirit then something has to change in this city', says Pastor Oloyede. Each Friday will be set apart as a special day of both prayer and voluntary fasting.

Pray: that the London Churches will unite in prayer and we would see a new Pentecost. (Ps.133)

More: <http://www.londonprayer.net/ayeartforlondon>

■ **Update on Global Day of Prayer resources – 27 May 2007**

The vision to unite the Christian world in prayer at Pentecost is becoming a reality. The 4th June 2006 was a truly remarkable day when the 2nd Global Day of Prayer took place in 199 nations. The new resources that the organisers of GDP have produced give us a glimpse into what God did during that season of 24-7 prayer, prayer on Pentecost and the 90 days of blessing which followed. The DVD can be used in contexts large and small to inspire and encourage prayer, whether you wish to link into the Global Day of Prayer or not. Details on the different resources available are given on the websites. www.globaldayofprayer.co.uk www.mss-direct.com www.globaldayofprayer.com The World Prayer Centre has now taken over the running of the UK Global Day of Prayer website which will be serving the British Isles and Ireland again this year. The UK site will link events that take place in Northern Ireland, Isle of Man, Channel Islands, Scotland, Wales and England.

Pray: that the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. (Hab.2:14)

More: <http://www.worldprayer.org.uk/pagesys.cfm?pID=107>

■ **2007 anniversary of the abolition of the Slave Trade**

The latest Cambridge Paper by historian John Coffey is published in honour of the 200th anniversary, next year, of the abolition of the slave trade by the British Parliament in 1807. Coffey explains: 'The campaign for abolition was spearheaded by devout Christians, and it stands to this day as perhaps the finest political achievement of what would now be called faith-based activism. 'Set all free' has been established by Churches Together in England to commemorate the bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act in 2007 in ways which challenge modern society to engage with Christian values. 'Set all free' will provide an opportunity for an honest retelling of the history of Britain's part in the slave trade and facilitate an honest dialogue on healing, reconciliation and reparations. It will also explore the role of the Church during transatlantic slavery and find out why many denominations turned a blind eye to the plight of enslaved Africans during centuries of Transatlantic slavery.

Pray: for healing, reconciliation and reparations and that the truth sets all free. (Gal.5:1)

More: http://www.setallfree.net/about_us.html

■ **News about the Sexual Orientation Regulations**

It has been announced that there will be an hour long SOR debate in the House of Lords (Tuesday 9th January 2007) to consider Lord Morrow's motion to annul the Northern Ireland SORs. This is the first (and possibly only) opportunity for Peers to have an open debate about the SORs, and, because it currently looks unlikely that the House of Commons will have a full debate themselves, it is the best opportunity for the flaws with the Regulations to be discussed. The Lawyers' Christian Fellowship and Christian Concern for Our Nation have appealed to every Christian leader to make this known to their constituencies and for every Christian to act and pass on this information. (See Prayer Alerts 4805-6)

Pray: Continue praying that our government will take due consideration and not ratify this law without debate.

More: <http://www.christianconcernforournation.co.uk/sor/index.php>

EUROPE

■ **Spain cathedral shuns Muslim plea**

The Roman Catholic bishop of Cordoba in southern Spain has rejected an appeal from Muslims for the right to pray in the city's cathedral, a former mosque. Juan Jose Asenjo rejected the request made by Spain's Islamic Board in a letter to the Pope. It had asked that the cathedral become an ecumenical temple where believers from all faiths could worship. The bishop said such a move would not contribute to the peaceful co-existence between people of different religions. Shared use of places of worship could make sense in airports or an Olympic village, said the bishop, but not in a consecrated Catholic cathedral. Spain's Islamic Board, which represents a community of some 800,000 in a traditional Catholic country of 44 million, argued in its plea to the Pope that such a move in Cordoba could serve to 'awake the conscience' of followers of both faiths and help bury past confrontations.

Pray: that the Church will stand firm and be given wisdom to avoid any confrontation this refusal will bring. (Ps.24:1)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/6213665.stm>

■ Thousands mourn Asian tsunami, two years on

Thousands of survivors and mourners across Asia marked the two year anniversary of the devastating tsunami by visiting mass graves, lighting candles along beaches, observing a moment of silence and erecting warning towers in hopes of saving lives in the future. Some volunteers were replanting mangroves, saying they were key to protecting coastal communities. The magnitude 9.0 earthquake that ripped apart the ocean floor off Indonesia's Sumatra island on 26 December 2004 spawned giant waves that fanned out across the Indian Ocean at jetliner speeds, killing people in a dozen countries and leaving millions homeless. The 2004 tsunami generated an unprecedented outpouring of generosity, with donor pledges reaching some US\$13.6 billion (euro10.31 billion). Altogether Christian Aid helped 290,000 people in 2006 and since the tsunami has spent more than £29m in India, Indonesia and Sri Lanka on water, food, medicines, housing and training. Another £13m will be spent by the end of 2007.

Pray: for all those who are still in need following the Tsunami. Pray that those who pledged support and have still not contributed be challenged to respond. (Zec.7:9)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/thousands.mourn.asian.tsunami.two.years.on/8856.htm>

■ Boats and helicopters deliver aid to Indonesian flood survivors

Authorities deployed boats and helicopters on Thursday to shift aid to survivors of floods and landslides in North Western Indonesia that have killed at least 109 and displaced more than 400,000. Heavy rain continued to fall over the hardest hit districts in Aceh province on Sumatra, complicating relief efforts and adding to the misery of survivors, said local government spokesman Nadir Musa. The relief efforts followed days of torrential seasonal rain, the cause of dozens of landslides and flash floods each year in the sprawling archipelagic nation where millions of people live in mountainous areas or in fertile flood plains. Helicopters dropped food, tents and medicines while volunteers in dinghies also distributed aid, said Musa. Aceh was the hardest hit province in the 2004 tsunami, losing an estimated 167,000 people, but the floods and landslides have affected inland regions that were untouched by that disaster.

Pray: that relief would reach these needy peoples. Pray for the small Church in Aceh that they would once again be able to witness by their actions.

More: http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2006/12/28/asia/AS_GEN_Indonesia_Flood.php

■ Christians urged to 'Break the Silence' for upcoming Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Jointly prepared since 1968 by Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Roman Catholic Church, the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is traditionally celebrated Jan. 18-25 or, in the Southern hemisphere, on other dates. With the theme set as 'Breaking the Silence' and focusing on the verse 'He even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak' (Mk 7:37), the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 2007 calls Christians to express their growing unity both by 'breaking the silence' and by joining together in responding to human suffering. 'Christians and churches can break the silence, speaking out with a single voice and reaching out as a single body, acting with compassion and in unity,' a WCC press release stated. 'The churches can be, and do become, agents of healing only when they themselves are healed, when they are truly the one body of Christ,' the WCC testified.

Pray: for this week of prayer for unity that the Church would realise that we are all one in Christ Jesus. (Gal.3:28)

More: <http://www.christianpost.com/article/20061227/24531.htm>

■ Islamists abandon Somali capital

Islamist fighters have left the Somali capital as government forces backed by Ethiopian troops advance on the city. A government spokesman told Reuters news agency that Islamic leaders had 'dispersed into thin air'. As the militiamen withdrew, gunfire echoed through Mogadishu and there were reports of looting. Ethiopia began a large-scale offensive at the weekend to back Somalia's interim government, capturing ground previously held by Islamist militias. A senior Islamist leader, Sheikh Sharif Ahmed, told al-Jazeera television his forces had left Mogadishu 'to avert heavy bombing because Ethiopian forces are practising genocide against the Somali people'. Hundreds of gunmen who had just fought for the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) took off their uniforms and submitted to the command of clan elders. Correspondents say the UIC's departure leaves a power vacuum in Mogadishu, raising fears of a return to clan warfare that blighted the city in the 1990s. (See Prayer Alert 4906)

Pray: Keep praying for this ongoing conflict that it would soon end and peace would reign.

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/6213499.stm>

■ Annan says Sudan's overture could pave way for peacekeepers

Secretary General Kofi Annan said on Wednesday that the Security Council was 'encouraged' that a recent message from the Sudanese government could pave the way for a large-scale peacekeeping operation in the country's war-ravaged Darfur region. 'This is a challenge for the Sudanese government to prove that it means business,' Mr. Annan said. 'We are going to press ahead, and I hope this time there will not be disappointments.' Mr. Annan's remarks followed a Security Council briefing at which a top United Nations envoy, Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, discussed a recent letter to Mr. Annan from Sudan's president, Omar Hassan al-Bashir. This is not the first time that UN officials and diplomats have expressed hope for a peacekeeping effort in Darfur. More than 200,000 people have died in Darfur, many of them from hunger and disease, since the government moved to crush a rebellion there in 2003. More than 2.5 million have been forced from their homes.

Pray: that this encouraging news would bear fruit and lead to a resolution and peace at last.

More: http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/28/world/africa/28darfur.html?_r=1&oref=slogin

■ Muslims begin the Hajj pilgrimage

An estimated three million Muslims have begun leaving the Saudi Arabian city of Mecca to begin the annual Hajj pilgrimage amid enhanced security. The authorities say they have implemented new safety measures to prevent stampedes that have killed hundreds of people previously. In January, almost 400 people were killed and some 300 injured in a stampede during one of the rituals. The Hajj, one of the five pillars of Islam, is due to end on Monday. It is an obligation for all Muslims to undertake the pilgrimage at least once in a lifetime, if they are physically and financially able. The pilgrims are following the route of the first Hajj performed by the Prophet Mohammed. When the pilgrims return to Mecca, they must perform a precise series of steps - including walking seven times round the Kaaba (a cube-like building in the centre of the mosque) in an anti-clockwise direction.

Pray: for all those on Hajj and celebrating Eid-ul-Adha who are seeking enlightenment that they will find the light of Christ and His salvation. (Eph.2:19-20)

More: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/6212003.stm

PRAISE REPORTS

■ Muslims help with Christmas celebrations in Indonesia

Christmas celebrations for Christians went off peacefully across the majority Islamic nation of Indonesia - with the help of Muslim organizations. People of the two faiths worked together to thwart the threat of attacks from Islamic hard-liners. Many Muslims attended Christmas Mass in Jakarta Cathedral as well as a Protestant service at nearby Immanuel Church. They included leaders of the Nahdlatul Ulama and the Muslim United Organization (MUO), two of the most influential Muslim organizations in the country. Muslim United Organization coordinator Andi Muhammad Soleh said more than 1,500 MUO members patrolled Christian places of worship to prevent attacks. The governor of Jakarta Sutiyoso spent Christmas night monitoring the situation in the capital. He commented: 'I am happy everything went on calmly and in peace.' Police supervisor Ketut Untung Yoga Ana told agencies that 'more than 20,000 officers were on alert to monitor celebrations for Christmas, the Idul Haj and the New Year.'

Pray: God for the action of the many Muslims who stood alongside the Christians of Indonesia.

More: http://www.ekkklesia.co.uk/content/news_syndication/article_061227indones.shtml

■ Police say sorry for interrogating Christian couple about moral beliefs

Police in Lancashire have settled out of court with a Christian couple who were interrogated last year about their moral beliefs. Wyre Borough Council in Lancashire have also settled out of court and apologised to the couple for faulty procedures that allowed an individual Council officer to report the matter to the Police. In December last year Joe and Helen Roberts of Fleetwood telephoned their local council to complain about public money being spent on a new project to promote gay rights. During the telephone conversation Mrs Roberts expressed her religious belief that homosexual practice is morally wrong. The couple were shocked to receive a subsequent visit from two police officers who questioned them in their own home for one hour and 20 minutes about their beliefs, even though no crime had been committed. When the Police and the Council refused to admit they acted wrongly the Roberts launched a legal action. A trial date had been set for 17 January 2007 in the High Court.

Pray: God for this answer to prayer and that the law has sided with justice.(Ps.100:5)

More: http://www.christian.org.uk/pressreleases/2006/december_22_2006.htm

PRAYER ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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Prayer Alert is a partnership project of the Prayer Association of the British Isles and Ireland
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