



PRAYER ALERT...

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BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Bishops' call to 'come as you are' this Sunday

'Back to Church Sunday' takes place this weekend, with thousands of people set to return to churches of all denominations following a personal invitation from a friend. Church of England bishops are embarking on a week-long drive to get their message of 'open invitation' across, prompting some bishops to speak out about the need for the Church to shed its 'middle class' image. The Rt Revd Stephen Cottrell, Bishop of Reading, has spoken out about the need for the Church to be truly welcoming: 'Even today I meet people who think you have to be highly educated or suited and booted to be a person who goes to church. That's so frustrating. How did it come to this, that we have become known as just the Marks and Spencer option when in our heart of hearts we know that Jesus would just as likely be in the queue at Asda or Aldi?'

Pray: for Back to Church Sunday, that people in all sections of society will feel welcome. (2Pe.1:11)

More: <http://www.cofe.anglican.org/news/pr8609.html>

■ Suspended Christian nurse files claim for discrimination

A Christian nurse from Exeter, facing disciplinary action for simply wearing a necklace on which hung her Confirmation Cross, has, under duress, today accepted an offer of redeployment and has instructed lawyers to file an action at the Employment Tribunal for discrimination. Shirley Chaplin, having served as a nurse for nearly 30 years, was threatened with disciplinary action after refusing to remove a necklace bearing a Cross – a symbol of her deeply felt Christian faith. The Royal Devon & Exeter Trust Hospital ordered her to remove it, deeming it a health risk to her and to patients. The nurse's campaign has been taken up by her local MP, Richard Younger-Ross, Lib Dem MP for Teignbridge. He said: 'This appears to be a case of religious bias and political correctness being wrapped up as health and safety when it's nothing of the sort.'

Pray: for all those in the workplace who find their faith under attack in the name of political correctness or Health & Safety. (Ps.109:28)

More: <http://www.ccfon.org/view.php?id=854>

■ Christian hotel owners in legal battle after complaint by Muslim guest

The Christian owners of a hotel in Liverpool face a £5,000 fine and criminal record after a Muslim guest complained she had been insulted. The unnamed woman accuses Ben and Sharon Vogelenzang of suggesting that the Islamic Prophet Mohammad was a warlord and the hijab was a form of bondage during a conversation at the couple's hotel, according to the Daily Mail. The Vogelenzangs have run The Bounty Hotel for six years and are members of the Bootle Christian Fellowship. They deny the allegations and insist that they were merely defending their faith when challenged about their Christian beliefs. Police have charged the couple under the Public Order Act 1986, which makes it a crime to use 'threatening, abusive or insulting words' that are 'religiously aggravated'. It was originally passed to root out abusive behaviour on the streets. They are due in court in December supported by the Christian Institute.

Pray: for all Christians who speak boldly about their faith that they will be full of wisdom and spirit led. (2Ti.1:7)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/christian.hotel.owners.in.legal.battle.after.complaint.by.muslim.guest/24229.htm>

■ Legalise sex at 13, says Prof on BBC

The BBC have broadcast a show featuring an academic's plea for the age of consent to be lowered so that young teenagers are free to have sex. Professor John Spencer set out his views on the Radio 4 programme *Iconoclasts*, aired last Wednesday night, before answering challenges from a panel. Prof Spencer argued that the current age of consent of 16 criminalises 'half the population' who broke the law as youngsters. He called for the age of consent to be lowered to 13 so that all teenagers can engage in sexual activity legally. But supporters of the current law say it protects youngsters from exploitation. Former Conservative Home Office Minister Ann Widdecombe MP said: 'The proposition that the age of consent should be lowered is absolutely appalling. The situation is bad enough at the moment with high rates of teenage pregnancies and sexual diseases.'

Pray: for our youngsters who frequently need boundaries to be made clearer not blurred further. (Ps.32:8)

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/legalise-sex-at-13-says-prof-on-bbc/>

■ Conference to help churches welcome people with learning disabilities

Churches will be encouraged to reach out to the 1.5 million people in the UK who have learning disabilities at a conference being held next month in London. The one-day conference on October 16 is being hosted by Prospects, a national Christian charity specialising in helping churches provide Christian support and spiritual development for people with learning disabilities. Cabinet Minister and the Labour Party Vice-Chair for Faith Groups will be a keynote speaker. David Bendor-Samuel, Corporate Affairs Director at the charity, said: 'People with learning disabilities are often denied the opportunity to develop their faith and make their voices heard in society. 'This event will provide a chance for church leaders and others to listen to people with learning disabilities as they share their experiences, challenges and faith.'

Pray: that this conference will have a positive impact in the way churches minister to the people with learning disabilities. (Mt.7:8)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/conference.to.help.churches.welcome.disabled.people/24242.htm>

■ Christian Legal Centre statement on DPP's Assisted Suicide Guidelines

The Christian Legal Centre is deeply concerned at the publication by the DPP today, 23rd September, of interim guidelines relating to assisted suicide and factors which will weigh against prosecution. Although the guidelines will be subject to consultation before becoming a fully established policy, the Centre's Executive Director, Barrister Andrea Williams has serious misgivings. 'Our hearts of course go out to elderly and unwell people who are suffering and to their loved ones. But we believe that all life should be protected in law and that the guidelines published today will cause great harm. Learning from other jurisdictions where assisted suicide has been legalised, there has been a shift towards seeing themselves as a burden on their families and being under a 'duty to die'. Additionally, we are concerned that the system will be open to abuse and to a creeping, ever-widening application. To read full coverage on this breaking story please click the 'More' link.

Pray: that the consultation over this proposed legislation will receive a fair hearing and not lead to creeping abuse. (Pr.2:6-7,12)

More: <http://www.christianlegalcentre.com/view.php?id=858>

■ Thought for the Day controversy to be aired in public debate

The Church and Media Network will host a public debate on BBC Radio 4's controversial Thought for the Day next month. The motion for debate is that 'This house believes that Humanist speakers should be included in BBC Radio 4's Thought for the Day'. The two minute slot will come into sharp focus this autumn when the BBC Trust will deliver a ruling on a formal complaint that humanist views are under-represented by the BBC, with Thought for the Day cited in evidence. Announcing the debate the Director of the Church and Media Network Andrew Graystone said: 'Thought for the Day is a totemic issue for the humanist movement. But some fear that it is religious, not secular voices that are in danger of being under-represented'.

Pray: that this public debate would lead to the BBC Trust recognising that there is a danger of side-lining Christianity, the foundation of its own beginnings. (1Cor.3:10-11)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.co.uk/article/thought.for.the.day.controversy.to.be.aired.in.public.debate/24237.htm>

EUROPE

■ It's time for Europe

It all began in the 1960s with a gifted evangelist Korky Davey and team members travelling in a van from the West Country to the continent where their innovative approach to reaching people with the Gospel facilitated local outreach. Since then Open Air Campaigners Britain has been responsible for opening up ministries in 12 European countries through fully committed British and national workers. At a European Zone Conference in September, OAC Britain was asked to assume oversight of evangelism in Greece, Italy and Spain. Today Europe is the only part of the world where the church is actually shrinking. OAC wants to firmly put the focus on this spiritual need. OAC offers specialist training in effective open air evangelism and its evangelists attract substantial numbers of people on every continent. As an interdenominational society, outreach is church based.

Pray: for the workers in OAC to be gifted by the Spirit with evangelism and teaching, enabling the Kingdom to grow. (Mt.6:9-10)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/its.time.for.europe/24241.htm>

■ European Commission accused over threatened action against Lithuania

The European Commission has been attacked for threatening legal action against a proposed Lithuanian law that, among other things, would ban 'public information' aimed at minors and promoting 'homosexual, bisexual or polygamous relations.' Critics say the threatened action amounts to unwarranted interference by the European Union in the sovereignty of a member state in the area of family law which is not a direct competence of the EU. The proposed law, called 'Law on the protection of minors against the detriment effect of public information' was condemned in a resolution passed by the European Parliament yesterday. Lithuania is accused of being in breach the Charter of Fundamental Rights, as well as Article 13 of the EC Treaty which bans discrimination on multiple grounds including sexual orientation. Several MEPs condemned the resolution for interfering in Lithuanian law and for breaching the principle of subsidiarity which respects member-state sovereignty.

Pray: for the EU that it would not overrule but respect the rights of sovereign states. (Lev.25:43)

More: <http://www.ionainstitute.ie/news.php?idx=1&num1=0726#0726>

WORLDWIDE

■ INSIGHT ARTICLE: USA Emergency Prayer: Muslims convening on Capitol Hill today

A massive Islamic Jummah Prayer (Friday prayer) event is taking place today Friday September 25, 2009. Organizers expect 50,000 Muslims to gather to 'express and illustrate the wonderful diversity of Islam.' According to their website www.islamOnCapitolHill.com the goal will be to 'manifest Islam's majestic spiritual principles as revealed by Allah' The gathering is being heralded as an opportunity to 'inspire a new generation of Muslims.' They are planning to hold it in Washington, DC at the US Capitol building in the very area where US presidents are inaugurated, with the Athan (Islamic call to prayer) 'echoing off the Lincoln Memorial, the Washington Monument and other great edifices that surround Capitol Hill.' The central purpose, the website says, is Islamic prayer. Muslims from a variety of races, ethnic backgrounds, and nationalities will be coming together to show their solidarity and the 'wonderful diversity of Islam.' Muslim groups have a 20 year plan to make America an Islamic country by the year 2020. www.TheReligionofPeace.com To enable more informed intercession click the insights button.

Pray: America will be dedicated to the Lord Jesus Christ and for an immediate end to any growth plans of radical and systematic Islam. (Is.40:5)

More: <http://www.prayer-alert.net/info/3909-USAinsight3.pdf>

■ Taiwan: School of witchcraft

A witchcraft school has started in Pingtung County Taiwan by an aboriginal tribe who fear their ancestral rituals, which incorporate witchcraft, are vanishing. The school which currently has ten students but hopes to expand intends to pass on psychic acts to the young generation. Wong Yu-hua, a social affairs official in Pingtung County said, 'We do not have a written language. That makes it hard for young Paiwans to learn the ritual.' The school teaches pupils rituals for blessing people and protecting them from evil. Witches can use their powers to worship gods and ancestors, pray for weather, harvests, healing treatments, rituals for hunting and tattooing. Wong, a descendant of witches, began a campaign to preserve the traditions despite opposition from her mother, an 87-year-old witch who held the traditional belief that witchcraft is inherited through blood lines and not learnt in a classroom. Eventually her mother and three other witches were persuaded to open the class, which is held twice a week.

Pray: that as the Paiwans reach out for the supernatural, God will break into their lives in power and enable them to touch the hem of Jesus' cloak. (Eph.2:8-9)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/expat/6207476/School-of-witchcraft-opens-in-Taiwan.html>

■ UN: Told of killing 'witches' on the rise

Murder and persecution of women and children accused of being witches is spreading around the world and destroying the lives of millions of people, according to United Nations officials, civil society representatives from affected countries and non-governmental organization specialists. Aides to UN special investigators on women's rights and on summary executions said killings and violence against alleged witch women - often elderly people - were becoming common events in countries ranging from South Africa to India. Workers from Nepal and Papua New Guinea told the UN's 47-member Human Rights Council, that 'witch-hunting' was now common both in rural communities and larger population centres. Children living homeless on the streets in many countries had been driven out by families or communities because they were suspected of being witches. UN officials said deaths ran into at least tens of thousands, and beatings, deprivation of 'witch frenzy' ran into millions.

Pray: for the Lord's righteousness and justice to enable the upright to experience his compassion. (Ps.11:4-5)

More: <http://www.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSTRE58M4Q820090923>

■ Uzbekistan: Raid against a registered church

The latest report of Forum 18 News Service shows that oppression against both registered and non-registered religious communities in the form of fines, imprisonment and confiscation of religious literature is still an ongoing reality in Uzbekistan. On 23 August in the capital Tashkent seven church members of the legally registered Donam Protestant church were arrested by Anti-Terror Police officers, who raided the regular Sunday afternoon worship service. Three of them were released, but four including pastor Vladimir Tyo were sentenced to 15-day prison terms for 'violation of the procedure for organising and conducting meetings'. The other three of the detained were released. Christian literature was also confiscated and destroyed without giving any reasons. World Evangelical Alliance ask us to pray for God's peace and restoration over Pastor Vladimir Tyo and Donam Protestant church, his protection over Christians in Uzbekistan and for true religious freedom in the country.

Pray: according to the declaration on Human Rights - for the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, to

change religion or belief and freedom, to manifest their religion in teaching, practice, worship and observance. (Zep.3:19)

More: <http://www.forum18.org/>

■ **Pakistan: School blown up in Peshawar**

The Taliban bombed a primary school in Terai Payan village in Peshawar on Tuesday. The bomb disposal squad officials said the Taliban planted around 20 kilogrammes of explosives near the school, which has 95 girls and 400 boy students. Jalat Khan, a teacher at the school, said they bombed the school at 2am on Tuesday. Locals said the watchman of the school had briefly left the premises when the Taliban blew it up. Meanwhile unidentified armed men attacked a security forces convoy in Spena Thana in the Matani police precincts on Wednesday, injuring a security official. Official sources said the men opened fire at the convoy of soldiers going from Darra Adam Khel to Peshawar.

Pray: for God to powerfully break the rod of oppression restricting access to a full and abundant life. (Mt.18:10)

More: http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009\09\24\story_24-9-2009_pg7_12

■ **Global: UN resolution to scrap nuclear arsenals**

Barack Obama will be the first US president to host a meeting of the UN Security Council and chair a meeting which could lead to a call for all nations to scrap their nuclear arsenals. Diplomats said that council members were expected on Thursday to unanimously adopt a US-drafted resolution that declares there is a 'need to pursue further efforts in the sphere of nuclear disarmament'. It will also urge all countries that have not signed the 1970 Non-Proliferation Treaty to do so. All five permanent Security Council members - the United States, Russia, China, Britain and France - have nuclear weapons. UN signatories without nuclear capabilities have criticised the permanent council members for barring other nations from developing nuclear programmes while failing to live up to commitments to disarm.

Pray: that this draft and all new resolutions produced at the UN will usher in God's way forward for His world,

More: <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/americas/2009/09/200992453939582558.html>

■ **Kenya: Missionaries appeal for food aid**

Catholic missionaries are appealing for food aid from government, international and local donors to feed famine stricken people in the arid area of Maralal northern Kenya. Yarumal Missionary, Fr Vitner Vidal Marting said that two boys died two months ago because of hunger and the situation is desperate with insecurity increasing in the last few days. People are walking for long distances begging for food and water in the parishes and outstations. Fr Marting said that the situation is forcing the church to give food only to pregnant women, children and the poor, 'even what we give is not enough and our food reserves are completely empty.' He said that it is a very sad situation where they are forced to send hungry people back home without food. Humans and animals are fighting for the same water points in order to survive. The World Food Programme had promised food every week but has failed to meet their obligations and people are still waiting.

Pray: for God to enable a fair distribution of resources amongst all the peoples of the area. (Pr.11:25)

More: http://www.africanews.com/site/list_message/22362#m22362

PRAISE REPORTS

■ **Premier Christian Radio becomes national digital service**

Premier Christian Radio has joined the national commercial digital radio service Digital One after its supporters helped raise the £650,000 annual transmission cost. The station, which previously broadcast on medium wave and DAB digital radio in the London area, as well as digital TV and online, became the UK's first national Christian radio station when it began broadcasting on Digital One today. Church bells are due to ring out across the country all this week to celebrate the launch, in a joint initiative with the Central Council of Bell Ringers and Ringing World magazine. Premier Christian Radio asked its supporters for help to raise the cost of broadcasting on Digital One, estimated at £650,000 a year, in an appeal to listeners last month. 'For the past few years it's been our ambition to bring Christian radio to listeners across Britain,' said the Premier Christian Radio chief executive, Peter Kerridge.

Praise: God for the increase of His Kingdom over the airwaves. (Dt.1:11)

More: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2009/sep/21/premier-christian-radio-national-dab>

■ **USA: 60,000 pray in Times Square!**

You can see almost anything at Times Square in Manhattan. But 60,000 people praying? That's an unusual sight in the heart of Broadway. Yet, that's just what happened on Monday for one hour – from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. in a Christian rally called Prayer in the Square. Event organizers had expected some 15,000. But their expectations were far exceeded at the third event of its kind in the last three years. City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who helped the church cut through the red tape necessary to hold such an event, addressed the crowd. 'It's a little strange for me to be up here,' he said. 'I'm a Jew. But I just celebrated Rosh Hoshana, our new year. So I guess it's appropriate for me to wish you all a happy new year.' No major media covered it – even in the centre of the media world on a slow news day.

Praise: God for this gathering of His people and pray that the media will open its eyes to what God is doing. (2Ch.7:15)

More: <http://www.wnd.com/index.php?fa=PAGE.view&pageId=110605>

PRAYER FORUM OF THE BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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