



PRAYER ALERT...

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BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ **FRIDAY FOCUS: 7th November - Hope for the Armed Forces - 2 Kings 6:8-18; Colossians 4:12**

On Sunday 9th November, we remember those who gave their lives in wars. Today the Armed Forces are under considerable pressure.

Give thanks: for the commitment and sacrifice of our service personnel.

Pray: for their safety and protection; for those injured and the medical staff who treat them; for service families, especially those coping with serious injuries or bereavement; for chaplains offering hope in tough situations.

Consider: praying regularly for our Armed Forces, 6th Nov was the Day of Prayer for the Armed Forces www.pray4ourforces.org.uk.

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

■ **UK aid combats radical schooling**

Millions of pounds of UK aid are being used to steer students in Pakistan away from radical religious schools and into mainstream education. British aid to Pakistan has doubled to a record £480m over the next three years as part of the world's Millennium Development Goals to reduce poverty. Some £250m of that is being used to boost mainstream education, including at religious schools, or madrassas. A representative for the madrassas said the cash would help modernise teaching. Although the UK's Pakistan Country Assistance Plan is separate from the two countries' counter-terrorism co-operation, the indirect effect is to steer students away from certain madrassas where they are at risk of being recruited by violent extremists. The chairman of Pakistan's Board of Madrassas, Wakil Khan, said British aid money was needed to pay up to 80,000 teachers working to a contemporary syllabus, as part of an ongoing programme to reform the country's estimated 15,000 madrassas.

Pray: that the monies provided will have the desired effect in reducing the radical element and reforming the education system. (Pr.14:8)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7709359.stm>

■ **Police 'must trust public more'**

Police have a 'weird' attitude to communicating with the public and must learn to trust them more, senior Home Office adviser Louise Casey has said. Officers 'dashed on to Crimewatch' to appeal for witnesses but when it came to updating people on the outcome of cases it was 'radio silence,' she said. Ms Casey, the government's ex 'respect czar', has been put in charge of building confidence in the police. In her first speech in the new role, she told an audience of senior police officers and council leaders, including several chief constables, they had to have a 'huge sense of urgency' about 'putting the public first'. According to a recent government survey just 33% of the public had confidence in the criminal justice

system. Most people believed criminals were allowed to 'get away with it' and the police were more concerned with the rights of perpetrators than victims, Ms Casey told the Ipsos Mori event.

Pray: for the relationship between the police and public that they would learn to respect the truth in each other. (Lk.16:10)

More: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/7711978.stm

■ In the lap of the council

In large parts of Britain it's as easy to open a lap dancing club as it is a coffee shop. But now campaigners are directing their fury at Parliament and demanding a change in the law. With its terraces of imposing, white stuccoed Georgian houses, the inner London enclave of West Kensington has a grandeur not typical of most residential areas. But the expressions of outrage being voiced by this group of denizens are no different to those resounding in town halls across the country. 'My main concern is what it's going to do to the area,' says one. 'How can they stop drug users and prostitutes from coming here?' asks another. 'Of course the industry's linked to human trafficking,' declares a further voice. While anxious to stress they are not prudes, this group believes that lap dancing is not appropriate. They are infuriated by the idea of nude and semi-naked women gyrating for paying clients just a short distance from a library and two schools.

Pray: that parliament will recognise and amend existing weaknesses in the licensing laws in this area. (Pr.11:6)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7690782.stm>

■ Teens who watch Sex in the City more likely to get pregnant

Teenagers who watch Sex in the City, Friends and other TV shows featuring sex scenes and discussions of sex are far more likely to get pregnant or get someone else pregnant than their peers, a new study has found. The study, which tracked more than 700 sexually active teenagers aged between 12 and 17 for three years, discovered that those who viewed the most sexual content were almost twice as likely to get pregnant or get their girlfriend pregnant as those who saw the least explicit TV. The study was lead by Anita Chandra, a behavioural scientist at RAND, an independent research organisation. It is published in Pediatrics, the journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Dr Chandra said that sexual content on TV had doubled in recent years, coinciding with teenage pregnancy rates edging up after decades of decline. 'Watching this kind of sexual content on television is a powerful factor in increasing the likelihood of a teen pregnancy. We found a strong association.'

Pray: that this study would be recognised as valid and lead to changes to the guide-lines for the TV industry. (1Co.15:33-34)

More: http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/us_and_americas/article5073047.ece

■ Government 'neglects married couples'

Care - Christian Action and Relationship Education - said the word 'marriage' had been dropped entirely from Government literature and instead public money was being directed toward unmarried couples. The organisation says that although ministers say they are still investing in marriage, less than £3.2 million is being spent on services such as marriage counselling. Author Dan Boucher argues the institution of marriage has suffered a 'dramatic reversal of fortunes' under Labour, even though research has shown married parents are more than twice as likely to stay together as those not married. The Children, Young People and Families Grant replaced the Marriage and Relation Support Service, abolished by Labour in 2004, which received £5 million in funding. Mr Boucher has called on the Government to reinstate funding for marriage support with 'immediate effect.' He said: 'We are struggling with increasing anti-social behaviour in the context of family breakdown.'

Pray: that our government would realise that marriage is fundamental in relationships for young people and families. (1Ti.3:4)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/3289027/Government-neglects-married-couples.html>

EUROPE

■ Russia: Wants to increase EU monitors in Georgia

Russia wants to increase the number of European Union observers monitoring a cease-fire between Georgian forces and Russian-backed separatists, a Kremlin official has said. France, holder of the EU presidency at the moment, brokered the cease-fire in August to end a five day war between Georgia and Russia, sparked by a failed Georgian attempt to retake its breakaway region of South Ossetia. The European Union then sent 225 unarmed observers, with about 75 support staff, to monitor the cease-fire, which both sides have accused the other of breaking. 'Among the agenda of the Russia-EU summit will be a question of increasing the number of EU observers in the conflict zone,' the official said after underlining the Kremlin's desire to see an increase in the number of EU observers. 'Military authorities from both sides must determine the optimal number of observers.' Russia and the European Union are scheduled to meet on November 14 in the French city of Nice.

Pray: for a final end to the skirmishes between Georgian soldiers and rebels; and the establishment of secure borders. (Ps.147:14)

More: http://www.rferl.org/content/Russia_Wants_To_Increase_EU_Monitors_In_Georgia/1338768.html

■ Zimbabwe: A call to prayer - 2 Ch.7:14

The president of the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ) Dr Goodwill Shana is inviting Christians to collectively seek God's face on behalf of the land, at Harare Agricultural show ground on 12th November. The vision is for Catholic Bishops and the Zimbabwe Council of Churches to be humble under God's hand and collectively seek his face, believing God's concern and compassion is directed towards the poor and the hungry. 'God has given us a wonderful way to steward our soil, water and other resources so that we are able to effectively produce food entirely His way. We call it Farming God's Way (FGW) which is rooted in God's word and constitutes the entrance point of God's way for rebuilding our nation as introduced in Isaiah 58. If we the wider body of Christ, humble ourselves together in unity and turn to God, wholeheartedly seek his face and apply FGW faithfully with the little we have, God will feed the nation through his church this year.'

Pray: that the Lord will soften hearts, for all to hear and implement God's plan for the poor and hungry of Zimbabwe. (Ps.107:37)

■ America: Ten ways to pray for Obama

America is a nation fragmented by abortion, gay marriage, global warming, failed economy and unpopular war, but Jesus Christ is still on the throne. His government is what is most important, regardless of who sits in the Oval Office. Here are 10 ways to intercede for President elect Barack Obama:- God's protection against neo-Nazi fanatics in Tennessee. For his wife and daughters living under scrutiny of invasive cameras, nosy reporters, maniacal fans and dangerous enemies. For Obama to govern with the Wisdom of Solomon. To stay humble in the midst of wealth and power. For God's provision of wise and righteous advisers. No secret traitors get near into his inner circle. A spirit of reconciliation in the face of people harbouring resentment and political grudges. That he will not have his God given views swayed by public opinion. Bind all evil forces assigned to manipulate him. Pray that Obama's door will remain open to the church. For America to enjoy God's peace and blessing.

Pray: for Barack Obama to be guided by the wisdom and love of God over the next four years of his presidency. (1Tim:2:1-4 & Is.40:15)

More: <http://forums.charismamag.com/viewtopic.php?f=8&t=3508>

■ Burma: Hundreds flee Karen state

More than 200 Karen villagers have been forcibly displaced and three others have been killed along with a Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) soldier, following attacks by the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) and the Burma Army in Doooplaya District, Southern Karen State, reports Christian Solidarity Worldwide. This violence comes only one month before UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon is due to visit the country for discussions over the political crisis. According to Free Burma Rangers, the DKBA and Burma Army began targeting villagers at the beginning of October in a bid to control the population and gain access to coal, zinc mines, rubber and teak trees. These attacks spilled over from Pa-an District into the Doooplaya District of Karen State at the end of October. Families have since been forced to flee their villages and set up temporary camps in Thailand, 50 miles south of Mae Sot. Karen

Pray: for the displaced without food and provision of safe drinking water, medicine, plastic sheets, respiratory and those with urinary tract infections. (Ps.9:3-5)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/hundreds.flee.karen.state.after.burma.army.killings/21816.htm>

■ Lebanon: Refugees

The 15-week conflict last year between the army and Fatah Islam insurgents levelled the old camp Nahr al-Bared in northern Lebanon. As he picked plastics and paper off the rubble-filled conveyor belt, Issam Sayyed indicated to a white house behind him pock-marked with bullet holes and with its roof caved in. 'That's my home,' said the father of nine, a Palestinian refugee displaced from the Nahr al-Bared camp. Soon the bulldozers clearing the ruins would knock down the white house along with the others, and the remains of Sayyed's home would be passing before his hands as he sorted through the rubble for a wage of US\$13 a day. Across from the camp in the temporary accommodation known as the 'barracks', Sayyed's wife was mourning the loss of their 10th child, a baby boy. He had died for lack of medical care just four days after his birth, according to his father.

Pray: for God to comfort traumatised and impoverished Palestinians who are refugees in Lebanon. (Ps.71:20,22)

More: <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?ReportID=81306>

■ Lebanon: More reconciliation needed

Lebanon's rival political leaders met on Wednesday for a second round of talks on lingering disputes but no breakthrough was made given deep-seated differences over Hizbullah's weapons and the diverse dialogues of participants. The 14 signatories of last May's Doha Accord who assembled for some three and a half hours under the auspices of President Michel Sleiman decided to gather again on December 22. A glimmer of hope can be heard in the link at the end of this article. Senior Shiite cleric Sayyed Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah who urged the political parties to make the most out of the current atmosphere of reconciliation and build bridges between once opposed factions. After meeting with Loyalty to the Resistance bloc he praised all the recent initiatives that have helped diffuse tensions, adding 'the national dialogue should be a venue for containing political conflicts and demonstrating frankness and openness and lay the foundations for a strong and fair state.'

<http://voice.dixerit.com/dailystarlbidx?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.dailystar.com.lb%2F%2Farticle%2Easp%3Fedition%5Fid%3D1%26cat%5Fid%3D2%26article%5Fid%3D97438>

Pray: for Lebanese politicians to match talk of reconciliation with specific ongoing action that benefits the whole nation and brings peace. See previous article. (Ps.72:1:4)

More: http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&categ_id=2&article_id=97450

■ **Orissa: Attacks are 'religious genocide', says ministry leader**

'This has been a religious genocide according to the UN definition of genocide where persistently and systematically it is planned and not stopped, maintains Ramesh Landge, founder and director of Cooperative Outreach of India (COI). Landge, who works with US-based Partners International, has been visiting the eastern state of Orissa, where the anti-Christian campaign is most fierce, to help the displaced Christians there. More than 50,000 Christians have been displaced by the violence, and 30,000 of them live in relief camps while others hide in the jungles. 'There has been a lot of intimidation and persecution. People have not been able to go back to their homes, and if they do go back, the Hindu fundamentalists parties want them to reconvert.' But although Christians have been suffering they have not renounced their faith and are continuing to stand strong as followers of Jesus Christ.

Pray: that the government would effectively stop the persecution of Christians. (Ps.119:157)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/orissa.attacks.are.religious.genocide.says.ministry.leader/21818.htm>

■ **Colombia: Church leaders under fire**

Christians in Colombia are anxious to learn the fate of pastor William Reyes, missing since September 25th. Also three other pastors have gone missing in the past month. Reyes is a minister of the Light and Truth Inter-American Church and member of the Fraternity of Evangelical Pastors of Maicao (FRAMEN). He left a meeting in Valledupar Cesar at 10 a.m. that morning heading home to Maicao, La Guajira. He did not arrive. Family members and fellow ministers fear that Reyes may have been murdered by illegal armed groups operating in northern Colombia. Since March of this year, FRAMEN has received repeated threats from both the leftist Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia and right-wing paramilitary units. In the past month three other Christian pastors were reportedly killed in separate incidents across the country. At press time investigators were travelling to verify the identities of the victims and circumstances of the killings.

Pray: for the protection of those living in a corrupt environment and God's wisdom to deal with the latest persecutions. (Ro.12:14)

More: <http://www.compassdirect.org/en/display.php>

PRAISE REPORTS

■ **Algeria/Iran: Two answered prayers, praise God**

The case against three Christian leaders accused of blasphemy was dismissed on 29 October by a court in Ain Turk, Algeria. The three Christians had been informed on 5 February that they had been sentenced in absentia to three years in prison and fines for 'insulting Islam and its prophet' and 'threatening' Mr Al-Aid, the man who brought charges against them. The three Christian leaders declined to bring charges against Mr Al-Aid for accusing them falsely, saying that they forgive him. AND: Answered prayers for two Iranian Christian converts, Mahmood Matin-Azad and Arash Basirat, who were arrested on 15 May charged with apostasy from Islam. The two men were released on 30 September. Please continue to pray for their safety. In the past some Christian converts who were imprisoned and then released have been killed after their release.

Praise: and give thanks for the release of these believers. Pray that the death penalty for apostasy does not become part of Iranian law and that the Algerian government continues to defend freedom of religion. (Zep.2:11)

More: http://www.barnabasfund.org/support/xPFU_index.php#ALGERIA%20-%20COURT%20DISMISSES%20CASE%20AGAINST%20THREE%20CHRISTIANS%20ACCUSED%20OF%20BLASPHEMY

■ **Court win for smack row parents**

A Christian couple who told social workers they had the right to smack their adopted son have won the right to a re-hearing in a bid to adopt his sister, aged two. Newham Council in east London told them they were not suitable to adopt the boy's half-sister, known as K, because of their attitude to corporal punishment and their financial circumstances, but the High Court in London quashed the council's decision as unreasonable. Mr Justice Bennett said it contradicted the findings of an independent panel and was 'bordering on the bizarre'. Outside court the parents said they were 'absolutely delighted' by the decision. The council said it will make a 'fresh decision' on the case in the light of the court ruling in which the High Court ruled that the council, for no apparent reason, had rejected the conclusion of an independent review panel which recommended the adoption.

Praise: God for this answer to prayer and that this will lead to changes in the council's attitude. (Pr.13:24)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/london/7708654.stm>

PRAYER FORUM OF BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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