



PRAYER ALERT...



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www.prayer-alert.net editor@prayer-alert.net

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BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Christians to 'prepare for persecution'

Barnabas Fund says Christians in the West need to be ready for suffering if they are to make a stand for Christ. They are inviting churches in the UK to dedicate one Sunday in November to the issue of persecution around the world – as well as at home. The theme of this year's Suffering Church Sunday, 'Be on Your Guard', reflects Barnabas Fund's growing concerns over the freedom of Christians in the West. 'More insidious threats are creeping into Western society – and we need to be prepared,' the group said. It warned that full religious liberty, including the freedom to choose one's faith, was 'under attack'. It said religious liberty was being 'publicly undermined' by world leaders on the international stage, who have adopted the term 'freedom of worship' instead of 'freedom of religion'. 'Any person of faith knows that religious exercise is about a lot more than freedom of worship.'

Pray: for God to strengthen us to make a stand for Christ. (1Pe.5:9)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.co.uk/article/christians.in.west.told.to.prepare.for.persecution/27018.htm>

■ Call for change to public order law

Christian hoteliers from Liverpool who were subjected to a criminal trial because of comments they made about Islam have called for a change to the law. Ben and Sharon Vogelenzang, declared innocent last December, were prosecuted under Section 5 of the Public Order Act after a female Muslim guest complained that she had been offended by their comments. To protect other Christians from a similar ordeal, the Vogelenzangs have encouraged Christians to visit their MP and ask for the word 'insulting' to be removed from the Public Order Act as part of the Coalition's forthcoming Freedom Bill. 'We stood trial, accused of a crime. It was awful. After a two-day hearing, the judge threw out the case against us. As Christians we should help each other. We want to help people by making sure that this can't happen again to anyone else.'

Pray: for Christians to have freedom of expression without fear of prosecution. (Mt.24:14)

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/video-vogelenzangs-call-for-change-to-public-order-law/>

■ Portsmouth: year's worship in one day

Portsmouth Cathedral has held its first '24 Hours of Worship'. Churchgoers worshipped in a different style each hour, including prayer, praise, music, reflection, healing, and silence, beginning at 7 p.m. on Friday 5 Nov and ending at 7 p.m. on Saturday. The event was the idea of the diocesan youth and children's work adviser, Ben Mizen, who joined forces with the City Centre Pioneer Minister, the Rev Mark Rodel, and the diocesan liturgy and worship group, to celebrate the main festivals of the church calendar in one day, beginning with Advent and ending with Pentecost. Groups known to have a unique style of worship were invited to take part. The 13th-century chapel of St Thomas was used for plainsong lauds at 2 a.m., and a healing service at 7 a.m. The nave was used for a Christmas Taizé Eucharist; an episcopal Eucharist, led by the

new Bishop of Portsmouth, the Rt Rev Christopher Foster; and for psalms chanted by the congregation. The choir was used for a choral Passion.

Pray: this event in Portsmouth will strengthen the congregation's faith and be a light to others. (Ac.4:24)

More: <http://www.churchtimes.co.uk/content.asp?id=103325>

■ Call for 'sanctuary' for would-be refugees

Senior church leaders and representatives from the main Christian denominations have called for Yorkshire to be a region of Sanctuary for people escaping persecution and who are seeking protection in the UK. The church leaders have a long record of supporting asylum seekers and refugees in their flight from terror abroad and their plight of destitution in this country. West Yorkshire Ecumenical Council (WYEC) urged all churches in the region to take practical steps to promote a culture of hospitality and to become places of sanctuary and welcome for asylum seekers. The Rev Dr Clive Barrett, Executive Secretary of WYEC, said that 'Welcome and hospitality are at the heart of Christian life. Church leaders encourage everyone, especially local churches, to extend that welcome to people who come to us seeking safety.'

Pray: for the stateless that they might find refuge. (Is.16:3)

More: http://www.networkleeds.com/Articles/223427/Network_Leeds/Recent_News/West_Yorkshire_churches.aspx

■ Olympic mega-mosque

The first planning clash over what is known as the 'Olympic mega-mosque' is set to take place at a major public inquiry in the New Year. This inquiry is into the current use of the West Ham site of the proposed mega-mosque by separatist Islamic sect Tablighi Jamaat. A pre-inquiry meeting is being held on Thursday 11 November at Newham Town Hall. In February Newham Council ordered Tablighi Jamaat off the site which is owned by the Muslim group and is half a mile from the main 2010 Olympic stadium. They are currently and unlawfully using it for a temporary mosque and have erected buildings on site without planning permission. Website www.megamosquenothanks.com sensibly expresses reasons for opposition to the mosque's construction.

Pray: that the fomentors of anti-Christian bias in Newham will be restrained by law at the 2011 Inquiry. (Ps.7:9)

More: <http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/islam/olympic-mega-mosque-public-inquiry>

■ Resignation of Anglican bishops

The Archbishop of Canterbury accepted 'with regret' the resignation of Church of England bishops planning to convert to Roman Catholicism in protest over the ordination of women bishops and joining a network that will allow them to retain some Anglican traditions. The move involves three serving bishops, who minister to parishes opposed to female clergy, and two retired bishops. The serving bishops are the bishop of Ebbsfleet, Andrew Burnham, the bishop of Richborough, Keith Newton and the bishop of Fulham, John Broadhurst. They will be joined by the former bishop of Richborough, Edwin Barnes, and a former Australian bishop, David Silk. All wanted more accommodation from the Anglican Church for opponents of women clergy. Groups within the Church of England have been campaigning for female clerics to become bishops without any concessions that would undermine their authority. Traditionalists and conservative evangelicals oppose the historic change, claiming the concept of women bishops runs contrary to doctrine.

Pray: that these issues will not hinder the spreading of the Gospel message. (Phl.1:27)

More: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/nov/08/archbishop-canterbury-accepts-bishops-resignation>

■ Churches that serve rural communities

Rural Presence is the new interactive website for Christians engaged in rural mission. It provides a forum for all Christians to share good news stories and information about the church in rural communities. The aim is to encourage and inspire mission and discipleship in rural churches. By sharing the wealth of ideas and practical approaches from churches around Britain it is hoped that an effective Christian presence can be promoted and sustained in the countryside. 'This site offers an opportunity to share in all that is good and exciting about the rural church,' said Rev Graham Jones, National Rural Officer for the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church. 'Whether it's setting up community cinemas or hosting local post offices, the opportunities for rural churches to serve their communities are endless. We want to resource, enthuse and inspire Christians to think differently about their ministry in the countryside.' Experiences may be shared at www.ruralpresence.org.uk where creative ideas can be found.

Pray: for the mission and work of rural churches and for their leaders. (Ac.16:5)

More: <http://www.methodist.org.uk/index.cfm?fuseaction=opentogod.newsDetail&newsid=474>

EUROPE

■ A Day of Light and Darkness

November 9 is the day in 1938 when Hitler's gangs attacked Jewish property in a prelude to the Holocaust, and the very same day 51 years later when the wall dividing East and West was breached, signaling the end of the cold war. People lined up in Berlin for an exhibition of photographs celebrating the opening of the Bornholmer Strasse border crossing in 1989. Nov 9 has always presented the dilemma of how to celebrate the joy of the wall's coming down while at the same time commemorating the night of terror known as Kristallnacht, or the night of broken glass. 'I think it's the beginning in the shift in narrative,' said Deidre Berger, director of the American Jewish Committee's Berlin office. 'It's a concern of what young people know about this day.' The nightly news seemed to support her view, reporting Germany's celebrating the wall coming down, followed by a report on the 'Jewish community' marking Kristallnacht.

Pray: that the world may always remember the devastating lessons of fascism and genocide. (Ps.107:39)

More: http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/10/world/europe/10germany.html?_r=1&ref=global-home

■ **Pope sees antichurch sentiment in Spain**

Pope Benedict XVI strongly criticized the 'aggressive' antichurch sentiment that he said was flourishing in Spain as he sought to rekindle the faith in a once staunchly Roman Catholic nation that is now among Europe's most liberal. The Church is fighting laws supported by Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero's Socialist government that have allowed same-sex marriage, expedited divorce and eased restrictions on abortions. The pope's first stop on a two-day trip that began on 6 November was in the pilgrimage city of Santiago de Compostela. Pope Benedict told reporters that the anticlericalism seen now in Spain was reminiscent of the 1930s, when the church suffered a wave of violence and persecution as the country lurched into civil war. The reference was striking given the scale of violence then, when the Roman Catholic Church claims that 4,184 clergy members were killed, accused of backing Franco's fascist dictatorship.

Pray: that the Pope's visit will strengthen the faith of the Spanish nation. (1Co.16:13)

More: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/07/world/europe/07pope.html?ref=europe>

WORLDWIDE

■ **INSIGHT ARTICLE: Saudi Arabia: Hajj awareness campaign underway**

This year Hajj falls on November 14th to 17th. The Hajj (or pilgrimage to Mecca) is one of the five pillars of the Islamic religion. Muslims from all over the world flock to Mecca to perform rituals believing the Hajj cleanses them from all sins. As Christians we would never condemn Muslims from wanting to be clean of sin, and by clicking on the info button below and using this weeks INSIGHT's into the 4 days of Hajj we can enter into informed intercession for Muslim seekers of God. Also see a Hajj 5 minute video at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zUofxXeT3VM> The Saudi government's preparations for the pilgrimage includes officials spending five hours a day spreading a message of Hajj awareness to security challenges on the pilgrimage route. As Christians we can also prepare for the Hajj and pray that God's Holy Spirit will meet seekers at every junction of their pilgrimage route.

Pray: for 1.4 billion Muslims globally to see the risen Lord and for the 3 million pilgrims to be physically safe from stampedes and 'Mecca flu' disease. (Lk.24:45)

More: <http://www.prayer-alert.net/info/Hajj2010a.pdf>

■ **China: Authorities raid Christian's home**

Approximately 10 police officials raided the home of a Christian in Beijing searching for Hua Huiqi, a formerly imprisoned pastor. Every room in the house was ransacked, including a bedroom belonging to a child. The officials questioned the homeowner about intentions to meet with foreigners later that evening. In response to the incident the owner later spoke these powerful words: 'Because the Beijing police have crossed the line, and have blatantly and continually abused the basic rights of my entire family, I hereby announce that today I will begin to continually fast and pray. I will pray to the Lord to bless China and to fill it with righteousness! I also request, brothers and sisters, that you pray for me and my family, and that God may grant us freedom from fear!' Prayer Alert office asks you to spread the news of this article so that many Christians will stand with Hua Huiqi for China.

Pray: that Hua Huiqi will not give in to fear and for other Christians facing opposition in China to remain confident in Christ. (1 Pe.3:14-17)

More: <http://www.persecution.net/cn-2010-11-04.htm>

■ **India: Caste System castoffs**

India's economy is booming with more millionaires per square mile than anywhere else on earth, the huge and youthful population of nearly 1.2bn will overtake China's by approximately 2050. But hundreds of millions still live in abject poverty in rural areas - more than 830 million live on less than half a US dollar a day. India has more cases of malnutrition than the whole of sub-Saharan Africa and the worst affected areas are central and eastern India where many Christians live amongst the lower caste. Development has come but done little for rural Indians. Mining companies turned people off their land with little in the way of compensation. A civil rights worker fears for the future of the nation if the divide between its rich and poor continues to grow. 'People have been left out, marginalised completely and are no longer going to take it lying down, if policies are not changed the situation will get out of hand.'

Pray: that God's laws will inspire government decisions so that repression is removed. (Ja.1:27)

More: http://news.bbc.co.uk/today/hi/today/newsid_9166000/9166402.stm

■ **Myanmar: Fighting on Thai border**

Fighting erupted Sunday and thousands fled to Thailand as Myanmar's military government held its first election in two decades. (See Prayer Alert 4410 re Christian minorities in Myanmar). Myanmar's officials claim to have retaken control after the weekend's clashes. On the strength of this report Thai authorities are sending home more than 10,000 people, but many are worried about further clashes. The coordinator of the Myanmar Partnership Coalition reported, 'Many who fled the fighting do not feel safe to go back. I just wish that the Thai authorities didn't send them back yet It's too soon to be certain whether they will be safe or not.' Some boats ferried people to Myanmar, and then came back to Thailand fully loaded with people. Thousands of men, women, and children are sheltering under blue tents erected on a soccer field next to a border patrol police station, while rocket grenades were still being fired near their homes.

Pray: for the fighting to end, shops to re-open and people to feel it's safe enough to return. (Mt.7:7 & Ps.4:8)

More: <http://www.voanews.com/english/news/Troops-Regaining-Control-in-Eastern-Burma-106945193.html>

■ Haiti: Cholera spreads

Nearly half of Port-au-Prince's three million residents have been living in tents since the January 12 earthquake, and at least 115 cases of cholera, including the death of one person, have been registered in Haiti's capital, the most significant warning sign yet that the epidemic has spread from outlying areas to threaten hundreds of thousands of people in the city's camps. Samples from patients in Port-au-Prince are being tested in a laboratory to confirm the presence of bacteria, which has killed at least 583 people in Haiti. If confirmed, the bacteria could imperil an estimated 2.5 to 3 million inhabitants.

Pray: for hospital staff and health workers to be enabled and strengthened as they work to combat the spread of the disease. (Ps.28:2)

More: <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/americas/2010/11/2010118225019323724.html>

■ Canada: Will stand with Israel no matter what

Speaking at a two-day conference on anti-Semitism on Parliament Hill during Holocaust Education Week, Prime Minister Harper said he is prepared to suffer any political backlash that comes his way for speaking out against anti-Israel rhetoric, telling an audience that while Israel is receptive to fair criticism, Canada is obligated to stand up for its ally when it comes under attack from others. 'Not just because it is the right thing to do, but because history shows us, and the ideology of the anti-Israel mob tell us all too well, that those who threaten the existence of the Jewish people are in the longer term a threat to all of us.' The prime minister acknowledged that his position is not popular with all governments and organizations, including members of the United Nations and the Francophonie. Watch the YouTube video of Harper's speech 'More' link below.

Pray: for the truth in this message to be heard and seen by many who visit YouTube. (Ge.12:3)

More: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AUFdhlOoQM&feature=player_embedded

■ Iraq: Christian areas targeted

A series of bombings and mortar attacks targeting six districts with strong Christian majorities in Baghdad injured at least 24 people. The attacks come days after more than 40 people died when Islamist militants seized a Catholic cathedral. (See also last weeks Prayer Alert and INSIGHT article on Christian Minorities in Iraq.) The violence came before the talks to resolve the country's political crisis ended yesterday with Iraq's main parties agreeing to form a government. Christian communities are agonising over whether to stay in Iraq or to try to leave. Since 2003 the Christian population has dwindled to roughly half following a number of bomb attacks on churches and abductions or killings of priests and other Christians.

Pray: for God to give more protection to Iraqi Christians so that migration ends and refugees return. (Ge.28:15)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-11724378>

PRAISE REPORTS

■ North/South Korea: Reconciliation and food aid

As winter approaches, floods and frosty relations between Seoul and Pyongyang are putting the lives of millions of North Koreans at risk because of local food shortages. Representatives of the Catholic Apostolate Council of Korea met at the Fifth Forum for Intra-Korean Reconciliation in Seoul to discuss ways to end the North-South row to help their fellow Koreans in the North. The archbishop of Seoul asked lay Catholics to help their northern brothers and sisters despite the worsening relations between the two governments; and a deputy director of the Rural Economic Institute said 'In addition to providing food aid, we can help local researchers develop better farming methods to boost local production. We can also plant trees to lessen the impact of flooding.' Auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Seoul said, 'If we ignore our brothers and sisters in the North, we must ask ourselves whether we are true Christians or not.'

Praise: God for opening avenues of Christian outreach to North Korea and ask Him to empower the dialogue towards reconciliation. (2Cor.5:18)

More: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Reconciliation-and-food-aid-for-North-Koreans-19946.html>

■ China: 80 million Bibles printed - and counting

The only authorised Bible-printing company in China marked the printing of its eighty-millionth Bible on Monday, the government's official press agency announced. Amity Printing Co, located in the eastern Chinese city of Nanjing, says it now prints one million copies a month. Since its founding in 1988, the printing company has grown to be one of the largest Bible publishers in the world. 'The production of 80 million Bible copies can be attributed to the world of China's Christians, and, more importantly, the country's reform and opening-up policy,' said Zhonghui Qiu, chairman of the board of Amity Printing Co. Similarly, David Thorne, the Asia secretary of the United Bible Societies – which is Amity's partner in Bible printing – credited the Chinese government's support for the high volume of Bibles being published in the country. About a quarter of the Bibles printed in the world today are made in China.

Praise: God that His Word is spreading so amazingly.

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/80.million.bibles.printed.in.china.and.counting/27047.htm>

PRAYER FORUM OF BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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C/O World Prayer Centre, Cornerstone House, 5 Ethel Street, Birmingham, B2 4BG, England