



PRAYER ALERT...



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

Issue 4008

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BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Friday Focus 3rd October - Hope for Government Romans 13:1-7; Psalm 20

As the nation continues to face major challenges, our leaders are under great pressure.

Confess: the times when we have not prayed for those in government.

Pray: for God to grant insight for the Prime Minister and all First Ministers and their cabinets across the UK; for wisdom for the setting of the legislative programme for the coming year that it will contain godly laws; for increased influence of Christians in government.

Consider: praying a BLESSing on my local MP

More: <http://www.worldprayer.org.uk/pagesys.cfm?PID=144>

■ Business world 'faith and hope message'

A new collective of socially conscious business people is presenting a radical 'back to basics' message of faith and hope to the business world at the Liverpool Summit this week. 'Together for Transformation' is calling the business world back to a fresh perspective of generosity, servant leadership, engaging communities, and aligning corporate goals with community goals in the sphere where work is conducted. Liverpool businessman and founder of Together for Transformation, John Manwell, said that his faith led him to want to promote an alternative way of doing business in anticipation of the global economic crisis. The group

promoting 'micro-financing' enables many businesses to support initiatives in the developing world, whilst empowering people and lifting them out of poverty and squalor. They are looking to engage with people who are keen to use their faith as a motivation for positive community projects much closer to home, such as urban arts projects or business incubation.

Pray: that the business world would hear this call and be used by God to bring about a change in attitudes. (Job 22:29,30)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/new.collective.calls.for.faith.and.hope.in.business.world/21563.htm>

■ Scottish Children's commissioner urges delay to plans

Scottish ministers have been urged to shelve controversial plans to reform the law governing teenage sex. The Children's Commissioner, Kathleen Marshall, has warned that a change could end up deterring young girls from seeking medical help. Ms Marshall stressed that she did not want to decriminalise teenage sex. But she wants to delay moves which could see girls facing prosecution for consensual sex in the same way as boys, until any consequences can be studied. At present, boys aged 13 to 15 who engage in consensual sex with girls the same age can technically face a criminal record, although prosecution is rare. In a new Sexual Offences Bill, ministers propose to treat young teenage girls the same way. Ms Marshall said she acknowledged the principle of equal treatment, but has said she is concerned that the move could deter young girls from seeking vital medical help - because they fear a criminal record.

Pray: against wickedness and shame, and for protection of innocence through schools, society, and legal systems. (The Message Pr.18:3-5)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/7646934.stm>

■ '30-second Nativity' competition

A competition to tell the Christmas story in 30 seconds or less has been launched by a Christian group. It will run alongside a Churches Advertising Network (CAN) radio campaign retelling the Christmas story. Churches, youth groups and individuals can submit entries in the style of either radio adverts or YouTube videos. CAN said the impetus for the campaign came from a poll last year suggesting only 12% of adults knew the details of the biblical Christmas story. They hope youngsters will write, text, record, video, paint the Christmas story in under 30 seconds. This campaign and competition will be a catalyst for churches to get involved all over the country, and use this to reach out to a generation that isn't brought up with the message of hope that Jesus's birth brings. CAN said pressures to secularise Christmas showed that they could not be complacent about promoting the Christmas story.

Pray: for the whole country to get behind this initiative with a Christian response to secular Christmas so that the true meaning of the season is restored. (1 Th. 1:3)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7647663.stm>

■ Micah Sunday to mobilise churches against poverty

Thousands of Christians will get to grips with global poverty issues this month when they take part in Micah Sunday, a global day of prayer on October 19 this year. Micah Sunday is an annual effort by Micah Challenge, a worldwide campaign of the Micah Network and the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), to mobilise churches and Christians to engage with global poverty issues and raise awareness of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Micah Sunday is celebrated with activities in church services around the world, including prayer times, biblical reflections and mobilisation of faith communities to present public petitions in the fight against poverty within each context. Usually scheduled for the Sunday closest to the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty declared by the UN for October 17, Micah Challenge will also promote a Stand Up Take Action moment as part of its Micah Sunday activities.

Pray: that the global financial crisis will not derail progress that has been made on fighting poverty worldwide and that other leaders would follow the Church to tackle deprivation.

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/micah.sunday.to.mobilise.churches.against.poverty/21562.htm>

■ Irish abortion ban defended

Ireland is to defend its ban on abortion at the EU Court of Human Rights so that scores of pre-born children are guaranteed the protection the Irish people give them. The Chief Counsel for defence Benjamin Bull said, 'This case is not only pivotal to Europe it's pivotal to America. With greater frequency, the U.S. Supreme Court looks across the ocean to see what other countries are doing when considering its own cases.' Three women seeking abortion in Ireland sued under the European Convention on Human Rights to overturn the country's ban on the practice. They obtained abortions in Britain and are fighting to establish a right to abortion in Ireland. Abortions are permitted in Ireland when the mother is at risk. The women are also seeking a precedent that would open the door to abortion as a right in most of Europe under the European Convention on Human Rights.

Pray: for God to inspire and lead the defence team so that no-one should be allowed to decide that an innocent life is worthless. (Dt. 32:39; Lev. 24:17)

More: <http://www.ccfon.org/view.php?id=637>

EUROPE

■ EU: Lauded for pressing Iran to drop Apostasy Bill

A Christian human rights group applauded the EU for issuing a declaration to Iran urging the repressive state to drop its draft apostasy bill and to release Christian converts from detention. In September Iran's parliament had overwhelmingly approved a bill which would punish apostasy with the death penalty. The bill proposed adding apostasy to a list of crimes that would result in execution. The EU in response, released a declaration Friday challenging the Iranian parliament to rethink passing the bill into law. 'The European Union urges the Islamic Republic of Iran to reconsider its decision to examine the law in question, release all those who have been imprisoned because of their religious affiliation and allow all its citizens to exercise their freedom of religion or belief in full,' read the letter. The bill is returning to the Legislative Commission for amendment proposals before it goes to Parliament for another vote.

Pray: for the demise of this bill, and for the protection of religious freedom in Iran. (Ex.15:18)

More: <http://www.christianpost.com/article/20081001/eu-lauded-for-pressing-iran-to-drop-apostasy-bill.htm>

■ Russia: Unregistered Baptists under pressure from state

Baptist communities in different corners of Russia have experienced state harassment in recent months, including interrogation by the state security service FSB, defamatory state television coverage, a warning for home worship, and a fine for preaching in public. The congregations concerned all belong to the Baptist Council of Churches which broke away from the Soviet-recognised Baptist Union in 1961 in protest at regulations preventing missionary activity and religious instruction to children. Its communities refuse on principle to register with the authorities in post-Soviet countries. According to the Baptists, a local head teacher spoke indignantly about how their children are 'retarded, downtrodden, dress differently from other pupils and often have to repeat the year'. An elderly woman was shown in tears, moaning that her children 'have ended up in the terrible Baptist sect'. 'They beat their children, and when I try to intervene, they beat me,' said the woman.

Pray: for God to strengthen his people as they teach and adhere to His laws and for slander to be silenced. (Ps.25:5; Ex.20:16)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/russia.unregistered.baptists.feel.under.pressure.from.state/21475.htm>

WORLDWIDE

■ **Somalia: Pirates hinder World Food Aid**

Somali pirates seize unescorted ships in the most dangerous waterway in the world. A Ukrainian ship carrying 30 tanks and Russian crew is the most recent seizure of more than 30 vessels off Somalia this year. See <http://www.dawn.com/2008/09/27/top10.htm>. The Gulf of Aden flows between Europe and Asia, and ships are only safe if escorted along this major route to the Suez Canal. The World Food Programme is trying to provide 35,000 tonnes of food to Somalia each month, 90 per cent of it by sea from ports in Kenya and South Africa. 'Patrols are not enough to deter pirates. We need escorts,' a WFP spokes person said. Canada has provided escorts since mid-August and had been due to halt its service on Saturday, but agreed to a four week extension of escorts by the Canadian navy so that emergency rations to 2.4 million people in Somalia can be delivered. They continue to look for naval escorts beyond October 23rd.

Pray: for God's mercy to fall on this massive humanitarian need in the midst of conflict, displacement, drought and hyperinflation. (La. 3:31)

More: <http://www.dawn.com/2008/09/27/top10.htm>

■ **India: UK Christians march for end to violence**

Growing violence against Christians in India has spread to 12 states, while 57 have been killed and 50,000 driven from their homes in Orissa state alone. A march has been called in London Saturday to present a petition to Gordon Brown and to the Indian High Commission, calling on the Indian Government to intervene and stop the escalating violence. India's national government is threatening to impose emergency rule on two states unless they stop anti-Christian violence which has raged for six weeks. The federal government issued an official warning to Orissa and Karnataka, accusing the Hindu nationalist BJP which rules both states of failing to curb the violence. Unless the two state governments take decisive action, 'President's rule' will be introduced, in accordance with Article 356 of the constitution. (See PA 3908) Marchers will gather in Richmond Terrace off Victoria Embankment at 2pm, for the rally staged by India Christian Concern. For more details, contact coordinator William Sidhu on 07958 281230.

Pray: for God to soften the heart of Gordon Brown and lead him to instigate appropriate action. (Is.11:2)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/uk.christians.to.march.for.end.to.sectarian.violence.in.india/21555.htm>

■ **Algeria: Four Condemned to Prison for Becoming Christian**

Four Algerians who converted to Christianity have been condemned to prison and heavy fines, while two others were set free after renouncing their conversion. The defence lawyer said the four were charged with 'illegally practicing a non-Muslim faith,' the French news agency AFP reported. Attorney Khelloudja Khalfoun said one of the converts was sentenced to six months in prison and fined USD3,087, while the other three were sentenced to two months in prison and fined USD1,544 each. The four converts, who were condemned by a court in Tiarret, refused to deny their faith, in contrast with the two others who were freed. Khelloudja told AFP that he would appeal the verdict, since only the ones who admitted they had converted were found guilty. 'They were judged by the facts themselves and therefore all should be guilty or all should be freed,' he said.

Pray: for God's justice for His people in a region of social and infrastructure corruption and religious intolerance. (Am. 5:4)

More: <http://mychristianblood.blogspot.com/archive/2008/06/08/algeria-four-condemned-to-prison-for-becoming-christian.html#more>

■ **New Mexico: Largest faith-based homeless shelter seeks support**

The only homeless shelter of its kind in New Mexico will celebrate its 22nd anniversary. But more than a celebration, Joy Junction Homeless Shelter's 22nd Anniversary Banquet is a rally for support amid increasing demand and decreasing supplies. 'We have seen tremendous growth in our residents, especially those coming out of various addictions to drugs and alcohol,' the founder said. The shelter, with the Lord's help, assists residents in developing the godly character that will serve to turn their lives around. With no federal, state or city funding they're open twenty-four/seven through the generosity of community-minded individuals. Last year they helped thousands of women, men and children back on their feet and into a home of their own, after arriving emotionally broken and with no place to go. With a troubled economy and being asked to care for an ever-increasing number of homeless, staff say the upcoming event is one of the most important of the year.

Pray: for God in his mercy to raise the workers and tithing to support this and the many more similar projects that will be needed in view of the future economic emergency. (Ps. 68:5,6)

More: <http://www.christianpost.com/article/20081001/n-m-s-largest-faith-based-homeless-shelter-seeks-support-amid-difficult-times.htm>

■ **Abidjan; Toxic oil sludge**

A trial is under way in Abidjan of local officials accused of conniving in the dumping of toxic oil sludge in August 2006 and causing over a dozen deaths, and illnesses to tens of thousands. Victims of the Abidjan dumping scandal, environmentalists and lawyers say the real culprits have slipped away. The president of the Union of Abidjan and Surrounding Areas' Victims of Toxic Waste, Ouattara Aboubacar, told the United Nations Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) the trial of 12 Abidjan port and customs officials was missing the big players: 'This trial sanctions impunity. We are sending underlings to trial without trying their silent partner, [Netherlands-based oil trader] Trafigura. For us, this trial has the bitter taste of

impunity.'Martyn Day of the UK-based Leigh, Day & Company law firm told IRIN his firm would be representing up to 30,000 alleged victims of dumping in a civil case against Trafigura, set to start in London in October 2009.

Pray: against unjustifiable greed in commerce and industry and the business-related rape of communities in Africa. (Is. 2:12-16)

More: <http://allafrica.com/stories/200810010423.html>

■ **Canada: Anglican parish joins breakaway group**

Parishioners at an Anglican church in Canada voted unanimously on Sunday to join a conservative network and essentially leave a denomination they feel is abandoning traditional Anglicanism. By a 109 to 0 vote, St Aidan's in Windsor Ontario has realigned with the Anglican Network in Canada (ANiC) – a breakaway body of 19 parishes that is under the jurisdiction of the conservative South American Anglican Province of the Southern Cone, one of 38 Provinces that make up the global Anglican Communion. 'We are delighted to welcome the people of St Aidan's into a faithfully Anglican and unabashedly Christian organisation,' said the Venerable Charlie Masters, Executive Archdeacon of the ANiC. 'They join a growing movement of North American Anglicans seeking to remain in full communion with the global Anglican Church. The people of St Aidan's acted because they are determined to remain biblically faithful, true to historic Christian orthodoxy and long-standing Anglican teaching,' according to a released statement.

Pray: for one, holy, catholic and apostolic church. (Rev. 22:18-end)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/canada.anglican.parish.joins.breakaway.group/21542.htm>

PRAISE REPORTS

■ **CARE welcomes trafficking announcement**

Social Policy Charity CARE welcomes Thursday's announcement from the Home Secretary, Jacqui Smith, that the Government intends to introduce a law making it illegal to purchase sex from a victim of trafficking. CARE responded 'At the moment it is perfectly legal to purchase sex from anyone, including a victim of trafficking, so long as this isn't in an 'on-street context' where punters will be caught by kerb crawling provisions. This is worrying given that research demonstrates that demand for paid sex in Britain is growing rapidly and trafficked women are increasingly being used to feed this demand. The new legislation announced today addresses shortcomings with respect to the victims of trafficking.' The Home Secretary said, 'We're on track to ratify the human trafficking convention by the end of the year, and next month we will start work to outlaw paying for sex with someone forced into prostitution at another's will, or controlled for another's gain.'

Praise: God for this legislation and continue to pray for the demand for paid sex to decrease on our streets. (Ex.20:2)

More: http://www.care.org.uk/Articles/126507/CARE/Stay_Informed/Public_Affairs_News/CARE_Welcomes_Trafficking.aspx

■ **£2 million disaster relief gift**

The Salvation Army received a £250,000 donation from Shell Oil Company and Motiva Enterprises LLC on Monday to be used towards immediate and long-term disaster relief in the aftermath of Hurricanes Gustav and Ike. It is part of a larger £2 million donation split between The Salvation Army, the American Red Cross, the Gulf Coast Relief Fund and other community organisations. Hurricane Ike in particular led to the Salvation Army's largest disaster response operation since Hurricane Katrina.

Praise: God for this generosity and pray that more rich multinational businesses would give generously and freely out of the abundance of their wealth. (1Ch. 29:9,&12)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/salvation.army.gets.250000.for.hurricane.relief/21553.htm>

PRAYER FORUM OF BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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Prayer Alert is a partnership project of the Prayer Forum of the British Isles and Ireland
C/O World Prayer Centre, Cornerstone House, 5 Ethel Street, Birmingham, B2 4BG, England