

PRAYER ALERT...

An initiative of the Prayer Forum of the British Isles & Ireland
www.prayer-alert.net editor@prayer-alert.net

Issue 3610

Website

Contact Us

Donations

Friday 3 September 2010

■ British Isles & Ireland

- [Atheist doctors](#)
- [Britain 'selfish and hedonistic'](#)
- [Religion more important in poor countries](#)
- [Call for debt cancellation for Pakistan](#)
- [Stephen Hawking again](#)
- [Wycliffe Bible Translators' 50th](#)

■ Europe

- [INSIGHT ARTICLE: Islamisation of Europe](#)
- [Vatican: Dismisses call for Islamic Europe](#)
- [European Christians on the defensive](#)

■ Worldwide

- [Middle East: Peace talks begin in Washington](#)
- [Pakistan: Taliban kills three foreign Christian aid workers](#)
- [Mexico: Catholic Church fans flames of gay rights row](#)
- [Malawi: Church warns of 'dictatorship'](#)
- [India: Recent persecutions](#)
- [Seoul: Lay Catholics likened to a 'sleeping giant'](#)

■ Praise Reports

- [North Korea: American Christian freed](#)
- [Sudan: Kidnapped Christian worker freed](#)

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Atheist doctors

Doctors who are atheist or agnostic are twice as likely to take decisions that might shorten the life of somebody who is terminally ill as doctors who are deeply religious. Doctors with strong religious convictions are less likely to discuss such decisions with the patient, according to Professor Clive Seale, from the Centre for Health Sciences at Barts and the London School of Medicine and Dentistry. Doctors are influenced by their beliefs just as other people are, said Seale. 'It is easy for clinicians to present themselves as neutral appliers of science, but values do come into it,' he said. That is accepted in abortion care, but the issue has not yet been widely discussed in the care of the dying. Seale's study, published in the Journal of Medical Ethics, was based on a survey of doctors specialising in care for people at the end of life, such as neurology, elderly and palliative care as well as general practice.

Pray: for doctors, carers, patients and close family as they work together to care for the terminally ill. (3Jn:8)

More: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2010/aug/26/doctors-religious-beliefs-terminally-ill>

■ Britain 'selfish and hedonistic'

Edmund Adamus, an adviser to the Archbishop of Westminster, said five decades of liberalising abortion and gay rights laws had made Britain more anti-Catholic than countries where Christians can be subjected to violent persecution. The director of pastoral affairs in the diocese of Westminster blamed Parliament for allowing the country to become 'the geopolitical epicentre of the culture of death'. His remarks are likely to cause tension ahead of the Pope's state visit to Britain later this month. He said 'Britain, and in particular London, has been and is the epicentre.' The expression 'culture of death' is often used to refer to liberal policies on abortion and euthanasia. He added that Parliament over the last 50 years had been 'the most permissively anti-life and progressively anti-family and marriage, in essence one of the most anti-Catholic landscapes, culturally speaking, more even than those places where Catholics suffer open persecution.'

Pray: for God's guidance as we weigh these cautionary comments. (1Co.14:29)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/religion/7974513/Britain-a-selfish-and-hedonistic-wasteland-says-Archbishops-adviser.html>

■ Religion more important in poor countries

Surveys conducted by Gallup in 2009 revealed that religion plays a greater role in the daily lives of people in poor countries than those in wealthy countries. The number of adults worldwide who say religion is an important part of their day remains high, at 84 per cent. The surveys, which looked at 114 countries, found a strong link between religiosity and a country's socioeconomic status, with each of the most religious countries having a per-capita GDP of less than \$5,000. In the UK, just 27% agreed that religion was important to their daily life, placing it in the bottom 10 alongside Russia (34%), France (30%), Hong Kong and Japan at 24%, Denmark (19%) and Sweden at (17%). There were 10 countries and regions where at least 98% of people said religion was important to their daily life, including Bangladesh, Niger, Yemen, Indonesia, Malawi and Sri Lanka where the figure was 99%.

Pray: for the richer nations - that their peoples' poverty of spirit may be filled with your presence. (Job 3:20)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/religion.more.important.to.people.in.poor.countries.than.rich.surveys.reveal/26613.htm>

■ Call for debt cancellation for Pakistan

The Jubilee Debt Campaign is calling on the British government to exert pressure on international institutions to cancel Pakistan's debt. The Pakistani government is currently in negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the country's most important creditor, to ask for debt relief for the disaster-stricken country. The IMF is believed to be insisting that Pakistan introduces a value-added-tax system and removes energy sector subsidies in order to receive further loans. A range of charities, church and campaign groups, including the Methodist Relief and Development Fund and Christian Aid, have joined the call for Western borrowers to take some responsibility for Pakistan's heavy indebtedness. They argue that Pakistan needs an immediate freeze on debt repayments, expressing fears that the country's annual \$3 billion repayments dwarf current levels of emergency aid. Campaigners argue that it is inappropriate for the IMF to hold the country to ransom amidst the current disaster.

Pray: for governments and the IMF to review their stance and grant debt relief to Pakistan. (Dt.24:6)

More: <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/12989>

■ Stephen Hawking again

In his new book, The Grand Design, Professor Hawking challenges traditional religious beliefs. He asserts that the laws of physics were behind the Big Bang instead of God. The professor is maintaining his well-known atheistic views and earning a good living from publishing material such as his The Grand Design. He concludes: 'Because there is a law such as gravity, the universe can and will create itself from nothing. Spontaneous creation is the reason there is something rather than nothing, why the universe exists, why we exist. It is not necessary to invoke God to light the blue touch paper and set the universe going.' He sets out to contest Sir Isaac Newton's belief that the universe must have been designed by God as it could not have been created out of chaos. Hawking's sophism deliberately ignores both the source of 'laws' that he references and simple historic and revealed human experience.

Pray: that the Holy Spirit would bring true revelation to Stephen Hawking. (Ac.10:38)

More: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-1308278/Stephen-Hawking-God-did-create-Universe.html#ixzz0yMSxYmgX>

■ Wycliffe Bible Translators' 50th

On 1 September 1960 Wycliffe Bible Translators was officially born in the UK. The training of translators had been taking place in the UK since the early 50s, but 1960 was the year in which Wycliffe UK was formally recognised as part of this growing, world-wide family of translation organisations. The ministry was named after John Wycliffe, an early Bible translator who wanted people to be able to learn about God in their own language. In 1960 the world population was estimated to be around 3 billion with about 1,000 languages that required a translation. Today the world population numbers close to 6.7 billion people with around 6,900 different languages. Wycliffe is involved in 1,300 Bible translation programmes while another 2,200 are waiting to start. Eddie Arthur, Executive Director of Wycliffe Bible Translators in the UK says, 'It is amazing to think that so many leaders in the world Bible translation movement have been trained and equipped for their roles in this quiet little corner of Buckinghamshire'.

Pray: that God's word will be read, heard and understood more widely through Wycliffe UK's efforts. (Mk.16:17)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/wycliffe.bible.translators.celebrates.50th.anniversary/26615.htm>

EUROPE

■ **INSIGHT ARTICLE:** Islamisation of Europe

Yusuf al-Qaradawi, a popular Sunni Muslim cleric said, 'Islam entered Europe twice and left it. Perhaps the next conquest, Allah willing, will be by means of preaching and ideology. The conquest need not necessarily be by the sword. Perhaps we will conquer these lands without armies. We want an army of preachers and teachers who will present Islam in all languages and in all dialects'. Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali speaking in a BBC interview on Islamism of Europe said There can never be sufficient appeasement and new demands will continue to be made by Muslims for changes in our society. A Barnabasfund call for prayer reported, 'The increasing power of Islamisation (political Islam) has affected European communities and radical Muslims are seeking to create dramatic changes in their host societies; wanting Islam to gain social, cultural, economic and political power. In response the West is gradually changing structures, laws and customs to suit Muslim communities. This week's INSIGHT ARTICLE focus is on an Islamic subtle invasion of Europe

Pray: that Christian values and the Christian message will gain popularity as Islam becomes more visible in Europe. (Gal.5:5)

Info: <http://www.prayer-alert.net/info/Apeacefulinvasionofeurope1.pdf>

■ Vatican: Dismisses call for Islamic Europe

While Colonel Gaddafi was in Rome on an official state visit marking the second anniversary of a friendship treaty signed with Italy he said Islam should 'become the religion of all Europe'. The secretary of the Vatican's Congregation for Evangelisation, Archbishop Robert Sarah dismissed the comments as a 'non-solicited provocation lacking seriousness. To speak of the European continent converting to Islam makes no sense because it is the people alone who decide consciously to be Christian, Muslim or to follow other religions', he said. True danger for Europeans was relativism, a lack of

attention to faith, the weakness of religion and an indifference to the sacred. These are true enemies for our faith which could create a fertile ground for the eventual future penetration of Islam in all of Europe.

Pray: for a Christian revival in Europe, enabling Christians to reclaim the years consumed by secularism, mammon and idolatry. (Joel2:25)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/vatican.dismisses.gaddafis.call.for.europe.to.convert.to.islam/26612.htm>

■ European Christians on the defensive

Netherlands: 'If it'd said 'Allah Akbar', the council wouldn't have dared to try and remove it,' says Marianne Bons, a member of the Dutch Reformed Protestant Church talking about a farm roof on which 'Jesus saves' is painted in enormous letters. The council says the text has to go. The farm's owner, a Christian, is refusing to obey. 'You're allowed to believe in anything in this country, as long as it's nothing to do with Christians or the Church,' says Ms Bons, describing the Dutch attitude to religion. <http://www.rnw.nl/english/video/christians-defensive>

France: Friday in Paris. A hidden camera shows streets blocked by huge crowds of Muslim worshippers and enforced by a private security force. This is all illegal in France: the public worship, the blocked streets, and the private security. But the police have been ordered not to intervene. The Muslims in the street have been granted unofficial rights that no Christian group is likely to get under France's 'Laicite', or secularism law. A French citizen watching the Islamization of Paris decided that the world needed to see what was happening. Using a hidden camera he posted videos on YouTube. See link: <http://www.youtube.com/user/ciceropicas>

Pray: that the Church in Europe would speak boldly against these Islamic incursions. (Ps.138:3)

More: <http://www.cbn.com/cbnnews/world/2010/August/Islamization-of-Paris-a-Warning-to-the-West/>

WORLDWIDE

■ Middle East: Peace talks begin in Washington

The Israeli and Palestinian leaders, Binyamin Netanyahu and Mahmoud Abbas, began direct talks in Washington Thursday as Hamas pledged to scupper attempts to bring about peace after its second attack on Israelis in two days. Barack Obama described it as a 'moment of opportunity that may not soon come again'. Netanyahu said the killing of four Israelis settlers by Hamas on Tuesday reinforced Israel's determination to ensure its security is at the forefront of the negotiations. Abbas said, 'We want peace, we want normal life. We want to live as partners and neighbours.' Obama said 'terrorists who want to undermine the push for peace would not be allowed to weaken negotiations and harboured no illusions as to the challenges for a lasting settlement. Each side has legitimate and enduring interests. Years of mistrust will not disappear overnight. Politicians need to focus on the human face of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict not their own political agendas.

Pray: God will release a spirit of optimism and trust to permeate all communications and for this to be a 'partnership that produces peace' (Ja.3:18)

More: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/sep/02/middle-east-peace-talks-begin>

■ Pakistan: Taliban kills three foreign Christian aid workers

After the Taliban warned they would attack foreign aid workers and Christian organizations security has been increased, but on Wednesday authorities recovered the bodies of three Christian relief workers who had been kidnapped and killed by members of the Pakistani Taliban in the flood-ravaged country. Their names have been withheld and the agency remains unnamed for security reasons. Military sources withheld news of the deaths from electronic and print media to avoid panicking other relief workers but they granted permission to Compass to publish it in limited form. Pointing to alleged discrimination against minorities in distribution of humanitarian aid a source added that Christians in severely flood-damaged areas in Punjab Province have been neglected. (See Prayer Alert 3210) The majority of the affected Christians in Punjab are in Narowal, Shakargarh, Muzzafargarh, Rahim Yar Khan and Layyah.

Pray: for God's protection and provision for Christians, and that greed would be replaced by Christian ethics. (Lev. 25:35)

More: <http://www.compassdirect.org/english/country/pakistan/24862/>

■ Mexico: Catholic Church fans flames of gay rights row

A row between Catholic Church leaders and Mexico City's mayor over gay rights has embroiled the Supreme Court. 'Would any of you want to be adopted by a couple of lesbians or queers?' said the Archbishop of Guadalajara at a recent news conference where he reacted to Supreme Court ruling granting equal rights to same-sex couples, including the right to adopt, was constitutional. The Cardinal's next comments fanned the flames of the quarrel further when he alleged that Mexico City Mayor Marcelo Ebrard had bribed the Supreme Court judges to hand down a ruling that supported gay rights. Mr Ebrard is now suing Cardinal Sandoval Iniguez for defamation. A Church spokesman urged Mexican voters to punish the mayor's party at the next election. The dispute has taken further twists and turns, drawn in other players and is closely followed by the Mexican media. At its heart is tension between the Roman Catholic Church and the secular state.

Pray: that God's truth will rid Mexico of its endemic corruption through the church's grace filled message of truth, love and peace. (Ps.45:2)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-11119011>

■ Malawi: Church warns of 'dictatorship'

'Malawi is sliding into dictatorship where it is a crime to hold dissenting views to government policy,' warned leaders of the Church of Central Africa. The charges came after the arrest and subsequent release of the synod's general secretary the Rev. Levi Nyondo. 'We are shocked and surprised that government could stoop so low to arrest a general secretary of a

reputable church,' synod moderator the Rev. Mezuwa Banda said. Nyondo was arrested after speaking at the funeral of former Cabinet minister Moses Chirambo who died just days after being dismissed from the government. Nyondo was charged with sedition for uttering words that could incite public anger and has since been granted bail by the Mzuzu Magistrate Court. Synod moderator Joyce Banda said the arrest of Nyondo would not intimidate the church into submission, but rather invigorate it to preach the truth. Joyce Banda is sitting vice president and may run for the presidency in 2014 elections.

Pray: for the church to deliver God's prophetic message and continue to stand against wrongdoing. (Ps.18:33-34)

More: <http://www.eni.ch/featured/article.php?id=4368>

■ **India: Recent persecutions**

Chhattisgarh - Police arrested three Christians for 'luring people to convert to Christianity' by offering them money and 'false hope' when Hindu extremists filed a complaint against them. Karnataka – Hindu extremists disrupted the worship meeting of Ebenezer Assembly of God Church and beat Pastor Ravi George and a church member identified only as Ramu. Both received hospital treatment for serious head and hand injuries. Karnataka - Christians face a social boycott of business and grocery shops, students are prevented from attending Christian schools and the Rev. Philip Rock of St. Sebastian Church was charged with 'causing disharmony' after Christians refused to follow Hindu rituals. New Delhi - Hindu extremists attacked Pastor Isaac Laal returning from a Sunday church service. The Evangelical Fellowship of India reported that armed extremists took him to a Municipal Corporation hall, accused him of forceful conversion and severely beat him.

Pray: for these and the hundreds of other Christians persecuted for their faith in India. (Ps.18:6)

More: <http://www.compassdirect.org/english/country/india/24929/>

■ **Seoul: Lay Catholics likened to a 'sleeping giant'**

Lay Catholics are held back by commitments within the clerical structures. It is now time to awaken them to their specific mission living in the world like a leaven, transforming it, showing the diversity of their life of faith so as to arouse admiration and questions in those who are non-believers. This is a summary of the contents of discussions and conversations at the Congress of Asian Catholic laity in Seoul which sees the present as a time of transition for the church. A professor at the Seminary from Vietnam emphasized that any commitment of the Church that does not include the mission to non-Christians is not a true ecclesial commitment. An Asian layman member of the Philippine government spoke of how important it is to maintain good relations with the media and fill it with Christian values.

Pray: for God to wake up the sleeping Catholic Church in Seoul and globally. (Eph.5:14)

More: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Lay-Catholics-in-Asia:-a-sleeping-giant-that-is-waking-up-19350.html>

PRAISE REPORTS

■ **North Korea: American Christian freed**

An American Christian imprisoned in North Korea has been released following a humanitarian effort by former US president Jimmy Carter. Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) said in a news release it welcomes the release of Aijalon Mahli Gomes, but strongly urges the international community to intensify pressure on North Korea for the release of thousands of prisoners still languishing in the nation. CSW said Gomes was detained in North Korea since entering the country on Jan. 25 by crossing the border from China. He was arrested by the North Korean authorities and sentenced to eight years in a labour camp. And ordered to pay a fine of \$700,000 for illegal entry and unspecified 'hostile acts.' He was the fourth US citizen to be detained by the North Korean government since Jan. 2009, following Robert Park (See Prayer Alert 0210) and the journalists Laura Ling and Euna Lee, all of whom were released after several months in custody.

Praise: God for the release of these international believers but pray for the many nationals still being held. (Ps.146:7)

More: <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/2010/s10080122.htm>

■ **Sudan: Kidnapped Christian worker freed**

An aid worker for Christian relief organisation Samaritan's Purse (SP) was released on 30 August after being held hostage for 105 days in Sudan. 35 year-old Flavia Wagner is exhausted but in good health and is currently in Khartoum. In May, Wagner and a Sudanese driver were abducted after their two-vehicle convoy was stopped by eight armed men 15 miles southwest of Nyala in Sudan's Darfur region. Seven days after the kidnapping, the two Sudanese men were released unharmed and without explanation in Thur, Darfur. Wagner remained in captivity but was allowed to contact her family and SP staff. 'We thank God that Flavia is safe and free' commented Franklin Graham, SP president, 'and appreciate the help of the governments of the Sudan and the United States. People around the world have been praying for her safety and her release. Today, those prayers have been answered.'

Praise: God for answering the prayers seeking Flavia's release (Lk. 4:18)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/kidnapped.christian.relief.worker.freed.in.sudan.after.105.days/26605.htm>

PRAYER FORUM OF BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

Please feel free to distribute Prayer Alert to anyone you feel will benefit from its ministry. All we ask is that you do not edit or change it in any way or charge for its use without contacting us for written permission.

Prayer Alert is a partnership project of the Prayer Forum of the British Isles and Ireland
C/O World Prayer Centre, Cornerstone House, 5 Ethel Street, Birmingham, B2 4BG, England