



PRAYER ALERT...



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BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ **FRIDAY FOCUS: 10th October – Hope for dysfunctional families. Jeremiah 29:11; 1 John 4:7-10)**

The effect our family has upon us is fundamental to our own development. In a dysfunctional family, negative roles or defence mechanisms can be passed onto children.

Confess: that as a nation, we have allowed the breakdown of the traditional Christian family.

Pray: for God to strengthen trust, love, and honesty in my extended family; for my church to become a place where each person is valued and open healthy relationships will thrive.

Consider: praying for a dysfunctional family I know to receive God's healing in their relationships.

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

■ **GET FAIR campaigners meet Prime Minister**

Campaigners from the Campaign to End Child Poverty, part of the GET FAIR coalition, have met the Prime Minister at 10 Downing Street. They were invited for talks with Gordon Brown on the morning that 10,000 demonstrators demanded he 'Keep The Promise' to halve child poverty by 2010 and end it by 2020. Speaking in 10 Downing Street following the meeting, Mr Brown described the fight against child poverty as 'one of the great causes of this generation.' He promised that 'we will in law make it the duty of Government by 2020 to eradicate child poverty in this country. While it is a long haul, we want to show step by step how we can achieve that goal.' The PM said that everyone campaigning for the cause believes that every child is special, precious and unique and concluded: 'Every child deserves the support of this generation.'

Pray: for government and churches to work together to eradicate child poverty and the iniquities it brings.(Lam.2:18-19)

More: <http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/news/ecpmeetprimeminister>

■ **LightLive reaching over 100,000 children**

Since Scripture Union's launch of LightLive four months ago, 6,000 children and youth church groups have been set up through the website with a total membership of 110,000 children. LightLive is Scripture Union's free ministry which allows churches and other Christian organisations working with young people to set up and manage their groups and learning programmes online. With access through the LightLive website to free downloadable Bible-based resources, leaders can use the Scripture Union Light syllabus or customise their own. Scripture Union Internet Manager, Ian Gooding, says: 'Most churches have registered one or two groups of between six and 20 members, although there are a significant number of churches with as many as 10 groups and 35 leaders. The rate of growth in September was about 300 groups a week joining

LightLive and, from these new groups, the total number of children reached increased by approximately 3,000 each week.'

Pray: with thanksgiving for this tremendous resource and its rapid growth among children and youth groups! (Ps.119:105)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/lightlive.reaching.over.100000.children/21577.htm>

■ Bid to ban smacking fails in Commons

A backbench attempt to ban smacking in England and Wales has failed to secure a vote in the House of Commons. A last minute amendment to change the law was tabled just two days before the Children and Young Persons Bill was due to be considered by MPs on October 8th. However, there was limited time for debate on the Bill and the amendment was not reached. Government research has found that 70 per cent of parents oppose an outright ban. Children's Secretary Ed Balls recently said the Government would not support the move. He also commented that it would be difficult to police. Mike Judge of The Christian Institute said: 'Many loving parents will be relieved that this misguided attempt to interfere with the way they bring up their children has failed. Parents who would never dream of being violent towards their children use smacking as one of a range of techniques to discipline them. They shouldn't be criminalised for doing so.'

Pray: that all children in England and Wales might experience wise and loving parenting, but especially those in families with difficulties. (Ps.27:10-11)

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/20081008/bid-to-ban-smacking-fails-in-the-commons/>

■ New Down's test could mean more abortions

Pro-life groups are concerned that a new method of testing for Down's syndrome could lead to more abortions. The new test involves carrying out a blood test on the mother. It's much safer than the current method, of inserting a needle into the womb to withdraw some of the amniotic fluid. This carries a risk of causing the miscarriage of healthy babies. However, there are concerns that more parents will choose to test for Down's syndrome if the new test becomes available, potentially leading to more abortions. The parents of Grace, a little girl with Down's syndrome, told BBC interviewers that the way in which parents were told of a positive diagnosis would be crucial to their decision-making. The Chief Executive of the Down's Syndrome Association also emphasised that parents should be given accurate information about the condition, adding: 'We don't consider Down's syndrome a reason for termination.' Abortion is legal up until birth in the case of foetal handicap. An estimated 3,000 babies are aborted each year because of abnormalities as minor as a cleft palate.

Pray: for the protection of all unborn children, remembering to intercede for God's over-ruling in the the final stages of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill (October 22nd). (Ps.139:13-16)

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/20081008/new-downs-test-could-mean-more-abortions/>

■ Evangelical Alliance welcomes ruling in favour of Christian registrar

The Evangelical Alliance has hailed an employment tribunal's ruling in favour of a Christian registrar 'a triumph for the place of conscience in public duties'. The tribunal ruled unanimously on October 8th that Islington council had discriminated against Lillian Ladele after she refused to perform same-sex civil partnerships because of her Christian faith. Dr Don Horrocks, Head of Public Affairs at the Evangelical Alliance said, 'This is an important landmark judgement because it conclusively confirms that where there are competing rights a balance has to be struck which treats the respective rights equally. This decision underlines that, freedom of religious conscience must be protected by law in the same way as any other human right and that employers must take a person's religion and belief fully into account when considering policy and action.' Dr Horrocks urged other local authorities to guarantee the same protection to employees of different faiths in light of this ruling. 'The demands of conscience and civil duties can and must co-exist,' he said.

Pray: praising God for this landmark breakthrough in employment practice. (Mk.12:17)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/evangelical.alliance.welcomes.ruling.in.favour.of.christian.registrar/20394.htm>

EUROPE

■ Ukraine: Snap election called

President Viktor Yushchenko of Ukraine has dissolved parliament weeks after the collapse of the country's ruling pro-Western coalition and announced Ukraine's third general election in less than three years. He accused Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko of wrecking the government through her 'thirst for power'. 'I am convinced, deeply convinced that the democratic coalition was ruined by one thing alone - human ambition,' President Yushchenko said in his five-minute speech. 'The ambition of one person. Thirst for power, different values, and personal interests taking precedence over national interests.' In an apparent reference to Russian influence, Mr Yushchenko also talked of 'external threats'. 'In a time of potential external threats, a non-Ukrainian scenario was launched - spineless and, in fact, hostile,' he said. The polls will be held on 7 December.

Pray: for God to hold this country in the palm of his hand and prevent selfish ambition from discolouring politics. (Php.2:3)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/7660058.stm>

■ Europe: Prayer for Europe Day

The Greater Europe Mission (GEM) is hosting a day of prayer for Europe on October 23. It is hoped that 10,000 intercessors will participate. There are nearly a billion people in Europe, one to two percent of that number are evangelical followers of Jesus. Many Muslims have moved into European countries. 'There are spiritual strongholds in Europe, and it's

going to take the power of prayer to address those, says GEM. On October 23rd participants will visit GEM's Website and follow the links to pray for whichever country they choose to click on. This pledge to pray will then be added to a running tally throughout the day, which will hopefully by midnight show at least 10,000 prayers participating. In order to recruit for the October 23 prayer, GEM suggests we be creative. Prayer chains and Facebook groups have already been established, and there are certainly more venues to come.

Pray: that thousands and thousands of people will intercede on that day and break the spiritual blindness over Europe. (Dan.4:34,)

More: www.gemission.org

WORLDWIDE

■ Orissa: Missionaries report carnage

We never imagined we would see this kind of carnage. A militant Hindu priest and 4 of his attendants were gunned down by unknown assailants in Central Orissa last weekend. Immediately the Christians were blamed. The cry rose up, 'Kill the Christians!' And the horror began for us. In the past 4 days we have first hand witness to hundreds of churches being blown up or burned down and dozens of Christians slaughtered for no other reason than they bear the name of Christ. All our centres are under lock down with everyone huddled inside and police outside. The fanatics are waiting for a chance to kill. In a nearby Catholic orphanage the mob allowed the kids to leave and locked up a Priest and a computer teacher in the house then burned them to death. Many believers have been killed and hacked into pieces and left on the road, even women and children. A centre was given 3 minutes notice to vacate with no time to grab personal belongings.

Pray: for God's hand to quell this storm, and for the world's media to start reporting what they see happening. (Pr. 30:5)

More: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/holy-war-strikes-india-955502.html>

■ USA: Gains for Obama among people of faith

A new survey on faith in American politics shows Democratic nominee Barack Obama making inroads among some believers and moving ahead of Republican John McCain among Roman Catholics, largely because of young Catholics' support. In the biggest shift over the past four years, Senator Obama now wins the backing of 60 percent of voters who attend religious services once or twice a month, a jump from the 49 percent the Democratic nominee won in 2004. Senator McCain holds the advantage only among the highly religious who attend once or more a week. More Americans say Obama is more friendly to religion than is McCain. Young adults support government involvement most in regard to helping the poor and the environment. But Catholics and Evangelicals also favour a government role in 'protecting morality.'

Pray: that as the opinions are expressed, God's still small voice will be heard in the hearts of Christians as they take part in the election of the next president of America. (Job19:25)

More: <http://features.csmonitor.com/politics/2008/10/08/gains-for-obama-among-people-of-faith/>

■ Pakistan: Catholic girls' school latest casualty of violence

Christian Solidarity Worldwide reports a Convent Girls' School run by Sri Lankan Apostolic Carmelite Sisters in Sangota Swat was bombed and destroyed by local Taliban. No one was killed because the school was vacated due to threats. In the past two years more than 150 girls' schools have been attacked in the North-West Frontier Province by Pakistani Taliban. CSW said, 'Bomb threats are occurring regularly in Pakistan's major cities including Islamabad and Lahore. Last night, three bombs were detonated among fruit juice shops in Lahore. Sources in Pakistan have described the general situation as verging on becoming a war zone.' Retired Group Captain Chaudhry, Executive Secretary of the All Pakistan Minorities Alliance said, 'These are absolutely senseless attacks aimed simply at spreading fear and terror into the hearts and minds of people. The victims are ordinary people, many from poor backgrounds. We appeal to the international community for support for the people of Pakistan at this time.'

Pray: for the victims of terrorism, and for the new Government of Pakistan to bring stability to the country. (Ps.40:11)

More: <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/2008/s08100058.htm>

■ Venezuela: Rain forest tribe's neglect caused by religion and politics

Three years after President Hugo Chávez expelled American missionaries from the Amazon for proselytising remote tribes as a cover for espionage, resentment grows over what some tribal leaders say was official negligence leading to the death of dozens of indigenous children and adults. Some leaders of one of South America's largest forest-dwelling tribes report 50 people in their communities dying since the expulsion of the missionaries causing shortages of medicine, fuel, and unreliable transportation out of the jungle to medical facilities. The government disputes the claims pointing to more spending on social welfare programmes, but the spending is part of a broader plan to assert greater military and social control over expanses of rain forest that are viewed as essential for Venezuela's sovereignty. There is growing concern about indigenous health care after a scandal over a tepid official response to a mystery disease killing 38 Warao Indians in the country's northeast.

Pray: that the government of Venezuela will put the value of 26,000 tribal people above the value of profit and status. (Job 5:20-22)

More: http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/07/world/americas/07venez.html?_r=1&oref=slogin

■ Prayer for South Africa

A prayer journey around South Africa starts 9 October (Day of Atonement) until 24th October (Feast of Tabernacles). Christians will unite before God at the same time to pray for the different leaders to govern and guide by Christian principalities. In accordance with 2 Chronicles 7:14, they will pray that God will heal and restore South Africa. Also an invitation has gone out to all Christian leaders (church, business, government and youth) to a Solemn Assembly on the 15th of October 2008 in Pretoria to pray for the nation. In addition, Ecumenical News reports Anti-apartheid church leader Alan Boesak is on the verge of giving up his church positions and returning to a leadership role in politics. Boesak, a leader of the anti-apartheid movement in the 1980s, was sidelined by his organization, the now-ruling African National Congress, in the 1990s after becoming embroiled in an extra marital affair and a corruption scandal. He served one year in jail after being convicted of fraud.

Pray: for God to meet with every ethnic group in power, and for His Spirit to direct and anoint their intercessions and heal the land. (Joel 2:18)

More: <http://www.eni.ch/news/item.php?id=2350>

■ Philippines: Christians fear reprisals

Militant Islamists in the Philippine island of Mindanao have stepped up their attacks on majority-Christian villages following the failure of a peace agreement that would have enlarged an existing Muslim autonomous region there. With Muslim commanders of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in the southern Philippines yesterday saying ongoing support from the international community was necessary to prevent full-scale war breaking out in Mindanao, both Muslim and Christian residents in the disputed territories were fearful of what the future might hold. 'The problem is that many people living in these areas don't want to be part of a Muslim autonomous region,' an anonymous source in Mindanao told Compass. 'The closer you get to these zones, the more nervous people are.' A Christian family from the area said many people were afraid to sleep at night because they kept hearing reports that they would be attacked at midnight.

Pray: that this Islamic attempt to control the region will be broken by God's Power. (Psalm 2:10-12)

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

PRAISE REPORTS

■ China: Good news for China and the world

Christians may now outnumber Communists in China, according to a report in The Economist (October 2, 2008). Hallelujah! Officially the government says there are approximately 21 million Christians in China. Unofficial figures such as one given by the Centre for the Study of Global Christianity in Massachusetts put the number at about 70 million. Others say the number is much higher. According to China Aid Association the director of the government body which supervises all religions in China said privately that the figure was as much as 130 million in early 2008. If accurate there may be more active Christians in China than in any other country in the world. This has Communist leaders concerned because current party membership is 71 million. Most Christians worship in illegal underground house churches as opposed to highly restricted government sanctioned services.

Praise: you Lord for building your church, and banishing Satan's ploys against her. (Mt.16:18)

More: <http://www.christianfreedom.org/>

■ Iran: Christians held on apostasy charges released

Iranian officials have released two Christian converts who were being held in prison on apostasy charges, one week after the Iranian Government voted overwhelmingly in favour of new legislation to introduce the death penalty for anyone who leaves the Muslim faith. Mahmoud Mohammed Matin-Azad, 53, and Arash Ahmad-Ali Basirat, 40, were arrested in May and charged with apostasy following their conversion to Christianity from Islam. Persecution watchdog Release International, gave a cautious welcome to news of their freedom. 'We're delighted Iran has dropped its charges against these men but existence is about to become even tougher for other Iranians seeking freedom of faith.' Their release follows a statement from the EU last week, in which it urged the Iranian Government to reconsider the debate on the draft bill on apostasy and pressed for the release of people imprisoned because of their religious affiliation. (See PA 4008)

Praise: and thank You Lord for answering our prayers, now Lord we ask you to release many more Iranians into your freedom. (Ps.24:7)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/iran.releases.two.christians.held.on.apostasy.charges/21571.htm>

PRAYER FORUM OF BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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