



PRAYER ALERT...

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www.prayer-alert.net editor@prayer-alert.net

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BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ **FRIDAY FOCUS: 28th November - Hope for our nation - 2 Chronicles 7:14; Hebrews 12:1-2**

As the foundations of our society continue to be shaken and world events bring challenges, we need to stand firm in the sure knowledge that Jesus is Lord. **Give thanks:** for God's continued protection on, and protection for our nations.

Pray: for wisdom for those working to reduce gun and knife crime on our streets; for more partnerships between churches and local authorities to offer help to disaffected young people; for boldness to be a carrier of hope. **Consider:** praying for an issue or person highlighted in the media today.

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

■ **Forget mammon, start praying, says Church**

Church leaders appeared to set themselves against the Chancellor's 'carry on spending' message when they urged consumers to stop shopping and turn to God instead. The Church of England launched its 'pray now, buy later' message as part of a thrift campaign for Advent, the pre-Christmas preparatory period that begins on November 30. Advent, traditionally a time of reflection and contemplation, had been squeezed by consumer pressures and frenetic activity, the Church said at the launch of a new website, www.whywearewaiting.com, to help Christians of all denominations to mark the season. The website features podcasts, reflections and 'waiting tips' on the Advent season, described as a 'daily dose of chocolate' for the soul. The Roman Catholic Abbot of Worth Abbey, in West Sussex, Father Christopher Jamison, said the message of the campaign was 'pray now, buy later' and not about telling people to stop shopping.

Pray: for a renewed focus on the truth of Christmas and that many people will take the opportunity of the economic downturn to re-examine Christmas and what it really means. (Pr.8:34)

More: <http://business.timesonline.co.uk/tol/business/economics/pbr/article5226690.ece>

■ **Children are born believers in God, academic claims**

Dr Justin Barrett, a senior researcher at the University of Oxford's Centre for Anthropology and Mind, claims that young people have a predisposition to believe in a supreme being because they assume that everything in the world was created with a purpose. He says that young children have faith even when they have not been taught about it by family or at school. 'The preponderance of scientific evidence for the past 10 years or so has shown that a lot more seems to be built into the natural development of children's minds than we once thought, including a predisposition to see the natural world as designed and purposeful and that some kind of intelligent being is behind that purpose,' he told BBC Radio 4's Today programme. 'If we threw a handful on an island and they raised themselves I think they would believe in God.'

Pray: for that 'God given intuition' to be nurtured in our children by the Holy Spirit and pray that they will not have that belief squashed. (Lk.18:16-17)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/religion/3512686/Children-are-born-believers-in-God-academic-claims.html>

■ St Andrew's day to be a 'Day of prayer and reflection' for Scotland

In October, the yearly meeting with Christian Leaders from many mainline denominations, was held by the First Minister and Government Minister, Fergus Ewing, in the Scottish Parliament. The leaders always place spiritual concerns at the heart of their meeting. This year they expressed that they would be holding a 'day of prayer and reflection' for the nation on St. Andrew's day – Sunday 30th November, 2008. They issued the following statement. 'The Leaders and Representatives of Scotland's Churches encourage our church communities and all people in Scotland to celebrate St. Andrew's Day this year as a day of prayer and reflection in which we will hold the principles of social justice and the difficulties facing the nation and world in our hearts and prayers in faith and hope before God.' In response First Minister, Alex Salmond said: 'This is something which can unite all of us in Scotland, whatever our beliefs, and I for one will certainly take part.'

Pray: for the people of Scotland as they pray, that they will hear from God for their nation. (1Tm.2:1-3)

More: <http://www.ppscotland.org/#publicm>

■ Women's Institute asked to weed out sex ads

Harriet Harman, the minister for women, urged the group to act in a bid to cut out trafficking in women for the sex trade. A spokeswoman for the WI, which has more than 200,000 members across the country, told Radio 5 Live, members would be encouraged to look out for adverts and write letters of complaint to editors if they found them. She said the adverts, often placed in local newspapers, were the most common way used by men to access sexual services. She added: 'We have so many members we believe we can make a difference on the ground and in our local community.' Ms Harman has already won the support of local newspaper groups in her campaign to eliminate the adverts. A number of publications have agreed to institute a ban although others point out that the adverts are perfectly legal and there are no grounds to refuse them space.

Pray: that this initiative will lead to the media ceasing to publish this kind of advertising. (Ps.37:9)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/3517303/Womens-Institute-asked-to-weed-out-sex-ads.html>

■ New laws against forced marriages

Laws to prevent forced marriages and protect those who have already fallen victim have been introduced in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The laws mean anyone convicted of trying to force someone into marriage could be jailed for up to two years. A victim, friend or police can apply for a Forced Marriage Protection Order. These court injunctions will forbid families from actions such as taking people abroad for marriage, seizing passports or intimidating victims. The legislation is the first to specifically target the problem of forced marriages. Justice minister Bridget Prentice said: 'This new law is a powerful tool that will help ensure that no-one is forced into marriage against their will and those already in such marriages will receive protection.'

Pray: for those who are in an existing forced marriage and pray that the new law will very quickly prove effective in preventing such arrangements that enslave people into unhappiness. (Is.61:1)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7747267.stm>

■ £35,000 of taxpayers' cash given to 'atheist bus' group

The British Humanist Association (BHA), which is running a campaign to get rid of faith schools and end the Church of England's position as the established religion, was given the grant by the Government's equality watchdog and is using it to stage a series of debates about the place of religion in public life. The four events will include speakers from faith groups but one of the keynote addresses is being delivered by the prominent atheist Professor AC Grayling, who claims 'religious belief shares the same intellectual respectability and rationality as belief in the existence of fairies'. Critics say it is wrong for the Equality and Human Rights Commission to give taxpayers' money to a controversial organisation whose stance would be found objectionable by many members of the public. The BHA is also the 'official campaign partner' of the atheist bus campaign which seeks to place on London bendy-buses a series of adverts declaring: 'There's probably no God. Now stop worrying and enjoy your life. (See Prayer Alert 4308 and Praise article below)

Pray: for God to break through into the minds of these unbelievers with the true message of Christmas. (Ac.14:15)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstoppers/religion/3521024/35000-of-taxpayers-cash-given-to-atheist-bus-group.html>

EUROPE

■ Netherlands: Campaign for religious education in schools

Three Christian parties in the Netherlands have launched a campaign to secure millions of Euros to pay for religious education in public schools. The Christian Democrats, Labour and small Christian party ChristenUnie want the Cabinet to set aside 10 million Euros annually for the task. The coalition parties will put forward an amendment in the debate on the Education budget in mid-December. But the money will not only be used for Christian education, it will also be used in mosques, synagogues, churches and possibly even the Humanist Union, which will supply guest teachers to give religious lessons on their behalf at non-denominational schools. The government will impose quality requirements on the teachers. Although the coalition has won some support they still lack the backing of the Education State Secretary. Their call comes after a payment of 2.7 million Euros last year to pay for start-up costs.

Pray: that many spirit filled Christian teachers will be recruited into this project. (Lk.4:36)

More: <http://www.religiousintelligence.co.uk/news/?NewsID=3390>

■ China: Calls off EU summit

China, angry at plans for Tibet's spiritual leader the Dalai Lama to visit Europe, has called off a summit with the European Union next Monday which may have forged a joint response to the global economic crisis. The 27 nation bloc expressed regret at Beijing's decision but pledged to continue to promote a strategic partnership 'at a time when the global economic and financial situation calls for very close cooperation between Europe and China.' France confirmed President Nicolas Sarkozy would meet the Dalai Lama at a December 6 ceremony in Poland to mark the 25th anniversary of the award of the Nobel Prize to former Solidarity leader Lech Walesa, despite Beijing's displeasure. European Central Bank President, the head of euro zone finance ministers, and EU Economic and Monetary Affairs Commissioner had been due to meet Chinese counterparts on the sidelines of the Polish Lyon summit to discuss the global crisis.

Pray: for godly joint ventures between the world and China's leaders. (Job12:23)

More: <http://www.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSTRE4AP44320081126>

WORLDWIDE

■ India: Mumbai - Who are the Deccan Mujahideen?

Attacks in Mumbai were claimed by an unknown group called the Deccan Mujahideen. However the pattern of attacks suggests that Lashkar-e-Taiba, an Islamist organization based in Lahore and with a significant presence in Kashmir and links to al Qaeda, may be to blame. Lashkar-e-Taiba's goal is to expel India from Kashmir. In the past, some have accused elements of the Pakistani military and intelligence services of having ties to the group. Pakistan's government has always denied such accusations. Another group calling itself the 'Indian Mujahideen' has claimed responsibility for attacks in a number of different cities over several months. They sent a warning in September expressing anger over recent raids by the city's antiterrorism squad (ATS). The message from the Deccan Mujahideen appears to be identical. Terrorism experts say Indian Mujahideen are most likely to blame, and are the same group as the Deccan Mujahideen.

Pray: for the victims and their families and for the authorities to unite in condemning and standing against all forms of terrorism. (Pr.3:31)

More: <http://blog.foreignpolicy.com/node/10392>

■ Zimbabwe: Terrible stories of annihilation

A cry from Zimbabwe via email to our office: 'Terrible things are taking place here caused by the communist thugs ruling this place. We are all terrified at what they are going to destroy next as riot police come in with AK47's and bulldozers demolishing brick and mortar houses without allowing families to salvage anything. To be frank with you, it's genocide in the making and if you do not believe me, read the Genocide Report by Amnesty International which says we are in level 7 (level 8 is after it's happened and everyone is in denial). The pall of smoke all around our city, thousands of homeless people sleeping outside in 0 Celsius with no food, water, shelter or bedding are a reality. This Government has GONE MAD. We no longer have SW radio because the Government jammed it out of existence, we don't have any reporters and no one is allowed to photograph. You need to help us publicize our plight, or how can we be rescued?' Also BBC reports the Cholera outbreak is the greatest threat that Zimbabwe has ever had to face. See the 'More' link.

Pray: for God to create avenues for the truth to be heard, resources released and justice to be dispensed. (Pr.16:5)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/7750824.stm>

■ Egypt: Muslims storm Church

A crowd of Muslims estimated at 20,000 strong stormed the Coptic Orthodox Church of the Virgin Mary in West Ain Shams, Cairo because of an extension that was added. The incident started on the day of the inauguration of the Church, when in the early hours of the morning Muslims hastily took over the first floor of a building facing the church, created a Mosque and started praying there. They later set fire to the church and at least one thousand Christians were trapped inside after being attacked with stones and butane gas cylinders. The Church building was originally a factory that was adapted into its present state. It took over five years to complete and to get the necessary permissions from the authorities to have a Church established.

Pray: that human rights organisations and lawyers will bring justice and recompense. (Pr.16:29)

More: <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/2008/s08110156.htm>

■ Thailand: Army calls for new elections

Protesters in Thailand have been occupying key government buildings since late August demanding the resignation of the government and have taken over Bangkok's International airport. Government spokesman Nattawut Saikaur said it was unlikely that the prime minister will dissolve the house, less than a year after elections brought his People Power Party to office. 'The prime minister has long reiterated that if he has to quit, it would be through democratic means,' he told reporters. The Thai army chief, Gen Anupong Paochinda, has urged for fresh elections to be called and demanded the protesters vacate the airport. The protests are led by the royalist People's Alliance for Democracy which claims the government is corrupt and hostile to the country's monarchy.

Pray: for a peaceful outcome to this situation. (Ecc.9:17)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/7584005.stm>

■ Middle East: Muslim columnist speaks up for persecuted Christian minority

On 25 October the Palestinian Muslim columnist, Abd Al-Nasser Al-Najjar, wrote a column for the Palestinian daily Al-Ayyam, focussing on persecution of Christians in Arab countries. He warned that the expulsion of Christians and the

attempt to denounce them as 'infidels' was causing great damage to the Arab culture, of which Christians are an essential and original part. His article criticised the fact that no one dared to come to the help of persecuted Christian minorities in the Middle East and he condemned the unwillingness of Arab intellectuals, the elite, non-government organisations and leaders of the private sector to act on behalf of Christians. The Middle East Media Research Institute a non-profit organisation that translates and analyses the media of the Middle East, translated the article into English and published the excerpts on its website.

Pray: for more secular bodies to recognise the discrimination, harassment and persecution of Christians by the Muslim majority. (Mt.5:44)

More: http://www.barnabasfund.org/News/archives/text.php?ID_news_items=431

■ **Kyrgyzstan: Restrictive religion law passed**

Urgent prayer is needed for Kyrgyzstan after the country's parliament unanimously passed legislation on November 6 to strengthen government control over religious groups. Critics have attacked the move as a breach of international human rights standards. Proselytising would be strongly curtailed in the mostly Muslim Central Asian nation, faith organizations will have to disclose financial information to authorities and the bill requires religious organizations to have a minimum of 200 members whose identities have been confirmed by local authorities; thus making it impossible for smaller churches to function legally. Even larger congregations will have difficulty getting 200 members to sign the necessary documents as history shows that these believers have good reason to be nervous about registering their names with the government. The law also includes dissemination of religious literature in public places and a ban on private religious teaching at all levels of education, outlawing private religious schools, will also be prohibited, according to the AP.

Pray: that no measures to quell Christian influence in Kyrgyzstan will succeed. (Is.32:1)

More: <http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2008/11/06/asia/AS-Kyrgyzstan-Religion-Law.php>

■ **Eritrea: New crackdown on Christians**

Eritrea's government has launched a fresh crackdown on Christians with reports that at least 110 evangelical believers have been detained in all parts of the country except the capital since last week, a well-informed rights group said Wednesday, November 26.

Pray: for a mighty act of God's power and authority to end the habitual violence against Christians in Eritrea. (Da.7:14)

More: <http://www.bosnewslife.com/africa/eritrea/3916-news-alert-eritrea-launches-new-crackdown-on>

PRAISE REPORTS

■ **Christian bus adverts declare Good News to London's commuters**

MEMO, a ministry dedicated to spreading the Good News on public transport networks for 125 years, has launched a new advertising campaign on London buses reassuring commuters of God's comfort in the midst of the global credit crunch. The campaign, launched on Monday, will see MEMO's ads displayed inside 200 buses throughout central London for the next four weeks. They ask commuters if they feel 'Crunched?' before quoting Luke 2:10-11, 'Don't be afraid! I am here with good news for you -- This very day in Bethlehem your Saviour was born -- Christ the Lord.' This comes ahead of an ad campaign on London buses by the British Humanist Association in January, running with the provocative slogan, 'There's probably no God. Now stop worrying and enjoy your life.' (See also story in GB & I) 'Amidst all the discouraging news in our nation we trust that many will find peace and reassurance as they respond to the Good News that Christ is the Lord' said a spokesperson for MEMO.

Praise: that many will be challenged to respond and will want to know more about God's message for them personally at this time. (Is.52:7)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/christian.bus.adverts.declare.good.news.to.londons.commuters/21981.htm>

■ **Renowned abortionist becomes pro-life advocate**

Former European abortionist Stojan Adasevic was known as the best abortionist in Belgrade having performed at least 48,000 abortions but he now says abortion is 'satanic' and has become one of the nation's most active pro-life advocates. Although his mother tried to abort him he'd never thought of abortion as murder until he began having daily recurring dreams about the children that he aborted. 'It was a long time before I grasped the fact that a child in the mother's womb is a living person, not from the time it draws its first breath but from the instant the human embryo is formed. This is a real war, waged by the born upon the unborn,' he told Love One Another Magazine. Since his last abortion Adasevic has been instrumental in the nation's anti-abortion movement. He succeeded twice in having state television air 'The Silent Scream,' a harrowing recording of an actual abortion.

Praise: God for this testimony and ask Him to use Stojan's witness to influence Serbian views on abortion. (Ps.139:13)

More: <http://charismamag.com/cms/news/archives/112508.php>

PRAYER FORUM OF BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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