



PRAYER ALERT...



An initiative of the Prayer Forum of the British Isles & Ireland
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Issue 4309

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Friday 23 October 2009

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BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Axe references to Christianity secular MPs urge Government

The Government is being urged by a group of powerful MPs to axe references to Christianity from the constitutions of Britain's far-flung outposts. To the dismay of Church leaders, the Foreign Affairs Committee is pressing for the change amid claims that references to traditional Christian morality could undermine gay rights in the overseas territories. The committee, chaired by Labour MP Mike Gapes, also objects to Christianity being singled out above other faiths. But the recommendation, which the Foreign Office says is being 'carefully considered', has provoked anger among Church leaders and politicians, with the Bishop of Winchester, the Rt Rev Michael Scott-Joynt, condemning the move as 'spurious political correctness'. Tory MP and former Minister Ann Widdecombe added: 'As far as I am concerned, it is proof positive that this Government is anti-Christian.'

Pray: for an understanding that references to Christian morality in these constitutions should not have a negative impact on the human rights of people living there. (Pr.2:11)

More: <http://www.ccfon.org/view.php?id=871>

■ You can be good without God, Denham tells church leaders

A government minister whose department is in charge of public policy on faith, and aims to build cohesion by bringing believers of different religions together, told church leaders last night it was possible to be good without God and challenged the assumption that faith organisations alone were responsible for 'defining, shaping and transmitting values'. John Denham, secretary of state for communities and local government, accepted an invitation from Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, an ecumenical body representing Christian denominations, to speak on the subject of inter-faith relations and government policy. In his speech at Methodist Church House, London, he said he was a secular humanist and it would take a 'skilled theological surgeon' to separate these beliefs from his Church of England upbringing. He told the audience he recognised the important contribution of religious groups to society, but refused to accept that religion enjoyed a monopoly on the direction and nature of the country's moral character.

Pray: for all those who do good for others but also pray for recognition of the permanency of God's truth in a world of constantly shifting moral values. (Ps.86:11)

More: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/oct/20/denham-morality-church-leaders>

■ British girls aged 12 sold into sex trade

British girls as young as twelve are being sold to wealthy men for sex at up to £50,000 a time, it has been disclosed. Three women and a man have been arrested in Manchester after secretly being filmed offering to sell six girls aged between 14 and 23 at a five-star West London hotel. They were also caught on video offering even younger, prepubescent girls. A

senior insider from the vice unit of the Metropolitan Police said: 'This is about as sick as it gets. 'These are among the youngest girls we've found being offered for sex.' Our inquiries continue and we expect more arrests.' An NSPCC spokesperson said: 'Unscrupulous traffickers are controlling and terrorising vulnerable children within the UK, forcing some into the sex industry and abusing and exploiting many others'.

Pray: for the victims of these terrible crimes and for those working to prevent such abuse. (Ps.21:11)

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/british-girls-aged-12-sold-into-sex-trade/>

■ Numbers soar of children in care

Record numbers of children are being taken into care because social workers have become frightened of taking risks in the wake of the Baby Peter scandal. Figures released yesterday show that applications for children to be taken into care have doubled in the past year. Cafcass, the children's court agency, said the rise was partly caused by some social workers referring 'lower level concerns' in case they make a mistake by 'under-reacting'. But the organisation warned that the rapid increase of cases was placing a great strain on the system, as its staff were now working round the clock to meet the demand. Some 784 applications were filed in June this year, more than double the 368 cases in June 2008. This is the highest care demand figure recorded in any month by Cafcass. Anthony Douglas, the Cafcass chief executive, said: 'While the rise in applications is good news for children who need protection, the child care system will need to gear up to support these much higher volumes.'

Pray: for all those working in Child Care that they will be able to fully carry out their work for the sake of the children. (1Jn.5:2)

More: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/children-in-care-numbers-soar-1806255.html>

■ Faith communities have 'vital' role to play in tackling climate change

At a meeting in London of the 17 biggest carbon-emitting nations this week a Nobel Prize-winning Climate scientist said faith had 'everything to do' with curbing global warming and preserving the planet; saying 'Whatever religion you espouse they all teach you values of fellowship and respect for others and it's very important to build on that base'. Gordon Brown warned of a climate catastrophe if world leaders failed to reach an agreement and said there was 'no plan B'. Leaders agreed that more funds should be made available for developing countries to adapt to the impact of climate change. UK Climate Secretary Ed Miliband said he felt a deal at Copenhagen was now more 'do-able' after the London talks. (Praise God) The view now is that the Copenhagen agreement could not be made at any price, but that countries have come a long way and the intention is to translate that into an agreement by the end of the year. (See Prayer Alert 4209)

Pray: for a continuing change of attitude by all ambassadors and that they would do what is right in the eyes of the Lord. (2Ki.15:3)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/faith.communities.have.vital.role.to.play.in.tackling.climate.change/24429.htm>

■ British soldiers working with Afghan National Army (ANA)

There are a number of small teams (8 or 9 men) of British soldiers who work operationally with the Afghan National Army (ANA). These teams can work with anything up to 80 ANA with most communication, even on the battlefield, being done through an interpreter. The majority of the junior Afghan soldiers are illiterate, cannot read a map and lack the discipline of British soldiers. Nevertheless, they have courage, dedication and good humour.

Pray: for good relationships between Afghan and British troops and their safety. Also for the interpreters who play such a key role. Pray that the British soldiers will be sensitive to Afghan culture and the local inhabitants. (Ex.18:20-21)

More: <http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/DefenceNews/MilitaryOperations/BritishstyleTrainingFacilityHelpsAfghanArmyTakeOnTheTaliban.htm>

■ **BREAKING NEWS:** Unexpected Assisted Suicide vote next week urgent action required

Having debated assisted suicide at great length in July and rejected it by a majority of 53, it was deemed very unlikely that another assisted suicide amendment would be allowed during the Lords' consideration of the Coroners and Justice Bill. Lord Alderdice, however, has just been permitted to table an assisted suicide amendment which will probably be addressed next Monday (October 26th, possibly on Wednesday 28th). There is now an urgent need to write to peers asking them, say CARE, to vote against Amendment 66 in the name of Lord Alderdice and indeed any other amendments that might be put down that seek to liberalise the law on assisted suicide. You will find a list of peers who are known to oppose the legalisation of assisted suicide on the 'More' link. Please write to them urging them to be present to vote against the Alderdice amendment (66), should it come to the vote. (See Prayer Alert 2809)

Pray: that this amendment and other similar ones will again be rejected. (Ro.7:22)

More: <http://www.carenotkilling.org.uk/?show=848>

EUROPE

■ Rome rules on admitting Anglicans

Groups of Anglicans will be able to join the Roman Catholic Church but maintain a distinct religious identity under changes announced by the Pope. The Vatican said the new rules follow requests from Anglicans wanting to join but retain their liturgical heritage. It comes amid splits among Anglicans worldwide over homosexuality and the ordination of women. But Archbishop of Canterbury Dr Rowan Williams said he did not think it was a 'commentary on Anglican problems'. Causes of discord in the worldwide Anglican Communion have included the election of an openly gay bishop and the blessing of same-sex unions. In the Church of England, the ordination of women as priests, and the prospect of their appointment as

bishops, has led many Anglicans to consider joining the Roman Catholics. Two senior opponents of women bishops said they would announce their reaction to the Vatican move in February.

Pray: for harmony in the church so that it can focus on proclaiming the Gospel of Christ. (Mk.13:10)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/8316120.stm>

■ Big anti-abortion rally in Spain

More than a million people are said to have taken part in a march in Madrid to oppose government plans to liberalise Spain's abortion law. Several dozen centre-right opposition parties joined the demonstration, which was backed by Roman Catholic bishops. Socialist Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero wants to introduce abortion on demand. At present, a pregnancy can only be terminated in mainly Catholic Spain under specific circumstances. The government wants the procedure to be available to all women up until the 14th week of pregnancy. Most controversially, the draft law currently before parliament would also permit girls aged 16 and 17 to have an abortion without their parents' knowledge. It is the latest in a series of ethical issues which have pitted the Catholic right against the government, which has legalised gay marriage and made divorce easier. The march brought together more than 40 religious and civil society groups calling for the government to withdraw the draft bill.

Pray: that the evidence presented by this demonstration would be listened to by the government. (Ps.50:5-6)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/8311824.stm>

WORLDWIDE

■ Pakistan: Taliban threatens to kill more Christians

In a letter sent to the Christian community in the north-eastern city of Sargodha Taliban militants said Christians should convert to Islam, pay an Islamic tax imposed on religious minorities, known as 'Jizya tax', or leave the country. If Christians refuse to accept these choices they 'will be killed, their property and homes will be burnt to ashes and their women treated as sex slaves,' said a letter distributed to BosNewsLife and other media by rights group International Christian Concern. The Christians 'themselves would be responsible for this,' the letter added. This statement emerged as Pakistan's army prepared for a ground offensive in South Waziristan following a string of attacks believed to be part of a Taliban campaign that killed more than 150 people in the last two weeks. Christians have been in the cross-fire or directly targeted by Islamic militants with links to the Taliban and al-Qaida. Christians are accused of representing an evil Western religion and supporting the U.S.-led war on terror.

Pray: for a hedge of protection around Christians and for terrorist organizations to lose power and influence and members. (Ps.3:8)

More: <http://www.bosnewslife.com/9463-breaking-news-taliban-threatens-to-kill-more-christians>

■ Iran: Unexpected turn of events – keep praying

The case of two Iranian women who converted to Christianity took an unexpected turn for the better on Saturday when their case was transferred to a new judge who was sympathetic to their situation. (See Prayer Alert 1609 & 4209) The two young converts were unexpectedly called to appear in court on the morning of Oct. 7 to face charges of anti-state activities, propagation of the Christian faith, and apostasy. The new judge acquitted the defendants from the charge of anti-state activities, (this rarely happens.) Their case will now be transferred from the revolutionary court to the general court for the other two charges. Since March, the two have been detained in the infamous Evin prison where they were denied medical attention and often blindfolded for interrogations for several hours at a time. Amirzadeh is said to be enduring ongoing pain from a spinal problem, as well as an infected tooth and intense headaches. The only 'crime' the women have committed is being practicing Christians (See Prayer Alert 4209)

Pray: for the voice of ministries serving the persecuted church to be heard and for the women to win their battle for freedom soon. (Ps. 37:11-13)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/promising.development.in.case.of.iranian.women.converts/24401.htm>

■ Canada: Student staging protest

Students from all over the world gave up their voices on Wednesday in solidarity with children who have lost their lives to abortion. Red armbands and red duct tape on their mouths identified them as taking part in the sixth annual Pro-life Day of Silent Solidarity. They carried fliers explaining their silence. <http://www.lifesitenews.com/ldn/2009/oct/09102006.html> Jennifer Rankin joined the protest in Warton Ontario, but the principal called the police and her mother. He stated, 'while we support the right to free speech that does not include school property.' Last year several students took part in a similar protest against warnings of suspension or expulsion. This year, after similar warnings Jennifer was the only student to participate in the protest. The local youth pastor said the school does an annual 'Gay Pride' day where everybody wears pink shirts and that the school allows nude pictures on the wall to stand as 'art'.

Pray: that God would strengthen this generation of Christians in Canada as they stand against ungodly principles in their nation. (Dt.3:28)

More: <http://www.thepeterboroughexaminer.com/ArticleDisplay.aspx?e=2139616>

■ Ethiopia: Islamisation

Windows International reports that although Christianity has been present in Ethiopia since the early days of the Church Islam has come in successive waves and since 1974 Christians have increasingly been persecuted for their faith. Their report states, 'While Ethiopia is statistically a Christian nation, believers there are facing increasing levels of persecution. Muslims have started massive campaigns to Islamise Ethiopia by penetrating Christian areas with bribes and mosque-

building efforts. Islamic militants have also begun launching attacks on churches and Christians, which is why this 'Christian' has now entered the ranks of a persecuted country on the Open Doors World Watch List 2009.

Pray: for this ancient Christian nation to be guided back to the Lord and for a revival that would enable her to fulfil the purpose God intends for her. (Ex.34:10-14)

More: <http://win1040.com/blog/2009/10/21/october-2009-daily-country-profiles-day-22-ethiopia-myanmar/>

■ Israel: 'Met Iran' at nuclear talks

'Death to Israel' is the most firmly held tenet of the believers in Iran. Almost any bad news for the Islamic Republic is routinely blamed on 'Zionists'. At news conferences abroad, Iran's officials refuse to listen to questions from Israelis, let alone answer them. However, Israeli officials told the BBC on Thursday that senior Israeli and Iranian officials have met face-to-face and discussed the threat of nuclear arms when each side attended panel sessions of a disarmament and non-proliferation conference in Cairo in September. Iran had denied the Israeli accounts, but if confirmed it would be the first official exchange between the bitter foes since Iran's 1979 revolution. Representing Israel at the closed-door event was the head of arms control at the Israeli Atomic Agency, Meirav Zafary-Odiz. Also on Thursday, US and Israel began two weeks of tests to simulate missile attacks on Israel. The Juniper Cobra exercise involve 2,000 troops from the US European Command and the Israeli army. <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2009/10/200910212051766622.html>

Pray: that now would be the time for direct negotiations between Iran and Israel. (Est.4:14)

More: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/default.stm

■ Afghanistan: Fraud could be harder to spot

About 200 district election chiefs have been replaced because of 'corruption and incompetence' but some say this is unlikely to make any difference as both middle and senior officials were often involved in the fraud. It will do nothing to undermine the influence of warlords or community leaders who ordered ballot boxes stuffed or polling stations closed. 'Replacing them might act as a deterrent and they know fraud will be investigated but there's a good chance there'll be just as much fraud second time round. Only this time it will be much harder to spot because they've learnt their lessons from the first round.' an election observer said. A decision needs to be made whether to close 7,000 polling stations in parts of the country where the fraud was worst. Meanwhile Nato defence ministers are signing a counter-insurgency strategy, to approve an additional 40,000 troops and agree to a transitional exit strategy — linked to the total takeover of security by the Afghan National Army.

Pray: for God to bring an end to boasting, deceit and falsehood in the elections so that they will produce honest results. (Ps.52:6-8)

More: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/Afghanistan/>

PRAISE REPORTS

■ Australians vote Jesus as most significant figure in history

Anglican Media has reported that research commissioned by All About Life - polling both Believers and un-believers - found that 54% of Australians ranked Jesus as the number one most influential person in history beating Albert Einstein who came in at second place (16%) and Charles Darwin who was ranked third (9%). Other statistics reveal that 2 in 5 Australians say they practice their religion and only 27% do not believe in God or a universal power of any sort. Not surprisingly, the report states that desperate times call for desperate measures with the most common situations for prayer being when people are faced with challenging times (36%) or when a loved one has fallen ill (34%). However over 1 in 3 Australians also feel moved to pray when they are thankful for something good that has happened (34%). Most Australians turn to their family or loved ones for help and support rather than other avenues like the internet.

Praise: God for the results of this survey and pray that Jesus will remain number 1. (Ex.20:3)

More: http://www.breakingchristiannews.com/articles/display_art.html?ID=7234

■ Franklin Graham preaches to 10,000 at China megachurch

US evangelist Franklin Graham preached at the second largest church in China on Sunday, proclaiming to around 10,000 people the story of the salvation of tax collector Zacchaeus recorded in Luke 19. Before the overflowing crowd at Bethel Church of Baoding, located about 120 miles south of Beijing, Graham stressed that each person there was not just one figure in China's 1.3 billion population nor too insignificant to meet God. To the Almighty Lord, each of them is as important as Zacchaeus, who was given the choice to accept or reject Jesus' invitation to come down and meet him. 'I'm here today to tell you that not only does God know who you are, He loves you,' the evangelist said, according to Decision Magazine, the publication of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA). Sunday's appearance marked the second time in the past two years that the evangelist has preached to thousands in China.

Praise: God that so many gathered together to worship Him and hear of His love for them.

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/franklin.graham.preaches.to.10000.at.china.megachurch/24420.htm>

PRAYER FORUM OF THE BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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Prayer Alert is a partnership project of the Prayer Forum of the British Isles and Ireland
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