

# PRAYER ALERT...

An initiative of the Prayer Forum of the British Isles & Ireland  
[www.prayer-alert.net](http://www.prayer-alert.net) [editor@prayer-alert.net](mailto:editor@prayer-alert.net)

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## BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

### ■ **FRIDAY FOCUS: 14th November - Hope for prisoners - Matthew 25:36; Isaiah 61:1**

Every month, over a thousand young men are sent to prison. **Give thanks:** for Christian organisations like Prison Fellowship, YFC and Alpha who work with prisoners to see lives transformed in every way. **Pray:** that many churches will join in with Prisoners Sunday (16th Nov) and Prisons Week (17th-23rd Nov); for all prisoners – young and old – that they would discover hope in Jesus; that juvenile and young offenders can find the help to deter them from a lifetime of crime. **Consider:** what is my attitude towards offenders? What would Jesus' attitude be?

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

### ■ **Politicians call for action over baby P case**

A 17-month-old baby boy on an 'at-risk' register in Haringey Council died of multiple injuries including a broken spine at the hands of his mother and her boyfriend after social workers failed to spot he was being abused; despite being visited by social workers 60 times in the past eight months. Haringey Council's director of children's services Sharon Shoesmith appeared determined to remain in her job as an inquiry into the authority's failings was ordered. Secretary of State for Children Ed Balls said, 'It is our duty to take whatever action is needed to ensure that such a tragedy doesn't happen again, that lessons are learned and that children in Haringey are safe.' Three members of staff at Haringey have been given formal warnings over their conduct during the Baby P case but Ms Shoesmith herself insisted on Tuesday, 'If any resignations or sackings were needed there would have been. I certainly will not be resigning.' At the same press conference, she twice refused to apologise for Baby P's death.

**Pray:** for staff at the heart of this enquiry to be held accountable for failures, for appropriate changes to the system to be implemented so that future children will benefit from this terrible case. (Job 12:21-23; Mt 25:33-35)

**More:** <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/politicians-call-for-action-over-baby-p-case-1015840.html>

### ■ **At Risk Register - comments from a social worker**

The work of child protection is very difficult, emotionally wearing and even dangerous. Staff turnover in the organisations that carry it out is often rapid. There is nothing like a constant fear of violence for undermining both the will to do anything and the judgment. The fundamental purpose of the British public service is to provide 'failsafe' and 'best-practice' procedures, usually with all their associated paperwork. Documentation is its own justification and a superstition now exists that nothing can go wrong if the forms are filled in correctly. When something goes wrong the purpose of inquiries is not to learn from experience but to find the person lowest in the hierarchy who can be blamed. This is not an atmosphere conducive to the exercise of common sense. In a land of serial stepfatherhood such as ours we must expect dramatic cases of the most revolting cruelty to emerge more frequently.

**Pray:** for anointed gifted social workers to be called into the front line work of child protection, and a backup workforce of astute administrators. (Mt.10:16)

**More:** [http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/guest\\_contributors/article5133966.ece](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/guest_contributors/article5133966.ece)

#### ■ **Methodists support responsible alcohol pricing**

The Methodist Church has come out in support of calls from MPs on Monday for the introduction of minimum prices on alcoholic drinks. The call came from the Home Affairs Select Committee in its 'Policing in the 21st Century' report, which also pressed for an end to 'happy hours' in bars and pubs and a ban on cut price promotions in supermarkets. David Bradwell, the Methodist Church's Public Issues Policy Adviser, expressed his concern over the report's findings, including its assertion that alcohol is 69 per cent more affordable today than in 1980. 'Alcohol misuse is a growing problem. This is partly due to the easy availability of cheap booze,' he said. 'The Methodist Church today urges the Government to move towards imposing minimum prices for alcohol and ending irresponsible promotions by retailers.'

**Pray:** for God to provide wise and anointed counsellors for those who so easily misuse alcohol and for the church to be heard as they urge the Government to end irresponsible promotions by retailers. (Ro.13:13)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/methodists.support.calls.for.responsible.pricing.of.alcohol/21861.htm>

#### ■ **Church attacked over Remembrance**

Christian research group Ekklesia says this amounts to the Church making a 'political statement' at odds with its teaching and beliefs. It said it was not suggesting that the Church is celebrating British victories, even less that it is celebrating war itself. But it does claim that, when the Church says it is commemorating 'those who have given their lives for the peace and freedom we enjoy today', it is ignoring the political and theological implications of its actions. Co-director Jonathan Bartley said: 'There's a clear and present sentiment behind the poppies and the prayers - and one that, if the people in the pews really stopped to think, would not be shared by all who attend (Remembrance Day) services. But the Rector of Putney said this 'missed the point' and it was right to remember sacrifices made for others. These aren't services in celebration of some cheap nationalism .

**Pray:** for our leaders and church leaders that as they seek to offer guidance on complex questions and moral issues, they will be guided by God through the Holy Spirit. (2Co.1:12)

**More:** <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7721022.stm>

#### ■ **Vulnerable man banned**

A council has apologised for its treatment of Terry Lawrence, a vulnerable man with learning difficulties who was given a two and a half year ban from day care centres after a dispute between staff and his family. Mr Lawrence's father Ken said after the suspension his son had no purpose or direction in his life. 'He was taken away from all his peer group, all his friends that he was in school with and he virtually used to stay in bed until midday because he didn't have anything else to do.' The council said sorry, and will pay him and his family £4,000 compensation but guarantees need to be implemented so that nothing like this could ever be repeated.

**Pray:** that all individuals needing encouragement, motivation, routine structures, care and a sense of being valued are not ignored or excluded by the society they are born into. (Ro.15:1)

**More:** <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/7723134.stm>

#### ■ **Disabled woman 'banned' from Marks and Spencer**

Cerebral palsy sufferer Susan Curran was banned from every Marks and Spencer store in Britain as a health and safety hazard when she got stuck in an M&S disabled lavatory and rang the emergency bell. She was helped out but then told her she was not allowed back to the store on her own because staff were not trained to deal with her and workers were being put at risk. Miss Curran was also notified she was the subject of a trespass order stating, 'Your right as a member of the public to enter into any of our premises is now withdrawn. You are not permitted to enter into any of our stores again. If you choose to ignore this notice you will be asked to leave.' M&S has since apologised to Miss Curran, and the trespass order was withdrawn, but she still needed a chaperone at stores.

**Pray:** for compassion to replace control when serving the most vulnerable people in our communities. (Ro.15:2)

**More:** <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/3398759/Disabled-woman-banned-from-MandS.html>

#### ■ **Police team that investigated tide of human traffic is closed**

Britain's largest dedicated human trafficking police unit is being shut down a year after it was set up due to Home Office spending cuts. The Met's Human Trafficking Team was designed to target gangs bringing more than 4,000 women and children to the UK as sex slaves and forced labourers from eastern Europe, China, Malaysia, Africa and South America to work in brothels. It is notoriously difficult to convict criminals for human trafficking, but as the only specialist operational team in the country, the Met's dedicated human trafficking centre had claimed a series of successes.

**Pray:** for governments to take human trafficking seriously and to maintain measures to combat this trade that brings misery to so many people. (Ps.28:9)

**More:** <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/police-team-that-investigated-tide-of-human-traffic-is-closed-1006612.html>

## EUROPE

#### ■ **France: Paris meeting on Iran sanctions**

World powers including senior foreign ministry officials from Britain, France, Germany, Russia, China and the United States have been working out a series of next steps in the showdown with Iran over its nuclear programme, ahead of a report on Friday that is expected to criticise the country's lack of co-operation with nuclear inspections. The US has targeted Iran's

banking and finance sectors with new sanctions. A US official said he holds out little hope that Iran would meet the group's demands despite being increasingly affected by sanctions hitting its economy at the same time as a drop in world oil prices. Russia and China see no need for restrictions as Iran is already under three sets of UN Security Council sanctions. Mr Obama has proposed a different approach on Iran, including possible direct talks with the leadership, while insisting it remains a threat and must not be allowed to develop nuclear arms.

**Pray:** for a future of new avenues of communication and co-operation to be initiated between President Mahomoud Ahmadinejad and President Obama. (Pr.3:13-17)

**More:** <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iran/3451599/Iran-sanctions-on-table-at-Paris-meeting.html>

#### ■ **Russia: Vladimir Putin closes in on presidency**

Russia's parliament announced it would rush through a constitutional amendment that could see Vladimir Putin return to the presidency within weeks. Kremlinologists have long predicted Mr Putin's return as president. Existing constitutional restrictions forced Mr Putin to stand down in May after completing two consecutive four years terms. He did not go far, however, changing jobs to become prime minister. Amid growing signs of panic in the Kremlin, the State Duma said it would meet on Friday to pass legislation that could allow Mr Putin to return to the Kremlin for 12 years, giving short shrift to the supposed inviolability of Russia's 1993 constitution. All three readings of the bill will be compressed into a single sitting, rather than dragged out over several weeks or months as convention normally dictates. The proposal to extend the length of time a president can serve from two consecutive terms of four years to two consecutive terms of six was made by Dmitry Medvedev the Russian leader last week.

**Pray:** against a spirit of control as the financial crisis casts shadows over Russia's oligarchs and power brokers. Pray for a spirit of co-operation with other nations that would not lead to another cold war. (Pr.16:32-33)

**More:** <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/russia/3448390/Vladimir-Putin-closes-in-on-presidency.html>

## WORLDWIDE

#### ■ **America: Racial Prejudice**

What would Jefferson the third president of the USA make of Obama the 44th? It was from Jefferson's hand that so much of the tragic atrocity and idealism of the American experiment came. For Jefferson the author of the Declaration of Independence, who proclaimed to the world that all men were created equal, could never bring himself to free his 100 or so slaves. And although Jefferson professed to believe in the universal fraternity of mankind, he thought black people intellectually inferior to those of European descent and patronised appallingly the most gifted of their race – like the scientist and inventor Benjamin Banneker. The root of hatred and discrimination is visible today as we hear of a woman killed earlier this week when leaving a Ku Klux Klan initiation ritual in New Orleans. Eight people were arrested and investigators found weapons, several flags and six Klan robes at the site. The woman was recruited over the internet to participate in the ritual and then return to her home state of Oklahoma to find other members for the white supremacist group.

**Pray:** for this KKK generational root of hatred and injustice to be completely destroyed. (Dt.12:2-3)

**More:** <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/woman-killed-as-she-tried-to-leave-ku-klux-klan-initiation-1014013.html>

#### ■ **USA: Washington G20 summit - New world order?**

The Group of 20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors, which brings together major industrialised and developing economies, meets in Melbourne on November 18 and 19. The G-20 includes the Group of Seven industrial countries; the United States, Germany, Japan, France, Italy, Britain and Canada, plus the European Union, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea and Turkey. Chiefs of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank also participate at G-20 meetings. For the Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, it is as important as the 1944 convention that established the modern financial world order. For Nicolas Sarkozy it is a once-in-a-lifetime chance to remake the global financial architecture and usher in an era of 'regulated capitalism'. But beware the headlines that these leaders try to manufacture when they assemble for their credit crisis summit in Washington this weekend.

**Pray:** for the summit without an agenda, on a crisis without an agreed cause, in a country without a functioning government. (Is.60:2,3)

**More:** <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/analysis-and-features/g20-summit-new-world-order-1012519.html>

#### ■ **Congo/Rwanda: Church delegation for peace**

Church leaders from Burundi, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo have set out to meet the presidents of the latter two countries in order to deliver a strong message in favour of peace. 'The 5-strong ecumenical delegation gathered on Wednesday at the Congolese capital Kinshasa, where they met with President Joseph Kabila before travelling in the coming weeks to the capital city of Kigali in order to meet the Rwandan President Paul Kagame. 'The aim is to transmit a message of peace,' says the World Council of Churches and All Africa Conference of Churches. The initiative was taken at a meeting of church leaders from the Great Lakes region on 22-23 October when 12 church leaders from Burundi, Rwanda and D.R. Congo decided that the heads of state and the rebel leader should hear a clear message: 'People are tired and want an end to the war,' and 'dialogue costs much less than armed confrontation'.

**Pray:** for the vision of peace in this region to be rewarded with consideration and positive action. (1Ch.16:35)

**More:** <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/news/news-management/eng/a/article/1722/people-are-tired-of-war.html>

#### ■ **Palestinian life: Splits and barriers**

On Tuesday the BBC highlighted the journey to school of two brothers Mohammed aged 8, and Amjad 12, living in Hebron. Mohammed has cerebral palsy, so Amjad pushes him to school in a wheelchair. They don't take the 2 minute direct route,

but Amjad had to push him up into the tangle of alleys the long way round because the direct route was blocked with a high concrete barrier. More than 40 years of Israeli occupation distorts everything in Hebron - even the school run. The morning after the BBC broadcast, Palestinian workers employed by the Israeli civil administration demolished the wall. The army said that after a request from the family, the wall was taken down 'to facilitate easier movement for the child as a gesture of goodwill' The building workers told the BBC the wall would be rebuilt with a gate which only Mohammed and his family will be able to use.

**Pray:** for all the families living in Hebron where abnormal life has become normal for them and ask God to resolve this 40 year struggle. (La.4:1-3)

**More:** [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle\\_east/7722811.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/7722811.stm)

#### ■ Iran: New Israel-range missile tests

Iran announced Wednesday that it successfully test-fired a 'Sajil' missile, a new generation of surface-to-surface missiles. A photo released by an Iranian news agency shows a missile test at an undisclosed location. Iran did not say when the missile was test-fired but said it happened in the presence of Defense Minister Brig. Gen. Mostafa Mohammad Najjar. The two-stage missile uses combined solid fuel and has a high-launching speed and a range of about 1,200 miles, which could travel as far as southeastern Europe and easily reach arch-foe Israel. The United States restated its objection to such tests, saying they violated Iran's obligations under United Nations Security Council resolutions. Iran's state-run television network showed video of the test launch showing Iran's capability to defend its territory. The reported test launch comes amid back and forth talks between Iran and Western powers on Tehran's controversial nuclear program. (See Europe item 1 above)

**Pray:** for positive open dialogue between Iran and the west so that a relationship of trust can form the basis of international diplomacy. (Ps.46:6)

**More:** <http://edition.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/meast/11/12/iran.missile.test/index.html>

#### ■ Iraq: Mosul killing of two Christian sisters

Iraqi Christians who returned to Mosul after fleeing a wave of violence and intimidation are in fear and panic after two sisters were killed when attackers broke into their home in the Alqahira residential area of the northern city of Mosul. Their mother, who lived with them, was also stabbed and is now in a critical condition in hospital. Police rushed to the scene and on arrival a security car was bombed. Three policemen were killed and the Sabih family's house was badly damaged. So far, nobody has claimed responsibility for the attack, which took place in Alqahira's Al Nien district. The sisters, both in their 40s, and who had worked for a local provincial council since the 1980s, were known to be devout Syrian Catholics. Initial reports received shows the incident has sparked fear and panic within the Christian community at a time of heightened anxiety about their safety.

**Pray:** for God to bring peace and security for vulnerable church communities. (Job11:17-19)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/killing.of.two.christian.sisters.renews.panic.in.mosul/21878.htm>

## PRAISE REPORTS

#### ■ More people praying in economic downturn

A poll by Faithbook on Facebook has found that more people are turning to God in prayer to help them through the global financial crisis. Among the 150 people polled, more than 80 per cent said they did not see the economic turmoil as a crisis, but rather as a 'global financial watershed' with the potential to see a reform of the economy with a moral and social framework. More than a quarter of respondents (28 per cent) said they had prayed more and 42 per cent that they had felt a positive effect from praying or meditating since the start of the global economic slump. Usama Hasan, Director of City Circle and contributor to Faithbook, says, 'In many ways, we are already in a spiritual recession. Financial wealth is worthless without spiritual wealth.' AMEN TO THAT!

**Praise:** God for the hope and change that are birthed through prayer amidst the gloom and doom of situations. (Jn.1:9;Pr.3:9-10)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/faithbook.poll.finds.more.people.praying.in.economic.downturn/21869.htm>

#### ■ Godly order of money removes \$500,000 debt

Not that long ago Katrina Clements was earning \$30,000 a year and in \$500,000 credit card debt. Now she is debt free and giving God the glory for it. 'I have accumulated this bottle of cut up credit cards from people who have been delivered from the credit card debt. God wants us to have money and not for money to have us' she said. It was through the church's financial freedom class that Clements says she began taking the appropriate steps to slay her debt dragon cutting up her credit cards, calling her creditors, having her interest rates reduced (or in some cases eliminated completely), and drastically changing her spending habits. Within a year of taking the class she was out of debt. Tithing 10% of her earnings, she claims, was a big part of the process and attributes the quick turnaround to her following a Godly order of money management.

**Praise:** God for a changed attitude and may it be repeated globally where people and nations are prisoners of thoughtless spending. (Job 22:21)

**More:** [http://www.breakingchristiannews.com/articles/display\\_art.html?ID=6026](http://www.breakingchristiannews.com/articles/display_art.html?ID=6026)

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