

PRAYER ALERT...

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BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ **INSIGHT ARTICLE: Druidry an official religion in UK**

A pagan tradition has been formally classed as a religion under the charity law. Druids can now receive exemption from taxes on donations and have the same status as the Church of England. The 350 member Druid network in the British Isles has practiced for thousands of years in Britain. They worship thunder, the sun, and spirits which they believe arise from places such as mountains and rivers. They cultivate a sacred relationship with the natural world through rituals, dancing and singing at stone circles and other 'sacred' sites throughout the country. A Druid who works as a counsellor said Druidry appeals to people turning from monotheistic religions but longing for spirituality in their lives. See <http://www.wdam.com/Global/story.asp?S=13256394> Also at an Eisteddfod celebration of Welsh culture the Archbishop of Canterbury Dr Rowan Williams and the former Chief Constable of North Wales Richard Brunstrom, were inducted as honorary Druids and given Bardic names. (See <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstoppers/religion/8037258/Druids-Worshippers-of-nature-who-were-said-to-sacrifice-humans.html> Click 'info' for Druidry INSIGHT ARTICLE.

Pray: for God to touch the lives of these people, both in the United Kingdom and wherever the root of Druidry is found globally. (Ac.19:18-20)

Info: <http://www.prayer-alert.net/info/Druidryinsights1.pdf>

■ **Tony Blair: Islamic extremists**

The west is being 'out-spent, out-manoeuvred and out-strategised' by violent Islamic extremism, Tony Blair has warned. He said there had been a failure to challenge the narrative that Islam was oppressed by the west which was fuelling extremism around the world. Too many people accepted the extremists' analysis that military actions taken by the west after the 9/11 attacks were directed at countries because they were Muslim and that it supported Israel because Israelis were Jews while Palestinians were Muslims. Speaking in New York to the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Blair said it was impossible to defeat extremism 'without defeating the narrative that nurtures it'. Moderate Muslims who believed in coexistence and tolerance were, he said, being undermined by the unwillingness of the west to take on the extremists' arguments. 'Examine the education systems that succour it. And then measure, over the years, the paucity of our counter-attack in the name of peaceful coexistence.'

Pray: for strong leadership in all Christian nations to counter false Islamic arguments. (Jn 8:44)

More: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2010/oct/06/tony-blair-islamic-extremism-west>

■ **Young people's 'faded memory of Christianity'**

Religion is largely irrelevant to most young people who rely instead on a 'secular trinity' of themselves, their family and their friends to give meaning to their lives, a new book claims. The study published by the Church of England concludes that people born after 1982 - known as 'Generation Y' - have only a 'faded cultural memory' of Christianity. For many young

people, religious observance extends no further than praying in their bedrooms during moments of crisis, on a 'need to believe basis'. Fewer than one in five young people believe in a God 'who created the world and hears my prayers', and teenagers were more likely to believe in the 'nicer' parts of religious doctrine than those about the devil and punishment. 'It is undoubtedly the case that the Christian memory is very faint and in many respects Generation Y is a largely unstoried and memoryless generation,' the study said.

Pray: for outreach to young people to give them the true Gospel message. (Ro.1:17)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstoppers/religion/8042110/Young-people-have-faded-memory-of-Christianity-says-Church-book.html>

■ 60,000 children in Britain are problem gamblers

Tens of thousands of 12 to 15-year-olds in Britain are becoming problem gamblers, a charity that works with gambling addicts has warned. GamCare, a charity which gives help, advice and treatment to problem gamblers, has released a report calling for children to be taught about the dangers of gambling. It says the rate of adolescent addicts is over three times as high as adult addicts. It also says young problem gamblers are more likely to be involved in alcohol and substance abuse, theft, truancy and likely to do less well at school. Jane Rigby, head of the education development at GamCare, said: 'Gambling is all around us. It is advertised on television, children are accessing Internet bingo sites and Internet poker sites. They have found ways of lying about their age to access these sites'. Rt Hon David Willetts MP, Minister for Universities and Science said, 'Educating young people about the risks of gambling is vital'.

Pray: for the advertising and accessibility of gambling to be tightened in order to protect our youngsters. (Heb.13:5)

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/video-60000-children-in-britain-are-problem-gamblers/>

■ Spend more on evangelism

Too many churches are neglecting evangelism, with little time and money spent on it, a leading evangelist has claimed. Many churches have one-dimensional evangelism strategies that just focus on Alpha, while very few are actually training their congregation in how to evangelise. The issue is so critical because compared to evangelism, everything else the church is doing 'is like rearranging the furniture on the Titanic'. The comments were made by J John, during a wide-ranging address on what makes a church community at the latest leaders' day at Gorsley Baptist Church. 'What is church about?' he asked. 'It's about looking up in: worship. Looking in: wellbeing. And looking out: witness. However, all the research shows churches spend 90-95 per cent of their time on two of those three things. The first two. Don't you think that's an imbalance?' It's not that churches are not working hard, he said, but more a case of changing their approach.

Pray: for church communities to reconsider the place of evangelism in their activities. (1Pe.3:15)

More: <http://www.baptisttimes.co.uk/news1.htm>

■ Methodist and URC ecumenical milestone

Ecumenical relations between the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church (URC) will reach a milestone moment next week when both church's Councils convene for their first-ever joint meeting. 140 members of the two Free Church councils will meet at the Hayes Conference Centre in Swanwick from October 13-15, when they will deal with both domestic and inter-denominational issues. Although the Methodist Church and the URC are not bound by any formal agreements, there has been extensive collaboration between the two bodies during recent years. Next week's summit will be the latest step in this journey of joint working between the two Churches, which both span England, Scotland and Wales. At the meeting, each Church Council will meet privately to carry out its own business. However, for the majority of the sessions, members of the two bodies will come together to work from the same agenda, as part of an ongoing drive to unite in mission and outreach.

Pray: for unity of purpose between Christian churches (2Co. 11:28)

More: <http://www.methodistrecorder.co.uk/mrhlines.htm>

■ GDOP London links up with Micah Challenge

Global Day of Prayer London (GDOP) is partnering with Micah Challenge's 10-10-10 campaign as part of their 500 days of prayer initiative. They are encouraging churches across the UK to pray for the marginalised in their local areas and the world's poor this October. As churches throughout the UK are getting behind this initiative, GDOP's London Convenor, Jonathan Oloyede, wants to continue to build this momentum of prayer by providing more and more resources to keep mobilising Christians towards 24-hour intercession. GDOP London is now producing a monthly podcast with regular interviews and features with key Christian leaders. Their October podcast has a special focus on praying for the world's poor. Oloyede also presents a monthly video blog to keep Christians inspired and updated on the 500 days of prayer movement and there are a number of prayer resources on the GDOP London website.

Pray: that all Christians remember and pray for the world's poor that their plight is lessened by God's strong intervention. (Dt. 15:7)

More: <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/2010/s10100016.htm>

EUROPE

■ Bosnia: Voting for future of divided nation

Voters in Bosnia-Herzegovina have begun casting ballots in general elections that are seen as crucial for the future of the fractured nation where politicians seek membership in the European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). There are international concerns the country will fall apart along ethnic lines. Almost 15 years after Bosnia's ethnic war ended, Muslims, Croats and Serbs have begun voting in elections that at least some people hope will increase

cooperation in the fractured nation. The international community, which monitors Sunday's vote, point out that cooperation between the different ethnic communities is crucial, also to overcome a major economic crisis in the country, where statistics show over 40 percent of people are unemployed. Bosnia's more than three million voters can decide the future of their former Yugoslav republic at over 5,000 polling stations. First official results are expected by midnight local time.

Pray: that this Sunday's vote will lead to increased cooperation between the communities. (Ro.15:5a)

More: <http://www.worthynews.com/9606-news-watch-bosnia-votes-for-future-of-divided-nation-update>

■ **Kazakhstan: Pressure on 'non-traditional faiths' is worsening**

The Kazakh government continues to put pressure on foreign missionaries attempting to obtain visas to stay in the country. The Kazakh Church is prepared for matters to get worse. 'Foreign involvement for the purpose of missionary work in Kazakhstan becomes increasingly difficult to happen,' confirms Eric Mock, vice president of Ministry Operations for Slavic Gospel Association. Norwegian news network Forum 18 conveys a number of instances in which the Kazakh government has denied visas to foreign missionaries of various minority faiths. A missionary visa, as it is, lasts only 180 days and cannot be renewed. Mock says there is some fear that the visas will become even more restrictive. With clear contempt toward the presence of evangelical Christian missionaries as well as missionaries for other minority faiths, the Church needs to prepare for any change.

Pray: that God would lift the spirit of fear from the Kazakh government over 'non-traditional' denominations. (Ac.10:34-35)

More: <http://www.mnnonline.org/article/14804>

WORLDWIDE

■ **INSIGHT ARTICLE: North Korea: Transfer of leadership**

North Korean leader Kim Jong-il's son, Kim Jong-un, has been appointed a general and leader of the defence commission amid rumours he is being anointed as successor this weekend at the 65th anniversary of the founding of the Workers Party. The Workers Party has not met for decades and observers believe Kim Jong-il may be cementing the family dynasty. The succession is being closely watched because of the North's nuclear programme and hostility with the South.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-11476434>

This announcement is Kim Jong-un's first mention in state media and is reminiscent of his father's rise to prominence in the 1970s. He is being elevated to a four-star general without military experience. His elder brother and half-brother appear to have been ruled out of the running for succession. Things are changing, an anonymous Open Doors traveller reported being allowed to pray publicly and sensing there may be a little more relaxation on the spiritual level. Click 'nfo' for North Korea INSIGHT ARTICLE.

Pray: for a sustained spiritual, physical, and political turning from hidden darkness to open freedom. (Is.42:16)

Info: <http://www.prayer-alert.net/info/NorthKoreaPowerInsight1.pdf>

■ **Kenya: Day of prayer 10.10.10**

Bishop Dominic Kimengich said Kenya suffers from illiteracy, poor leadership, a large refugee population from Somalia and the Sudan, malaria, HIV/AIDS, and growing gang violence connected to guns available from unstable bordering nations. Kimengich hopes to help his people to be strong in faith and peaceful and resourceful in spirit; he also wants to promote education and self-reliance as ways to 'plift the living standards of the people.' This Sunday is a day of prayer for the nation. (see How to Pray for Kenya <http://www.prayer-alert.net/info/HowtoprayforKenya2.pdf> Globally we can join the Kenyan Church and pray they would continue to be strong on the issue of social justice, be the voice of the voiceless, and offer Christian values that bring the people together in unity through Christ as the children of God. Kenya is beginning to see themselves as a nation and starting to say, 'What can we do for ourselves?'

Pray: that Kenya will continue to take a new direction with God's help.(Ps.16:11)

More: http://www.mlive.com/living/kalamazoo/index.ssf/2010/10/committed_to_god_and_kenya_new.html

■ **Worldwide: Unreached People Prayer Initiative**

Thirty-six years ago at the first Lausanne Congress Strategic Prayer Group meeting Ralph Winter spoke about the 'Hidden People Groups' (see also this weeks British Isles INSIGHT ARTICLE). That first meeting initiated much activity centring on the 10-40 window. This year they meet again in Cape Town 2010 and are sensing the Lord calling His church anew to times of strategic prayer for the 'least reached' nations; but this time his church will be able to use the tools of the 21st century to touch people groups of the world. We are invited to unite through technology and bring in the harvest. Their desire is to see strategic prayer groups established and interceding both over Skype and on-site in particular nations among unreached people groups, believing the Lord will give us His strategies to bring in the harvest! They are encouraging a partnership with existing prayer networks and intercessors to create a synergy of divine connection and increasing passion for prayer for the unreached. PRAISE GOD!

Pray: that the church would unite through this initiative and not see it as something separate from what they are already doing. (Nu.2:2 & Is.18:3)

More: <http://www.unreachedprayer.org>

■ **Iran: Persecution update**

A young Iranian believer from a Muslim background died of injuries sustained when he was severely beaten by a relative. Elam Ministries report that the relative took exception to the believer's clear commitment to Jesus. He leaves a wife and two young children. According to the Farsi Christian News Network, three of 15 believers arrested on 8th July for their faith

remain detained. A number of others continue to be detained for their faith in Iran, all are under pressure to recant their faith but are refusing to do so. According to Iranian State Television in September nine believers have also been arrested in Hamedan on charges of evangelism. We can praise God that nearly five months after being released from prison, an Iranian court has acquitted Maryam Rostampour and Marzieh Amirizadeh Esmaeilabad of all charges related to being Christians and engaging in Christian activities.

Pray: that prisoners will know the presence and peace of Jesus, remain clearly committed and fulfil the Father's purposes for their lives. (Ps.23:3-5)

More: http://www.givengain.com/cgi-bin/giga.cgi?cmd=cause_dir_cause&cause_id=%20%20%201489

■ Pakistan: Muslims murder Christian family

Islamic extremists killed Edwin Paul, a Christian lawyer and evangelist, his wife and their five children at their home in north-western Pakistan because he mounted legal challenges against a Muslim charging a Christian exorbitant interest. A Muslim neighbour said that the previous day armed men stopped Paul, took him by the collar and said, 'Leave the town in 24 hours. We know how to throw out Christians; we will not allow even a single Christian to live here. We will hang them all in the streets so that no Christian would ever dare to enter the Hazara land.' Hazara are settlers to the area from northern Pakistan and they financially support Islamic extremist groups. They are known for charging up to 400 percent interest to Christians. The Paul family had moved to the area in February.

Pray: that the Christians in Pakistan would be protected, strengthened and emboldened as they bring about His justice and ask God to remove the spiritual cloud of Islam over the nation. (Is.51:4-6)

More: http://www.openheaven.com/forums/forum_posts.asp?TID=34336&PN=1&TPN=1

■ Algeria: Christians face court

As in many Muslim democracies, hard-line Islamic fundamentalists in Algeria have secured the balance of power and are skilful politicians armed with Korans to achieve political gain and influence policies. Decades of Islamic terror have left many Algerians traumatised and disillusioned, and now Christianity is growing especially in the Kabylie region. This is attracting the attention of the Islamists. While persecution of Christians has escalated the Church is not alone for many Kabylie citizens and rights groups are equally concerned about advancing Islamisation, declining liberty, escalating intolerance and state repression. A new struggle for Algeria is heating up. In the Kabylie region four Protestant leaders will face court on the 10th October for 'practising non-Muslim worship without authorisation'. The fellowship is affiliated with the Protestant Church of Algeria a nationally accredited denomination with 30,000 believers, mainly in Kabylie. The Pastor who owns the property where the Church meets will also be tried for 'hosting a foreigner' (a French pastor).

Pray: for the court's courage to uphold justice despite Government and Islamist pressure. (Mt.12:18)

More: <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/2010/s10100034.htm>

PRAISE REPORTS

■ Libya: South Korean Pastor released

The northern African nation of Libya has released from detention two South Korean nationals – including one pastor – who were arrested this past summer for their alleged engagement in missionary activities, according to Seoul's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. One of the men, a Protestant pastor identified only by his family name, Koo, had been arrested in June for violating the predominantly Muslim country's religious law, which prohibits the proselytizing of Muslims. The other man, identified by his family name, Jeon, was arrested the following month for aiding in Koo's efforts, which included bringing Christian books and other materials for missionary work into the country. While South Korea – as the second largest missionary-sending country in the world – is no stranger to situations involving missionary activities, the case in Libya was complicated by the recent expulsion of a South Korean Embassy official who was suspected of collecting information on Libya's leader and other sensitive issues.

Praise: God for the release of these prisoners and pray that others still imprisoned would be released soon. (Ps.146:7)

More: <http://www.christianpost.com/article/20101003/libya-releases-s-korean-pastor-after-months-long-detention/>

■ S Korea: Senior citizens urged to turn to God

South Korean senior citizens are urged to get closer to God in order to find happiness in their old age. Seoul archdiocesan Pastoral Administration for Seniors' organized the Seniors' Day festival on Oct. 5 in Seoul. 'It has celebrated the annual event every October since 1988. Some 3,500 seniors attended the event. Auxiliary Bishop Andrew Yeom Soo-jung of Seoul said, 'seniors have experienced life's joys and sorrows. Jesus knows all hardships. What we need most in our remaining days is to realize that we are all beloved of the Lord.' With Seoul's aging population increasing to more than one million, Seoul RC archdiocese in cooperation with the local government sets up day care centres for senior citizens at parishes. So far, it has opened six centres in six parishes and plans to open nine more by February next year.

Praise: God that He blesses even those who are old and grey. (Is.46:4)

More: <http://www.ucanews.com/2010/10/06/koreas-senior-citizens-urged-to-turn-to-god/>

PRAYER FORUM OF BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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