



PRAYER ALERT...



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BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Is it time to speak up for your Christian faith?

The Bishops of Lichfield and Chichester have both quite rightly urged their flocks to speak up for once in favour of their Christian beliefs. They are clearly fed up with the relentless rise of political correctness which means that we can have Wintermass instead of Christmas, Nativity plays cancelled and church groups banned from having cribs. Andrew Pierce writes in the Telegraph 'You just know that most of these politically correct decisions were taken by well meaning white middle class bureaucrats who think they know what members of the Muslim and other faiths want. I used to live in the East End of London. Let me tell you, some of the gaudiest Christmas displays were in shops run by Muslims. I think the Bishops are on to something. We hear too little from the Anglican Church apart from whingeing when the Pope tries to woo potential converts.'

Pray: that we, as Christians, will have the courage to declare our faith. (Mt.14:27)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/religion/6636296/Is-it-time-to-speak-up-for-your-Christian-faith.html>

■ Committee rejects C of E proposal on Equality Bill and supports the EU position

The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights (JCHR) disagreed strongly with the Archbishops' Council (AC) over a proposal to modify the Equality Bill (<http://www.churchtimes.co.uk/content.asp?id=84949>). The AC had suggested an explicit link to a hitherto separate exception and again repeated its previously-voiced concern about a 'trend towards regarding religion and belief as deserving of a lesser priority in discrimination legislation than the other strands'. Concurrently the European Commission (EC) has called on the UK to end exemptions to equality laws that allow religious employers to discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation. The EC sent a 'reasoned opinion' to the UK last Friday for 'incorrectly implementing' EU rules prohibiting such discrimination. The UK Government currently permits exemptions for employers who could not conscientiously employ homosexuals because of their religious convictions. The EU's intervention means that anti-discrimination will have to be redrafted to ensure that churches and other religious bodies fall in line with all aspects of equality laws.

Pray: that God will grant wisdom and courage to those who must respond to this matter. (1Co.16:13)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.co.uk/article/eu.seeks.to.end.discrimination.exemptions.for.uk.s.religious.employers/24695.htm>

■ David Suchet says Christianity is being marginalised in Britain

Christianity is being marginalised in Britain because of a concern for not offending other faiths, says the actor David Suchet. The star of ITV's Poirot told Woman's Weekly magazine: 'I do feel that Christianity is being marginalised by other religions

in Britain.' Suchet, who was confirmed two years ago, claimed a charity he worked for had been recently turned down for Government funding 'because it was a Christian charity, even though it had been funded by the Government for several years. Don't misunderstand me. We should embrace all religions and marginalise none,' he told the magazine. 'But we seem more concerned with marginalising Christianity, and not offending other faiths. We are in danger of losing the importance of the Christian faith in our own country,' he said. His comments come amid concerns that Harriet Harman's Equality Bill (see Items 2 and 4) may lead to a ban on Christmas. Suchet's concerns are amplified by Paul Diamond <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XTeSje6mhd8> speaking at the Religious Freedom Rally in Washington DC on November 16, 2009

Pray: that the Holy Spirit descends upon those governing us (Mt.28:18)

More: www.christiantoday.com/article/david.suchet.says.christianity.is.being.marginalised.in.britain/24722.htm

■ Shutting the office over Christmas may 'offend'

Employers have been warned that shutting the office over Christmas or putting up religious decorations could be seen as discriminatory by non-Christian staff. However, organisations such as emergency services which must stay open should not worry about making Christians work during the religious holiday. The remarks come from the Employers Forum on Belief (EFB) in a new publication, 'Christmas – A Guide for Employers'. The EFB, which includes representatives from the Government, Barclays Bank and West Midlands Police, says its booklet gives guidance on the 'significance of Christmas, parties, working hours and holiday time'. It claims non-Christians could resent that they have to take holiday to celebrate their own religious festivals when all staff are given time off over Christmas. The EFB says it could be viewed as indirectly discriminating on the ground of religion or belief.

Pray: that our nation's Christian value structure stands firm in the face of opposition. (Ro.8:35)

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/shutting-the-office-over-christmas-may-offend/>

■ Bishop praises resilience in midst of floods

The Bishop of Carlisle has praised flood victims in Cumbria for their resilience as he urged Christians to pray. The Rt Rev James Newcome spoke of his pride and gratitude to local clergy and congregations who have stepped in to assist flood victims with shelter, food and comfort. 'One of the most encouraging things about all of this is the way in which people have worked together to help the unfortunate people who have been most affected,' he said. 'Grit, resilience and an astonishing sense of humour has been shown by all the people in the worst affected areas.' Bishop Newcome paid special tribute to PC Bill Parker who disappeared when a bridge over the River Derwent collapsed last Friday morning. He encouraged Christians to pray and look for practical ways to help the thousands of people whose homes and businesses have been affected.

Pray: for all those affected by the floods and especially the family of PC Parker. (Ps.18:18)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.co.uk/article/bishop.praises.resilience.in.midst.of.floods/24702.htm>

■ Teenage boys to learn how to respect women in drive to tackle violence

A generation of youths who do not know how to treat women are to be targeted in a drive to tackle violence and abuse in teenage relationships, the Government announced today. The campaign could also involve children as young as 5 being taught about 'gender equality' as part of personal, social and health education that, from 2011, is to be a compulsory part of the national curriculum. Rules are also to be produced for how teachers should tackle 'sexist, sexual and transphobic' bullying. A strategy to tackle violence against women and girls published yesterday highlights the need for 'attitudinal' change among teenagers in relationships. The move follows growing concern that some teenage boys are mistreating girls with verbal abuse, physical attacks and attempts to coerce them into having sex.

Pray: for a growing sense of care and respect for one another amongst our young people. (1Pe.2:17a)

More: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article6930526.ece>

EUROPE

■ European President: Devout Christian professing 'global management of planet'

After his election as the new President of the European Union, many are trying to figure out just where on the political and ideological spectrum Herman Van Rompuy, the little-known prime minister of Belgium, falls. While Van Rompuy is rumored to be a devout Catholic, his recent talk of 'global management of the planet' has caused some serious concern in Christian circles and wider. Speaking at his first press conference as President of the E U he said, '2009 is the first year of global governance with the establishment of the G20 in the middle of a financial crisis. The climate conference in Copenhagen is another step toward the global management of our planet.' Mr. Van Rompuy has a history of support for Christian values and Europe's Christian identity. Speaking out against Turkey's entrance into the EU he said 'Values which are in force in Europe are fundamental values of Christianity which lose vigour with the entry of a large Islamic country such as Turkey. Although contentious areas Van Rompuy's history as a devout Christian who has even written books on the defense of the right to life, could easily lead to great hopes for the future of the EU.

Pray: that President Van Rompuy would know the freedom of bringing God's presence into all EU negotiations. (Ps.119:44)

More: <http://www.lifesitenews.com/ldn/2009/nov/09112308.html>

■ **Brussels starts work on new 10-year economic plan**

The EU launched a public consultation period on Tuesday (24 November) on its new 10-year economic plan. Still grappling with the fallout from the global financial crisis, the EU hopes the plan will help tackle pressing issues such as rising unemployment and return the bloc to solid economic growth in the longer term. The final date for submissions is 15 January 2010, after which the commission will finalise a detailed proposal to be submitted to EU leaders at the European summit next March. 'Europe reduced unemployment from 12 percent to 7 percent in the decade to 2008. We now need new sources of growth to replace the jobs lost in the crisis,' said commission president Jose Manuel Barroso in a statement. The consultation paper points to the importance of greener and socially inclusive growth. The need for policies to improve education, align worker skills with employer demands and the promotion of green technologies are some of the issues stressed.

Pray: that Christian values infuse the EU's plans. (Pr.1:5)

More: <http://euobserver.com/9/29044>

WORLDWIDE

■ **INSIGHT ARTICLE: Saudi Arabia: Hajj - Praying for pilgrims**

Since Wednesday 24th through to this Sunday night pilgrims from around the Muslim world travel from Mecca to Mina, On Friday the pilgrims throw stones at pillars representing Satan's temptations. Then they slaughter an animal symbolizing their willingness to part with something precious to them, just as Abraham was prepared to sacrifice his son. Genesis 22:8 prophetically states, 'God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.' Revelation 5:12 says 'Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!' Today in Saudi Arabia and around the Muslim world, sheep and goats will be slaughtered. Pray that Muslims will understand that Jesus is the promised Lamb that takes away the sins of the world. For guidelines how to pray for the pilgrims click the 'info.' button below.

Pray: for God to reveal Himself in power to all Muslim pilgrims and seekers of God. (Ps.84:5-7).

More: <http://www.prayer-alert.net/info/HAJJ1.pdf>

■ **America: President Obama going to Copenhagen with emissions target**

For the first time in more than a decade President Obama is pledging a provisional target for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions in the United States. He will tell the delegates that the United States intends to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions 'in the range of' 17% below 2005 levels by 2020 and 83% by 2050 officials said. Mr. Obama has met over the past two weeks with the leaders of China and India, the fastest-growing sources of greenhouse gases, to discuss climate change and the Copenhagen conference. American officials said that both countries told the president they would be prepared to announce steps to reduce the rate of growth of emissions if the United States put a pledge on the table. Chinese Foreign Ministry announced on Thursday that Prime Minister Wen Jiabao would attend the conference and have hinted that they will announce a near-term target for reducing energy use relative to economic growth.

Pray: that the Copenhagen meeting would produce a strong agreement to avoid the worst ravages of climate change. (Is.14:7 & Ro.8:21)

More: <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/26/us/politics/26climate.html?ref=us>

■ **Egypt: Muslim violence against Christians**

Since Saturday November 21st the town of Farshoot and the neighboring villages of Kom Ahmar, Shakiki and Ezbet Waziri, have been the scene of ongoing Muslim mob violence against Coptic Christian inhabitants. Coptic property is being looted, vandalised and burnt. Others are being thrown out of their homes which are then occupied by Muslims. Reuters Cairo reported a witness saying 'chaos is overwhelming.' The Violence is ongoing. Seven Coptic women have been reported abducted. Coptic priest Rev. Benjamin Noshi is in hospital with a fractured skull after being attacked in his car. Most Coptic businesses were looted and burnt. 'They are destroying the Coptic economy in these areas,' says Wagih Yacoub of Middle East Christian Association. Security forces are not taking action to stop violence. Instead they are stationed to protect the Farshoot police headquarters after the mob stoned it and attacked the officers. Witnesses said that the Police watched the mob but made no arrests.

Pray: for International human rights organisations to speak out against religious persecution in Egypt. (Lev.19:13)

More: http://freecopts.net/english/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1081&Itemid=9

■ **North Korea: Children die on streets**

Christians in North Korea said Wednesday November 25th a massive famine has broken out in their autocratic-ruled nation with many children 'dying' while security forces send malnourished people to labour camps for allegedly refusing to join the '100-Day Battle.' In the province Hwanghae it is normal to see dead children lying on the streets. North Korean Christians blamed a nation-wide production-drive imposed by the regime of the country's leader Kim Jong-il, known as the '100-Day Battle' for the apparently worst famine in years. 'The people don't get the chance to keep themselves alive,' Christians said in comments obtained by Worthy News and its partner agency BosNewsLife. Those seen as not working for the country's interests are immediately sent to labour camps, where inmates have been tortured, Christians said. The new '100-Day Battle', will take the total length of the mobilization period up to the end of the year and possibly even into early 2010 pro-North Korean media reported.

Pray: for compassion to inspire the North Korean government to bring a future and hope to the nation. (Ps.90:13)

More: <http://www.worthynews.com/6976-urgent-breaking-news-north-korean-christians-children-die-on-streets>

■ **Middle East: Palestinians reject Israeli offer**

A Palestinian official has described Israel's proposed 10 month suspension of settlement construction in the occupied West Bank as mere 'propaganda'. The Palestinian chief negotiator said on Thursday that the move does not indicate any progress that would justify the resumption of peace talks. The temporary settlement suspension offer was aimed more towards appeasing the Americans than trying to reconcile with the Palestinians. 'At the end of the day Netanyahu needs to make peace with us, the Palestinians; he doesn't need to make peace with Americans.' Israel announced the temporary settlement suspension on Wednesday 24th saying it was aimed at encouraging negotiations with the Palestinians. The suspension excludes building projects already under way as well as areas of the West Bank that Israel annexed to its Jerusalem municipality after occupying the territory in the 1967 Middle East war. A member of the Palestinian legislative council said 'If you analyse the Israeli position you will see that they are building even more settlements,' she told Al Jazeera.

Pray: that legal and binding contracts already agreed to be honoured and for the infrastructure to be strengthened not destroyed. (Ja.5:12)

More: <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2009/11/2009112665926722643.html>

■ **Hong Kong: Widening gap between rich and poor alarms churches**

Christian leaders in Hong Kong have called on the church to repent and renew its commitment to social justice as the gap between rich and poor continues to widen in the former British colony. The call was made in a declaration issued last week by Christians who met earlier in the month for a three-day mission council organised by the Hong Kong Christian Council. The declaration warned that the gap between rich and poor in Hong Kong had widened in the more than 10 years since the handover to China while the church had become too functionalist at the expense of mission and its spiritual direction. It appealed to churches to assume their prophetic role and engage themselves in serving the poor, promoting democracy and safeguarding the environment. 'Churches need to repent and to carry out God's mission on earth, to serve the marginalised people,' said the declaration drawn up by over 120 church leaders from various denominations.

Pray: for God's anointing on the church as congregations promote social justice and allocate resources to serve the marginalised. (Lk.12:35)

More: http://www.christiantoday.com/article/widening_gap_between_rich_and_poor_alarms_hong_kong_churches/24715.htm

PRAISE REPORTS

■ **INSIGHT ARTICLE: Eurasia: Raising a praying nation**

This office has received an encouraging report from a closed Islamic country telling us of successful training conferences for Pastors, leaders and emerging young ministry leaders. The same report gives details of the progress made in setting up a National Prayer Network. To read the brief report click on the 'info.' button.

Praise: God for the power of His name and the work he is doing in the hidden places of the world. (Ps.75:2-3)

More: <http://www.prayer-alert.net/info/Praiseeurasia1.pdf>

■ **China: Christian church leader released from prison**

House church leader Osman Imin (Wusiman Yaming in Chinese) was freed on Wednesday Nov. 18th in China's troubled Xinjiang region after serving two years in a labour camp for alleged 'illegal proselytizing' and leaking state secrets.' (See Prayer Alert 1909) Authorities had called for a 10 to 15 year prison sentence but significantly reduced the term following international media attention.

Praise: God for freedom of the press and ask him to continue to bless those working for his kingdom both inside and outside China. (Pr.25:11)

More: <http://www.christianpost.com/article/20091125/china-releases-uyghur-church-leader-from-prison/index.html>

PRAYER FORUM OF BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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