

PRAYER ALERT...

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

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BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ **FRIDAY FOCUS: 9th November - Remembrance - Romans 5:1-8; Psalm 91**

On Sunday we will remember those who gave their lives in wars. Today, let's reflect on what it meant for Jesus to lay down his life. **Give thanks:** for all those who have and are serving in the Armed Forces. **Pray:** for wisdom to all who lead our Armed Forces; for encouragement for military chaplains; for all those away on operational tours and the stress that places on family life; for the Christian Armed Forces Support organizations seeking to make Christ known. **Consider:** regularly supporting in prayer someone serving in the Armed Forces.

Pray: that Christian ethical and moral values will enable the armed forces to be forces for peace and justice.

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

■ **Ex-chiefs demand more forces cash**

The UK National Defence Association, led by three ex-chiefs of the defence staff, has warned that Britain's armed forces are over-stretched and under-funded. They say defence spending should be about 3% of gross domestic product but next year's defence budget will be 2% of GDP. The group believe that if service personnel needs aren't met then: 'We're in danger of damaging one of the priceless assets of our country. Resupplying an army in the field like in Afghanistan is not like stocking shelves at Tesco.' They urge the public to: 'wake up and listen because soldiers are suffering on our behalf in the two most intense wars we've fought since Korea.' The launch of UKNDA, under the presidency of Winston Churchill (grandson of the war-time Prime Minister) came in the wake of defence procurement minister Lord Drayson's announcement that he would take a 'leave of absence' from his duties, perhaps frustrated that his plans for modernising procurement lacked government resourcing. (See Prayer Aler 3107)

Pray: that this funding situation would be remedied and that God would honour intercessions offered on November 8th – Armed Forces Prayer Day. (2 Tim.2:3-4)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7084303.stm>

■ **YouTube death threat for Christian opponent of London Mega-Mosque**

A harrowing video showing a mock obituary of a prominent Christian campaigner against the erection of an east London 'mega-mosque' has appeared on YouTube. Despite the death threat video including his wife and two daughters aged just 5 and 6, Christian Peoples' Alliance councillor Alan Craig has vowed to continue his fight against the proposed 12,000 capacity mosque in the 2012 Olympic village. It's being sponsored by an ultra-conservative Islamic sect, Tablighi Jamaat. London already contains more mosques than any other western capital, but this new mosque would dwarf many English cathedrals. Nevertheless Craig's main concern focuses on the group behind the proposed establishment. He said: 'I'm not anti-Muslim. I'm a democrat. I believe Muslims have the right to build mosques. But there's a difference between your

average mosque down the road and this mega-mosque they want to build near West Ham tube station.' The FBI and MI5 have expressed suspicions that Tablighi Jamaat has ties to al-Qaeda. (See Prayer Alert: 3607& 3707)

Pray: that Alan Craig and his family would be protected and that the proposed mosque would not be allowed to become a cause celebre for militant fundamentalism. (Mt.5:10)

■ Prayer concerns of Pakistani Christians in Britain

In view of the current situation in Pakistan, Yaqub Masih, Chairman of Pakistan Christian Concern, has called all churches to observe a day of prayer and fasting on November 16th. He further invites us to focus special prayers on Sunday November 18th that God would bring stability and peace to the country in its critical state.(See World Prayer item number two today) Many might also choose to pray for Pakistani Christians living in Britain, especially those numbered among the estimated 3,000 converts from Islam. In September Rt.Rev.Michael Nazir Ali warned that such converts would suffer unless Muslim leaders spoke out in defence of the right to change faiths as a basic civil liberty. He said: 'It's common for people who've changed from being Muslim to be ostracised, to lose their job,for their marriages to be dissolved,for children to be taken away.' One convert to Christianity described his Bradford community's reaction: 'They told me if I'd been in Pakistan, they would have been first to chop off my head.' (See:Prayer Alert 3807)

More: <http://mychristianblood.blogspot.com/archive/2007/09/16/bishop-warns-that-muslims-who-convert-risk-being-killed.html#more>

■ Joel Edwards announced Commissioner to the Equality and Human Rights Commission

The Rev Joel Edwards, General Director of the Evangelical Alliance, has been appointed as a commissioner to the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). Rev Edwards says the EHRC's task of balancing rights with responsibilities will be formidable but he'll strive to ensure faith communities' values play an effective role in the commission .However, it would be a huge challenge for Christians and people of faith to learn how to present faith distinctives within a liberal democracy, where morals and values cannot be dictated to by Christian faith alone. The setting up of the single equality commission was established by the Equality Act 2006. It brings together the three existing UK equality commissions – the Commission for Racial Equality, the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Disability Rights Commission and will incorporate three new human rights strands – age, sexual orientation and religion and belief. Rev Edwards enjoys an acceptability across the broad religion and belief spectrum. His expertise in consensus management and conflict resolution will be a valuable contribution to the EHRC.

Pray: that Joel Edwards will bring godly wisdom into the contentious arena of equality and human rights. (Jas.3:17-18)

More: <http://www.eauk.org/media/ehrc-appointment.cfm>

■ Rally to keep spirit of Christmas alive

An influential coalition of Christian and Muslim leaders has defended Christmas after a Labour think-tank suggested it be downgraded to improve community relations. A controversial report by the Institute of Public Policy Research argues that, while it might be difficult to ban Christmas entirely, it should only be celebrated if other religious groups' festivals are given similar prominence in order to treat all communities equally. Coalition President,Rt Rev David Gillett, Bishop of Bolton, said the vast majority of Britons want to preserve the country's Christian heritage and Sheikh Ibrahim Mogra,a Leicester Imam and joint head of the coalition's community and public affairs commented:'We wouldn't be happy if any festival were downplayed. We don't believe equality is achieved by downgrading anyone. There might be one or two Muslims who object to Christmas but the vast majority want religion in all its forms to be celebrated.' There is growing concern among faiths that secularists are attempting to push religion to the margins of public life.

Pray: thanking God for this united defence for the distinctive meaning of Christmas celebrations. (Jn.1:14)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml;jsessionid=10KCK5WXILOK1QFIQMFSFFWAVCBQ0IV0?xml=/news/2007/11/05/nxmas105.xml>

EUROPE

■ EU concerned over turmoil in Georgia as Georgian soldiers line streets

A ring of soldiers cordoned off central Tbilisi on Thursday after Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili declared a state of emergency and shut down independent media to quash six days of anti-government protests. Opposition leaders said they were suspending protests to avoid more injuries. Over 550 demonstrators were treated in hospital on Wednesday after the government sent in riot police, who beat them with batons, fired rubber bullets and sprayed tear gas. 'We don't know where half the opposition leaders are, they were dispersed,' protest leader and former foreign minister Salome Zurbishvili told Reuters. Saakashvili justified the police action by saying neighbouring Russia was stirring trouble and he expelled three Russian diplomats from Georgia. Schools and colleges were closed until next week and protests were restricted. Human rights groups and the Georgian Orthodox Church said the president's actions were inexcusable. Saakashvili wants to take Georgia - an East-West oil transport link wedged between Russia and the Middle East - into NATO and the European Union.

Pray: that the different factions would find agreement leading to peaceful unity for the Georgian peoples.

More: <http://uk.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUKL0752768220071108>

■ EU leaders will fly across Europe just to sign treaty

The European Union opened itself up to criticism from eurosceptics and environmentalists yesterday after agreeing to split next month's summit of 27 heads of state and government between Lisbon and Brussels. Barring a last-minute change of

heart, 26 presidents and prime ministers will fly by private jet to Lisbon, swiftly sign the contentious new EU treaty and hop back onto their planes, returning to Brussels for the normal sumptuous summit dinner and discussions about climate change, the Middle East crisis and the credit crunch. Portugal, currently holding the EU presidency, insists that the new treaty be signed by the 27 leaders in its capital on December 13. That will ensure that the treaty, the successor to the doomed constitution, will go into history as the Treaty of Lisbon. Belgium, however, insists that the summit resume its business in its capital on the nights of December 13 and 14. Neither side will back down.

Pray: for the leaders of the EU nations that they would put aside their disagreements and get down to the important decisions.

More: <http://www.worthynews.com/news/politics-guardian-co-uk-eu-story-0,,2205951,00-html/>

WORLDWIDE

■ Global poverty prayer week

Tearfund's Global poverty prayer week (12-18 November 2007) pulls together thousands of Christians hungry to hear God and keen to be part of a miracle. Praying can seem a very small act, almost a feeble one, in the face of huge problems like global poverty. But the power in the act is so utterly out of our hands. It's the tiny mustard seed that we bring to The Mountain-Mover. And yet we're told that we need to keep on giving our prayers, tiny though they might be. Acts 2 tells us that the apostles 'devoted themselves' to prayer. Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians that we should 'pray continually'. Clearly he felt that prayer is something that it's possible to do most of the time. This Global poverty prayer week carry your packet of mustard seeds lightly to God, each one a tiny gift from you, that, in the hands of the Almighty, can move those mountains of poverty and suffering in ways that will leave us speechless with awe.

Pray: Let your prayers glory in being small acts – yes – but small acts done with great love.(1Cor.13)

More: <http://www.bepartofamiracle.org.uk/Prayer+week/>

■ CSW calls for release of human rights defenders in Pakistan

CSW called for the immediate release of hundreds of lawyers and human rights activists arrested since the State of Emergency and suspension of Constitution on the 3rd November in Pakistan; and for the restoration of basic democratic freedoms in the country. Among those detained are leading Pakistani human rights lawyer Asma Jahangir, who serves as UN Special Reporter for Freedom of Religion and Belief, and I.A. Rehman, director of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. Also Pakistani Christians now fear the situation will be exploited by those who wish to carry out more attacks on the Christian community. (See <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/6106>). for reports of a number of recent incidents including Catholic sanitary workers killed for refusing to convert to Islam. Bribery allegations, and Catholic-run public high school attacked by a group called Janisaran-i-Islam, allegedly for 'forcibly converting students' and 'encouraging un-Islamic behaviour.' The school has re-opened after a period of closure.

Pray: for the rule of 'control' to end and for God to do a 'new thing' in Pakistan. (Is.43:19)

More: <http://www.csw.org.uk/latestnews/article.php?id=679>

■ Evangelist killed and sacrificed for Hindu goddess

A young evangelist killed by Hindu priests seeking human sacrifices for the 'goddess' Kali is the latest in a series of violent attacks against Christians in India. An advocacy group representing church and mission groups said Vipin Mandloi was killed near Aamkut village in the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh. Mandloi went missing on October 14 when he went to a nearby mountain to graze his goats and sheep near a new Hindu temple. Three Hindu Priests came there and shot Vipin Mandloi. The Hindu priests were apparently angry that he had become a Christian. After a history of alcohol abuse and a failed marriage, he returned to mission work, preaching the Gospel and helping a fellow evangelist who runs several churches in the area. It was not immediately clear if there was blood of other missing persons in the temple. 'The goddess Kali is a bloodthirsty goddess'

Pray: for God to strengthen the Christian minorities and for the blood sacrifices to stop. (Ro.12:21)

More: <http://www.worthynews.com/christian/india-evangelist-killed-and-sacrificed-for-hindu-goddess/>

■ Egypt's nuclear ambition raises question of stability

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak has decided to revive Egypt's nuclear program. Like Iran and North Korea Egypt has signed the Nuclear Non proliferation Treaty and will cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency and its inspectors as it develops its program. He stressed, as Iran does, that Egypt's intentions with the program were related to energy, not weapons. Mr. Mubarak is 79. He expects to be succeeded by his son, Gamal Mubarak, who is not a military officer. Egypt has been led by military officers since 1952, If there were truly free and fair democratic elections in Egypt, Mr. Mubarak's government party would likely lose badly, based on the economic situation and the perception by religious Muslim Egyptians that Mr. Mubarak's policies are far too responsive to the wishes of Israel and the United States.

Pray: for long-term stability in Egypt. (1Tim.2:2)

More: <http://www.toledoblade.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20071107/COLUMNIST43/711070317/-1/COLUMNIST>

■ Chadians charged over kidnapping

Four Chadian nationals have appeared in court in Ndjamena, charged in connection with attempted airlift of 103 children to France. The officials were charged with 'fraud and complicity to kidnap minors'. Six French members of the charity Zoe's Ark, three Spaniards and a Belgian are in jail awaiting trial. They will face trial alongside 10 Europeans - six are members of

Zoe's Ark, three members of the Spanish flight crew and a Belgian pilot - who were questioned by a prosecutor on Monday. The 103 children were discovered aboard a plane on the tarmac in the eastern town of Abeche. Most say they are Chadian and were living with their families. Zoe's Ark had said it was rescuing orphans from the war-torn Sudanese province of Darfur for adoption in France.

Pray: for strengthening of international systems which identify and resolve instances of slavery. (La.2:19)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/7083208.stm>

■ Bibles banned at 2008 Beijing Olympics

Organizers for the 2008 Olympics in China have released their list of items banned from the Olympic village where the athletes will stay. Among the 'prohibited objects' is Bibles citing 'security reasons' for the ban. Athletes are also prohibited from bearing any kind of religious symbol at Olympic facilities. The Olympic charter says 'no kind of political propaganda, religious or racial hatred is allowed in the Olympic areas.'

Pray: that there will be no censure or intolerance towards Bibles or religious objects used by Christians in China. (Ro.8:35)

More: <http://www.cbn.com/CBNnews/264115.aspx>

■ Huge flood affects 1 million in Mexico

Mexican president Felipe Calderon has called the natural disaster one of the worst in Mexico's history. Tabasco, one of the poorest areas of Mexico, has lost all of its banana and other crops, and four-fifths of the state is under water. Local aid agencies are distributing essentials of food and water. The long-term rebuilding effort is expected to be a major operation. Caritas Mexico has set up 14 centres in Mexico City to collect aid for the people of Tabasco. World Vision plans to send 40 metric tons of supplies to the people stranded as soon as roads are cleared and arrangements can be made. Convoy of Hope, affiliated with the Assemblies of God, is also preparing to respond to the massive flooding.

Pray: for the long term recovery of all the people affected by this disaster. (Ps.71:20)

More: http://www.christianpost.com/article/20071106/29973_Huge_Flood_Affects_1_Million_in_Mexico.htm

PRAISE REPORTS

■ Council reverse in equality row

A Christian couple who refused to sign a 'sexual equality' contract could be reunited with an 11-year-old foster child who was taken from them. Carers Vincent and Pauline Matherick have taken 28 at risk children into their home in Chard, Somerset. But the couple faced deregistration for failing to comply with legislation requiring them to treat homosexuality as equal to heterosexuality. Now Somerset Council has decided the pair can continue to foster children. Mr Matherick, 65, said although he would not condemn homosexuality, he could not actively "promote it" because of his religious beliefs. The couple faced being deregistered as foster carers if they did not comply with the new legislation and decided to stop fostering. Their 11-year-old foster son, who had been with them since 2005, was moved to a children's unit. But on Thursday, the Mathericks were told they could continue fostering and would not have to 'promote homosexuality'. 'It's good news and we're very pleased,' Mr Matherick said.

Praise: God for this wonderful answer to prayer! Alleluia! (Ps.66:3)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/somerset/7075006.stm>

■ Christian Egyptian tycoon plans new TV stations against radicals

Egyptian billionaire and telecoms tycoon Naguib Sawiris plans to launch new television channels to counter what he describes as increasing social and religious conservatism in the Arab Muslim country. Sawiris, a Coptic Christian with a \$10 billion fortune according to Forbes magazine, said he would launch a movie channel early in 2008 followed by an all-news station. He already owns OTV, a 24-hour entertainment channel. Speaking at a dinner for journalists late on Monday, Sawiris said he was disturbed by the rising number of women wearing the Islamic headscarf. 'I am not against the headscarf because then I would be against personal freedoms,' he said. 'But when I walk in the street now I feel like I am in Iran. I feel like a stranger.' Egypt, a country dominated by Sunni Muslims, has seen a rise in religious conservatism since the 1990s. The majority of women wear headscarves in public.

Praise: God for this initiative and pray that it would counter the growing Muslim religious extremism with God's truth. (Dt.33:11)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/christian.egyptian.tycoon.plans.new.tv.stations.against.radicals/14441.htm>

PRAYER ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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