



PRAYER ALERT...



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BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ African and Caribbean leaders call churches to community action

Around 100 leaders from across the spectrum of African and Caribbean churches shared inspirational stories and spurred each other on to work together for the good of their communities at the conference, entitled 'The Black Church from Windrush to Obama: changing church, changing society'. Labour MP Stephen Timms and Conservative MP Desmond Swayne both addressed the gathering to stress the importance of engagement. Timms paid tribute to the work of Dr Albert Odulele's church, Glory House, in Barking, and Swayne compared the current challenge for the church with the mandate to Esther in the Old Testament: 'and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for just such a time as this.' His comments were echoed by other speakers throughout the day. There was also widespread agreement that the church can and must do more when it comes to the urgent tasks of social action, evangelisation and bringing God back into the public square.

Pray: that all the church will take up the mandate to unite under the banner of Christ. (Est.4:14a)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/african.and.caribbean.leaders.call.churches.to.community.action/24521.htm>

■ Police chief meets with churchmen

The leaders of Northern Ireland's four main churches met with the new PSNI Chief Constable on Monday. Matt Baggott met the leaders of the Catholic, Church of Ireland, Presbyterian and Methodist denominations in Armagh. He took up his post as the third leader of Northern Ireland's rebranded police service in September. He is also a practising Christian and is the president of the Christian Police Association. He met Cardinal Sean Brady of the Catholic Church, leader of the Church of Ireland Archbishop Alan Harper, Reverend Donald Kerr of the Methodist Church and Reverend Dr Stafford Carson of the Presbyterian Church, at Cardinal Brady's home for the 90-minute meeting. Dr Carson said: 'We are extremely grateful to Chief Constable Baggott for meeting with us. His extensive experience of community policing and clear leadership skills will be of great benefit to the people of Northern Ireland in the years ahead.'

Pray: for God's help and guidance for the Chief Constable and for the communities of Northern Ireland. (Ps.139:10)

More: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/8337998.stm

■ Schools' 'text for morning-after pill' scheme expands

A scheme encouraging schoolgirls as young as 11 to request the morning-after pill by text message is to be expanded. After an initial trial among six secondary schools, Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust (PCT) hopes to roll out the scheme across the county. The scheme, which allows schoolgirls to text requests for the morning-after pill to a school nurse who can then supply the pill during breaktime, has been roundly criticised. Family values campaigners say that making the morning-after pill more widely available encourages promiscuity among teenagers and that plans to expand the scheme 'beggar belief'.

The service was launched earlier this year after Oxfordshire saw a sharp rise in pregnancies among girls aged 18 and under. Under the scheme parents are not automatically informed of their daughters' requests for the morning-after pill, but child protection staff are alerted if a girl aged under 13 uses the service.

Pray: for a strengthening of family and moral values that will discourage promiscuity among our youngsters. (Ho.14:4a)

More: <http://www.anglican-mainstream.net/>

■ Divine help is in commuters' pockets

Commuters are to get a little divine help on their stressful journeys thanks to a new book of prayers written by a retired bishop. In *Pocket Prayers for Commuters*, the recently-retired Bishop of St Albans, the Right Reverend Christopher Herbert, tells commuters that while the daily grind can be stressful, 'real peace is waiting to be found'. He has recorded a podcast to promote the book, empathising with commuters about how the journey to and from work can take its toll. The morning, he says, 'might have been dark, wet and miserable' and the carriage 'packed'. 'It's not exactly a stress-free way to begin the day, is it?'. But he adds: 'Suppose that God himself is actually present with you, waiting to be discovered; that still, small voice hidden inside all the turbulence that you and your fellow-commuters face each day?' The book, published by the Church of England, contains prayers and reflections for five weeks of travel, out and return.

Pray: that this and similar initiatives may be an encouragement to stressed commuters. (Ps.29:11)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstoppers/religion/6494633/Divine-help-is-in-commuters-pockets.html>

■ Christian registrar to appeal over same-sex ceremonies

Controversial claims that Christians should not have to condone homosexuality will be made in the court of appeal, as a registrar says she suffered discrimination by being required to conduct same-sex civil partnership ceremonies. Lillian Ladele, has said she was treated unfairly in her role as a registrar for Islington council, which expected her to carry out the ceremonies despite her beliefs that they were 'contrary to God's law'. 'If this decision is allowed to stand it will help squeeze Christians from the public sphere because of their religious beliefs on ethical issues,' said Mike Judge, a spokesman for the Christian Institute, which is backing Ladele's appeal. 'The rights of Muslims and homosexuals are protected, but the rights of Christians always seem to be on a lower level,' he added. This hearing comes two years after Ladele was disciplined for refusing to perform the ceremonies. (See Prayer Alert 0309)

Pray: for this case as it continues that the rights of Christians will be considered as well as homosexuals. (1Cor.6:9)

More: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/nov/02/registrar-civil-partnerships-appeal-court>

■ Transsexual Jesus sparks protests

About 300 protesters held a candlelit protest outside a Glasgow theatre over the staging of a play which portrays Jesus as a transsexual. The protest was held outside the Tron Theatre, where *Jesus, Queen of Heaven* - in which Christ is a transsexual woman - is being staged. It is part of the Glasgay! arts festival, a celebration of Scotland's gay, bi-sexual and transsexual culture. Festival organisers said it had not intended to incite or offend anyone. The Christian protesters gathered outside the theatre ahead of the opening night of the production on Tuesday. Pastor Jack Bell, of the Zion Baptist Church in Glasgow, who took part in the protest, said: 'We didn't threaten anyone going into the play or any of the cast members. It was a peaceful protest with hymns and placards. You can't blaspheme God and use freedom of speech as an excuse'. He added, 'True biblical Christianity is becoming marginalised through political correctness.'

Pray: that the excuse of political correctness will not be used to marginalise the Christian faith. (Is.37:23)

More: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/glasgow_and_west/8342056.stm

■ Church of England launches seven-year climate change plan

The Church of England has used a meeting of global faith leaders and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to launch an environmental strategy for the next seven years. The gathering took place on 2 November in Windsor and discussed commitments on climate change in the run-up to the world's political leaders meeting in Copenhagen in December. Nine other faith groups have also made specific plans for their contribution to the struggle against human-assisted global warming. The strategy document, *Church and Earth*, outlines policies on climate change mitigation and adaptation. These will be overseen by the Church of England's 'Shrinking the Footprint' campaign, set up in 2006, and implemented by the Church's 43 dioceses and 16,200 churches. It will also involve the 4,700 taxpayer-funded schools it controls across the UK.

Pray: that these initiatives by the faith groups will act as a catalyst for governmental policies.

More: <http://www.ekkleisia.co.uk/node/10519>

EUROPE

■ Italy: School crucifixes 'barred'

The European Court of Human Rights has ruled against the use of crucifixes in classrooms in Italy. It said the practice violated the right of parents to educate their children as they saw fit, and ran counter to the child's right to freedom of religion. The case was brought by an Italian mother, Soile Lautsi, who wants to give her children a secular education. The Vatican said it was shocked by the ruling, calling it 'wrong and myopic' to exclude the crucifix from education. The ruling has sparked anger in the largely Catholic country, with one politician calling the move 'shameful'. The Strasbourg court found that: 'The compulsory display of a symbol of a given confession in premises used by the public authorities restricted the right of parents to educate their children in conformity with their convictions.' It also restricted the 'right of children to believe or not to believe', the judges said in a statement quoted by AFP news agency.

Pray: that the Christian foundations of much of Europe will not be forgotten or ignored. (Mt.7:25)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/8340411.stm>

■ **Russia: Proposed law threatens ministry to children and missions trips**

A draft legislation introduced this month threatens to make evangelism nearly impossible in Russia. A date has not yet been released for further ruling on the law, but in the meantime, evangelicals express concern. 'Only religious groups that have been registered in Russia for at least 15 years will be allowed to engage in any evangelistic or missionary activity,' says Bob Provost of Slavic Gospel Association. 'For example, if a North American church were to send a youth group over to help with a summer camp (which happens a lot), or if they were to send over a music group to help with evangelistic activity, it would not be allowed. Foreigners in Russia on a temporary visa would not be permitted.' The legislation also outlaws indigenous churches from any missionary activity within hospitals, orphanages, or homes for the aged. Children, under the new legislation, will be prohibited from attending religious activities without specific permission by a parent or guardian.

Pray: for this legislation to be turned around and reversed before being adopted. (Mt.16:18b)

More: http://www.openheaven.com/forums/forum_posts.asp?TID=29603&PN=1&TPN=1

WORLDWIDE

■ **INSIGHT ARTICLE: Pakistan**

In the midst of a very dark time in this nation we 'fix our eyes on Jesus the Author & Perfector of our Faith'. God is initiating new things in Pakistan, creating opportunities for groups of Christians to visit dark areas that are unreached in recent days. He is enabling his people to build relationships with key local leaders. Give thanks for opened doors and for favour even with religious authorities. These areas are traditionally strongholds for some of the fundamentalist parties in this nation, but there are people with warm open hearts in many of these villages who maintain traditional values of 'melmastia' - welcoming the guest. For information that calls for rejoicing, praise and powerful prayers of protection click the 'Info:' button.

Pray: for a powerful army of angels to protect this generation of people on fire for God with the gospel in their hearts. (Lk.10:18-19)

Info: <http://www.prayer-alert.net/info/4509-Pakistan2.pdf>

■ **Pakistan: Missionary school set on fire**

In the middle of the night on Tuesday November 3rd militants threw inflammable chemicals into a Christian residential school in Murree, a summer resort for residents of Islamabad. The ferocious fire reduced three buildings to ashes in one and a half hours causing an estimated financial loss of one billion Pakistani rupees. The only buildings saved were a prep class room and the chapel. The school was being run by the Church of Pakistan.

Pray: for God to heal the memories and emotions of the 142 boarders who were inside the school on Tuesday night, pray also for God's power to completely overwhelm the powers of darkness in this region. (2Thes.3:2-3)

More: <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/2009/s09110016.htm>

■ **Gaza: Arabs seek UN support war probe**

Arab and nonaligned nations sought UN General Assembly support on Wednesday for their call on Israel and the Palestinians to launch credible probes of war crimes allegedly committed during the Gaza war. Forty three speakers were scheduled to take the floor during the debate that assessed both Israeli and Palestinian fighters' conduct during the 22-day Gaza conflict that ended in January. 1,400 Palestinians and 13 Israelis were killed. Goldstone, a South African Jew and respected former international prosecutor, recommended that Israel and Hamas face possible prosecution before the International Criminal Court in The Hague if they fail to conduct credible investigations within six months. Egypt's UN Ambassador Maged Abdelaziz said immediate measures were needed to secure adoption of the call on both Israel and the Palestinians to launch independent investigations of the alleged war crimes perpetrated during the Gaza conflict.

Pray: for truth to be revealed and all deception seen for what it is in the coming months of investigations. (1Pt.2:13-15)

More: <http://www.jordantimes.com/?news=21338>

■ **World: Day of prayer for persecuted church**

On 8th November we are asked to pause and pray for those who are enduring persecution for the sake of the Gospel. Remember those who have not eaten for days because they are given nothing to eat. Remember those beaten and in prison. Remember families whose homes have been destroyed and who live in constant fear of violence. Remember pastors brutally beaten and tortured for their faith. Remember those who have lost loved ones or are facing death themselves for refusing to denounce Christ. Remember also the more subtle persecution in our own nations where people are losing jobs and credibility as they come under pressure to conform. The International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church gives us the privilege of joining together with over half a million churches in 150 countries to pray for the suffering church. Let us unite in prayer for the persecuted church, in the spirit of oneness that Christ commanded.

Pray: for the compassion that flows from the throne of God to ignite our prayers this Sunday, for if one suffers we all suffer. (1Pt.3:12)

More: http://ausprayernet.org.au/newsletter/DisplayNewsletter.php?e_id=00000001831#st2

■ **Iran: Bars Friday worship for Christians**

The Iranian Government ruled on October 31 that the Central Assemblies of God Church in Tehran was no longer allowed to have Friday services. This termination of services is seen as 'intimidating' Christians. Many Christians in Iran have long since decided to take their faith 'underground' and not practice in churches, rather preferring House Churches and safe havens to avoid any religious persecution. Due to this latest shift of the Revolutionary Guard's intolerance for Christians,

persecution no longer is an issue for those in underground churches. The Assembly of God Church is one of the largest in the country and the reaction to the news was sombre and many were openly weeping in the church Sunday service. While Sunday services are still available to the church's members there is trepidation for what will come out of the government's surge for seeking out Christian worshipping and reducing the amount of time it is allowed to happen.

Pray: for a mighty outpouring of God's Spirit to touch the hearts of the leaders of Iran with revelations of truth and to strengthen and grow the Iranian Church. (1Th.2:14)

More: <http://www.religiousintelligence.co.uk/news/?NewsID=5232>

■ Philippines: Kidnappers demand ransom for priest

Gunmen demand a £1.2 million ransom for 79-year-old missionary Fr. Michael Sommt who was kidnapped from his home in the southern Philippines. In a video he said, 'My kidnappers are led by Commander Abu Jayad. They are asking two million US dollars as ransom money. We are living in difficult circumstances in the open; I am still in good health even if I do not have the full medicines. Who may have pity - to help, so that I can get out of here as soon as possible.' Father Patrick O'Donoghue, the head of the Missionary Society of Saint Columban, said Fr Sinnott looked relatively healthy and insisted that the ransom would not be paid for the priest's release stating, 'The Columban fathers do not pay ransom, we never have and I don't think we ever would.' Historically similar ransom requests have been met by the government releasing prisoners in exchange.

Pray: for Christ's supremacy, bringing about an immediate release that would not encourage any further actions of revenge. (Ps.143:1)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/kidnappers.demand.12.million.ransom.for.irish.priest.in.philippines/24501.htm>

PRAISE REPORTS

■ Sharia law march cancelled - HALLELUJAH!

The Islam 4UK march on Parliament, Downing Street and Trafalgar Square last Friday was CANCELLED! The official reasons given by the Metropolitan Police was that Anjem Choudary, leader of the radical Islamic sect Al Muhajiroun had cancelled the march because of security concerns. We rejoice today in turning this particular battle at the gates! Nothing is too difficult for our God! (See Prayer Alert 4409)

■ Africa: Evangelical shaking

The fire of Pentecostal evangelism is burning through the continent scorching 'sins' and shaking the religio-political status quo to its very foundation. Traditional churches are watching helplessly as their members defect en masse to the Pentecostal churches. Last week in Kenya Bishop Margaret Wanjiru's Pentecostal church received Maina Njenga. Njenga is not your normal Sunday service convert but the leader of an ancestral worship 'sect' complete with a political and economic arm that has been linked to brutal killings in Kenya and Mafia-like extortion rings. Njenga's triumphal march followed by thousands of adherents who had suddenly 'seen the light' happened a day after the State dropped murder charges against him. Evangelical church services are characterised by a spiritually charged atmosphere, energetic singing, dancing and passionate sermons and prayer. The youth and a considerable chunk of senior citizens find Pentecostal church services more exciting.

Praise: God for vibrant and vigorous demonstrations of his power in the African continent. (1Th.5:19-22)

More: <http://www.nation.co.ke/InDepth/Africa%20Insight/-/625262/679174/-/item/0/-/tfqq4/-/index.html>

■ Brazil: March for Jesus draws 1.5 million evangelicals

In its 17th year, the event brings together hundreds of evangelical churches in a country that is home to the world's largest Roman Catholic population. Seventy-four per cent of the country describes itself as Roman Catholic. The march is held each year on the same day the Catholic Church celebrates the Corpus Christi holiday, which is not observed by evangelical Protestants but is a national holiday in Brazil. Participants marched 2.5 miles in San Paulo and heard music from Christian bands and messages from preachers and local celebrities, according to The Associated Press.

Praise: God for this evidence and witness of His church. (Is.43:12)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/brazils.march.for.jesus.draws.15.million.evangelicals/24522.htm>

■ Birmingham: The Presence

Around 2,500 people gathered in the newly refurbished LG Arena at the NEC on Saturday 17th October (to spend the day in worship and prayer for our nation and the world. (See Prayer Alert 4209) The day focused on the desire to see more of God's presence, love, justice and mercy poured out across our nations and the world. The organisers received encouraging messages of support from around the world, including Christians from Australia, USA, Malaysia, Myanmar and Indonesia. For inspiring reports and visual images of the day click on the 'More' link.

Praise: and thank God for the powerful anointing on the day that released his heart and purposes for our nation. (2Ch.7:14)

More: http://worldprayer.org.uk/uploads/2009_10_The_Presence_Website_Rpt.pdf

PRAYER FORUM OF THE BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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