



PRAYER ALERT...



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BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ New chaplain provides spiritual and pastoral support to London police

In a new development, Rev Jonathan Osborne has been appointed senior chaplain to the Metropolitan Police Service overseeing spiritual, pastoral and religious support across 32 London Boroughs and six Dioceses. His role will involve establishing a voluntary network of leaders from different faiths to meet the diverse needs of the London police service and their families. Mr. Osborne said he was looking forward to the task of providing spiritual and pastoral support to members of the Metropolitan Police Service and their families regardless of their faith. Welcoming the new appointment Martin Tiplady Director of Human Resources for the Metropolitan Police Service said, 'I am delighted that Jonathan will be joining us. Chaplaincy has an important role in servicing the emotional and spiritual needs of our officers and I look forward to him working with us to develop the extent and offerings of a multi-faith service.'

Pray: God would use Jonathan powerfully as a Christian witness within London's police force without any need to compromise his Christian ethics. (Mt.13:33)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.co.uk/article/new.chaplain.provides.spiritual.and.pastoral.support.to.london.police/24876.htm>

■ One budget does not make a whole economy

After the pre-budget report Christian finance experts say it need not be all doom and gloom. Financial charity Credit Action said painful measures were necessary to help the economy get back on its feet. 'The recession has woken people up slightly to the fact that things that are of real value are not measured financially. The Association of Christian Financial Advisers said some aspects of the pre-budget report were just about winning votes but there were also good points like the continued care of the vulnerable with increase in pensions and benefits. People should view the state of their own and the nation's finances with a long-term perspective. One budget doesn't make a whole economy and God's perspective is very different from our perspective about how the economy runs. It's accepting that we are where we are now and we are looking for God to put his hand back on a righteous market.

Pray: for God to raise up more Christian financial advisers, bankers, economics and investment professionals in the global market place. (Job.22:25-26)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/prebudget.report.need.not.be.all.bad.news.say.christian.finance.experts/24857.htm>

■ Justice needed for sacked Christian worker

Duke Amachree, a Homelessness Prevention Officer, has not breached any area of his unblemished employment contract, he is a compassionate family man, has been a good servant of the council and community for 18 years and a Christian who has become a victim of prejudice. The Christian Legal Centre are asking us to stand with Duke in prayer for justice and for him to win his job back in time for Christmas. In January Duke was helping a client with her housing situation who had seen doctors telling her she had an incurable medical condition. Out of compassion for her Duke commented that sometimes the doctors don't know everything – and encouraged her to consider putting her faith in God. There was nothing in his

employment contract to indicate that he was in any way not to speak about God. The client reported him to his managers, two days later he was suspended with immediate effect.

Pray: that compassion would rule in the appeal that has been lodged by Duke. (Lk.12:10-12)

More: <http://www.justiceforduke.com/>

■ **Lost Christians have found new homes**

A recent national survey found that only half of Britons now consider themselves Christian, down from 66 per cent in 1983. Half of them sign up voluntarily and thoughtfully to Christianity. The result isn't the passive congregations of old, but communities of active, engaged worshippers. Christianity is, globally, in the middle of a boom. Many people in Britain are still signing up to the faith. Remember that today's is the first generation for hundreds of years that isn't Christian by default. In the middle of the last century, parents would automatically tell census-takers that they were 'Church of England'. This applied less to other denominations. By contrast, people these days are actually thinking about what they believe, and why. All in all, Britain is going through one of those periods of religious refreshment that crop up every few decades.

Pray: that the Lord continues to send his Spirit to us in this post-Christian (Ac 8:15-18)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/columnists/georgepitcher/6830892/The-lost-Christians-have-found-new-homes.html>

■ **Church of England campaign to target young priests at General Synod**

Dr Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury, will unveil the scheme which will target college-leavers in response to falling numbers of young people coming forward for ordination, while total numbers of Church of England ordinations have been rising over the past decade. In 1996, some 20 per cent of the 453 ordained in the Church of England were aged under 30 but by 2006 just 15 per cent of the 594 ordinations were of the same age group. Of the 595 people recommended for training in 2007, just 88 (14.8 per cent) were under 30. The trend for middle-aged ordinations has been steadily rising. A Call Waiting website will feature streamed interviews with young ordinands-in-training, deacons and priests, alongside articles tracking the process from a discernment of vocation, through the selection procedure at a Bishops' Advisory Panel and finally to ordination.

Pray: that the Holy Spirit will move those called to respond to this initiative. (Mt 9:8-10)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstoppers/religion/2235846/Church-of-England-campaign-to-target-young-priests-at-General-Synod.html>

■ **Special needs system requires 'radical overhaul'**

The government should 'radically overhaul' the system for children with special educational needs to provide new support for parents and pressurise schools to cater properly for pupils whose learning difficulties put them at risk of being left behind, a government commissioned review reports. The Lamb inquiry reveals the scale of the struggle parents have to get appropriate support for children with special educational needs such as autism or dyslexia. Under new plans, there will be a helpline for parents providing independent advice and Ofsted would have to judge how well schools are providing for pupils with SEN. The system of statementing will be reviewed to guarantee that local authorities put the needs of the child first, rather than availability of resources. It follows parental complaints that authorities are deciding the level of their child's need according to the funding available to them rather than the scale of their problems, leading to a postcode lottery in services across the country.

Pray: that children's needs are highly prioritised by all local authorities and appropriate measures implemented. (Mt.19:13-15)

More: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2009/dec/16/special-needs-radical-overhaul>

EUROPE

■ **Brown to promote 'gay rights' across the EU**

Gordon Brown is in negotiations to get British civil partnerships legal recognition in EU member states. These negotiations form part of Gordon Brown's campaign for 'gay rights' recognition across Europe. In an interview with a gay lifestyle magazine Mr Brown said, 'I'm fighting to get all the countries in Europe to recognise civil partnerships carried out in Britain. We want countries where that hasn't been the case – especially in eastern Europe – to recognise them. We're negotiating agreements with France and then with Spain.' Mr Brown listed civil partnerships as a key achievement of the Labour Party and said that he had always given gay rights 'strong support'. The Prime Minister has made a number of attempts to encourage homosexual voters to back Labour. Earlier this year he invited the organisers of a controversial month-long drive to teach schoolchildren about homosexuality to a reception at 10 Downing Street.

Pray: that the role model of Christian marriage is strengthened as the basis for family. (Ge 2:24).

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/brown-to-promote-%e2%80%99gay-rights%e2%80%99-across-the-eu/>

■ **Ireland: Ex-CIA official reports N. Ireland peace targeted**

A small but ruthless number of former members of the Irish Republican Army are trying to undermine the agreement that ended 30 years of deadly violence in Northern Ireland. A former deputy director of the CIA, Richard Kerr who is now a member of the Independent Monitoring Commission that tracks paramilitary groups in the British province said members of the so-called 'Real IRA' and other breakaway groups are trying to sow disorder by targeting police officers and soldiers in Northern Ireland. His organization published a report saying some dissident Irish republicans are still extremely active and dangerous. There also are concerns among security analysts that the militants could launch attacks on the British mainland. A leading authority on the conflict said the recent attacks come at a time when the nationalist Sinn Féin party, which has

close links with former IRA members, is struggling to sell its political strategy. Kerr also says, 'Hangers-on with strong hatred of the British may have some local support'.

Pray: for God to intervene in power to prevent any planned attacks and for true and lasting reconciliation between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. (Ps.113:4)

More: <http://edition.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/europe/12/16/nireland.violence/index.html>

WORLDWIDE

■ Palestine: Christians cry out

Last Friday a group of Palestinian Christian leaders issued a document in Bethlehem pleading the case of Palestinians and calling for the end of Israeli occupation of the territory. The 'Kairos Palestine Document' calls for an end to the occupation 'because today we have reached a dead end in the tragedy of the Palestinian people. The hearts of the faithful are filled with pain and questioning. What is the international community, the political leaders in Palestine, in Israel and in the Arab world doing? What is the Church doing?' 'The problem is not just a political one, it is a policy in which human beings are destroyed, and this must be of concern to the Church.' is the Christian Palestinians' word to the world. The document says the occupation of the land is a sin against God and humanity and any theology legitimizing occupation is far from Christian teaching.

Pray: for this call for justice and peace to be heard, ushering in an equality among the peoples of the region. (Ps.133)

More: http://www.islamonline.net/servlet/Satellite?c=Article_C&cid=1260257918309&pagename=Zone-English-News/NWELayout

■ Global Conversion: Muslim Christians?

Christians from Muslim backgrounds are forging new identities in Islamic cultures. Can one be a Muslim and a follower of Jesus? Tens of thousands believe so. Yale University describes the debate over the question of following Jesus while remaining within a practicing community of Muslims. This has great importance in regions where the two faiths contend. It also serves as an important example of a wider challenge as the gospel moves across cultural boundaries. Those who respond will answer its call in different ways. Does conversion to Christ produce a bland universal citizenship or distinctive diverse discipleships? Just as Messianic Judaism is accepted, there is a strong debate with regard to Muslims having a life-transforming encounter with Jesus and remaining within their Muslim community. They participate in their culture's prayers and as their love for Jesus becomes known to family and friends some family and friends follow their example.

Pray: for God's enabling power of evangelism for his people in difficult and diverse cultures and for Him to use them clearly for His purposes in these last days. (Mt.13:30)

More: <http://www.christianitytoday.com/globalconversation/december2009/index.html>

■ Iraq: Christians have requested our prayers

On Tuesday 15th December in Mosul there were three bomb attacks outside churches. At 10:30 am a small bomb damaged the wall of a Syriac Catholic Church. Four people were killed, possibly bystanders, when a second bomb exploded 10 minutes later and grenades were thrown at a nearby Christian school. That afternoon a larger bomb at a Syriac Orthodox Church caused significant damage, injuring a number of people. These attacks followed the bombing on 26th November of two other church properties in Mosul. There were no casualties, though a Chaldean Catholic Church was virtually destroyed. Church leaders in Mosul described these attacks as the latest in a campaign to force Christians to leave. Church leaders in Baghdad have been warned by the authorities that further bomb attacks might target church buildings, especially during the Christmas period. The reporting of this falls in the context of the run up to parliamentary elections scheduled for early next year.

Pray: that all Christians in Iraq will know the Father's peace and protection as they attend worship services over the Christmas period. (Ps.91:4)

More: <http://www.christianpost.com/article/20091215/church-targeted-blasts-kill-4-injure-dozens-in-mosul/index.html>

■ Sudan: Tensions building

Sudanese police fired tear gas at two hundred protesters demanding democratic reforms in Khartoum. Political tensions are mounting in Sudan in the build-up to the elections next year. President Al-Bashir and opposition leader Kiir of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement reached a deal on the terms of a referendum on Southern independence, but opposition groups are pushing for more changes before the elections and a referendum. In southern Sudan church leaders are asking Wycliffe Bible Translators for scripture related training material for healing workshops. These workshops are a relevant way of encouraging people to engage with the Scriptures. The church in Sudan said the referendum on independence may lead to even more upheavals, and they want to be prepared. (http://www.wycliffe.org.uk/DOCUMENTS/CTP_nov-dec09.pdf)

Pray: for God to protect and minister to the hidden workers in Sudan who are striving to fulfill the great commission. (Is.40:31)

More: <http://www.rnw.nl/africa/article/tensions-building-towards-sudanese-elections>

■ Iran: Report reveals what really happened

A defecting member of the men who killed in the aftermath of the Iran elections told channel 4 news what he witnessed. After months of stories by witnesses and victims, we now have a picture of what went on by someone who was ordered to carry out attacks and is now seeking refuge in the UK. 'In truth the orders didn't come after the election. The orders for all that you witnessed came three or four months before the election; we had classes on ideological and political thought and crowd control. We received orders that there is jurisprudence of the Imam Zaman, (the 13th Imam, who is expected to return like a Messiah) whose incarnation is Ayatollah Khamenei, and that he had announced that for the advancement and

development of Islam and the development of the revolution no-one could be more effective than Mr. Ahmadinejad.' He went on to report youth vote suppression, violent city control, unspeakable sexual and physical abuse, adding 'I never thought that these matters could be contaminated like this.'

Pray: for God to mobilise world authorities to reprimand where necessary and initiate justice for those still imprisoned and living in fear. (Ps.113:7)

More: http://www.channel4.com/news/articles/politics/international_politics/iran+basij+member+describes+election+abuse/3466142

■ **America: Research found believers' assumptions about God are self-centered**

Scientists say individuals tend to endow God with their own personal beliefs, including views on abortion and same-gender marriages. Persuaded that they speak in God's name these people stop at nothing to press their point, as evidenced by ultra-conservative, right-wing religious groups in the United States and Islamic fundamentalists in the Middle East. However, they do not act on God's will, but on ideas they allot to their God. Intuiting God's beliefs on important issues may not produce an independent guide but rather serve as an echo chamber to justify one's own beliefs. People may use religious agents as a moral compass forming impressions and making decisions based on what they presume God would believe or want. The central feature of a compass points north no matter what direction a person is facing, but this research suggests inferences about God's beliefs may instead point people further in whatever direction they are already facing.'

Pray: that God would convict us all of any selfish ambition and enable us to live by His word, be led by His spirit and be filled with holy discernment. (Heb.4:12)

More: <http://news.softpedia.com/news/People-Endow-God-with-Their-Own-Views-128456.shtml>

PRAISE REPORTS

■ **Downing Street: 'Let us pray.'**

A reception for Christian leaders at 10 Downing Street took an extraordinary turn when it became an impromptu prayer meeting. The unpublicised party hosted by Gordon Brown was intended to 'celebrate Christmas and the contribution of Britain's churches.' Guests were dumbfounded when asked to join in prayers by the Rev Nicky Gumbel. One who was there said: 'It was quite bizarre, suddenly Nicky Gumbel was up in front of everybody urging them to pray for Gordon Brown and for the success of the Copenhagen summit. The Prime Minister addressed the room. 'I don't subscribe to the view that we are a secular society, Christian values are at the centre of national life. We are our brother's keeper.' Everyone there had some connection with Christian churches. Among the 150 guests were Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor and the Bishop of Southwark, Tom Butler.

Praise: God for prayer in high places, and may Gordon Brown have more opportunities to surround himself with Christian leaders in the New Year. (1Tim.2:1-2)

More: <http://scottishchristian.com/monitor/let-us-pray-evangelist-stuns-no10-party-guests/>

■ **America: Kansas City internet miracles**

God is moving through an IHOP webcast with fifty six miracles recorded on their website this week. - I was watching the webcast and Wes said God's healing the right ankle of someone. I cried, 'That's for me.' My right ankle was injured in a mountain bike accident in 2002 and I limp sometimes. I am a nurse doing 14 hour shifts; today I had no pain or stiffness in my right ankle. It is totally healed!' - In our College, we watched the webstream. The warmth of the love of God filled the room, we prayed fervently as He released His Spirit of intercession upon us. His kindness led to repentance and we experienced a breakthrough that has never occurred before! - God has touched me in a special way while watching the live webstream. I can't describe how I feel. I just know I've been set free of a lot of stuff. I have been a Christian for years, but this is awesome!

Praise: and Halleluiah, Lord we want more of your spirit to minister in new ways as you confound the works of the enemy. (Jn.14:12)

More: <http://www.ihop.org/Publisher/Article.aspx?ID=1000060006>

■ **South Asia: 'Jesus Film' a powerful ministry tool**

In South Asia exciting things have been happening in the last month as Gospel for Asia's film team ministry reached nearly 300 villages with a movie on the life of Jesus. More than 28,000 people attended these showings with 4,146 of them either choosing to receive Christ or requesting to know more about Him! Small fellowship groups sprang up as a result. We are asked to pray for Kiran aged 19 who needs help from God to forsake all of his past addictions and live fully for the Lord; and for Chunni, as she struggles with lack of peace because of family problems and is asking the Lord to help her work out these problems and help her to walk more closely with Him. Also pray for protection for facilitators of these screenings in such a complex part of the world.

Praise: God for opening this door of ministry and pray that all who see the film will grow stronger daily in their faith. (Rev.3:8)

More: <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/2009/s09120062.htm>

PRAYER FORUM OF BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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