



PRAYER ALERT...



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Website

Contact Us

Donations

Thursday November 18

■ British Isles & Ireland

- [Hindus welcome inclusion of Paganism in UK's schools](#)
- [Scotland's End Of Life Assistance Bill](#)
- [Religion needs a new image](#)
- [Derry priest in Mass attack](#)
- [Outrage after Amazon sells paedophile guide](#)
- [Royal Engagement](#)

■ Europe

- [Christian doctor goes to EU Court of Justice](#)
- [UN: Petition for justice](#)

■ Worldwide

- [Haiti: Cholera and riots with political agenda](#)
- [Iran: Supreme Leader speaks against House Church movement](#)
- [Iran: Death sentence for Christian](#)
- [Egypt: Christian homes torched](#)
- [China: House Church raided](#)
- [Iraq: Christians determined to stay](#)

■ Praise Reports

- [Priestly vocations on the rise](#)
- [Saved from death](#)

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Hindus welcome inclusion of Paganism in UK's schools

Hindus have welcomed the reports of Lincolnshire County Council allowing its schools to teach Paganism to students. Prominent Hindu statesman Rajan Zed living in Nevada said that all religions were different ways to relate to the Divine. Debbie Barnes, Assistant Director of Children's Services for Lincolnshire County Council, said individual schools can decide whether or not to teach Paganism. See <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1328080/Schools-ahead-teach-Paganism-alongside-major-religions.html?ito=feeds-newsxml> Currently Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and Judaism are part of the religious education. Recently Britain officially recognised Druidry as a religion and the rise of paganism in 21st century Britain has led to police officers being advised on how to approach witches and jailed druids being allowed official pagan days of worship off prison work. Pray that Christians will stand against this growing acceptance of primitive beliefs so that new faiths will not undermine our social values. See Prayer Alert article - <http://www.prayer-alert.net/info/Druidryinsights1.pdf>

Pray: that Britain will fill her spiritual void with Jesus Christ and stop reaching out to false deities. (Ac.19:18-20)

More: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-1328968/Pagans-march--harmless-eccentrics-dangerous-cult.html>

■ Scotland's End Of Life Assistance Bill

Margo MacDonald's 'End of Life Assistance (Scotland)' Bill is due to have its first reading on 24 November (the debate may take place earlier). It is vital the Bill is stopped at the first reading. If it progresses to the next stage then some form of euthanasia is likely to be legalised in Scotland. We are asked to pray and/or write to MSP's to encourage them to vote against the bill. In February the Scottish Parliament established the End of Life Assistance (Scotland) Bill Committee, to consider the general principles of Margo MacDonald's Bill and report on them to the Scottish Parliament. In March, the Committee launched a public call for evidence, inviting individuals and organisations to make written submissions with their views on the Bill. The consultation is now closed. Of the 601 people and organisations who gave written evidence to the consultation on the Bill, only 6.5 per cent (39) were in favour of it.

Pray: for God inspired decisions regarding this bill, and for the precious gift of life to be protected. (Mt.10:30,31)

More: <http://www.carenotkilling.org.uk/?show=890>

■ Religion needs a new image

Former Met chief Lord Ian Blair speaking at the annual lecture of theology think tank Theos warned that violence, infighting and abuse are obscuring much of the good that people of faith are doing today. The former Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police warned that people were not always aware of the achievements brought about by religion because of some of the crimes committed by people of faith as well as internal conflicts, for example within his own Anglican Church.

Lord Blair, a practising Anglican, went on to say that Islam had been 'demonised' by the acts committed by extremists and that to most people, faith appeared 'irrelevant, clannish, prejudiced, old-fashioned and violent'. He believed religion was still principally a force for good and the acts of charity and love by people of faith should be and remain the glue that permits modern society to exist.

Pray: for Lord Blair and other 'high profile' Christians to continue to speak out for truth humility and justice in our society and for the press to report from a positive standpoint. (Ps.45:4)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.co.uk/article/religion.needs.a.new.image.says.former.met.chief/27093.htm>

■ Derry priest in Mass attack

On Sunday Fr Dermott Harkin used Mass at St Brigid's Church, Londonderry to attack republican gunmen believed to be responsible for shooting one of his parishioners. The victim, a convicted sex offender, was beaten and then shot in the legs. Fr Harkin said the attack was not to be tolerated, and doesn't reflect the feelings of the vast majority of people in this area. He said that no-one has the right to take the law into their own hands, that all violence is wrong, that all forms of abuse and cruelty meted out to any human being is against God's law and an insult to a good and decent community of people. The priest said he got a very positive reaction from his parishioners.

Pray: that people would continue to move away from vigilante type activity and for peace to reign in Northern and Southern Ireland. (Ps.133:1)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-11755636>

■ Outrage after Amazon sells paedophile guide

An e-book which billed itself as a guide for paedophiles has been withdrawn from sale by prominent online retailer Amazon.com after horrified customers called for a boycott of the site. The book, entitled The Paedophile's Guide to Love and Pleasure: A Child-Lover's Code of Conduct, had been available for the retailer's electronic reading device since October. The e-book claims that paedophiles are misunderstood, and offers advice about how to avoid falling foul of the law. Though Amazon.com has now withdrawn the contentious publication, other highly controversial books can still be bought through the online retailer. Amazon initially appeared to be reluctant to withdraw the book, saying in a statement, 'Amazon believes it is censorship not to sell certain books simply because we or others believe their message is objectionable. Amazon does not support or promote hatred or criminal acts, however, we do support the right of every individual to make their own purchasing decisions.'

Pray: for Amazon to review their decision and to ban texts that support illegal activities. (Dt.7:12)

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/outrage-after-amazon-sells-paedophile-guide-online/>

■ Royal Engagement

Clarence House announced plans for a 2011 Royal wedding on Tuesday, to the delight of the couple's parents, politicians and well-wishers. Prince William asked for Miss Catherine Middleton's hand in marriage while they were on holiday in Kenya last month, and the wedding will be held in the spring or summer next year. She will then move in with her husband in Wales. The Prince proposed with the blue sapphire and diamond ring that his father, the Prince of Wales, gave to his mother Diana, Princess of Wales in February 1981. The Queen and Duke of Edinburgh are said to be 'absolutely delighted' by news of the engagement, while the Prince of Wales said he was 'thrilled'. Speaking at his Poundbury model village in Dorset, Prince Charles made reference to the length of their eight-year relationship, joking, 'They have been practising long enough.' The parents of Kate Middleton said they were 'absolutely delighted' and 'thrilled' at the announcement.

Pray: for William and Kate as they prepare for marriage and for them to cope with the media barrage they now face. (Pr.18:22)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newsttopics/theroyalfamily/8137887/Royal-wedding-Prince-William-to-marry-Kate-Middleton-after-proposing-with-Dianas-ring.html>

EUROPE

■ Christian doctor goes to EU Court of Justice

Sheila Matthews, a paediatrician of 18 years, sat on an adoption panel and asked to abstain from voting on whether children should be placed with homosexual couples, due to her Christian beliefs. This resulted in her being dismissed as a medical adviser by Northamptonshire County Council. After a campaign led by Christian Concern she was reinstated in her job yet she was no longer allowed to continue as a full member of the adoption panel. This meant that she lost the opportunity to put vulnerable children in loving homes and her career was restricted. Sheila resigned this March because she felt that she could no longer work somewhere where she was denied the opportunity to fully use her skills. She has effectively been excluded from practising her vocation due to her Christian views. On Wednesday Sheila applied to be heard at the European Court of Justice mounting the legal challenge to determine whether professional medical advice regarding the child's 'best interests' is 'negated' by 'homosexual rights.' Her case was heard before an Employment Tribunal in Leicester Tuesday.

Pray: for the British Isles to adopt the best possible Christian options and practice for children and for religious and professional freedom for Christians in the workplace. (Job 6:29)

More: <http://www.lifesitenews.com/ldn/2010/nov/10111603.html>

■ UN: Petition for justice

Catholic, Protestant and Muslim leaders and non-governmental organisations have slammed a death sentence imposed on Asia Bibi, a Christian mother of two convicted on blasphemy charges for proclaiming her faith in Pakistan. She is the first woman sentenced to death for such an offence. Bibi's lawyers visited her in prison to prepare her application for an appeal. Meanwhile, Freedom International has formed an online petition calling on the United Nations to shine the international spotlight on Bibi's plight. 'We believe that it is imperative that the United Nations exerts pressure on the Pakistani government to steadfastly enforce law protecting the humanitarian rights of all citizens, regardless of their religious affiliation.' CFI President Jim Jacobson said in a statement. Bibi was beaten, arrested for blasphemy and sentenced to death after standing for her Christian beliefs. The sentence was handed down on Sunday. The online petition for Bibi's release is at: <http://www.christianfreedom.org/news/petition-to-free-asia-bibi/>

Pray: for the United Nations pressure to achieve Bibi's release and the repeal of Pakistan's blasphemy law. (Ex.23:6)

More: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Christians,-Muslims,-NGOs-mobilise-for-Asia-Bibi,-against-“obscene”-blasphemy-law-19995.html>

WORLDWIDE

■ Haiti: Cholera and riots with political agenda

Health officials say the cholera bacteria now raging through Haiti is a very virulent strain matching those commonly found in South Asia, so rioting Haitians believe the cause of the Cholera epidemic in Haiti originated from Minustah peacekeepers from Nepal. Rumours have spread for weeks that latrine discharges at a Nepalese peacekeeper camp are to blame, even though the U.N. says the soldiers there have tested negative for cholera. With a presidential election on November 28th the U.N. sees more than just health concerns involved. Protests were not spontaneous because they all began at around 6 a.m. on Monday suggesting a level of politically motivated coordination by Haitians who oppose the election. 'This was a clear message to boycott the election,' said a government official. Nevertheless the riots have closed airports and roads, and are stopping much needed aid reaching people dying from a disease that can kill in 4 hours.

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

More: <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2031665,00.html>

■ Iran: Supreme Leader speaks against House Church movement

House church leaders fear an increased wave of persecution following a speech by Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who warned against the 'network of house churches' that 'threaten Islamic faith and deceive young Muslims'. His comments came in the context of warning against what he believed to be attacks against the pure principles of Islamic faith, including Hollywood films and cartoons that are at odds with Islam. A church leader from Iran said, 'I think this is the first time that he has openly agitated against the house church movement and mentioned it specifically. Speeches like this often have far reaching consequences in the country. Not that the people of Iran react with violence against Christians, but behind the scenes, the security services and religious police will take measures. That is what leaders of house churches fear the most at this moment.'

Pray: that the speech will attract more Iranians to Christ now the House Church movement is officially recognised and for government plans against Christians to be thwarted. (Pr.2:33)

More: <http://www.mnnonline.com/article/14968>

■ Iran: Death sentence for Christian

See Prayer Alert 4410. According to www.presenttruthmn.com, the official death sentence verdict has now been delivered in writing to Pastor Youcef Nadarkhani, stating that he is to be hung for the crime of apostasy. There are 20 days to appeal the verdict and Youcef's attorney is now beginning the process of the appeal. The prayer burdens surrounding this development are many, - that God would grant him peace in this hour, that God would move on his behalf and that he would be delivered! Pray also for his wife and children at this extremely difficult time; a spokesman for Truth Ministries said, 'We trust our great Lord to give her the peace that comes only from the True Comforter.'

Pray: for Pastor Youcef and other Christians in prison for their faith to be daily strengthened. (Jas. 5:16)

More: <http://continentalnews.net/christian-news/iranian-pastor-accused-of-%E2%80%98thought-crimes%E2%80%99-to-die-by-hanging-3344.html>

■ Egypt: Christian homes torched

Tuesday night Muslims set fire to at least 10 houses belonging to Coptic Christians in a village south of Cairo over rumours that a Christian had an affair with a Muslim girl. Several people were arrested and security forces sealed off the village of al-Nawahid to prevent the violence from spreading to neighbouring villages. The attacks started after locals spotted a young Copt and a Muslim girl together at night inside the village cemetery. Both were put under police custody as authorities investigate. Coptic Christians make up 10 percent of Egypt's 80 million people. Copts and Muslims generally live in peace, though human rights groups say attacks on Copts are on the rise, underscoring the government's failure to address chronic sectarian strains in a society where religious radicalism is gaining ground.

Pray: for the rights of Christians in Egypt to be recognised and equalled to those enjoyed by Muslims. (Mk.13:13)

More: <http://www.haaretz.com/news/international/muslims-torch-christian-homes-in-southern-egypt-1.325018>

■ China: House Church raided

ChinaAid reported that early on Friday morning more than 10 believers were taken away by officials; five of them were not released until that afternoon. Without going through any paperwork government officials confiscated items belonging to the church. A ChinaAid spokesperson said, 'In this process of persecution and growth the Chinese church is encouraged to play well the role of Samaritans, abandon excuses of cowardice and bravely face dark and violent forces of the government by adhering to the principles of Christian ethics and morality. They should unite and help each other, firmly refusing to compromise; and produce greater light and salt.' ChinaAid expresses deep regret at the 'ultra-leftist policies' that the Chinese government has been pursuing recently.

Pray: that the church will grow increasingly mature in the storm of persecutions and eventually the name of Jesus Christ will be glorified in the region. (Ac.10:35)

More: <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/2010/s10110094.htm>

■ Iraq: Christians determined to stay

The massacre at the Church of Sayyidat al-Najat is one of the most savage attacks inflicted on Christians of Iraq since 2003. Christians have been kidnapped, tortured, raped, evicted from their homes and threatened to convert to Islam or leave or die. Over sixty houses of worship have been destroyed, 17 Christian leaders kidnapped, some tortured and five killed including the bishop of Mosul and a Protestant pastor. Despite all efforts to drive Christianity from its Middle East heartland there is still a large number of the faithful who are determined to stay - come what may, saying this is their country in which their ancestors lived for thousands of years. On Sunday they gathered in the damaged church still stained with the blood of its martyrs and Muslims who were indignant at what happened showed their solidarity with the Christian community by joining them.

Pray: that, though afflicted may they not be crushed, though perplexed may they not despair, though persecuted they will never be forsaken, and when struck down may they rebuild. (2Cor 4:8-10)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/christians.in.iraq.the.determination.to.stay/27065.htm>

PRAISE REPORTS

■ Priestly vocations on the rise

This September saw the numbers entering English seminaries to become Catholic priests at their highest level in a decade. Fifty-six men began the journey towards priesthood this year. 'The number of people responding to the call of Christ to be priests has been rising slowly but surely, and may rise further as people respond to the visit of Pope Benedict.' said the Chairman of the Vocations Directors of England and Wales. Many dioceses and religious orders now run discernment groups for young men and women where all vocations are discussed. Such groups encourage lay, religious and priestly vocations. The director of the National Office of Vocation said, 'When everybody in the Church takes seriously Newman's insight that 'God has created me to do him some definite service,' then a greater number discover their call to the priesthood and religious life.'

Praise: God for all those who hear Christ's calling to join His church and follow His paths for their lives. (Mt.4:19)

More: http://www.catholicchurch.org.uk/Catholic-Church/media_centre/press_releases/press_releases_2010/Priestly-vocations-on-the-rise-in-England-and-Wales

■ Saved from death

In an Indian village, Gitika's body shrank as an evil spirit caused her to quit eating, lose sleep and writhe with burning pain. For a month and a half a demon terrorized her, making her weak and speaking through her saying, 'I won't leave her until I take her life!' The hospital said nothing could be done for her and she was sent home to die. A neighbour told the family of a Pastor who could pray for their daughter to be healed. Hoping for a miracle they contacted Pastor Somkar. 'I know what you are doing. Don't go. Don't bring him here!' the evil spirit yelled, through Gitika. But the pastor came and prayed for several weeks until she was delivered from the demonic attack, started eating again and was completely healed. After seeing God's power through prayers the entire family became Christians. Gitika now shares with others that only God was able to give her life again.

Praise: God for healing and deliverance, and ask him to use Gitika and her family to bring the whole village to faith in Jesus. (Ac.10:38)

More: <http://www.gfa.org/news/articles/saved-twice-death/>

PRAYER FORUM OF BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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