



PRAYER ALERT...



An initiative of the Prayer Forum of the British Isles & Ireland
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BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ B&B owners sued

The Christian owners of a seaside Bed & Breakfast are being sued for refusing to allow two homosexuals to share a double bed because it would be contrary to their Christian faith. The B&B they own operates a policy which allows only married heterosexual couples to share a double bed. The homosexual couple are claiming that the refusal to allow them to share a bed was a 'direct discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation'. They are relying on Equality Act regulations and are claiming up to £5,000 in damages against the hotel owners. At Bristol County Court Bernie Quinn, who works at the hotel, hinted that Mr Preddy and Mr Hall's booking was a set-up. He told the court that hours before Mr Preddy had made a telephone booking he spoke to a 'Mrs Preddy' regarding a double room. 'We were very surprised when the two gentlemen turned up the next day', said Mrs Bull, the owner.

More: <http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/sexual-orientation/christian-bb-owners-sued>

■ Secularists attack day of Bible readings

The BBC will devote nearly a whole day of Radio 4 to readings from the King James Bible to mark the 400th anniversary of its publication. (See Prayer Alert 5010) While the move has been welcomed by the Church, it has prompted secularists to complain to the BBC at what they believe is 'excessive' coverage. The 28 Bible passages, each 15-minutes long, will be introduced by the Archbishop Rowan Williams, Simon Schama and Will Self, and recorded by actors including Samuel West, Emilia Fox and Hugh Bonneville. The Rt Rev Graham James, Bishop of Norwich, said the BBC's coverage was an encouraging sign that it recognised the significance of the King James Bible. 'The BBC is not being kind to Christians, but recognising the place of the Bible in the nation. It has had an impact on our culture, our history and our language and it has helped to create our sense of who we are as a people.'

Pray: [that this event will go ahead and will be heard by as wide an audience as possible. \(1Ti.4:13\)](#)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/tvandradio/bbc/8196662/Secularists-attack-day-of-Bible-readings-on-Radio-4.html>

■ Concern over NHS-backed sex text messaging

Children are receiving text messages with advice on sex from a taxpayer-funded service, in a scheme which has been accused of sidelining parents and undermining the age of consent. The free service is aimed at 13 to 25-year-olds, according to a national newspaper, and works by replying to messages young people send in. Norman Wells, Director of Family Education Trust, said: 'Not only does it undermine parents by presenting itself as an authoritative source of advice on sex, relationships and sexual health, but it also fails to respect the age of consent by offering a service to children under 16.' Mr Wells added: 'the information provided is not even accurate. The website fails to tell visitors that condoms provide

much less protection against sexually transmitted infections than they do against pregnancy, and says nothing about the health benefits of keeping sex within a lifelong, mutually faithful relationship with an uninfected partner'.

Pray: for a more tightly regulated and sensitive service providing better quality care and advice. (Ps.103:18)

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/concern-over-nhs-backed-sex-text-message-service/>

■ Charity warns of rising homelessness

The UK housing charity Shelter has today (14 December 2010) warned of a rise in homelessness as new research reveals the number of households in rent or mortgage arrears has more than doubled in the past year. Worryingly, households with children are most at risk (five per cent). Shelter estimates that more than 480,000 children are currently living in families that are falling behind with their basic housing costs. With recent government figures showing the first sustained increase in homelessness since 2003, Shelter is warning that homelessness could be set to soar in 2011 as Government cuts to housing benefit and support for homeowners, along with predicted job losses and increases in living costs, push thousands of struggling households over the edge. Shelter's Chief Executive Campbell Robb said: 'We urge the Government to think again about the cumulative effects of its policies on people who are at real risk of losing their homes'.

Pray: that the Government will adopt policies that will prevent people from losing their homes. (Isa.32:18)

More: <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/13777>

■ Unmarried parents and broken homes

Nearly half of the children born today will be living in broken homes by the age of 16. The sharp increase in unmarried couples having children is to blame for the rise in parental separation rates, a study from the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) claimed. The report calls for a major shift in policy to reassert the 'vital' importance of marriage as a more stable form of commitment than cohabitation. It followed concerns from Iain Duncan Smith, the work and pensions secretary, that society pays a 'heavy price' for separation, in terms of the cost of crimes committed by children from broken homes, lost taxes and rising benefit bills. In 1980 there were one million single parents, but this has now doubled. Mr Duncan Smith, who founded the CSJ, has suggested that the true cost of family breakdown to the UK economy, including benefits, lost taxes and crime, was up to £100 billion a year.

Pray: that the nation reasserts the bedrock of family to be in Christian marriage. (Job 21:19)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/8184938/Unmarried-parents-to-blame-for-rise-in-broken-homes.html>

■ UK considering ban on US pastor

The American preacher who had planned a mass burning of the Koran on the anniversary of the September 11, 2001, attacks could be banned from entering Britain under incitement and national security laws. Theresa May, Home Office minister, said that she is 'actively looking' at the case. A previously obscure preacher, Jones gained infamy through his effort, later cancelled, to burn the Koran. Anti-racism campaigners deplore the idea of such a visit and say it will only breed hatred and violence. The US pastor said that he had been invited to address a rally in February in Luton, which has a significant Muslim minority, being organised by English Defence League (EDL), a far-right group, about 'the evils and destructiveness of Islam'. The EDL has emerged in the past couple of years to oppose what it calls the spread of Islam, Sharia law and Islamic extremism in England. Its opponents say the group is racist and stages violent protests.

Pray: for wise counsels, inspired by the Lord, to prevail in this case. (Job 12:13)

More: <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/europe/2010/12/20101212224043670608.html>

EUROPE

■ Intolerance against Christians highlighted by report

A major new report into the increasing levels of discrimination faced by Christians in Europe has been launched in Vienna. The report, produced by the Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians in Europe highlights the growing trend towards marginalising Christians from the public square. The paper gives examples of attacks on freedom of religion and freedom of conscience, including moves in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe to force doctors to perform abortions against their conscience. The launch coincided with a conference sponsored by The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) on freedom of conscience and religion. The document also refers to attacks on freedom of expression, such as the Spanish Government imposing a €100,000 fine on a Christian TV network for running a series of advertisements in favour of the family and opposing the homosexual lifestyle.

Pray: that this report's findings will lead to understanding and acceptance of Christian values. (Ps.147:5)

More: <http://www.ionainstitute.ie/index.php?id=1200>

■ Poland welcomes first black MP

A Nigerian-born pastor has become the first black member of Poland's lower house of parliament (Sejm) in what is being seen as a large step forward in the nation's race relations, reports Michael Ireland, Chief Correspondent, ASSIST News Service. In an interview with Polish Radio Lodz, Godson declared that he will still remain active in promoting his home city even though he will be spending much of his time in Warsaw on national affairs. Godson came to Poland in the first half of the 1990s and received Polish citizenship in 2000. He is a graduate of the Department of Agronomy at Abia State University in Nigeria and also holds a doctorate in human resources management. Godson continues to lecture at a number of universities throughout Poland. Godson is also the president of the African Institute in Poland as well as a pastor of the Church of God in Christ, a Christian Pentecostal church active in Poland.

Pray: that Godson's faith would bring spiritual insight and wisdom to government decisions. (1Ki.4:29)

More: <http://www.christiantelegraph.com/issue11594.html>

WORLDWIDE

■ **INSIGHT: Eritrea: Pray for change**

The first meeting of the Eritrean Cabinet of Ministers got underway on the 14th December in Eritrea's capital. In its agenda the meeting heard extensive briefings by President Isaias Afwerki assessing political, economic, social and diplomatic activities this year, as well as the envisaged national development programmes for 2011 and beyond. (See: <http://www.shabait.com/>) Analysts say the State of Eritrea is believed to be crumbling and it is doubtful that the Afewerki government will be able to sustain the unity and stability of the nation for much longer. Rumours within Eritrea say many are losing patience and may rise up against the authoritarian government. For insights into Eritrea's Christian heritage, historical and political roots click the 'Info' button.

Pray: for God to release Eritrea into her inheritance under His authority. (Ps.132:15)

Info: <http://www.prayer-alert.net/info/EritreaInsights1.pdf>

■ **Pakistan: Muslims burn and beat evangelist unconscious**

An evangelist is still recovering from burns after six young Muslim men beat him with clubs and belts and set him on fire last month. Area Christians said they found the Rev. Wilson Augustine, aged 26, unconscious with burns on his head, hand and arm on Nov. 22 near the bus stop on the outskirts of Sargodha. Christian elders of nearby villages said that Augustine was distributing pamphlets and proclaiming Christ door-to-door the previous day among Christian families of local villages when the sons of a powerful local land owner saw one of the pamphlets. Augustine later identified the six who attacked him but police decline to name the suspects in the attempted murder. Augustine's father reported the assault to the local police station, but the registrar was reluctant to file a case against the sons of a wealthy, powerful land owner.

Pray: for God to faithfully lead and protect the Christians in Pakistan as they proclaim His name. (Ps.18:30)

More: <http://www.compassdirect.org/english/country/pakistan/29641/>

■ **Iraq: Government trying to protect churches**

Concrete walls up to 10 feet high are being built around churches in Baghdad and Mosul to protect Christmas churchgoers from violence, reports a Catholic News Agency. The barriers are the Iraqi government's response to reports of increased threats to churches and other Christian communities ahead of Christmas. Normally celebrations would involve parties in church halls and parks. But after requests from church leaders activities in both Baghdad and Mosul are being scaled back to reduce the security threat. 'The sadness of the people is everywhere. Uncertainty is everywhere. The question on everyone's lips is What's next?' Archbishop Bashar Warda said.

Pray: that Jesus Christ would bless, protect and enable the Christians of Iraq to draw into His presence with joy this Christmas. (Jos.1:9)

More: <http://www.christiantelegraph.com/issue11667.html>

■ **Egypt: House converted to prevent Church services**

In an effort to prevent Coptic Christians using the newly built Church of St. Mary and St. Michaels for prayer services the Giza Governorate converted a four storey house facing the church into a mosque secretly during Thursday night, and hastily hung a cloth sign outside advertising the new Ekhlass mosque. Due to the minimum distance required by law between a church and a mosque Copts view this conversion of the house into a new mosque 'as a trick on the part of the government to make the completion and use of St. Mary's Church an impossibility.' On Friday morning over 3000 Muslims prayed there despite the presence of an established large mosque not far from the new mosque. In November the same Coptic Church was the scene of security forces using tear gas on women, children and youths at the church, in an attempt to halt construction of the new church building.

Pray: for a peaceful and just resolution to a potentially inflammatory situation. (Ps.5:11)

More: <http://www.assistnews.net/STORIES/2010/s10120046.htm>

■ **Vietnam: Officials bulldoze Bible school**

At 7am Vietnamese time, about 500 police, soldiers and fire officers arrived with bulldozers at Pastor Quang's school and demolished the property. Pastor Quang, (one of the so-called 'Mennonite Six' jailed in 2004) is currently being held at a undisclosed location after being beaten with batons 'until he fainted.' Twenty students from the school were also arrested and interrogated. Police specially drafted in from the Central Highlands region were on hand to escort students back to their provinces. Montagnard Christians from this region make up a large proportion of the Mennonite Church in Vietnam. Pastor Quang's wife, Phu Dung Le, and his three children are safe. Leaders and Bible college students linked with Pastor Quang have come under intense pressure from officials to give up their association with the Mennonite church since October.

Pray: for God to keep those arrested in His perfect peace and to touch the officials involved through the witness of the Christians. (Mal.1:4)

More: <http://www.releaseinternational.org/pages/posts/vietnam-officials-bulldoze-bible-school-and-beat-beleaguered-pastor-unconscious-775.php>

■ **Pakistan: Desperate needs**

Much of Pakistan is still under water after recent floods. Pakistan is a country already deeply in debt with millions of people relying on food aid as they will not be able to grow rice and wheat until next year. Donors have been reluctant to give to a country with a reputation for militancy and corruption and the UN has only raised half of the \$2bn it pledged to the flood victims. These people are already very poor and struggle to survive. In addition, winter is approaching and many face a lack of adequate food, warm clothing and heating fuel. Relief organizations do what they can to help, but the need seems overwhelming. We are asked to remember the poor people of Pakistan in our prayers as they face the cold winter months without adequate shelter, clothing, food and heat. The women and children suffer the most, particularly in areas not yet reached by agencies distributing life saving aid.

Pray: that the organizations that are serving in Pakistan will have the financial resources to continue their projects. Pray also for the safety of local believers.

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-11969359>

■ **Afghanistan: Authorities block lawyer from visiting Christian**

A Christian in Afghanistan facing 'apostasy' charges punishable by death is still without legal representation after authorities blocked a Christian lawyer's attempt to visit him in prison. Authorities denied him access to Musa and to his indictment file. After several court hearing postponements, Musa appeared before a judge 'shackled and chained' on Nov. 27th without prior notice. The judge sent Musa's case file to the attorney general's office for corrections. Another Afghan Christian is in prison for giving a New Testament to a man who reportedly turned him in to authorities. He is in a holding jail in northern Afghanistan. See link for background to these stories.

More: <http://www.compassdirect.org/english/country/23987/28442/>

PRAISE REPORTS

■ **INSIGHT: Most Britons behind Christian's in workplace**

A new poll commissioned by Christian Concern to coincide with the launch of its Not Ashamed campaign revealed, 'most Britons think Christians should be able to follow their conscience in the workplace without facing disciplinary action from their employers.' The organisation and its sister group, the Christian Legal Centre, have been involved in the legal defence of numerous Christians penalised by their employers. Out of more than 1,000 adults polled by ComRes, seventy-three per cent agreed that the right to wear Christian symbols such as a cross in their workplace should be protected by law. Eighty-seven per cent felt it was wrong for healthcare workers to be threatened with the sack for offering to pray with patients. The poll's findings are an indication that the attitudes of some politicians and employers are out of step with the feelings of the majority of the population when it comes to public expressions of faith. See:

http://www.christiantoday.com/article/most_britons_think_christians_shouldnt_be_penalised_for_following_conscience_at_work/27230.htm

For an encouraging Insight into God's provisions for our nation click the 'Info' button.

Praise: and thank God for His continued presence in the midst of us. (Ps.132:15)

Info: <http://www.prayer-alert.net/info/GodsProvision1.pdf>

■ **BBC TV will broadcast Nativity to several million**

The BBC will air a new dramatisation in prime time on BBC 1 of all the events surrounding the birth of Jesus Christ in the week leading up to Christmas. Four half-hour episodes at 7pm will follow the biblical narrative and highlight the identity of Jesus God's Son coming to earth in fulfilment of God's promise. It is expected to attract audiences of several million.

Andrew Marsh will debate the nativity on Radio 5 Live

Praise: God for enabling modern technology to reveal the reality and relevance of Jesus Christ to our nation. (Is.35:5)

More: <http://www.nativitydrama.info/>

PRAYER FORUM OF BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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Prayer Alert is a partnership project of the Prayer Forum of the British Isles and Ireland
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