

# PRAYER ALERT...

An initiative of the Prayer Association of the British Isles & Ireland  
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Friday 19th October 2007

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## BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

### ■ **FRIDAY FOCUS: 19th October - Hope 08 - Philippians 3:13-14; John 17:20-26**

In 2008, we pray that the Lord will give His Church the hunger to press forward and joyfully use our creativity and energy to do more where we are, so that His kingdom may come more fully.

**Give thanks:** for the number of places already signed up (633 - Aug 07)

**Pray:** that each Church in my area will be able to work together; a BLESSing for those taking a lead in planning Hope08 in my Church/area.

**Consider:** how can I link up with other Christians in my community/workplace to reach out with the good news?

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

### ■ **NHS trusts 'failing on infection'**

A quarter of hospital trusts in England are failing to meet new standards on infection control, a survey by the Healthcare Commission has found. Forty-four trusts were not complying with one or all aspects of the hygiene code, standards seen as key after the recent deaths from hospital infections. The general picture in the watchdog's annual health check of England's trusts was, however, one of improvement. But regional divides persist, with the north performing better than the south.

Trusts were rated on two principle categories: quality of services and how they had managed their finances. Nineteen trusts scored 'excellent' on both parts of the rating, up from two last year but 20 were deemed 'weak' - the lowest scoring - on both counts, four of these for two years in a row. Health Secretary Alan Johnson said he had asked the commission to re-inspect the 44 trusts failing on infection.

**Pray:** for all our hospital staff that they will be able to meet the challenges of cleanliness and health. (1Sa.25:6)

**More:** <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/7048981.stm>

### ■ **Fathers: Care seeks urgent action**

In responding to the Joint Committee on the Draft Human Tissue and Embryos Bill, published on October 8th the government dismissed questions regarding the role of fathers, strongly suggesting that it will stick to its proposals in the Draft Human Tissue and Embryos Bill regarding fathers. We can expect these - which include using the law to deny certain children, from conception, the possibility of ever having a father - to be in the final Bill. In order to address this concern some parliamentarians have tabled Early Day Motion (EDM) 2135 calling on the government to drop its controversial father's provisions from the bill. Please write to you MP and ask them to sign the Early Day Motion. There is a very significant time pressure here because signatures must be received no later than October 25th. To be noticed, however, it will require many more. Given the time pressure you may prefer to email your MP via [www.writetothem.com](http://www.writetothem.com)

**Pray:** for our government as it seeks to finalise this bill that it will not ignore the needs of fathers. (Ps.68:4-6)

**More:** <http://www.care.org.uk/Publisher/Article.aspx?id=96084>

#### ■ **Christian MP may run for Lib Dem leadership**

A Christian MP is emerging as the most tipped third contender in the race for the leadership of the Liberal Democrats, after the surprise resignation of Menzies Campbell. Steve Webb, MP for Northavon near Bristol and also vice-President of the Liberal Democrat Christian Forum said he was seeking advice from his colleagues in the party on the issue before making a decision to stand. Newspapers have cited him as a likely contender, with the Daily Mirror saying the 'principled, campaigning antipoverty crusader he has most qualities needed by a leader.' Mr Webb has been MP for Northavon since 1997. If Steve Webb stands he will be seen as the candidate of the Liberal left compared to Chris Huhne and Nick Clegg who share a similar ideological position within the party. He has previously been the Liberal Democrat spokesman for health and is responsible for pulling together the party's manifesto for the next general election.

**Pray:** for the Lib Dem's as they seek a new leader and for all Christians in parliament that they will be led by the Lord in the decisions they make. (Rom.8:14)

**More:** <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/5934>

#### ■ **Soldiers 'need spiritual preparation for war'**

Death is not the end, the Chief of the General Staff of the Army has declared, and says that soldiers need to be spiritually better prepared for war. General Sir Richard Dannatt argued that Christian leaders and chaplains in the army needed to equip soldiers for the spiritual issues at stake. 'In my business, asking people to risk their lives is part of the job, but doing so without giving them the chance to understand that there is a life after death is something of a betrayal,' he said at the inaugural Spring Harvest Aiming 4 Excellence conference. 'I think there is very much an obligation on a Christian leader to include a spiritual dimension into his people's preparations for operations, and the general conduct of their lives.' General Sir Richard, an evangelical Anglican, has well established views and last year, in a controversial Daily Mail interview warned of the threat of Islam in Britain.

**Pray:** for all our forces, especially in areas of conflict, that they will find spiritual support from those with faith. (Ps.94:16-19)

**More:** <http://www.religiousintelligence.co.uk/news/?NewsID=1052>

#### ■ **UK relief agency launches Zimbabwe emergency appeal**

UK relief and development agency Tearfund is launching an emergency appeal to support Zimbabwe churches bringing help to the poorest families affected by Zimbabwe's spiralling crisis. Many have gone without food for weeks with even basic items unavailable in shops. The World Food Programme has warned that over three million people are at risk of severe food shortages. 'People are living on nothing more than cups of tea with the last of their maize meal now gone,' says Peter Grant, Tearfund's International Director. 'Churches are working tirelessly to bridge the gap, meeting the acute need. Despite the spiralling economic crisis they are bringing relief and hope. But they urgently need our help for this work to continue. That's why Tearfund is appealing.' Tearfund is appealing to the British public and churches to support relief work that must be increased to avoid an intensifying food and water crisis that will put lives at risk.

**Pray:** that when things seem hopeless, God's presence will be most powerfully felt. (Ps.140:12)

**More:** <http://www.tearfund.org/News/Zimbabwe/zimbabwe%20video%20reflection>

## EUROPE

#### ■ **European Evangelical Assembly opens with prayer for Turkey**

The European Evangelical Alliance (EEA)'s annual assembly opened in Greece on Tuesday with a heart-wrenching appeal from Turkey's Evangelical Alliance to pray for believers there following the horrific murder of three Bible publishing workers in April. More than one hundred EEA members have gathered on the Greek island of Evia to share successes and to assess current challenges in European mission around the theme of 'Increasing our influence in Europe'. Zekai Tanyar of the Evangelical Alliance in Turkey wept as he spoke of the shock he had felt at the time of the killings of Tilman Ekkehart Geske of Germany and Necati Aydin and Ugur Yuksel of Turkey in their Bible publishing office in Malatya. (See Prayer Alert 1607 & 1707)

**Pray:** for the EEA as they discuss their strategic plan for 2008 that they will be led by the Holy Spirit. (Pr.4:11)

**More:** [http://www.christianpost.com/article/20071017/29732\\_European\\_Evangelical\\_Assembly\\_Opens\\_with\\_Prayer\\_for\\_Turkey.htm](http://www.christianpost.com/article/20071017/29732_European_Evangelical_Assembly_Opens_with_Prayer_for_Turkey.htm)

#### ■ **Turkish MPs back attacks in Iraq**

Turkey's parliament has given permission for the government to launch military operations into Iraq in pursuit of Kurdish rebels. The vote was taken in defiance of pressure from the US and Iraq, which have called on Turkey for restraint. Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has said the motion does not mean a military operation is imminent. But he said Turkey needed to be able to respond to a recent rise in bomb attacks blamed on PKK rebels from Iraq. Turkish MPs backed him overwhelmingly, by 507 votes to 19. (See Prayer Alert 2907)

**Pray:** for the developing situation in Northern Iraq, Turkey and the Kurdish peoples that a spirit of restraint would prevail. (Pr.17:27)

**More:** <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/7049348.stm>

#### ■ **EU welcomes Ukraine's new 'orange' coalition**

The European Commission has welcomed the formation of a coalition between the two major pro-western parties in Ukraine after the September elections, hoping that the country will continue to choose the path of reform. 'I welcome the

announcement of the formation of a coalition following the September parliamentary elections in Ukraine,' external relations commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner said on Tuesday. 'The future government has important challenges ahead as Ukraine continues down the path of constitutional, political, and economic reforms. The European Commission stands side-by-side with Ukraine as it continues along this path of reform,' she added. Ukraine's two major pro-western parties - led by Yulia Tymoshenko, a Christian, and Viktor Yushchenko - signed a draft coalition deal on Monday. (See Prayer Alert 1407 & 1607)

**Pray:** that this newly formed coalition will succeed and bring about a real democratic government and peace.

**More:** <http://euobserver.com/9/24982>

## WORLDWIDE

### ■ Work continues for release of priests kidnapped in northern Iraq

Unconfirmed reports say contact was made with the priests' captors but initial attempts to secure their release foundered. Church group Middle East Concern (MEC) said, 'It appears that agreement was reached for their release leading to reports of their having been released. However, the kidnappers subsequently withdrew from the agreement and demanded a larger ransom.' The Iraqi priests, Rev Pius Affas and the Rev Mazen Ishaq, were kidnapped in Mosul on 13 October 2007 by an unknown group and Pope Benedict XVI made an appeal for their release. Syrian Catholic Archbishop Basile Georges Casmoussa has been involved in efforts to free Father Affas, who is in his 60s, and Father Ishaq, who is 35. Father Affas is originally from Mosul, a location of the Sunni insurgency, while Father Ishaq is from a Christian village south of the city. The two priests had received a letter two months ago warning them that the church would be attacked if they did not leave.

**Pray:** for God in His mercy to lift them out of this situation. (Ps.9:12-14)

**More:** <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/5927>

### ■ Companies ordered to shut down in China

China Aid Association learned that Xinjiang government has ordered at least four companies to shut down revoking their business licences and visas for alleged religious infiltration among Xinjiang Muslims. Two Chinese Christian owned companies were ordered to close and received a notification on September 20, 2007 accusing them of 'involving serious illegal conduct of illegally spreading Christianity, engaging in infiltration activities, and endangering the security of the state, social, and political stability.' Their licences were revoked. Another Christian owned foodstuff company owned by a Muslim convert was also ordered to shut down by the Municipal Bureau for Ethnic Religious Affairs on September 13, 2007. Reliable sources showed over 50 foreign Christian workers accused of being involved in illegal religious activities in Xinjiang have been expelled or deported in the past 6 months. Sources inside the Chinese government informed CAA that the Chinese government launched a massive expulsion campaign of foreign Christians, encoded Typhoon No. 5, in February 2007. This campaign is believed to be part of the 'anti-infiltration' efforts to prevent foreign Christians from engaging in mission activities before the Beijing Olympics next year.

**Pray:** that God will defend the cause of honest business and protect those who preach His truths in China. (Is.25:3)

**More:** <http://chinaaid.org/2007/10/10/two-american-companies-and-two-chinese-companies-ordered-to-shutdown-in-xinjiang-for-alleged-religious-infiltration/>

### ■ North America – human sexuality bill and gay partnership blessings

Faced with a bid from Canadian clerics to bless gay weddings, the worldwide Anglican Communion now faces a real risk of breaking apart over differences between its liberal and conservative wings. 'The train and the buffers are getting closer,' said religious journalist and commentator Clifford Longley. 'The Anglican Church is unravelling,' Longley concluded as Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams struggled to keep his global flock of 77 million Anglicans together in a bitter war of words over homosexuality. Meanwhile in the USA Lutherans prepare for first draft on human sexuality bill, described as a social statement on the controversial issue of human sexuality. The first draft is due out early 2008. See <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/us.lutherans.prepare.for.first.draft.on.human.sexuality/13955.htm>

**Pray:** for God's word to be the plumb line for decisions on sexuality within the Church. (Gen.1:27, Matt.19:12)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/canadian.move.pushes.anglicans.closer.to.schism/14004.htm>

### ■ Food aid frozen after Somali arrest

The World Food Programme (WFP) has suspended aid distribution to more than 75,000 people in Mogadishu following the arrest of one of its officials by Somali government forces. The arrest came on Wednesday the same day the WFP said three lorry drivers working for it in Sudan's Darfur region had been killed while delivering aid. Government troops stormed UN offices in the Somali capital on Wednesday arresting Idris Osman, who heads WFP operations in the city. A statement from the UN said: 'WFP is forced immediately to suspend these distributions and the loading of WFP food from our warehouses in the Somali capital.'

**Pray:** for humanitarian aid to continue to be distributed as complaints are investigated and dealt with. (Ps.35:10)

**More:** <http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/C7DDA76D-9F1A-4C48-9C40-00D9B8A975DE.htm>

### ■ Anti-Christian rumour helps fuel attacks in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, where half of the population of 144 million earns less than a dollar a day, people are convinced that villagers are being paid to convert to Christianity and Buddhists and Muslims lash out with threats and violence. As Christianity spreads in this Muslim-majority country it is rumoured, 'People become Christians after getting huge amounts of money as a reward for conversion.' The rumour has been the rationale for violence against Christians from Muslims and Buddhists.

Subash Mondol, a supervisor of the Christian Life Bangladesh (CLB) 'Jesus Film' team in Khagrachori district, said that tribal villagers decided to kidnap a CLB worker after hearing a rumour that he had received money for converting. Not finding any money on Cinku Marma, who converted from Buddhism 14 months ago, they later assaulted him as he was en route to a village to show the film. Marma had recently baptized 22 tribal people in the area causing community anger over his evangelistic activities.

**Pray:** that God will silence the lies. (Titus 1:11)

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

#### ■ Attack on Bhutto convoy kills 130

At least 130 people were killed when two bombs exploded among crowds in Karachi celebrating the return of the former Pakistani PM Benazir Bhutto. Ms Bhutto, who was travelling from the city's airport to a rally marking her homecoming after eight years in self-imposed exile, was not hurt. The truck carrying her had its windows shattered and a door blown off. The attacks on the motorcade happened despite a heavy security presence following threats from militant groups. Witnesses described horrific scenes, with bodies and body parts littering the area. Children were among the dead. Several Islamist groups, including pro-Taliban militants, had said they would attack Ms Bhutto on her return, after she promised to confront those operating in the northern tribal areas bordering Afghanistan. After the blasts, a dazed Ms Bhutto was immediately rushed from the scene to her Karachi home.

**Pray:** for our God of compassion to remove the darkness from Pakistan and establish democracy and fundamental human rights. (Lam.3:1,&22)

#### ■ Smugglers flood Gaza with weapons

Smuggling in the Gaza Strip could destroy chances for a Middle East peace conference next month. Dozens of tunnels are being used to flood Gaza with weapons and ammunition. Rafah is a Palestinian town in the Gaza Strip near Egypt's Sinai Peninsula. The town has long been a conduit for underground smuggling of weapons people and other contraband. It is controlled mostly by Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and local clans. A 2005 agreement between Israel and Egypt allows for only 750 Egyptian guards to patrol Gaza's border with Egypt. That hasn't been enough to stop the floodgate of weapons smuggling and thousands of weapons have passed through the Rafah tunnels with a dramatic increase in recent weeks.

**Pray:** for an end to suffering and extremism in Gaza. (1Ki.8:50)

**More:** <http://www.cbn.com/CBNnews/251626.aspx>

## PRAISE REPORTS

#### ■ Christians flock to comfort Israel

Thousands of Christians ascended to Jerusalem as they do every autumn in a show of solidarity with Israel and in anticipation of the prophesied Messianic Age, when all nations will come to celebrate Sukkot, the weeklong biblical Feast of Tabernacles (Zechariah 14:16). Three Jerusalem-based ministries hosted the pilgrims at events with a similar focus but different approach. With an estimated 6,000 participants, the International Christian Embassy conference at the Jerusalem Convention Centre was by far the largest event. In fact, it is the biggest single tourism event of the year in Israel. Though some religious elements did their best to paint the Christian visitors as a missionary threat, it was clear that the vast majority of Israelis were indeed comforted, whether by coming in direct contact with the pilgrims or witnessing their daily exploits on the evening news.

**Praise:** God for the witness of so many Christians in Israel that it will bear much fruit. (Mt.9:36-37)

**More:** <http://www.israeltoday.co.il/default.aspx?tabid=128&view=item&idx=1563>

#### ■ God blesses Philippine tribe that practised sacrificial giving

Chris and Lynne Strange are missionaries to the Banwaon tribe in the Philippines. Last year, even though the Banwaon's had little food themselves, the Stranges said the tribe gave what they had to some neighbouring villages who had less than them and were suffering from cholera. It was a sacrificial act that could have cost them their own lives. When people around the world heard of it, they made donations to the Banwaon's so that they would not starve to death. Now, according to a report from New Tribes Mission, just about a year later, 'the Lord has blessed them this year with an abundant harvest and we are hearing that some of them have had to build new rice storage buildings, because their current building is too small,' said Chris Strange. The report also stated that the main Banwaon chief gave thanks to the Lord for His provision and the generosity of his brothers and sisters in Christ.

**Praise:** God for His provision and generosity. (Ps.111:2-5)

**More:** [http://www.breakingchristiannews.com/articles/display\\_art.html?ID=4550](http://www.breakingchristiannews.com/articles/display_art.html?ID=4550)

## PRAYER ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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