



PRAYER ALERT...



An initiative of the Prayer Forum of the British Isles & Ireland
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Website

Contact Us

Donations

Friday 30th October

■ British Isles & Ireland

- [FRIDAY FOCUS: 31st October - Hope for those in debt - Proverbs 31:9; Isaiah 58:10](#)
- [BBC prank calls row goes to Trust](#)
- [Christian counsellor urges compulsory purchase of 'mega-mosque' site](#)
- [Church condemns killing of aid worker as 'offence against God'](#)
- [National Day of Prayer for the Armed Forces](#)
- [Christians to pray in London for religious freedom in Nigeria](#)

■ Europe

- [Moscow: Two Jesuit priests murdered](#)
- [Europe: Church bodies speak out on treatment of detained migrants](#)

■ Worldwide

- [Congo: Exodus](#)
- [Nigeria: Hundreds innocent on death row](#)
- [Afghanistan: One Aid agency's future in country](#)
- [China: Intensified persecution since Olympics](#)
- [Israel: Fragile truce](#)
- [India: Struggle with ethnic and religious tolerance](#)

■ Praise Reports

- [South Africa: Prayer journey](#)
- [World Evangelical Alliance celebrates](#)

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ **FRIDAY FOCUS: 31st October - Hope for those in debt - Proverbs 31:9; Isaiah 58:10**

Personal debt in the UK now stands at £1.4 trillion and is a primary contributor to poverty, family breakdown and suicide. **Give thanks:** that no-one is beyond the love of God, regardless of how bad their financial situation is.

Pray: for those trapped in debt, that they would receive the right help; that they would encounter the life-changing love of God; for resources for organisations like Christians Against Poverty (CAP) giving hope to the poor; for many to get involved with CAP Sunday (2nd Nov).

Consider: supporting an organisation that works with those in debt.

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

■ **BBC prank calls row goes to Trust**

The BBC's director general is meeting the corporation's governing body to discuss lewd phone calls made on comic Russell Brand's Radio 2 show. Mark Thompson will brief the BBC Trust on a preliminary inquiry into how the calls made with Jonathan Ross to actor Andrew Sachs came to be broadcast. Brand has resigned from Radio 2 and Ross has been suspended. The pair made obscene comments about Sachs' 23-year-old granddaughter Georgina Baillie during phone calls. At the meeting on Thursday, the BBC's director of audio and music, Tim Davie, is due to present a preliminary report on the calls to the trust, which represents the interests of licence fee payers.

Pray: for our broadcasting media that this incident would raise awareness of falling standards and bring about change. (Jer.7:3)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/7699054.stm>

■ **Christian counsellor urges compulsory purchase of 'mega-mosque' site**

The leader of the Christian Peoples Alliance group on Newham Council called on Monday for the compulsory purchase of land being used in east London by a controversial Islamic sect without planning permission. Tablighi Jamaat has been illegally running the Abbey Mills mosque on the land, near to the site of the London Olympic village, for the past two years. The group, which is suspected of connections to militant Muslims, plans to use the site to build a 70,000-capacity mosque. Cllr Craig called on the Mayor of Newham, Sir Robin Wales, to initiate the process required for compulsory purchase of the site for community use and to 'rescue it from its current irresponsible management'. He pointed to growing opposition not only from Christians but from moderate Muslims who have spoken publically against the mosque. 'We cannot go on like this,' said Alan Craig. 'The absolute refusal of Tablighi Jamaat to regularise their illegal position over the past two years means that the land should now be used for other purposes.'

Pray: that this proposed significant Islamic landmark will not succeed and cast a shadow over the Olympics. (Ps.63:7)
More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/christian.counsellor.urges.compulsory.purchase.of.megamosque.site/21755.htm>

■ Church condemns killing of aid worker as 'offence against God'

The United Reformed Church (URC) in Great Britain has condemned as 'an offence against God' the assassination of Gayle Williams, a 34-year-old Christian aid worker in Kabul, and the chilling comments of those who said they killed her. The Rev. John Marsh, moderator of the general assembly of the URC, said, 'It is deeply sad and sickening that Gayle Williams has been deliberately targeted as a Christian, and gunned down in the streets of Kabul. Williams worked with disabled children for Serve Afghanistan. On 20 October, two men on a motorcycle gunned her down as she walked to work in the Afghan capital. The URC's Marsh said, 'We will also pray for the families and individuals in Kabul, who delighted in and depended upon her skills, and the people who actually killed her and those who support them. We pray with all Christians, Muslims and people of faith for whom this is an offence against God and a violation of all that their spiritual traditions mean.'

Pray: that almighty God will work through His people to bring transformation to this nation. (Ps.147:14)

More: <http://www.eni.ch/featured/article.php?id=2388>

■ National Day of Prayer for the Armed Forces

Many of our sailors, soldiers and airmen are fighting in conflicts far away from home. The British Armed Forces have seen the most intense fighting in decades during the last 2 years in Afghanistan, but although it is Iraq and Afghanistan that get the most news coverage, servicemen and women are currently stationed across the world. There can be few people in the country who are unaware of the pressures that the Armed Forces are under. Many are under considerable stress closer to hand and many families are facing loss and uncertainty. In past times of conflict, the nation was called upon to pray for her sailors, soldiers and airmen and we now ask you to do the same. They all need our support. Please pray for our armed forces on Thursday 6 November, the National Day of Prayer for the Armed Forces.

Pray: that God would reach out to bless, protect and guide all those in the forces and their loved ones. (Ps.145:13)

More: <http://www.pray4ourforces.org.uk>

■ Christians to pray in London for religious freedom in Nigeria

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) will be holding its annual Day of Prayer for Nigeria in London on Saturday 1 November. This year the event will highlight the brutal murder of a Christian school teacher last year by students and local people in Gombe State after being falsely accused of desecrating a copy of the Quran while invigilating an exam. Christiana Oluwatoyin Oluwasesin was stoned, stripped, beaten and stabbed to death before her body was burnt by the angry mob on 21 March, 2007. Her husband, Michael Oluwafemi Oluwasesin will be speaking about his experiences at CSW's prayer event. He said: 'I am truly elated to be given the opportunity to tell the world my story, and pray that it will not only awaken people to the situation northern Nigeria continues to face, but also to take action to assist those who continue to undergo persecution and hardship.' At least 60,000 people, mostly non-Muslim, have died in religious violence in northern and central Nigeria since 1999. (See also item under Worldwide.)

Pray: for the people of Nigeria to experience an outpouring of the Holy Spirit that would bring all peoples to a knowledge of Jesus Christ. (1Ti.2:3-5)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/christians.to.pray.for.religious.freedom.in.nigeria/21761.htm>

EUROPE

■ Moscow: Two Jesuit priests murdered

Two Jesuit priests were murdered brutally in Moscow after being attacked with blunt objects. Jesuit Fathers Otto Messmer 47, and Victor Betancourt 42, were found dead late Oct. 28 in their Moscow apartment. The Russian bishops' conference denounced 'those who committed this terrible crime' and prayed Russian authorities would be able to find the criminals. 'The assassin is in a state of serious horrible sin and whoever committed the crime must undergo just punishment,' the conference said in an Oct. 29 statement sent to Vatican Radio. It said that it hoped once the perpetrators were found the Russian courts and society would pronounce 'an objective juridical and moral judgment' for the crimes committed. In a note distributed to journalists at the Vatican press hall, head of Vatican Radio Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi said a police investigation was under way.

Pray: for God's peace and comfort for all those who knew and worked with the priests at Moscow's Church of St. Louis de France. (Ps.9:9)

More: <http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/0805499.htm>

■ Europe: Church bodies speak out on treatment of detained migrants

Thousands of migrants are 'unjustly detained in Europe for not having the right documents', say two European church bodies. In a joint statement on Monday, the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) and the central committee of the Conference of European Churches (CEC) appealed to Christians across Europe to pray for detained migrants and support the work of prison chaplains who face these situations of detainees daily with hardly any possibility to change conditions and offer perspectives,' said the statement. They also say applicants have to wait for years with the result that hundreds of them begin to put down roots, despite their future remaining insecure. Those who have been in

Austria for more than five years should have the right to stay on legally. They added, 'We ask for humane and reasonable policies, which respect the rule of law and human rights, and promote integration instead of preventing it.'

Pray: that European countries begin to honour their obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights and abolish potentially illegal provisions. (Pr.21:2,3)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/church.bodies.speak.out.on.treatment.of.detained.migrants/21651.htm>

WORLDWIDE

■ Congo: Exodus

It is chaos across much of eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, since the rebels launched a new offensive at the weekend. (See last weeks Prayer Alert) The UN peacekeeping mission is under attack from locals believing they are not being protected. Foreign aid workers trying to evacuate from hotspots are being stopped. Others are struggling under the extra demands of bringing more supplies and equipment into this area and at the same time being restricted because of the security. Even before the latest violence eastern Congo was in the grip of a major humanitarian disaster with 850,000 internal refugees in North Kivu. The man who has lit the fuse is renegade Tutsi general Laurent Nkunda who claims the Congolese government has not protected his minority tribe from a Rwandan Hutu militia that escaped to Congo after the 1994 genocide, and so it is up to him. In theory the battle between the government and Mr Nkunda should be a one-sided affair. The Congolese army has an estimated 20,000 troops compared to a rebel force of 6,000. Yet witnesses report Congolese government soldiers fleeing the battle zone.

Pray: for God's provision for the thousands of frightened, homeless, hungry refugees of this conflict. (Ps.108:12,13)

More: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/congo-the-new-exodus-976922.html>

■ Nigeria: Hundreds innocent on death row

'Prisoners on death row are held in cells where they can witness executions. After a prisoner has been hanged, other death row prisoners are forced to clean the gallows. Hundreds of those awaiting execution on Nigeria's death rows did not have a fair trial and so may be innocent', said Amnesty International in its latest report that exposed a catalogue of failings in the country's criminal justice system. The report says it is riddled with corruption, negligence and a nearly criminal lack of resources; and calls on the government of Nigeria to establish an immediate moratorium on executions in light of its findings. 'It is truly horrifying to think of how many innocent people have been executed and may still be executed. The judicial system is riddled with flaws that can have devastating consequences. For those accused of capital crimes, the effects are obviously deadly and irreversible.'

Pray: for an end to torture for confessions, an end to death sentences for children, an end to the negligence causing files to be lost and an end to trials taking more than 10 years to conclude. (Ps.26)

More: http://www.amnesty.org.uk/news_details.asp?NewsID=17910

■ Afghanistan: One Aid agency's future in country

Aid agencies are reviewing the viability of their presence in Afghanistan following the murder of Christian aid worker Gayle Williams, who was killed in Kabul last week in a drive-by shooting. The attack in the heart of Kabul has added to the sense of insecurity already felt by in-country foreign aid workers due to the recent escalation of violence by insurgent groups. The Taliban is gradually encroaching control of the regions outside of the cities and the roads in between. In light of recent events, Serve Afghanistan believes that aid agencies will have to reconsider their presence in the country. A recently issued U.N. report stated that there were more than 120 attacks targeting aid workers in the first seven months of this year alone. These attacks saw 92 abducted and 30 killed.

Pray: for God's canopy of protection over all the NGO's, and for adequate security measures to be put into action for such a time as this. (Ps.25:21)

More: <http://www.compassdirect.org/en/display.php?page=breaking&lang=en&length=long&id=element=5663>

■ China: Intensified persecution since Olympics

Since the end of the Olympic Games, ChinaAid has received reports of intensified religious persecution from across China. In Beijing, Pastor 'Bike' Zhang Mingxuan and his family members have been evicted from their home, beaten and arrested. In Heilongjiang province, one city called Yichuan recently banned all of the house churches. In Yunnan province, some house church members were attacked right after the Olympics. In Shandong province, Pastor Zhang Zhongxin was sentenced to two years of re-education through labour, and after the Olympics his appeal was denied. Pastor Zhang's lawyer, Li Fangping, was refused permission to meet with him because authorities claim Pastor Zhang could endanger state security. Twenty-nine house church leaders have been serving time in a labour camp and prisons in Henan province since July 9, 2007. They are accused of being 'evil cult' members.

Pray: that our brothers and sisters in China would be strengthened and become even more vigorous in their spiritual and physical growth. (Ac.16:4-6)

More: <http://chinaaid.org/2008/10/29/persecution-intensifies-after-olympics/>

■ Israel: Fragile truce

Palestinian terrorists on Thursday morning violated the fragile truce with Israel once more, firing a Kassam rocket from the Gaza Strip at the western Negev town of Sderot. Hizbullah Palestine, a little-known group, claimed responsibility. It first emerged last week when it claimed responsibility for an Oct. 21 rocket attack. Following the attack, Defence Minister Ehud Barak ordered the closure of crossings for the transferral of goods between Israel and Gaza. Kerem Shalom crossing, the

Nahal Oz fuel terminal and the Karni goods crossing will be temporarily shut down. Police were yet to locate the rocket's exact point of impact north of Sderot. Last week, Palestinians fired a Kassam that landed outside Kibbutz Gvaram. Israel closed border crossings to Gaza in response to the attack. Since the inception of the truce agreement between Israel and the Hamas government in June, Palestinians have fired over 20 rockets and 20 mortars at western Negev communities.

Praise: continually for God's will to overshadow all the enemy's plans for this country. (Jer.33:16)

More: <http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1225199603747&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull>

■ India: Struggle with ethnic and religious tolerance

With national elections only months away, India is reeling from a rash of spiteful religious and ethnic clashes, prompting many to ask why their vibrant, pluralistic democracy tends to encourage, rather than avert, the cruelty of neighbour against neighbour. A political psychologist and social critic said that in spite of its lively and largely transparent elections, some of the other basic pillars of democracy, including tolerance and respect for the rule of law, are fragile at best. The latest dispute was in Mumbai last week, when a nativist party claiming to represent Marathas, the dominant ethnic group in the state, pounced on Indians who had come from elsewhere to apply for jobs at Indian Railways. Meanwhile violence between Hindus and Muslims erupted in Maharashtra, spreading south to Andhra Pradesh. Indian cities remained on edge after a spate of terrorist attacks attributed largely to Islamic militants. Other factors include the longstanding Kashmir insurgency in the north and Maoist guerrillas across central India.

Praise: for an end to the atmosphere of hatred and violence being generated, and for a peaceful season leading up to the national elections. (Pr.19:11)

More: <http://www.ihf.com/articles/2008/10/29/asia/india.php>

PRAISE REPORTS

■ South Africa: Prayer journey

South Africa consists of about 650 cities and towns. In at least 415 of these cities and towns there is at least one congregation that has made an effort to mobilise people to establish a 24-7 prayer watch. In PA 4108 we highlighted a SA Prayer Walk and can now report, 'Safe back home after almost 6,000 km around South Africa, praying for the Political leaders, Church leaders and the House leaders (fathers, Priests of the house). Thank you so much for all the support, (prayers, scripture, encouragement, food, bed, support, hearing ears, books, DVD's, cd's, finances and biltong). After speaking to several groups and churches on the route, the prayer action for the leaders will be taken up by different churches, intercession groups, prayer groups and cell groups and prayers for the leaders of our country will be continued on a more concentrated basis and they promised to inform other groups and churches in their areas, to also participate.' For more information at Jericho Walls International Prayer Network, in SA. Click the More button below.

Praise: God for all those wonderful times when we walk in his presence with our brothers and sisters, and know we are in his will. (Ps.37:4)

More: http://www.jwipn.com/prayer_initiatives.asp

■ World Evangelical Alliance celebrates

The World Evangelical Alliance has excelled in the last six years in presenting the world with a credible and faithful witness of the Gospel, says its international director at the WEA's General Assembly in Thailand. He added that the challenges for evangelicals in the world are great, pointing to radical secularism, postmodernism, and declining Christianity. At the same time, there is growing interest in spirituality, climate change, HIV and AIDS, the global financial crisis, trafficking and migration. Opportunities are also great, he insisted, noting the rapid spread of Christianity in the Global South. 'We see this tremendous growth and this seismic shift in the Church around the world and we are excited to witness what God is doing as He raises up women and men around the world in so many different places,' he said.

Praise: God for the difference that evangelical Christians make in our world, and pray that the body will become stronger as borders are enlarged. (Is.54:1-3)

More: <http://www.christianpost.com/article/20081029/world-evangelical-alliance-celebrates-tremendous-growth-achievements.htm>

PRAYER FORUM OF BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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