



PRAYER ALERT...



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BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Queen gives warning to C of E Synod

The Queen has spoken of the 'difficult' and 'painful' choices facing the Church of England as she formally opened the Church's General Synod. She spoke of the 'need to communicate the Gospel with joy and conviction in our society'. The Queen addressed the 476 members of the Church's governing body as they marked the start of a five-year term. The Synod will debate measures to keep the Church together over issues such as same-sex blessings. Its members are preparing to discuss Prime Minister David Cameron's 'big society' idea. Before her address, the Queen, who is Supreme Governor of the Church of England, attended a service of Holy Communion at Westminster Abbey, accompanied by the Duke of Edinburgh. Speaking at the Synod meeting, she said: 'The new Synod will have many issues to resolve to ensure that the Church of England remains equipped for the effective pursuit of its mission and ministry'.

Pray: for the General Synod that all members will be open to God's guidance in their forthcoming deliberations. (2Tim.1:14)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-11817744>

■ Irish flee 'Celtic Tiger' for a better life

Young Irish, in particular, hope that emigration isn't their only option, but amid news of the Ireland bailout, some aren't waiting around. Many of them are expressing deep concerns about their futures. Andrew Murphy, a recent university graduate, has taken an internship at the European Commission in Brussels and doubts he will find permanent work at home. Ruth McNally, another recent graduate, is living on unemployment benefits. 'Two of my friends are going to teach English in Korea.' There is a sense of despair that has taken hold and a feeling of humiliation among many as Ireland seeks help from the rest of Europe. During good times, Ireland, for the first time in its history, was a destination for migrants seeking to make their fortune. Now, Ireland is again supplying labour to the rest of the world.

Pray: that the economic pressures on Ireland will not depress the country's joyful attitude to life. (1Pe.5:10)

More: <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Europe/2010/1121/Ireland-bailout-Young-Irish-flee-Celtic-Tiger-for-a-better-life>

■ Christmas bonuses 'discriminate'

Guinness Care and Support is refusing to pay its staff overtime for working at Christmas because it claims the move would discriminate against other religions. A staff member said: 'We have learnt that senior head office management have decided that all staff who work on Christmas Day and Boxing Day will be paid standard flat rate wages with no bonuses whatsoever. The management themselves are on two weeks' annual leave. It has come as a shock and left us all stunned.' Ben Bradshaw, Labour MP for Exeter, said: 'We are still an overwhelmingly Christian society and Christmas is a religious festival and a public holiday. Other religious festivals are not public holidays and I do not think Guinness is comparing like with like. Christmas Day is the one day that people want to be with their loved ones and if they have to work on that day they should be paid accordingly.'

Pray: that the management will be brought to reconsider the niggardliness of their new policy. (Job.5:16)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/topics/christmas/8149877/Care-home-chain-says-Christmas-bonuses-discriminate-against-other-religions.html>

■ **Concern over Beyoncé advert**

The Christian Institute has voiced concern over sexually explicit advertising after a perfume advert for Beyoncé's new perfume was deemed unsuitable for daytime television. Mike Judge, of The Christian Institute, raised concern over the effect of such adverts on young girls. 'As Christmas approaches we are bombarded by inappropriate perfume adverts on TV, the high street and in our shopping centres,' he said. 'These ads only contribute to society's sexualisation, which more and more people are speaking out against. Sexualisation damages all in society but in particular it puts pressure on young girls and women to conform to a 'perfect' body image.' He added: 'The Advertising Standards Authority took action against this advert after 14 people made complaints, which shows it only takes a handful of people to say something is inappropriate, and it can make a real difference.'

Pray: for a wider recognition of the damage sexually explicit adverts and pop videos can do to our young people. (Ps.7:14)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.co.uk/article/christian.institute.raises.concern.after.beyonc.advert.axed.from.daytime.tv/27103.htm>

■ **Pupils 'learn to cut off hands of thieves'**

Up to 5,000 Muslim children at a network of Islamic schools across Britain are being taught how to chop off the hands of thieves and that Jews are plotting to take over the world. This was disclosed on the programme Panorama on BBC One, which also claims that the children's textbooks were discovered at a network of 40 private schools, called Saudi Students Clubs and Schools, teaching the Saudi Arabian national curriculum. One book for six-year-olds warns that those who do not believe in Islam will be condemned to 'hellfire' in death. Another book for 15-year-olds teaches about Shariah law and its punishments. 'For thieves their hands will be cut off for a first offence and their foot for a subsequent offence,' it says. Two diagrams show where cuts should be made. Panorama also found examples of private Muslim schools using extremist sentiments on their websites.

Pray: that the Imams who fervently wish for better understanding between our faiths will rein in the use of such subversive material in Islamic schools. (Ps.55:9)

More: <http://www.todayonline.com/World/EDC101123-0000046/Where-pupils-learn-to-cut-off-hands-of-thieves>

■ **Pupils aged ten viewing pornography**

One in three children is accessing a 'tsunami' of explicit pornographic images on the internet by the age of ten, a study has revealed. Four in five teenagers regularly look up unsuitable photographs or film on their computers or mobile phones, it also suggested. Campaigners warned that exposure to these images inflicts 'serious mental harm' on children and prevents them forming healthy adult relationships in later life. The average age of a child first exposed to pornography is just 11. At a conference in Parliament on Monday, campaigners called on ministers to force websites to carry cigarette-style health warnings. A large 'R18' banner would pop up on targeted websites, alerting children and parents to the nature of the site, they said. The British Board of Film Classification, which censors films, should also be called in to classify website content. Miranda Suit, director of SaferMedia, said pornography was getting more extreme and easier to access.

Pray: for the internet to become better regulated to prevent corruption of our young. (Job.5:17)

More: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1332165/Third-pupils-aged-10-view-porn-internet.html#ixzz167KPo9sW>

■ **'Not Ashamed' campaign latest**

Christian Concern says thank you for your continuing support of 'Not Ashamed' (See Prayer Alert 3910). With just a few days to go until the 1st December launch, momentum is growing. Signatures on the declaration continue to grow – please continue to spread the word at church and elsewhere. Why not send a quick email to all the Christians in your address book? We're keen to hear of how you are planning to mark 'Not Ashamed' day in your local area. Some churches are thinking of placing an advert in the local paper, others of writing a letter to the editor highlighting the reason for Not Ashamed; others are intending to deliver a copy of the declaration to their local MP or mayor. Please send us your ideas so that we can share them to <http://www.notashamed.org.uk/>.

Pray: that this initiative will grow and develop national prominence. (Ps.25:20)

More: <http://www.anglican-mainstream.net/2010/11/21/not-ashamed-3/#more-38779>

EUROPE

■ **Belgium: Police arrest 10 in 'Islamist terror plot'**

Police in three countries have arrested 10 radical Islamists over a terrorist plot to attack Belgium, Belgian federal prosecutors say. They were detained in police swoops in Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany after a year-long investigation by police in the Belgian city of Antwerp. An 'international jihadist terrorist group' was allegedly plotting to attack an unspecified target in Belgium. The police investigation also looked at funding for a Chechen militant group. The 10 suspects were arrested in simultaneous operations on Tuesday, a spokeswoman for prosecutors said in a press release. Among the 10 arrested are Belgians, Dutch, Moroccans and Chechens, and most of the detainees are resident in Antwerp, the prosecutors' spokeswoman said. In the course of the Belgian investigation, a number of other people were also arrested in Spain, Morocco and Saudi Arabia.

Pray: for Governments and authorities to be granted wisdom on how to handle terrorists. (Jer.1:19)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-11820008>

■ **Sweden: Ministry team marks steady progress**

Although Sweden is woven brightly with a rich Christian history, advancing secularism and moral decline have added dark threads to the tapestry. Shifting cultural norms throughout Europe have caused people to reject the ways of the past, which

includes Biblical Christianity. Sweden's third-largest city, Malmö, has also seen massive immigration, making it one quarter Muslim today, on track to transforming into a Muslim-majority city within just a few decades. The work for missionaries from The Evangelical Alliance Mission (TEAM) is challenging, but clear cut. Working hand-in-hand with InterAct, a Swedish church and mission movement, TEAM missionaries are seeing churches grow that bring the whole Gospel to the whole person in Sweden. Their strategy is to transform lives and multiply churches through relational, holistic evangelism by mentoring young leaders to reach their peers. They do this using music, art, and social caring to reach children, youth and those who have been marginalized by their society.

Pray: for the work of the churches and mission groups as they seek to spread the Good News particularly in Malmö. (Ac.5:42)

More: <http://www.christiantelegraph.com/issue11441.html>

WORLDWIDE

■ Sudan: Police raid, corruption and Day of Prayer

The Sudan Council of Churches is scrutinising out-of-country referendum registration processes in Kenya, Uganda and Egypt, while also reporting that on Sunday the police stormed their offices. Seven vans with 200 police broke down doors and searched the building for 'suspected hidden weapons.' These events happen as Africa's biggest country is preparing to vote in a referendum to determine if the Muslim North and Christian South should separate. See: http://www.episcopal-life.org/81808_125876_ENG_HTML.htm Because of fears that the referendum results could send Sudan back into another civil war; a global Day of Prayer for Sudan on December 5th has been called by The World Evangelical Alliance. It is believed that a) the South is not prepared to receive the anticipated influx of refugees from the North. b) the government in the North cannot guarantee Christians safe passage South. WEA's prayer requests are for a peaceful and fair referendum with the outcome accepted by all involved.

Pray: for God's grace to be so poured out in Sudan that the referendum would be a beacon to the world of what God can do. (Is.59:1)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/world.evangelical.alliance.asks.christians.to.pray.for.sudan/27043.htm>

■ North Korea: Overview and country profile

North Korea is one of the world's most secretive societies, and still nominally under communist rule. Their nuclear ambitions have aggravated their rigidly maintained isolation from the rest of the world. North Korea's roots were birthed in 1948 amid the chaotic end of World War II and its history is dominated by Kim Il-sung. As Christians we can pray for a rebirth of Korea out of the chaos of war into God's provision of peace for the nation. After the Korean War, Kim Il-sung introduced the personal philosophy of 'Juche', or self-reliance, which became a guiding light for North Korea's development. As Christians we can pray for God's guiding light Jesus Christ to be shone over the nation at this time as avenues of Christian support are touching the nation. (See Prayer Alert 2010 re: Archdiocese of Seoul outreach to North Korea)

Pray: for an end to 'leadership dependence on cult personality' and the beginning of 'God's Rule' for the whole nation. (Eze.18:23)

More: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/country_profiles/1131421.stm

■ Afghanistan: Pilgrimage aftermath

Last week many travelled the Hajj route to perform a series of rituals believing it will bring them forgiveness. Often they go at great personal sacrifice and expense on this once in a lifetime trip that is required by their religion. We are asked to pray that as pilgrims return home they will realize the futility of their efforts and that they would have opportunities to hear the Gospel and turn to Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins. Pray that the Church of Jesus Christ will grow in this the second poorest country in the world. Many of the women there have a hard life of poverty and abuse, with no rights and are controlled by their husbands or relatives. We are asked to pray for foreign workers teaching and working with these women, and pray also that the husbands and/or relatives of the women will continue to allow foreigners to meet with and teach them.

Pray: for God's mercy and grace to bring more signs, wonders and revelations of Him to the people of Afghanistan. (Ac.4:12)

More: <http://politifi.com/news/Hajj-Muslim-Pilgrimage-Observed-In-Saudi-Arabia-PHOTOS-1302244.html>

■ Eritrea: End of year purge of Christians

Security forces in Eritrea have begun a vigorous clampdown on Christians in the run-up to Christmas. The discovery of details on the underground church enabled security forces to hunt down all believers and their families. About 40 people have been detained with the hunt for others continuing. Among those arrested are a young couple who had been caring for the weak and destitute in their area; they were forced to leave their one-year-old son behind. Between 2,000 and 3,000 Christians are in prison for their faith. They are held indefinitely in appalling conditions designed to force them to recant their faith, with no formal charge or trial. They are starved, deprived of medical attention, subjected to beatings, horrific torture or imprisoned in metal shipping containers, which are baking hot during the day and freezing at night.

Pray: for God to give the underground Church His protection and wisdom as they continue their walk with Jesus Christ. (Ge.28:15)

More: <http://dynamic.csw.org.uk/article.asp?t=news&id=925&rnd=0.3931085>

■ Pakistan: Mystery surrounds Asia Bibi

Mystery surrounds Asia Bibi, who was sentenced to death on November 8 for blasphemy. (See Prayer Alert 4710). The case is receiving conflicting accounts of the 'facts' with some sources reporting her being freed by the Pakistani President, but others reporting this is not true. Several sources inside Pakistan claimed Asia Bibi was set free on November 22nd and

has now gone into hiding over fears for her safety. The Centre for Legal Aid, Assistance and Settlement said it 'welcomes the release of Asia Bibi, the first Christian woman to be sentenced to death for blasphemy in Pakistan.' But now a respected source close to the case said Bibi has not been pardoned and that her mercy plea has been sent to the Punjab Home Department, which will forward it to the Interior Ministry for onward submission to the Presidency.

Pray: for Bibi and her family's protection and for God to bring His justice into every area of this case. (Ps.12:7)

More: <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/2010/s10110157.htm>

■ Pakistan may delay Taliban operation

The Pakistani government might delay a military offensive in Pakistan's North Waziristan tribal region bordering Afghanistan by another four to six months (contrary to the expectations of the Pentagon). According to the 'Daily Express Tribune' newspaper a government source who requested anonymity gave several reasons for the delay, including differences in perceptions over scheduled withdrawal of NATO troops, the peace plan of Afghan President Hamid Karzai and the widening role of India in Afghan affairs. The source said that 'taking the ongoing war in the federally administered tribal areas and other regions to its logical conclusion is the first and foremost priority for the army'. The recent developments in the region, particularly in the wake of US President Barack Obama's visit to India, have forced Islamabad to think twice before opening another war front in North Waziristan. Pakistan has been under intense pressure from the US to launch an offensive in North Waziristan.

Pray: for the Lord to peacefully remove so called 'epicentres of terrorism' in Pakistan and neighbouring countries. (Ps.64:1)

More: <http://feeds.bignewsnetwork.com/?sid=710525>

■ Cambodia: Hundreds dead in stampede

Hundreds died and hundreds more were injured in a stampede at water festival celebrations in Phnom Penh. 339 people have been confirmed dead and 329 injured. The Prime Minister said, 'This needs to be investigated more, it is the biggest tragedy since the Pol Pot regime,' There will be a national day of mourning on Thursday. Minister of Information Khieu Kanharith said the stampede happened because 'one million people', many of whom were leaving, became 'scared of something.' In October at a Christian conference the Lord said there would be a shaking of the region and many Christians in Cambodia believe the latest tragic disaster at the annual water festival is one more shaking that is taking place.

Pray: that tcause will be found and that the 'shaking' will bring many into the Kingdom.

More: <http://www.phnompenhpost.com/index.php/2010112244892/National-news/hundreds-die-in-tragic-end-to-water-festival.html>

PRAISE REPORTS

■ Estonia: Supernatural taste of revival

Huge crowds of Estonians got a taste of the spiritual revival that has been sweeping South Korea when they attended the Estonia Miracle Healing Crusade held on October 30 and 31, 2010. It was held in the largest arena in Estonia, located in the capital city Tallinn, led by Dr. Jaerock Lee, Senior Pastor of the Manmin Central Church in South Korea. This crusade broke attendance records to a Christian event in the country. Many people accepted Christ as their Saviour and others were healed of various diseases including cancers, heart diseases and poor eyesight. Bishop Dr. Robert A. van Heulen, European Director of The Association of Evangelical Assemblies had fallen very ill and entered Estonia relying on the wheelchair because he couldn't walk properly. But when Dr. Jaerock Lee prayed for the sick from the podium at the crusade, Bishop Dr. Heulen's face began to glow. Immediately strength came down upon his legs and he stood up from his wheelchair and began walking.

Praise: God that His Spirit is at work in Estonia and long may it continue. (Lk.11:13)

More: <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/2010/s10110162.htm>

■ Cuba: Church growth exploding

Cuba is seeing one of the fastest church growth rates in the world - the Southern Baptist International Mission Board (IMB) says that this is evidenced by the fact that there just aren't enough churches to hold all the believers. In 1960, Cuban Baptist churches numbered 210. Growth was slow over the next three decades, increasing that number by just 28. However, within the last 20 years, a church-planting movement began sweeping the island nation. Today, according to the IMB, the number of Cuban Baptist traditional churches, missions, and house churches exceeds 6,200. Church growth is surpassing the speed of construction for places of worship, which leaves some of the congregations worshipping in houses, garages, yards or on rooftops. The leaders also find they need tools to cope with the other needs of their burgeoning congregations. So, IMB missionaries regularly form teams to help train and disciple new leaders.

Praise: the Lord for the growth of His Church in Cuba. (Eph.3:21)

More: <http://mnnonline.org/article/14948>

PRAYER FORUM OF THE BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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