



PRAYER ALERT...



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

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BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ **FRIDAY FOCUS: 30th November - AIDS/HIV Pandemic - Isaiah 41:17; Psalm 145:13-20**

40 million people live with HIV worldwide (more than 60,000 in UK live with HIV); only 8% of people in developing countries have access to treatment. **Confess:** that we still have much to do to stop AIDS by 2015 **Give thanks:** for those who are committed to caring for those with the disease. **Pray:** for wisdom to guide those working to find a cure; for resources for the Christian agencies providing care for the dying and homes for orphans; those living with HIV would find hope in Jesus Christ. **Consider:** leaning more about this issue through World AIDS Day, 1 December.

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

■ **Christian Aid to call for bold Aids strategy**

Christian Aid participated in an event organized by the STOP AIDS Campaign in Parliament Square on 29 November, ahead of World AIDS Day on 1 December. Parliament Square was transformed with a giant Aids awareness ribbon made out of 8000 red carnations in recognition of the 8000 people who die each day from Aids-related illnesses. Christian Aid encouraged as many people as possible to attend the event and to speak to their own MPs on the day to 'increase the pressure on the DfID to produce a bold AIDS strategy'. The Stop AIDS Campaign called for a strategy to tackle HIV and Aids over the next three years. The strategy includes a spending plan of £2.5 billion that would ensure that the UK paid what the campaign said was 'its fair share of resources needed to achieve Universal Access by 2010'. See also: Williams delivers strong World AIDS Day video message <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/6381>

Pray: for Christians to work for the welfare of those with HIV and AIDS and demonstrate God's love for His children. (Mt.8:17)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.co.uk/article/christian.aid.to.call.for.bold.aids.strategy/14947.htm>

■ **Code of practice for mosques aims to stamp out extremism**

Muslim leaders would introduce programmes to fight extremism in the first ever set of national guidelines for mosques. They represent a radical attempt by leaders of the country's two million Muslims to introduce an effective system of self-regulation that would help prevent young people from being attracted by extremist teaching from unregulated mosques. Leaders also propose a strong line against 'unIslamic' forced marriages and domestic violence, and recommend that women should have access to religious training and positions of leadership in mosques. The Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board, an alliance of Britain's top four Muslim organisations, drew up the guidelines in the form of a ten-point code of practice which will be reviewed by Britain's 1,500-plus mosques before their final issue next March. The guidelines have emerged from working groups set up by Government in an attempt to tackle Islamic extremism but have no Government input. Muslim

leaders have deliberately distanced themselves from ministers as part of their determination to make their community self-regulating.

Pray: that these guidelines will be respectfully adhered to, as building blocks for peace and good in our society. (Lk.1:79)

More: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/faith/article2957492.ece>

■ **UK seeks teacher release in Sudan**

The Foreign Office is attempting to secure the release of a British teacher jailed in Sudan for insulting religion after naming a teddy bear Muhammad. Gillian Gibbons, from Liverpool, has been sentenced to 15 days in prison and will then be deported. She escaped conviction for inciting hatred and showing contempt for religious beliefs, and will now appeal. Dr Muhammad Abdul Bari, Muslim Council of Britain said 'Sudan has grossly overreacted in this sad affair. Gillian should never have been arrested, let alone charged and convicted of committing a crime. We hope that Gillian will be able to return home without much further delay.' Mrs Gibbons' son said, although the family are struggling to take in the punishment. 'I don't want the verdict to lead to any anti feeling towards Muslims.' Foreign Secretary David Miliband has expressed 'in the strongest terms' the UK's concern at her detention. The Sudanese ambassador, Omer Siddig, was called back to the Foreign Office to explain the decision.

Pray: for the safety and speedy return of Gillian and for the eradication of religious hatred in all its forms. (Mic.6:8)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/7120263.stm>

■ **Christian lawyers and Stop the Traffik to highlight contemporary slavery**

The Lawyers Christian Fellowship (LCF) and Stop the Traffik will come together on December 3rd for a seminar addressing contemporary slavery as well as the legal challenges involved in stopping human trafficking. The main speakers will be the Strategy Director of Stop the Traffik, Peter Stanley, and solicitor Stephanie Biden. Stop the Traffik is a global coalition linking over 800 organisations in over 50 countries and works on educational programmes to stop the buying and selling of people. Stanley will give insight into this illegal trade which has trapped millions in sexual exploitation, forced labour and domestic servitude. Biden worked with the International Justice Mission on sex trafficking cases in South East Asia for eight months. She now coordinates a network of UK based lawyers who research and campaign on trafficking. Biden will address the legal problems encountered by those seeking to protect victims of trafficking and by those prosecuting the perpetrators. (See Prayer Alert: 4007.3507)

Pray: that the seminar will bring further breakthroughs for the campaign against this iniquitous trade. (Ex.22:21-23)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/christian.lawyers.stop.the.traffik.to.highlight.contemporary.slavery/14915.htm>

■ **Black pupils begin to close the gap at GCSE**

A study of this year's GCSE and national curriculum test results shows the percentage of black Caribbean and African pupils getting five A* to C grades at GCSE has improved at twice the national average, up 4.2 percentage points and 4.6 percentage points respectively to 49.1 per cent and 51 per cent. Steve Sinnott, general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, said: 'The results show that targeted additional support works. In the past four years the performance of Caribbean children has improved by nearly 50 per cent, twice the rate of the national average increase.' Unfortunately the study also shows that education is not promoting social mobility. The gap between the poorest and the rest is widening, with those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds achieving less and dropping out earlier. Black Caribbean children still fare worse than most other ethnic groups, with only Gypsies and Irish travellers, whose numbers are statistically insignificant, doing worse than them at GCSE.

Pray: thanking God for this improvement but interceding for a reduction in the social deprivation gap that still disadvantages many children. (Pr.22:6)

More: http://news.independent.co.uk/education/education_news/article3201568.ece

EUROPE

■ **Peace in Balkans at stake over Kosovo, diplomats warn**

The 27-nation European Union is heading for a crucial test of its foreign policy after three-day last resort talks in Austria on the future of Serbia's breakaway province of Kosovo failed to result in a compromise. 'Regrettably the parties were unable to reach agreement on status', EU envoy for Kosovo Wolfgang Ischinger said on Wednesday, less than two weeks before the troika - representing the US, EU and Russia - reports back to the United Nations on 10 December. (See also Bosnia in Prayer Alert 4707)

Pray: for peace in the Balkans and that there will not be a return to the conflicts of the past. (Ps.133)

More: <http://euobserver.com/9/25239>

■ **Turkish Christian priest abducted**

A priest from Turkey's Syriac Christian community has been kidnapped in the country's south-east, officials say. The priest's car was reportedly found abandoned near Midyat in Mardin province on Wednesday. A local clergyman had received a phone call demanding a ransom for his release. Attacks on Turkey's Christian minority have increased recently. A Catholic priest was shot dead last year and three Protestants were killed in April. Five men accused of the attack on the Protestant missionaries went on trial in the town of Malatya last week. (See Prayer Alert 1607 & 1707) Turkey's Syriac Christian

community numbers an estimated 25,000 people and is based mainly in Mardin, in the largely Kurdish south-east, and in Istanbul.

Pray: for Christians in Turkey that the persecutions will cease. (2Cor.4:8-9)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/7118475.stm>

■ Euro MPs back stricter gun laws

The European Parliament has voted to tighten laws on obtaining and possessing firearms. The age at which a firearm can be bought or owned will be raised to 18, unless it is for hunting or target shooting under adult supervision. Blank-firing guns that could be converted will also be made illegal. Earlier this month, a student shot dead eight people at a school in Finland, where gun ownership is among the highest in the world. EU governments are expected to approve the reforms by the end of the year and the directive is due to come into force in January 2008. Member states will then have two years to put the changes into practice. One of the aims of the legislation is to control the sale of guns over the internet.

Pray: that this step will help to a reduce the use of guns for crime across Europe.

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/7118719.stm>

WORLDWIDE

■ December 1st - World Aids Day

Saturday is World AIDs day. This coming weekend is an opportunity for all of us to join together in praying for those affected by HIV/AIDs around the world; remembering that many who contract the disease are also victims of horrific crimes. Women and girls are having to deal with the stigma of having the disease, plus the shame of being raped; and are suffering in silence because they don't believe they can share the truth with anyone.

Pray: that God would send loving godly counsellors to the victims of AIDS. (Ps.91:1-3)

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

■ December 2nd - Day of Prayer for Iraq

There has been a growing prayer movement in Iraq over the last few years, resulting in Pastors and leaders from all over Iraq agreeing to have a National Day of Prayer for their country this Sunday. Church leaders in Iraq are inviting Christians around the world to join them on this day. For up to date reasons for celebration, and reports of where there is still a need for intercessions click on the more link below.

Pray: for God to build His Kingdom in Iraq. (Ps.28:2)

More: <http://www.gulfnews.com/opinion/columns/region/10170750.html>

■ SPECIAL FEATURE - Iraq City Profile - Hilla

Hilla is a 900 year old Shi'ite city of half a million people not far south of Baghdad. It is the capital of Babel province; the site of the ruins of Babylon; where the Arab armies conquered the Persians 1,400 years ago; a place from which Shi'a Islam spread throughout Iraq several hundred years ago; where Saddam massacred thousands in 1991; and more recently the scene of some of the worst atrocities of the current violence. Hilla needs to be prayed for. Please join us in doing so and find out more in this week's city profile through 'More' link below.

Pray: that Hilla's history of bloodshed will end and that a new chapter will begin with the city submitting to the Prince of Peace.

More: www.iraqprayer.org/city%20profiles.htm

■ Peace in the Middle East?

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert concluded peace talks hosted by US president George Bush in Washington this week. They left with an agreement to meet every other week, while a teams of negotiators led by a joint steering committee will meet for the first time on 12 December. Mr Bush, who also hosted Tuesday's meeting in Annapolis, said the two sides were committed to reaching a comprehensive peace deal by the end of 2008. Hamas are opposed to the peace talks and the Israeli public are sceptical. There have been many failed peace talks in the last 40 years, yet among some there is the realisation that the future of Israelis and of Palestinians depends on finding reconciliation with each other.

Pray: for Palestinians and Israelis to turn back to the Lord, seek peace with Him, and with each other (Matt 5:8-9, 23-24, 43-45)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/olmert.says.palestinian.state.crucial.for.israel/15007.htm>

■ Forty House Church leaders detained in Henan Province

Forty church leaders from different counties of Henan province China were having a bible study on November 18th when they were raided and detained by Public Security Bureau Officers (PSB). According to one eyewitness a group of (PSB) officers from Xiancheng county Henan raided a House Church leadership meeting in Peichang village, Fanhu town. They detained 40 leaders immediately. 21 of them were released before November 24, and 19 are still being detained at the county detention centre. Family members of the 19 detainees were notified by Police to send blankets and 360 Yuan (\$50) for 15 days' living expenses. All of the detainees are senior leaders from one of China's largest house church groups called China Gospel Fellowship (CGF)

Pray: for God to cause there to be an accurate interpretation of events and immediate release of the victims. (Ps.22:19)

More: <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/2007/s07110169.htm>

■ Radical Muslims destroy Indonesian Church

A Protestant church in the Indonesian province of West Java has been destroyed by a group of 250 'radical Muslims' according to Open Doors. The Muslims from the 'Anti Apostasy Movement Alliance' (AAMA) entered the Pasundan Christian Church in the South Bandung area of West Java by force. Although no one was in the church at the time the husband and children of Pastor Cristine Yohanes were forced to hide nearby. The militants held an Islamic prayer service in the church before proceeding 'to destroy the interior with sticks and knives', said Pastor Timorason, leader of the West Java branch of Christian Communication Forum, an umbrella group of Indonesian churches. Despite the arrest of two suspects, Pastor Timorason has said that the police are reluctant to act against the militants. He said, 'We urge the government to take this case seriously because we have heard that a dozen other churches have been nominated by extremists for attacks in the coming weeks.'

Pray: for God to protect the buildings and possessions of the Indonesian Christians and for all their Christian labours to bear fruit for God's Kingdom. (Is.65:21, 22)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/radical.muslims.destroy.indonesian.church/14952.htm>

■ Kenyan Muslims deny Sharia claims

Kenyan Muslim leaders have dismissed as propaganda allegations that an opposition party promised to introduce Sharia for Muslims if it won elections. The National Muslim Leaders Forum said its deal with the Orange Democratic Movement was to end the current discrimination against Muslims. Christian leaders have been calling for the pact to be made public to end angry speculation ahead of December's polls. Roughly one-third of Kenya's population of 34 million is Muslim. Muslim leaders decided to make the pact public after a document circulated on the internet claimed that Mr Odinga's ODM had pledged to introduce Sharia in parts of the country where Muslims are in the majority. 'Instead the memorandum of understanding, signed in August, states that Mr Odinga has pledged to defend Muslims against harassment and victimisation by state security forces who claim to be fighting terrorism.'

Pray: for transparency rather than power politics in relations between political parties and religious groupings in Kenya before the December elections. (Prov.11: 3)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/7115387.stm>

PRAISE REPORTS

■ Brain dead man comes back to life

An Oklahoma man declared brain dead shocked everyone when he suddenly reached for the nurse who was preparing him for organ donation. The family of Zack Dunlap is calling his story a miracle. One moment, they're saying goodbye to him. The next, they're being told he has come back to life. As churches urged the town of Frederick to pray for 21-year-old Zack Dunlap, his family said they received a sign from God. Dunlap's uncle James Blackford said, 'God come down and give him a miracle. I believe that with all my heart.' Zack suffered severe head injuries in an accident. On Monday morning, at a Wichita Falls hospital, the highway patrol said Zack was pronounced brain dead. Shortly after, a nurse was preparing him for organ donation when the unthinkable happened. Zack had come back to life. Zack's next-door neighbour said, 'I think it's the result of people praying in this town, and committing him to the Lord. And God has a purpose for him.'

Praise: God that He is still a God of miracles. (Ps.77:14)

More: http://www.woai.com/news/local/story.aspx?content_id=76901869-2a7e-4e9a-ba69-caa4157319be

■ Chinese Christians to celebrate 'miracle' of 50 million Bibles

Celebrations are planned in China to mark the production of more than 50 million Bibles in the People's Republic by the Amity Printing Company, a joint venture between the United Bible Societies and the Amity Foundation, which is a Chinese Christian agency. 'Since the cultural revolution of 1966 to 1976, many Chinese Christians have been doing their best to take the chance to read the Bible,' Qiu Zhonghui, general secretary of the Amity Foundation, told Ecumenical News International on 27 November. The celebrations planned in the city of Nanjing for 8 December will mark the production on 11 September 2007 of the 50 millionth Bible by the Amity Printing Company, the only body allowed to print Bibles in mainland China. Zhang Liwei, the Amity Foundation's associate general secretary, told ENI the events would 'celebrate the miracle that God makes it possible in China to print these millions of copies of the Bible for Chinese Christians'.

Praise: God that His word continues to be the word of life. (Is.55:10-11)

More: <http://www.eni.ch/featured/article.php?id=1415>

PRAYER FORUM OF BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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