



PRAYER ALERT...



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www.prayer-alert.net editor@prayer-alert.net

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BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ **FRIDAY FOCUS: 5th October - Giving Thanks - Colossians 2:6-7; Philippians 4:4-8**

Let's have a 'giving thanks day' today. **Give thanks:** for all God's multiplied blessings to me, for my family and loved ones; for His blessings on our nation and for the food harvest this year. **Pray:** that a spirit of thanksgiving will begin to flow in our society; for the leaders in my church/workplace to know they are appreciated; for God's continued mercy on and protection for our nations. **Consider:** asking God to give you an opportunity to say thank you to someone today: e.g. a neighbour, a teacher, doctor, police officer, etc.

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

■ **Police commence new crackdown on human trafficking**

All 55 Police forces across Britain and Ireland have commenced an unprecedented crackdown on human trafficking, aiming to prosecute profiteering gangs and reach an estimated 4000 women and children forced to work in the sex industry. Home Secretary, Jacqui Smith said it would provide a clearer picture of the extent of this 'secret' crime. The new operation, codenamed Pentameter 2, will be guided by the dedicated Human Trafficking Centre in Sheffield which was established in 2006 when a similar operation helped free 84 women and teenage girls from illegal brothels and 'massage parlours' and produced 232 arrests. The public are urged to report any suspicious behaviour to the police, and a new telephone line will offer help to immigration staff and social workers in identifying trafficked victims. The crackdown comes one week after CHASTE (Churches Alert to Sex Trafficking across Europe) announced it will tour the UK in November with the message that love is not for sale. CHASTE Chief Executive Dr Carrie Pemberton said: 'We now have a movement arising in Parliament, the police, the churches and the faith communities saying - 'enough is truly enough'.' (See: Prayer Alert 3507)

Pray: for the success of Pentameter 2 and CHASTE's November tour and the loving rehabilitation of victims of human trafficking. (Is.54:14)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.co.uk/article/police.commence.new.crackdown.on.human.trafficking/13609.htm>

■ **Christian campaigners force new guidelines over creationism**

Teachers are now allowed to answer questions on creationism but must make clear it has 'no underpinning scientific principles'. New government advice is in response to a strong campaign in schools by the Christian group 'Truth in Science' which promotes intelligent design (ID), a Creationism offshoot. The advice is intended to avoid the US situation where pressure from the religious Right has forced science teachers to begin lessons in ID. Creationism, the Biblical theory that The Earth was created by God in six days, has been controversial. Pupils taking Biology GCSE with exam board OCR this year became the first students in mainstream education to answer questions on the theory in a science exam. The new guidance says teachers should respond 'positively and educationally' to questions about Creationism and be 'respectful of

students' views, religious or otherwise'. However teachers should instill in pupils aged five to 14 the outlines of evolutionary theory and focus on it for GCSE and A-level. (For further details read the Evangelical Alliance statement: <http://www.eauk.org/media/media/creationism-in-schools.cfm>)

Pray: that this welcome guidance would be accepted by the Council of Europe currently debating proposals to oppose the teaching of creationism. Also pray that the new guidelines would bring clarity on this controversial subject. (Jas.3:1)

More: http://www.dailymail.co.uk/pages/live/articles/news/news.html?in_article_id=484907&in_page_id=1770

■ Religious hatred law comes into force

Incitement to religious hatred has become a criminal offence in England and Wales with the commencement of the Racial and Religious Hatred Act. The Act creates a new offence of intentionally stirring up religious hatred against people on religious grounds, closing a gap in the current legislation. Existing offences in the Public Order 1986 Act legislate against inciting racial hatred. Jews and Sikhs have been deemed by the courts to be racial groups and are protected under this legislation, but other groups such as Muslims and Christians are considered to be religious rather than racial groups and have therefore not previously received any protection under the law. The new Act outlaws the use of threatening words or behaviour intended to incite hatred against groups of people defined by their religious beliefs or lack of belief. However it doesn't explicitly outlaw 'expressions of antipathy, dislike, ridicule, insult or abuse of particular religions'. The new offence therefore has an even higher threshold than the race hatred offence, recognising that religious beliefs are a legitimate subject of vigorous public debate.

Pray: that the new Act will not indict Christians who uphold Biblical principles with which others may disagree. (Ps.25:9-10)

More: <http://www.ekkleisia.co.uk/node/5823>

■ UK deportees 'tortured in Sudan'

Asylum seekers from Sudan's war-torn Darfur region have been tortured after being returned to Khartoum from the UK. Human Right Group the Aegis Trust said it had evidence that Darfuris had been abused while in detention on their return to the capital. It corroborated claims by five Darfuris who'd had UK asylum applications rejected. The UK government has challenged an April ruling from the Court of Appeal against deportations of any further Darfuris. The Home Office argues it's safe to send them back to parts of Sudan other than Darfur and has taken its case to the House of Lords. Darfuri Sadiq Adam Osman said that on 5 February he was sent back in handcuffs to Khartoum where he was jailed and beaten for days. The Aegis Trust helped Mr Osman to escape and has corroborated his story with photographs of his injuries and medical testimony. The Trust said such deportations would be like sending Jews back to Nazi Germany.

Pray: that this situation for Darfuri asylum seekers would be urgently rectified. (Mic.6:8)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7025330.stm>

■ Welsh company launches downloadable Bible for reading in the dark

A company in Monmouthshire, Wales, has launched a line of religious mobile phone products, including a downloadable Bible for £6. The firm, Teimlo, has launched the service, which is called Ecumen, to deliver daily prayers, computer wallpapers and mobile ring tones. Non-violent family-friendly games are also available. The name appears to be a combination of 'acumen' and the first three syllables of 'ecumenical', indicating the unity project of the church within the world. The downloadable version of the Christian scriptures is being promoted as the only Bible you can actually read in the dark. Pastor Robbie Howells, of Newport City Church, said: 'Mobile phones are such a great way of telling people about the gospel, and as a pastor it gives me a new way of communicating with members of the church, especially young people. It's getting the message across in a fun, funky way.'

Pray: thanking God for this initiative and for the potential impact of His Word using this medium. (Ps.119:9-16)

More: <http://www.ekkleisia.co.uk/node/5840>

EUROPE

■ EU to have Church of England envoy

The Church of England is set to significantly boost its profile within the European Union with the creation of a new role to represent its perspective to policy makers in Brussels. The new post, which is titled Church of England Representative to the European Union Institutions, will combine the ambassadorial role for the Church of England with a ministry as Canon to the Pro-Cathedral Church of Holy Trinity, Brussels. The new post holder is envisaged to be in position from next January and reflects the increasing role of the EU in British life. It is hoped the Church representative will provide an effective means of communicating Christian concerns to MEP's and other officials within the Union on a diverse range of topics. The post holder will also interact with other Christian denominations and will be an Associate Staff member of the Ecumenical Conference of European Churches, working under the direction of a Steering Committee.

Pray: for the person nominated that the Lord will anoint them with His wisdom and power to spread the message of the Church. (Is.11:2-4a)

More: <http://www.religiousintelligence.co.uk/news/?NewsID=1017>

■ EU treaty talks leave several political loose ends

Although the legal experts have given their blessing to the EU's new draft treaty, there are plenty of political issues that may have to be dealt with by EU leaders when they meet later this month to sign off the document. Topping the list is Poland's request to have a decision-blocking mechanism written into the treaty. Other member states fear this will make using the mechanism the norm rather than the exception and are battling to keep it in a declaration, which has no legal value. In the

legal experts talks, Britain managed to maintain its so-called red-lines by opting out of the Charter of Fundamental Rights - a document listing citizens' rights - as well as in the area of judicial and police cooperation. It also managed to secure an agreement that the European Court of Justice will not have jurisdiction in the area currently subject to national government powers and which is now moving to court and commission scrutiny, for a five-year transitional period.

Pray: for leaders of the EU nations as they prepare for this meeting that their decisions that will be made wisely.

More: <http://euobserver.com/9/24897>

WORLDWIDE

■ One monk for every soldier

There are between 400,000 and 500,000 monks in Burma and 400,000 soldiers. Only a mutiny in the army can end the Junta's rule in Burma, and some believe it is possible. The uprising is led by the Alliance of All Burmese Buddhist Monks, an organisation that few people have heard about, and must have been operating deeply underground. For many soldiers shooting or beating monks goes against their spiritual up-bringing and the lower-ranking soldiers share certain similarities with the rest of the population; being poor, badly treated, and afraid. A rumour emerging from Burma over the past couple of days is there may be a split in the army. Troops from central Burma are said to be marching towards Rangoon. Some say they are coming to challenge the soldiers who are attacking monks others say they are to reinforce them. Rumours are often accurate barometers of people's hopes and fears. Also see article on fresh wave of arrests on:

<http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/467FA734-F72F-4FC8-8ECC-428248CAFAB8.htm> Other resources can be found on: <http://www.prayforburma.org/>

Pray: that God will work bring physical and spiritual freedom to the whole country. (Is.42:6-8)

More: <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/world/story/0,,2180449,00.html>

■ Few legal options for abused Palestinian women

Palestinian female victims of domestic violence have little chance of escaping their situation or bringing the perpetrators to justice as they face a legal system stacked in favour of the accused, and a prevailing attitude that places blame on the victim. Many women who have been raped are then killed by family members in 'honour killings' for having brought shame to their family. Seldom are the killers arrested or charged, and when they are the maximum sentence imposed is six months. 'Violence against women is regarded as a taboo subject. Neither the Jordanian nor the Egyptian penal codes in force in the West Bank and Gaza respectively recognise sexual violence committed within marriage. Statistics show 24 percent of women were subjected to physical abuse, 12 percent of women were subjected to sexual abuse, and only 1.2 percent of women who experienced domestic violence lodged a formal complaint with the police.

Pray: for women here and around the world who are the victims of abuse and unjust legal systems. (Is.51:5)

More: <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?ReportID=74610>

■ Suicide bomber kills youths in Sudanese Church

A suicide bomber in military fatigues killed five young people at a church meeting in Sudan's Upper Nile State. Officials call it accidental, but others say attacks mean to intimidate Christians. He detonated a grenade after approaching a group of 34 young people holding an outdoor church meeting. Authorities say the soldier was drunk and accidentally set off the grenade. But according to a Christian support organization, one general said that he believed the goal of the attack was to intimidate churches. The man had approached a group of Christian youths who sang worship songs outside a church building. Then he took out a match and began to smoke, the children heard a strange noise. Some children started to gather around the man to see what was making the noise, and unfortunately the bomb went off. United Nations Mission in Sudan published a brief report on the bombing on October 1st.

Pray: for God in His mercy to end Sudan's suffering. (Is.59:1)

More: <http://www.compassdirect.org/en/display.php?page=lead&lang=en&length=long&idelement=&backpage=&critere=&countryname=&rowcur>

■ Death toll from Nigeria Christian attacks higher than reported

Indications that the death toll following the weekend's violence in northern Nigeria may be higher than initially estimated. Official figures suggest around nine Christians were killed, several churches were burnt also businesses and homes belonging to non-Muslims were destroyed during religious violence. Even Christian policemen are reported to have lost their homes and property. As tensions slowly subside in the area, the circumstances which triggered the violence are gradually coming to light. The violence began when a group of Muslim students invaded a room shared by two Christian students at the Secondary School in Tudun Wada Na Kande, and began to assault them severely. When the Christians asked what they had done wrong, their assailants told them to 'mind their own business'. However, once the school principal arrived at the scene, the Christians were accused of drawing a picture of Mohammed on a mosque wall and of planning an assault on Muslim students.

Pray: for peace, justice and truth in this situation and for victims to be allowed to mourn. (Prov.3:17,18)

More: <http://mychristianblood.blogspot.com/archive/2007/10/03/death-toll-from-nigeria-christian-attacks-higher-than-report1.html#more>

■ Pray for peace of Jerusalem on October 7

A global grassroots prayer initiative that co-incides with the season of Yom Kippur for the first time in church history invites intercessors around the world to a very special Day of Prayer for the Peace of Jerusalem. The event will be broadcast live on GOD TV and by global telephone conference call link internationally on Oct. 7th. The 24 hour Prayer Conference Call

allows people from all over the world to actively participate in corporate prayer for the peace of Jerusalem and all her people. The number will be 605-990-0233 and the Access Code 3775 (DPPJ). It will run for 24 hours. To view the Prayer Focus Schedule please go to www.greatercalling.org Last years Prayer Conference Call on October 1st, registered over 1,000 people from around the world joining on the telephone in several different languages to pray for the Peace of Jerusalem.

Pray: for the peace of Jerusalem. (Ps.122:6)

More: <http://ew.us.churchinsight.com/Group/Group.aspx?id=1000001667>

■ Red Cross talks with Afghan kidnappers

The International Committee of the Red Cross has established contact with the armed group that kidnapped four of its workers but no progress has been made officials said Friday. Meanwhile on Saturday a large bomb ripped through a crowded police bus in Kabul, killing 27 people. The four ICRC employees a national from Myanmar, one from Macedonia and two from Afghanistan, were seized Wednesday in the central province of Ghazni while trying to secure the release of a German captive. 'We have established contact with all parties concerned with the aim of resolving this situation as quickly as possible,' said Graziella Leite, an ICRC spokeswoman in Afghanistan. The ICRC was referring to the kidnappers as an 'armed group.' Militants had initially released the German, Rudolf Blechschmidt, but then re-captured him along with the four ICRC employees.

Pray: for God's spirit to work through all the NGO's in Afghanistan. (Prov.2:6-8)

More: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=unYKOIC7M1k&url=http%3A%2F%2Farticle%2Ewn%2Ecom%2Fview%2F2007%2F09%2F28%2FNew%5FEfforts%5Fto%5Ffree%5FRed%5FCross%5Fworkers%5Fin%5FAfghanistan%5Fx%2F>

PRAISE REPORTS

■ Christian Unions win battle

The right of Christian Unions to restrict leadership posts to Christians has been recognised in new guidance issued by the National Union of Students (NUS) together with the Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship. The Christian Institute helped to defend Hull CU pointing out that the Student Union was acting unlawfully. The SU eventually backed down. Exeter, Birmingham, Edinburgh and Heriot-Watt CU's are among others who have experienced difficulties. However, the new guidance will only apply on campuses where the Student Guild or Union has adopted it. (See also Prayer Alert 0107 & 4506)

Praise: God for this result and pray for all the new students settling in, coping with homesickness, new lifestyles and making new friends. (2Chr.20:15b)

More: http://www.christian.org.uk/issues/2007/cu/nusnews_17sept07.htm

■ An evangelistic movement reaching for 10 million men by 2015

A new Christian men's movement is on the rise around the globe. And within the next decade, pastors are hoping to witness the next great men's awakening. The Christian Men's Network (CMN) celebrates its 30th anniversary this week in Dallas as it pushes forward on an ambitious plan to reach 10 million men by the year 2015. 'Our goal is to make manhood and Christ likeness synonymous,' said Paul L. Cole, president of CMN Worldwide. Whether it is men within the church, men who have left, men in the government or men in different spheres of culture, the CMN initiative is all about reaching men through a biblically-based curriculum. 'We believe that if you build strong men, you build strong families, and strong families will build strong churches, and strong churches will change the culture,' said Cole, who is currently holding strategic forums in Dallas with church leaders from around the world.

Praise: God for this initiative and pray that men will hear the call in all sectors of society and every nation. (Mt.12:35)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/new.evangelistic.movement.reaching.for.10.million.men.by.2015/13612.htm>

■ Heaven's rehearsal

Toronto, the most ethnically diverse urban centre in the world organised a massive worship service drawing 15,000 worshippers. The evening opened to a parade of flags representing 127 of the world's 202 sovereign nations. The audience, which represented a spectrum of ages, skin colours, cultural backgrounds and denominations was on its feet for much of the three-hour programme, arms raised, jumping, singing and shouting praise.

Praise: God for His spirit of truth enabling us to worship and praise Him. (Gal.4:6)

More: <http://www.canadianchristianity.com/nationalupdates/070927rehearsal.html>

PRAYER ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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C/O World Prayer Centre, Cornerstone House, 5 Ethel Street, Birmingham, B2 4BG, England