



# PRAYER ALERT...

An initiative of the Prayer Forum of the British Isles & Ireland  
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## BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

### ■ **FRIDAY FOCUS: 21st November - Hope for prodigals - Luke 15:31-32; Luke 19:10**

There is no prodigal beyond the Father's reach. **Give thanks:** that wherever they are, whatever they have done, whatever they have said, He knows where they are and He loves them passionately. **Pray:** for the faith to once again speak their names and believe that as they are prayed for, they will come back to the Father; that by His Spirit, He will lift the blindfold and unstop their ears so that they can see and hear the longing of the Father's heart. **Consider:** letting a family, who are struggling with a prodigal, know you are praying for them this week.

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

### ■ **Child abuse 'lessons not learnt'**

Lessons are not learnt from instances of serious child abuse and death in England because many case reviews are inadequate, inspectors have said. Ofsted's annual report, which now covers all children's services, also said some staff were not equipped to respond to signs of abuse and neglect. The government said it would 'not rest until we have the very best possible child protection arrangements.' The report was written before the death of Baby P in Haringey, north London. Ofsted chief inspector Christine Gilbert said: 'The report does present a positive picture for many children, young people and adults. It says that for those - for most - things are going in the right direction. Ms Gilbert said: 'Too many vulnerable children are still being let down by the system and we are failing to learn from the worst cases of abuse.' As well as judging 38 of the 92 reviews they evaluated as inadequate, the inspectors found 'serious delays in producing them in almost all cases'.

**Pray:** that our authorities would see the need to improve systems to meet the challenges of this report and other public cases and concerns. (Pr.12:5)

**More:** <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/7737174.stm>

### ■ **Pupils are 'bullied for their beliefs'**

One in four children with a religious belief is bullied at school as a result of their faith, research shows. The findings have prompted anti-bullying campaigners to urge ministers to make it compulsory for schools to record all incidents of faith-based bullying, as they have to do in cases of racism and homophobia. The survey of more than 1,000 pupils by the anti-bullying charity BeatBullying ([www.beatbullying.org](http://www.beatbullying.org)) showed that 23 per cent of the pupils were bullied as a result of their faith. In addition, 9 per cent of those with a faith were bullied as a result of wearing religious symbols to school. The report paints a worrying picture of the lack of cohesion between different communities at school, with 20 per cent of young people saying their friendships largely comprised people from the same religious or faith background. Significantly, a minority (about 6 per cent) said their parents frowned on them mixing with people from different faith backgrounds.

**Pray:** for a renewed understanding by faith and community leaders, of the issues faced by youngsters in matters of faith so that they can better support and guide them. (Ac.4:29)

**More:** <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/pupils-are-bullied-for-their-beliefs-1021678.html>

#### ■ Too much violence on TV

A majority of people believe there is too much violence on TV, according to research. The survey found that 64% of viewers think that entertainment programmes contain too many scenes of violence. Women are even more likely to disapprove, with 71% condemning the current output compared with 57% of men. The research, commissioned by Mediawatch-UK, the group set up by campaigner Mary Whitehouse in the 1960's, found that only 38% believe that broadcasters, film and game producers respond appropriately to public concern about the issue. Of those questioned, 65% agreed that the Government has a role in reducing violence on screen, but only 47% believed that regulator Ofcom is effective in controlling scenes of violence on TV. Mediawatch-UK director John Beyer said: 'It is clear that the majority of people want action taken to reduce screen violence'.

**Pray:** for our media that they will respond positively to the concerns of the majority to reduce the violence and crudeness which is so prevalent. (Ps.119:1-3)

**More:** <http://entertainment.aol.co.uk/entertainment-news/too-much-violence-on-tv-brits/article/20081116190325322265560>

#### ■ Multi-faith prayers to be considered for Parliament

Plans to end the dominance of the Anglican faith at the daily opening of Parliament and have multi-faith prayers modelled on BBC Radio 4's Thought for the Day are to be considered by the House of Lords' procedure committee. The change could lead to a rotational approach to daily prayers, where different faiths are represented on a particular day, in the way the Today programme gives a voice to different religions throughout the week. Under current arrangements, all sittings in both Houses begin with prayers which follow the Christian faith, a tradition which began in the middle of the 16th century. See <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld/ldcomp/ldctso58.htm>. Lord Brabazon of Tara, the chairman of the committee, is to look at a number of ideas being drafted by the Sikh peer Lord Rana and other peers. The proposed change to multi-faith prayer after 400 years of honouring God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - is alarming. This would be the 'official' devaluing and diluting of our 'official' State Religion by the elected government of our Nation.

**Pray:** for our government as they consider these possible steps diluting our Christian roots. (1Ti.2:1-20)

**More:** <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/multifaith-prayers-to-be-considered-for-parliament-981745.html>

#### ■ Christianity 'being sidelined in Britain'

Attempts are now being made in Britain to relegate Christianity to the 'border of irrelevance', according to a cathedral chief. If the attempts succeed it will mean the destruction of 'a unique vision of humanity and all that is best in it.' The dire warning comes from the Sub-dean of Lincoln's Anglican Cathedral, Canon Alan Nugent. He said practising Christians will be excluded from senior posts in both local and national administration because of a widespread assumption that anyone confessing a robust faith 'must be an extremist or irrational or both. Secularisation has been going on for a long while and has brought about the marginalisation of the Christian faith. Christian beliefs, instead of promoting the values underlying our society, are now simply regarded as a private life-style choice which should have no significant place in determining any aspect of social policy. There are many who seek to exclude Christian belief from social debate because for them belief is synonymous with irrationality, prejudice and extremism.' Canon Nugent declares.

**Pray:** for revival and a revelation of the power of God in the life of the nation. (Ps.68:33-35)

**More:** <http://www.religiousintelligence.co.uk/news/?NewsID=3316>

#### ■ Irish Archbishop welcomes Stormont breakthrough

The Anglican Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, the Most Revd Alan Harper, OBE has welcomed Wednesday's breakthrough in talks to secure the resumption of the Northern Ireland Assembly at Stormont. He said: 'I warmly welcome the decision on the part of the main partners in the Northern Ireland government executive to resume meetings of the executive and to take forward proposals for the devolution of policing and justice powers. I also very much welcome the decision that the executive will meet much more frequently and purposefully in order to deal with the backlog of business that has accumulated over the past five months. While the devolution of policing and justice powers and many of the other issues that will confront the executive are far from straightforward and un-contentious, I am confident that with a strong will to make government in Northern Ireland work the efforts of the executive will not prove unfruitful'.

**Pray:** that this move will at last lead to a final solution to this problem. (Pr.16:22-23)

**More:** <http://www.religiousintelligence.co.uk/news/?NewsID=3331>

## EUROPE

#### ■ Europe's Protestant churches say social exclusion is greatest challenge

Protestant churches from across Europe have identified social exclusion as their greatest challenge in a new survey. The survey was conducted by the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE) among 100 of its members and member churches. The results were made public during the CPCE's third consultation on new social challenges to Europe's Protestant churches, held in Tallinn in Estonia last week. Among the respondents, 24 per cent agreed with the statement that 'The growing gulf between poor and rich is leading to social exclusion'. After social exclusion, 16 per cent said they felt the stress on the individual to be the greatest social challenge, whilst 11 per cent mentioned the social integration of migrants and a lack of inter-cultural dialogue. The social effects of globalisation and the climate and energy crisis were other concerns flagged up by 8 per cent of respondents. Delegates at the consultation stressed the responsibility of the churches to engage in social and political issues.

**Pray:** for the church not to forget the poor and neglected - but instead to bless them from the abundance God gives. (Pr.22:22-23)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/europes.protestant.churches.say.social.exclusion.is.greatest.challenge/21868.htm>

## WORLDWIDE

### ■ India: Hindu militants offer rewards to kill Christians

People are being offered rewards to kill, and destroy churches and Christian properties,' a spokesman for the All India Christian Council (AICC) said. 'They are being offered foreign liquor, chicken, mutton, weapons, petrol and kerosene.' The head of a string of orphanages in Orissa believes Christian leaders are the militants' key targets. The going price to kill a pastor is \$250 US dollars. The violence has now spread to 14 states. On November 11th, militants destroyed churches in the Kandhamal district, and extremists tried to kill two Christians attempting to return to their village. The youth wing of the Hindu nationalist Vishwa Hindu Parishad organisation, is meeting in secret and training women fighters to use swords and sticks to fight and destroy Christians. On their official website, the Bajrang Dal describe themselves as 'Warriors of the Hindutva Revolution'. Hindutva has been described as 'Hindu-ness', which has been used to justify the extreme belief that India should be for Hindus only.

**Pray:** against this evil plan to drive out Christians from the area and for God to break and destroy Satan's agenda for a Hindu Nation. (Dt.9:3)

**More:** <http://www.releaseinternational.org/pages/posts/hindu-militants-offer-rewards-to-kill-christians-destroy-houses-in-orissa467.php>

### ■ India: Prime minister affirms Christianity in heritage

India's Prime Minister has hit out at Hindu groups that claim Christianity is a foreign religion by hailing it as part of the country's heritage. Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh made the statement at a meeting with Rev Dr Samuel Kobia, general secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in New Delhi, saying, 'Christianity is part of our national heritage.' He noted that Christianity in India has a longer history than in many Western countries and made reference to the Indian constitution which states that India 'guarantees freedom to practice and propagate one's faith.' The statements are a strong rebuttal of the views of Hindu nationalist groups. (see article above) He has also promised to extend financial assistance from the federal government to rebuild destroyed and damaged churches – and to support Christian families that have lost everything in the violence.

**Pray:** for God's plans and purposes for India to be fulfilled. (2Ki.19:30-32)

**More:** [http://ausprayernet.org.au/newsletter/DisplayNewsletter.php?e\\_id=00000001631#st3](http://ausprayernet.org.au/newsletter/DisplayNewsletter.php?e_id=00000001631#st3)

### ■ Zimbabwe: Urgent call

World Alliance of Reformed Churches released a statement on Friday, 'Since August a severe cholera outbreak has claimed hundreds of lives and more are dying everyday. People living with HIV/AIDS have no access to life-saving drugs or food. Schools and hospitals are closing daily through lack of teachers, doctors, nurses or medicines. Millions of Zimbabweans are starving despite the best efforts of aid agencies. Many are now surviving on wild fruit, and gaining access to water, food, electricity and even cash from the bank is a daily nightmare. Amidst all this suffering the state is guilty of misappropriating funds mobilised to buy life saving drugs for the sick as well as providing jobs for at least 50,000 Zimbabweans in the health sector. Four million Zimbabweans find themselves trapped in Southern Africa and beyond, unable to return home. With a hungry and demoralised civil service, no one is taking responsibility to ensure accountable and efficient public service delivery. As we call for an urgent affirmation and protection of the right to life and dignity for all Zimbabweans, we also call for adherence to democratic principles and processes in the mediation process and a return of the rule of law inside Zimbabwe.'

**Pray:** that protests from the World Council of Churches will not fall on deaf ears and positive action backed by relentless prayer will turn the tide of political oppression. (Ps.12:4,5)

**More:** [http://warc.jalb.de/warcajsp/side.jsp?news\\_id=1634&part\\_id=0&navi=6](http://warc.jalb.de/warcajsp/side.jsp?news_id=1634&part_id=0&navi=6)

### ■ Zimbabwe: Kofi Annan told to postpone visit

President Robert Mugabe's government has told former United Nations secretary general Kofi Annan to postpone a planned visit to Zimbabwe, which it views as a 'partisan mission', state media reported on Thursday. Annan, former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and Nelson Mandela's wife, Graca Machel, are members of a group of prominent figures and former statesmen called The Elders, who planned to visit Zimbabwe on Friday to assess the humanitarian situation. An unnamed senior government source told the state-run Herald newspaper that the group had been advised to put off the visit to a later date.

**Pray:** for God to remove Robert Mugabe from his self proclaimed retention of authority. (Pr.18:1-3)

**More:** <http://africa.reuters.com/top/news/usnJOE4AJ0BM.html>

### ■ USA: Gay activist mob attacks Christians

Hundreds of homosexual activists attacked a group of Christians who were singing songs and praying with people in San Francisco's 'gay' Castro District. After several days of peaceful worship and prayer angry men began yelling profanities and warning them to leave the district. The men covered them with a large cloth backing them into a corner and began swearing, the mob grew as bars emptied and a crowd completely surrounded the Christians. The worship group began singing 'Amazing Grace,' while an estimated 500 'gay' advocates sang, 'We Shall Overcome.' Women were doused with hot

coffee. One woman was hit on the head with her own bible, pushed to the ground and kicked, then people began lunging and blowing whistles. They also took pictures saying, 'We're going to kill you. We know who you are.' Police escorted the worshipers from the area.

**Pray:** that God would lead and protect peaceful Christian outreach initiatives in dark areas of America. (Pr.11:20)

**More:** <http://wnd.com/index.php?fa=PAGE.view&pageId=81310>

#### ■ Congo: Rebel pullback raises hopes for peace talks

Hundreds of General Laurent Nkunda's Tutsi rebel fighters pulled back on Wednesday from frontline positions in a move U.N. peacekeepers hoped would open the way for talks to end weeks of conflict in east Congo. Nkunda demands direct talks with President Joseph Kabila, and ordered the pullback after meeting at the weekend with a U.N. peace envoy. Nkunda pledged to respect a shaky ceasefire and take part in U.N.-backed peace negotiations to clarify the U.N. role in 'separation zones' aimed at keeping the armies apart. Hundreds of thousands have been driven from their homes creating a humanitarian emergency. The rebels are pulling back on three axes, but they were still holding strategic positions just 15 km (nine miles) north of Goma, near Kibati. Aid workers are providing food and medical help to more than 200,000, and trying to reach hundreds of thousands more cut off by the fighting in the hills and forests of North Kivu.

**Pray:** against this ferocious outpouring of violence that has been entrenched in the area for so long, and for anointed resolutions to prepare the ground for peace. (Ps.7:6-7 & Nu.10:35)

**More:** <http://africa.reuters.com/top/news/usnJOE4A10H5.html>

#### ■ Iraq: Prison term reduced but protection needed

In prison at the age of 14 for having fatally stabbed her uncle in northern Iraq, Maria's early release on Nov. 10 thanks to a juvenile court decision, was overshadowed by fear of retaliation from her extended Muslim family. The now 16-year-old was sentenced to five years in prison for killing her paternal uncle in self-defence on July 9, 2006 when he attacked her, her mother and little brother at their family kitchen utensil store. The uncle had cut her mother with a knife and was fiercely beating them for converting to Christianity and for 'shaming' the family by working in public when Maria stabbed him. Clearing her of an original conviction for premeditated murder, the Erbil high court reduced the sentence from five to three-and-a-half years, upholding an earlier decision that she was guilty of killing her uncle though she acted in defence of herself and others.

**Pray:** for Maria's safety from retaliation and God's powerful protection to be over her and work through all converts to Christianity who are living in unfriendly regimes. (Ps.5:11)

**More:** <http://www.compassdirect.org/en/display.php?page=news&lang=en&length=long&idelement=5689&backpage=summaries&critere=&countryname=&rowcur=>

## PRAISE REPORTS

#### ■ USA: Anonymous donation of \$50 million to Wycliffe Bible Translators

An enormous donation to the world's largest Bible translation organisation has enabled Wycliffe Bible Translators to launch a major 17-year project to translate the Bible into the last remaining languages. The Last Languages Campaign is a historic, high-speed and high-tech effort to start a language development and Bible translation programme in the remaining one-third of the world's language groups that still need a translation by 2025. This represents a time saving of 125 years from the 1990s translation pace. The project will bring first-time access to literacy and the Bible for some 200 million people in approximately 2,400 language groups over the next 17 years. The effort is fuelled by new strategies and advanced translation techniques developed by Wycliffe personnel that accelerate the pace of language development and Bible translation by three times the pace of a decade ago. Interestingly, the gift comes in advance of the campaign's official launch on November 22.

**Praise:** God for this ambitious vision and generous donation. Continue to pray as Wycliffe launches Christmas fund raising for Bible translation. (Col.1:25,26)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/wycliffe.pushes.to.translate.last.remaining.languages/21933.htm>

#### ■ Christmas prayers for peace to go to Bethlehem

As many Christians around the world prepare to celebrate Advent and Christmas, they are being invited to pray for justice, peace and security for Palestine and Israel - and to send a prayer or a peace message to Bethlehem. Christmas celebrations will again take place in a difficult climate for people in the Holy Land. However, in Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus Christ, many individuals and groups refuse to give up hope. They continue to search for non-violent ways to voice their rights and work for a peaceful and just future for both Palestinians and Israelis. Once again, individuals, communities, churches and congregations, organisations and partners from across the world are invited to e-mail Advent and Christmas wishes and prayers for justice and peace to Bethlehem. Messages can be e-mailed to the Arab Educational Institute at the following address: [aei@p-ol.com](mailto:aei@p-ol.com) Read all messages at: [www.aeicenter.org](http://www.aeicenter.org) and [www.paxchristi.net](http://www.paxchristi.net)

**Praise:** that the message of Christmas will bless all those that receive these emails. (1Co.16:20)

**More:** <http://www.ekkesia.co.uk/node/8000>

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