



PRAYER ALERT...

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BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Launch of major UK Campaign: 'Not Ashamed'

A Christian advocacy group has launched a new campaign defending the right of Christians to express their faith and beliefs in public. The former Archbishop of Canterbury Lord Carey is among the supporters of the nationwide 'Not Ashamed' campaign launched by Christian Concern for our Nation. The campaign criticises the discrimination some Christians have experienced in school or the workplace as a result of being open about their beliefs. It points to the recent high profile cases of Gary McFarlane, a relationships adviser who was dismissed by Relate for refusing to counsel same-sex couples, and Shirley Chaplin, a nurse who was taken off wards after refusing to remove her crucifix. The group is asking Christians to wear the Not Ashamed logo during Advent and on December 1, which it has declared 'Not Ashamed Day'. Lord Carey is writing a leaflet to accompany the campaign, to be delivered to every household, in which he explains why Jesus Christ is good news for all. www.notashamed.org.uk

Pray: for this campaign to be successful in empowering Christians to express themselves unashamedly. (2Pe.2:2)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/new.campaign.to.defend.place.of.christians.in.public.life/26765.htm>

■ Archbishop says desire for God is 'undimmed'

Dr Rowan Williams insisted the country has not 'turned its back on God' as he personally invited its residents to return to church this week. His comments echo those of the Pope, who declared at the end of his historic visit to Britain that he detected a 'deep thirst' for faith despite the forces of 'aggressive secularism' at work in Britain. Churchgoing has declined in recent decades, although some figures suggest it is now stabilising. (See Prayer Alert 3810) This has led many organisations, particularly in the public sector, to stop traditional celebrations of Christianity and to make staff keep their beliefs private. When launching a publicity campaign ahead of the annual Back to Church Sunday, the Archbishop said: 'The desire for God is undimmed in Britain. This country has not turned its back on God or spiritual things and the Church of England is here for the whole nation: we are a spiritual home on every street corner.'

Pray: for God to grant a renewed confidence in living and working the Christian life in the UK. (Ac.16:5)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/religion/8014412/Archbishop-of-Canterbury-says-desire-for-God-is-undimmed.html>

■ Government's commitment to people of faith

The Evangelical Alliance(EA) has welcomed assurances from Baroness Warsi that this Government 'does God' and is 'comfortable' with faith. The Government minister made the comments to Church of England bishops last week, adding that the church was 'at the heart of society' and that the Labour Government had failed to 'create policies to unleash the positive power of faith in our society'. The EA head of public affairs, Dr Don Horrocks, said her comments were 'welcome' and 'timely'. He pointed to the work of Christian charities like Redeeming our Communities in Manchester, whose volunteers have been credited with helping to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour. The General Director of the EA, Steve Clifford, said that Christians were 'already at the heart of serving their communities' but should grasp the opportunity to get even more involved by being a part of the Government's Big Society initiative.(See Prayer Alert 3010)

Pray: for Government to act on their words to place the Church at the 'heart of society'. (Isa.26:2)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.co.uk/article/evangelical.alliance.welcomes.governments.commitment.to.people.of.faith/26745.htm>

■ Pope's visit 'challenges stereotypes'

After all the fears expressed before the Pope left Rome of a possible debacle - street protests and a poor turnout - there was a tangible sense of relief, even of euphoria, among Pope Benedict's entourage during the return flight. The Prime Minister, Mr Cameron, said the Pope had challenged the whole country 'to sit up and think' about the relative roles of religion and politics. The Pope had talked about 'the development of a healthy pluralistic society'. He expressed his admiration for Britain's 'instinct for moderation' which found an echo in the Prime Minister's vision of a country that is 'deeply but quietly compassionate'. The Pope's triumph was really his speech to leaders of civil society at Westminster. One politician said that his performance had been 'sheer magic'.

Pray: that the Papal visit will leave a long-term legacy in the role of the Christian faith in this country. (Phm:20)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-11372501>

■ Police need to reclaim streets

Police have 'given up' on the street and are failing to take problems caused by anti-social behaviour as seriously as victims do, a police chief says. About 45% (3.5m) of police calls relate to anti-social behaviour, but Chief Inspector of Constabulary Sir Denis O'Connor said officers did not regard it as real crime and were slow to act. He warned cutting spending on the issue would be 'a very significant mistake'. Police chiefs say they are deeply aware of the impact of anti-social behaviour. Home Secretary Theresa May said the report was a 'damning indictment of Labour's failure to tackle anti-social behaviour' and the government was reviewing the tools the police needed to deal with anti-social behaviour because Asbos were 'clearly not working'. The work of Street Pastors www.streetpastors.co.uk and Street Angels www.streetangels.org.uk/ have contributed to crime reduction in many of the areas where they serve.

Pray: that the Police, together with the Church and all peace-makers, would reclaim the streets bringing law and order and God's new life. (1Jn.5:5)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-11394354>

■ Threat to end dialogue with Anglicans

The Russian Orthodox Church has threatened to withdraw from dialogue with Anglicans because of the 'liberalism and relativism' of some Anglican Churches, and the development of women bishops in the Church of England. In a speech at Lambeth Palace a week ago, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk attacked the Anglican Church for what he described as 'betraying our common witness by departing from traditional Christian values and replacing them by contemporary secular standards'. He urged the Archbishop of Canterbury to resist pressure from liberal Anglicans. His prolonged attack on liberalism in the Anglican Church stunned Dr Williams, onlookers said. He said 'The abyss that exists today divides not so much the Orthodox from the Catholics or the Catholics from the Protestants as it does the 'traditionalists' from the 'liberals'.

Pray: that fundamental reconciliation between the two churches may be reached to promote the Kingdom. (Mt 5:24)

More: <http://www.churchtimes.co.uk/content.asp?id=100650>

■ Church coalition at party conferences

Five denominations have formed a coalition to raise their shared concerns with the three main parties during conference season. The coalition is formed of senior leaders from the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Methodist Church, the Quakers, the Salvation Army and the United Reformed Church. They hope to keep the Government's Big Society initiative, affordable housing and poverty on the agenda when they attend the conferences of the Liberal Democrat, Labour and Conservative parties during September and October. These denominations are encouraging members of the public to attend the fringe events that they and Christian political fellowships are staging alongside each of the conferences. The Rev Martyn Atkins, General Secretary of the Methodist Conference said: 'Some people believe that politicians don't 'do God' and that the churches shouldn't get involved in political life. Our delegation demonstrates that the churches value the vocation of those who work to improve our society through political life'.

Pray: that our politicians will take into account our Christian values when planning change. (Ps.103:6)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/churches.form.coalition.at.party.conferences/26752.htm>

EUROPE

■ Poland: Holocaust denier tours Nazi sites

Prosecutors in Poland say a British historian who denies the Holocaust is touring World War II sites including former Nazi death camps. Author David Irving is leading a group on a visit to the camps and other World War II sites but is not releasing his exact itinerary. Poland's National Remembrance Institute said on 22 September that its prosecutors know where Irving is. The Institute's spokesman Andrzej Arseniuk said prosecutors are watching his public statements for any violations of the law that forbids the denial of the Holocaust. Violations are prosecuted and can lead to prison terms of up to three years. Irving was convicted under a similar law in Austria in 2006 and served 13 months in prison.

Pray: that sceptics about the horrors of the ungodly Holocaust are saved by the Holy Spirit from the path they have taken. (Gal.4:11)

More: http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2010/09/22/world/AP-EU-Poland-Holocaust-Denier.html?_r=1&ref=global-home

■ Bulgaria: 166 children die of neglect

Children in state-run homes were tied to their beds or wheelchairs, or 'chemically immobilised', amid claims of sexual abuse, according to a report by the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee (BHC). The report was based on investigations by prosecutors and human rights experts at all the country's 26 social care homes, which shelter 1,350 disabled children. Of 238 deaths, three-quarters could have been prevented, the report said. Preliminary findings concluded that 166 deaths resulted from 'lack of care' by personnel at the institutions. Bulgaria's Chief Prosecutor Boris Velchev said most of the deaths were never reported to police or subject to autopsies. According to the report, 31 deaths were due to malnutrition, 84 to neglect, 13 to poor hygiene, six to accidents such as drowning or freezing, 36 to pneumonia and two to abuse. In 15 cases, the experts could not determine the cause of death. 'We are determined to conclude the investigations and punish those responsible,' Velchev said.

Pray: for all children in care, that they may be lovingly nourished in body and spirit rather than neglected. (La.3:33)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/bulgaria/8013837/166-children-die-of-neglect-in-Bulgarian-care-homes.html>

WORLDWIDE

■ Israel: Jerusalem rioting

Security in Jerusalem was tightened on Thursday following large riots on Tuesday that erupted when Samar Sarchan a Palestinian from east Jerusalem was killed by an Israeli security guard. Jerusalem District Police Commander gave his backing to the guard. Whilst Succot holiday events were scheduled to proceed as planned, a large police presence was in place in the Old City and surrounding area due to fears of further clashes. Also riots broke out in east Jerusalem neighbourhood of Silwan before dawn on Thursday morning, ending a two-month period of calm. The disturbances broke out after members of a Jewish family that owns a pathway in the area sought to take down an illegally built gate placed on the path by Palestinian residents. The gate leads to a mosque in the neighbourhood. (See:

<http://www.jpost.com/Home/Article.aspx?id=186026> In Silwan, three Molotov cocktails were thrown at police and four Molotov cocktails were hurled at the Beit Orot Yeshiva near the a-Tur neighborhood in Jerusalem.

Pray: for police to have prudence and discretion as they calm the situations and for residents to refrain from further reprisals. (Pr.8:12-14)

More: <http://www.jpost.com/Israel/Article.aspx?id=188974>

■ Israel: Prayer for Jerusalem's Mayor to attend event

Millions of Christians around the world will join together on Sunday October 3 to pray during the Global Day of Prayer for the Peace of Jerusalem. In Jerusalem the prayer day will be marked by a special live televised celebration to 192 nations from a position overlooking the Old City. The Rev Dr. Robert Stearns of Eagles' Wings will lead the Jerusalem event and Mayor Barkat will bring greetings from Jerusalem to the hundreds of thousands of worldwide viewers joining the telecast. See www.daytopray.com Jerusalem is under tremendous pressure on all sides and the prayers of faithful people will make a difference, especially as Christians and Jews from the nations, together with Israeli Christians and Arab Christians, stand together in Jerusalem.

Pray: for many to hear of this and stand in prayer with Arab and Israeli Christians for the Peace of Jerusalem. (Ps.122:6)

More: http://www.breakingchristiannews.com/articles/display_art.html?ID=8234

■ Lebanon: Hezbollah in Lebanon

Human rights activist, and Media Chairman for the Canadian Lebanese Coordinating Council, Elias Bejjani, reports from the Beirut Observer, '3,500 Hezbollah militiamen are secretly deployed in the Eastern Christian region of Lebanon, and Hezbollah has reached its final logistic preparations to execute an armed coup to take over all of Lebanon by force.' The web site attributed its information to well-informed sources in the Saudi media.' see: <http://globalpolitician.com/26589-hezbollah-lebanon> Also Syria and Saudi Arabia have stepped in to ease tensions in Lebanon in light of an escalating crisis between rival political parties over a UN-backed tribunal probing the murder of ex-premier Rafiq Hariri. There are fears that should the court indict Hezbollah members, this could lead to a Sunni-Shiite conflict similar to the one that brought the country close to civil war in May 2008.

Pray: that militant plans would come to nothing and God's benchmark would be used in every negotiation. (Ps.29:11)

More: <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5gflkqY7gudl2YLeSKkgs-WTIN0Q>

■ India: Commonwealth Games corruption

Two days ago the athletes village faulty infrastructure was highlighted when a bridge collapsed injuring 23 workers. On 31st July India Sports News and the Times of India reported New Delhi officials uncovering evidence of corruption in construction projects and illegal cash transfers for contractors developing the site. Officials of India's Government Watchdog reported construction quality certificates scrutinized in 16 games-related projects had turned out to be fake or suspect. Also another corruption scandal over money being transferred from the Commonwealth Games account to a little-known film company based in London was discovered in July.' see <http://www.earthtimes.org/articles/news/337392.hits-delhis-commonwealth-games.html> The BBC reported, 'From the time of winning the bid New Delhi was accused of influencing the voting in its favour by offering cash inducements to Commonwealth member countries and when building work began it was behind schedule and under the control of 20 competing organising committees. 45 workers have died in accidents since work began. See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-11389204>

Pray: for an end to this corruption and any other hidden corruption and exploitation, resulting in future safe working conditions, honest dealings and security for the Games. (Is.56:1)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/sport/othersports/commonwealthgames/8020132/Commonwealth-Games-2010-Delhi-official-sorry-for-collective-failure-as-crisis-grows.html>

■ Zimbabwe: Sunday - International Prayer Day

The Call is ringing out across Zimbabwe to return to God, and train the poor to farm in a profitable and sustainable way. In response to this call, on Sunday 26th September thousands of Christians will gather in urban and rural-combined church meetings across Zimbabwe to cry out in a national day of prayer. Worldwide Christians are invited to join Zimbabweans in prayer for the nation. These gatherings are being organised by Trumpet Call for Transformation, a partnership between the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe and Foundations for Farming. 'We invite you to partner with us for the transformation of this nation. Pray that the Lord will reveal Himself to the Zimbabweans. Pray for the ministry of Foundations for Farming – transforming individuals, communities and nations through faithful and productive use of the land. (see Prayer Alert 3510)

Pray: that the Church will turn to God in active repentance (2Chron.7:14) and continue to reach out to the hungry and poor (Isa.58:9-10)

More: http://www.lovezim.org/Groups/134601/Love_Zim/Prayer_Day/Prayer_Day.aspx

■ Indonesia: Church defies authorities

Dozens of Christians have defied police and threats of attack from Muslim groups to hold prayers inside their boarded-up church near the Indonesian capital. The group held their Sunday service surrounded by hundreds of police and security guards saying they had as much right as any Indonesian to worship in the Muslim-majority country. Local officials used bullhorns to remind members of the Batak Christian Protestant Church that they were banned from the site following an attack last week by suspected Muslim activists on two church leaders. (See Prayer Alert 3810) 'We just want to carry out our obligations as Christians but authorities are treating us like terrorists,' said Advent Tambunan a member of the congregation. A local leader of the Islamic Defenders' Front, which has led calls for the Christians to leave was among 10 people detained by the police after last week's attack.

Pray: for the wave of Christian revival in Indonesia to grow and overwhelm the darkness. (Is.60:1)

More: <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/asia-pacific/2010/09/201091944922621312.html>

■ China: Pastor 'Bike' perseveres to encourage house church Christians

Pastor Bike is the chairman of the China House Church Alliance and is a passionate evangelist known for riding his bike across the country on missions of encouragement to the many Chinese House Churches. ChinaAid is reporting that on Monday September 20 during the trial of house church Christians Liu Yunhua and Gao Jianli, Pastor 'Bike' and his wife came to see the trial but were detained by the Public Security Bureau. Pastor Bike has been arrested and interrogated countless times in the past 10 years in his efforts to strengthen house church Christians. Other Christians who came to the trial were also detained on their way home. There is no record of their release. ChinaAid urges Xuchang's local government to respect Pastor Bike and his wife's rights as citizens and are calling on them to release the detained house church members. 'We ask Christians worldwide to join us in prayer for their protection and encouragement,' a spokesperson said.

Pray: for God to use ChinaAid and other Christian resources to infuse His justice in this and similar situations in China. (Ps.7:9-10)

More: <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/2010/s10090116.htm>

PRAISE REPORTS

■ Outreach brings Leicester to a standstill

Residents of and visitors to Leicester were told to 'come just as you are' on Saturday, September 18, 2010, as the Jesus Loves Leicestershire's (JLL) team hosted its fourth annual 'Fire And Glory' event in the Leicester city centre. And come they did, as thousands of shoppers and onlookers flocked to the huge stage at Humberstone Gate, one of the main shopping streets in Leicester, to witness one of the city's biggest annual Christian outreach events. Praise groups, singers, rappers and evangelists took to the stage for a successful day of worship, praise and thanksgiving. Local resident Maria Moseley, 62, from Leicester Christian Fellowship, spoke of how she had been healed of osteoarthritis after spending 28 years in a wheelchair.

Praise: God for this initiative and answers to prayer. (Ps.3:4)

More: http://www.breakingchristiannews.com/articles/display_art.html?ID=8239

■ Romania: Gypsies find hope in Christ

The European Union has deported more than 1,000 gypsy people in recent weeks, and most are being sent back to Romania where they face a life of poverty and deprivation. But Christian groups are working to bring hope to Romania's gypsies. For many, it has led to a relationship with God. After years of mission work in Romania, Kevin Hoy realized gypsies have often struggled with advancing in Romanian society. In 2009 he witnessed what many call the 'Toflea miracle,' where 500 gypsies in southeast Romania were baptized after accepting Christ. It was the largest baptism in Romania's history. Hundreds more in Tileagd answered the call to Christ this year. 'What you realize as you travel around is so many of the gypsy communities haven't moved forward at all,' Hoy said. 'They are exactly where they were, whether it's 10 years, 20 years - they haven't moved at all.' (See also Prayer Alert 3510 & 3810)

Praise: God for the work of the Holy Spirit and pray that many more will be blessed. (Gen.1:28a)

More: <http://www.cbn.com/cbnnews/world/2010/September/Romanian-Gypsies-Find-Hope-in-Christ/>

PRAYER FORUM OF BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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