

# PRAYER ALERT...

An initiative of the Prayer Association of the British Isles & Ireland  
www.prayer-alert.net editor@prayer-alert.net

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## BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

### ■ **FRIDAY FOCUS: 12th October - Friends - Proverbs 17:17; John 4:28-42**

Friends bring so much into our lives. Over 70% of people who have come to faith have been helped by friendship with a Christian.

**Give thanks:** for every friend you've known, and that Jesus counts us as His friends.

**Pray:** a BLESSing for a friend to come to know Jesus Christ as Lord; for those you know who are without friends; for those who have no opportunity to build friendships, asking God to put Christians on their path to encourage them.

**Consider:** befriending someone who is lonely or from another country.

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

### ■ **Christians alarmed by extended animal-human hybrid embryo legislation**

Christian lawyers have expressed concern as the government issued its response to the Joint Committee's report on the Human Tissue and Embryos Bill on Monday. The report gives an idea as to what the amended Bill will look like when it is put before Parliament, probably in the coming session. 'One of the most concerning aspects of the government's response is that they have now taken their proposals to legalise animal-human hybrid embryos even further, by extending legislation not only to cover 'cytoplasmic embryos' (whereby human cells are inserted into an animal egg), but also to legalise so called 'true' hybrid embryos, which would be created by the mixing of human and animal gametes e.g. mixing human sperm with an animal egg, or vice versa,' said Andrea Minichiello Williams of the Lawyers Christian Fellowship (LCF). The government also proposes to include in the Bill a regulation-making power which would allow the definitions of hybrid embryos to be further liberalised without the need to debate the matter in Parliament.

**Pray:** that the government will listen to the objections from the Church and Christian lawyers. (2Cor.7:1)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/christians.alarmed.by.extended.animalhuman.hybrid.embryo.legislation/13843.htm>

### ■ **Church of England gay clergy row intensifies**

A senior Church of England conservative has intensified the storm over homosexuals in the clergy by warning he will boycott next summer's Lambeth Conference if liberal American bishops are invited. The Bishop of Rochester, the Rt Rev Michael Nazir-Ali, said he would find it difficult to attend a Church council alongside those who consecrated or approved the appointment of Anglicanism's first openly gay bishop. His comments are fresh evidence of the divisions within the Church of England over the issues and will exacerbate the difficulties facing the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, in maintaining unity. Bishop Nazir-Ali's conservative views are thought to be shared by as many as one in four of his colleagues. Another conservative, the Bishop of Winchester, the Rt Rev Michael Scott-Joynt, has claimed more than half of English bishops are considering whether to attend the Lambeth Conference, the ten-yearly gathering of all Anglican bishops, in Canterbury. Bishop Nazir-Ali's remarks come at a hugely sensitive time for Dr Williams.

**Pray:** for this developing situation in the Anglican communion and seek God's will to be overall. (1Cor.6:18)

**More:** <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml;jsessionid=0IDLJJVB4AI41QFIQMFSFFWAVCBQ0IV0?xml=/news/2007/10/08/ngay108.xml>

#### ■ Incitement of hatred law should not curtail free speech, says Evangelical Alliance

Any new incitement to hatred law should be written with care to avoid intolerance of free speech, the Evangelical Alliance has said following government proposals this week. The Alliance, which reiterated its opposition to incitement of homophobic or other forms of hatred, says it is hopeful the government will consult carefully if it decides to go ahead with banning incitement on grounds of sexuality in the Criminal Justice and Immigration Bill. Evangelical Alliance head of public affairs Dr Don Horrocks said: 'We support legislation that seeks effectively to prevent the stirring up of hatred, but our view remains that the existing law was adequate to deal with offences relating both to religion and sexuality. If the government feels it is necessary to bring in further legislation, it is important that the Racial and Religious Hatred Act is used as the benchmark, since this recently-enacted law against incitement of hatred on grounds of religion and belief represents the best legal precedent we have'.

**Pray:** for the government as it consults over this delicate legislation. (Ps.111:10)

**More:** <http://www.eauk.org/media/media/hatred-law.cfm>

#### ■ New research reveals drastic cuts in hospital chaplaincy

New research released on Sunday by the public theology think tank Theos has revealed major cuts to chaplaincy provision in nearly a quarter of NHS Trusts in England. The research shows that since 2005 chaplaincy care has been cut by a dramatic 54,127 hours (p/a). Trusts have also reported reductions to chaplaincy provision at an average of 19 hours per week. Only two Trusts have reported an increase in chaplaincy hours, and one major Trust has cut chaplaincy by over 50%. The research finds that 23% of Trusts report a cut to their chaplaincy budget and indicates that, even where Trusts report an increase in their budget as a proportion of Trust spending, they have made cuts in real terms. In February it was reported that hundreds of hospital chaplains could face the sack or a reduction in their hours as a result of the NHS cash crisis. The Theos report gives the first indication of the extent of these cuts.

**Pray:** that this trend will be reversed and that the spiritual needs of the people will be met. (Jn.21:16)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/new.research.reveals.drastic.cuts.in.hospital.chaplaincy/13751.htm>

#### ■ Dog collar clergy 'risk attack'

Members of the clergy are being advised to take off their dog collars when they are on their own, to reduce the risk of being attacked. National Churchwatch, which provides personal safety advice, says vicars are attacked more often than professions such as GPs and probation officers. The organisation's Nick Tolson said all clergy should consider the advice, including the Archbishop of Canterbury. The group also produces security advice for all UK churches and churchworkers. Mr Tolson said: 'When they are on their own, and when they are off duty - for example when they are doing their shopping in Tesco on their own - there is no need for them to wear their dog collars'. National Churchwatch also says that most police forces do not specifically record crime against places of worship. However, it says that crime against churches continues to be a problem, and there is 'plenty we can do to help reduce it'.

**Pray:** for our Church leaders that God will protect them as they go about their work. (Ps.91:15)

**More:** <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7032314.stm>

## EUROPE

#### ■ Barroso and Brown to hold talks prior to Summit

Gordon Brown and the President of the European Commission Jose Manuel Barroso will meet on Thursday ahead of crucial talks on the new EU treaty. After the Downing Street meeting, which is expected to cover the UK's opt-outs, the two will answer questions. It is expected the leaders will be grilled on the treaty's similarity to the abandoned constitution. On Tuesday a committee of MPs described the treaty and the old constitution as 'substantially equivalent'. During prime minister's questions on Wednesday Mr Brown again rejected Conservative demands for a referendum on the treaty. The Tories say that, because the government gave an undertaking to let voters decide whether to accept the EU Constitution, it is now duty bound to do the same for the new treaty. The Portuguese Presidency and the Commission have shown optimism that an agreement can be found on the proposed Reform Treaty. With only days remaining before the Lisbon Summit on 18-19 October, Poland is emerging as the last possible stumbling block.

**Pray:** for this meeting and for the Lisbon Summit next week. (Pr.3:13)

**More:** [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk\\_politics/7037758.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/7037758.stm)

#### ■ EU urged to renew sanctions on Uzbekistan amid deteriorating human rights

EU member states have been urged to recognise the deteriorating human rights situation and continuing limitation of religious freedom in Uzbekistan as they meet to consider the renewal of sanctions against the country. The decision to renew sanctions against Uzbekistan is expected to be taken at the forthcoming meeting of the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) (or EU foreign ministers) on 15 and 16 October. The sanctions were initially imposed following the Andijan massacre in May 2005 where at least 500 demonstrators were murdered by Uzbek troops. The EU adopted sanctions in November of that year, which are renewed every six months. At the same session the EU is expected to vote on whether to broaden the sanctions on Burma, Christian Today has been told. It appears some EU member states, led by

Germany, are lobbying for the non-renewal of sanctions on Uzbekistan, despite the worsening human rights situation there, reports Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW).

**Pray:** for the human rights situation in Uzbekistan and Burma that God will bring freedom for the oppressed. (Ps.82:1-4)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/eu.urged.to.renew.sanctions.on.uzbekistan.amid.deteriorating.human.rights/13760.htm>

## WORLDWIDE

### ■ Muslim threat to attack church in Nigeria

Militant Islamists in the northern state of Borno have sent three letters on separate days last week to a church warning that members would be attacked in the next few days, raising tensions where 50 Christians were killed and 57 churches destroyed last year. Leaders of the Christian Association of Nigeria said that the letters were dropped onto the premises of the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria (EYN), in the Polo Area of Maiduguri. Mosque calls to prayer were sounded at 11 p.m. and 1 a.m. Monday night, (9 Oct) these are hours when Muslims do not usually observe prayers, putting police and security agencies on alert. By 6 Wednesday morning police armoured tanks were patrolling the streets to thwart any plans to attack Christians. The Rev. Daniel Mbaya of the Polo Area Church of the Brethren, which has about 3,000 members, had reported the threat to police and Christian leaders. Nigeria's security agencies and Christian leaders held an emergency meeting yesterday on ways to protect Christians in the event of an Islamic strike on the church. ' (Remember CWS Day of prayer for Nigeria this Saturday 13th Oct.)

**Pray:** for God to be in the midst of them, inside and outside the Church building. (Is.66:1,2)

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

### ■ Nigeria: 10 Christians slaughtered over alleged Muhammad cartoon

Rampaging Muslims killed 10 and injured 61 Christians, destroying nine churches and displaced more than 500 people in northern Nigeria, because Muslim high school students claimed a Christian student had drawn a cartoon of Islam's prophet, Muhammad, on the wall of the school's mosque. It occurred Sept. 28 in Nigeria's northern state of Kano. There are 1,500 students at the high school, of which only 14 are Christians, and only seven of those actually live on campus. The Christians insist no one ever saw the alleged cartoon, and no one in the tiny minority group of Christians would have dared such a feat, especially during Ramadan. 'How can we take such a risk when we know that we are a minority and cannot stand against them?' a Christian student said. 'This is a lie created to have a reason to attack us.' (Remember CWS Day of prayer for Nigeria this Saturday 13th Oct.)

**Pray:** for God to protect minority Christians and give them peace. (Matt.5:11,12)

**More:** [http://wnd.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE\\_ID=58015](http://wnd.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=58015)

### ■ Prominent Gaza Christian murdered

The director of the Gaza Strip's only all-Christian bookstore was found stabbed to death on Sunday October 7 in what appears to have been an act of Muslim aggression. Rami Khader Ayyad, 32 a prominent Gaza Christian disappeared on Saturday following months of death threats from local Muslims. He ran the Teacher's Bookshop, a ministry of the Palestinian Bible Society and the Gaza Baptist Church. Ayyad was accused by area Muslims of spreading the Gospel. Medical officials in the Hamas-controlled territory said he had been stabbed and shot. Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh condemned the killing and said the Islamist movement would not allow anyone to sabotage Muslim-Christian relations. Gaza's 2,500 Christians, who live among 1.5 million Muslims, have increasingly become a target of Muslim aggression since Hamas wrested control of Gaza last June. Last month an elderly Christian woman was attacked and her home robbed by a masked man who referred to her as an 'infidel.' Prior to the Hamas coup the bookstore and Palestinian Bible Society headquarters were the targets of frequent attacks.

**Pray:** for this battle zone to be transformed to a community of people living in accord. (1Peter 3:9)

**More:** <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/2007/s07100065.htm>

### ■ Race and religion divisive issues in Malaysia

Fifty years after independence race and religion remain divisive issues in Malaysia with the nation at times coming 'close to the brink of disaster', Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said. Malay Muslims form about 60 percent of the country's population of roughly 26 million. Hindus, Buddhists and Christians dominate among the Indian and Chinese minorities. Many non-Muslims say the authorities and the courts are allowing their rights, including freedom of religion, to be trampled by the Muslim majority.

**Pray:** for God to protect and encourage the Christian groups in Malaysia. (Ps.12:5)

**More:** <http://www.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSKLR8346120071007>

### ■ Army controlled Darfur town razed

A Sudanese government controlled town in Darfur has been burned down and looted. Haskanita is the home of the African Union peacekeeping base that rebel forces attacked last week. The UN observer mission did not say which forces destroyed Haskanita and the Sudanese government has not commented. On Friday rebels said Sudanese government troops were attacking the town in apparent retaliation for the destruction of the AU base. A statement issued on Sunday by the UN Mission in Sudan said an assessment mission to Haskanita on Saturday had reported 'the town, which is currently

under the control of the government, was completely burned down, except for a few buildings'. It said the market area had been looted and just a few civilians had returned in search of food and water. In a town that was previously home to 7,000 people, only the school and the mosque were left standing.

**Pray:** for God to end the violence of the armed factions and bring lasting peace for the civilian population. (Ps.7:9)

**More:** <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/7032613.stm>

#### ■ World Church grouping warns on 'flight of Christians' from Iraq

The World Council of Churches has warned of an 'exodus' by the small Christian community of Iraq and said the country's leaders and foreign governments need to install the rule of law and restore a multi-cultural balance in society. 'The flight of Christians from Iraq is a sign of the failure of policies that were purported to bring stability and peace to Iraq and even the region,' said the WCC, which opposed the US-led military action that brought down Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

'Intolerance between social groups has grown markedly as an outcome of the conflict there,' the Geneva-based church grouping said in a statement issued on 1 October after a meeting in Armenia of its executive committee. Although Christians represent only four percent of Iraq's population, they make up 40 percent of its refugees. The WCC praised Muslim clerics who are using their influence to contain violence in Iraq, and said joint Christian-Muslim advocacy outside Iraq for tolerance would send a signal to those of all faiths inside the country.

**Pray:** for God to change the hearts of those who oppose His plans. (Rom.2:14,15)

**More:** <http://www.eni.ch/featured/article.php?id=1256>

## PRAISE REPORTS

#### ■ Christian agencies unite in Russian outreach

Prayer-Alert office have been notified of an outreach initiative by Wycliffe Bible Translators Russia and at least 14 other mission organizations. They will be participating in a festival of missions in St. Petersburg on 13 October. (Seeing different organizations working together like this is fairly unusual in Russia and is a continuing answer to prayer.) An audience of 1,000 mostly young people is expected. However, at the 11th hour, there are still many details to be finalized so that the programme runs smoothly.

**Praise:** God for bringing unity among the organisations as they communicate God's message and intercede for open hearts and wisdom as they follow up on the many contacts they will make.(Ps.133)

#### ■ Chinese Christians emerge from the shadows

The Catholic community in Yan'an, the cradle of China's communist revolution, has won permission to build its first church in more than seven decades in a sign of the religious revival sweeping the country. After years of negotiations between Yan'an's small but growing congregation of Christians and suspicious Communist Party leaders, agreement has been reached for a new site on the city's outskirts. It is a dramatic turnaround for a church that fled its magnificent cathedral in advance of the arrival of Chairman Mao at the end of the Long March, and suffered years of persecution. 'This is a sacred place to the Communist Party,' said Fr Peter Zhang, the young priest who ministers to 600 Catholics in the town, up from a handful a decade ago, and others in towns nearby. He said he thought there were still believers who kept their faith secret, but the new church might give them confidence to reveal themselves.

**Praise:** God for this wonderful development and pray that it will be completed.

**More:** <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/index.jhtml>

#### ■ New study from Barna reveals what teens look for in a Church

The US based Barna Corporation has done some new research regarding teens, what they are hoping to find in a church and what their spiritual habits are. As far as what young people are expecting from their church experience, the most common response (45%) was 'to worship or make a connection with God'—this was described as 'very important.' According to the survey, three-quarters of the teens (72%) said they pray during the week—the most common spiritual activity among the respondents. Half of the teens surveyed (48%) stated that they attend a church worship service. The results are actually lower, however, than those of previous years, when 10-years-ago, 81% of teens stated they prayed during the week, and 53% said they attended worship services. To see all the results of the Barna survey, follow the link.

**Praise:** God for these encouraging results and pray for increased interest and growth worldwide. (Ps.119:9)

**More:** <http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=BarnaUpdateNarrowPreview&BarnaUpdateID=281>

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