

PRAYER ALERT...

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BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ PM says 'families matter' in post-riot 'fight back'

David Cameron has hit out at a 'slow-motion moral collapse' and said family and parenting is the place to start to fix society. In a speech following the riots in English cities the Prime Minister said social problems that have been 'festering for decades' have 'exploded in our face' and said that politicians have been 'too unwilling for too long to talk about what is right and what is wrong'. Mr Cameron also said he wanted a 'family test' applied to all domestic policy. He said, 'If it hurts families, if it undermines commitment, if it tramples over the values that keeps people together, or stops families from being together, then we shouldn't do it.' He noted that politicians 'shying away' from 'speaking the truth about behaviour, about morality', has 'actually helped to cause the social problems we see around us. We have too often avoided saying what needs to be said – about everything from marriage to welfare to common courtesy.'

Pray: for the restoration of biblical values of family and morality. (Lev.18:4)

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/pm-says-families-matter-in-post-riot-fightback/>

■ Sisters of teen mums more likely to have babies young

A girl is far more likely to become a teenage mum if she has a sister who has already become one, a new academic study shows. 'The research says how important family is compared to institutions,' says one of the researchers Professor Carol Propper. The 'peer effect' on girls aged 16 to 18 raised the chances of becoming a teenage mother from about one in five to two in five. The researchers who conducted the study said the effect was stronger when sisters were closer together in age and also from poorer households. The study concluded that the 'peer effect' had a greater impact on teenage pregnancy than any education or advice they are given at school. 'These findings provide strong evidence that the contagious effect of teen motherhood in siblings is larger than the general effect of being better educated. 'This suggests that more policies aimed directly at decreasing teenage pregnancy may be needed in order to reduce teen births.'

Pray: for a better understanding of how to reach vulnerable girls to help them make better informed life choices. (Ex.18:20)

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/sisters-of-teen-mums-more-likely-to-have-babies-young/>

■ Ex-Spice Girl speaks out against child sexualisation.

Former Spice Girl Melanie Chisholm says the sexualisation of children has gone too far, and encouraged stars like Rihanna to take more responsibility for their performances. Miss Chisholm's comments come amidst increasing concern about child sexualisation, and follow a Government review into the problem. Commenting on the issue she said, 'People have to take some responsibility, I think music is a big part of that. Women in music, very successful women, are extremely sexual and they have young fans. It is inappropriate. Earlier this year hit songwriter Mike Stock warned that pop music has taken 'a

slow but unmistakable descent into pornography'. He said, 'Pop music in this country is almost completely dominated by American acts who have taken sexualised imagery, dance moves and lyrical content way beyond the limits of decency.'

Pray: for a reappraisal of what is appropriate for pop videos aimed at our youngsters. (Je.35:15)

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/ex-spice-girl-warns-rihanna-about-sexualised-image/>

■ Equality body's U-turn on religious liberty

Christians have reacted with a mixture of disappointment and alarm after an equality quango appeared to backtrack on its pledge to support Christians this week. In July the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) stated, 'reasonable accommodation' of religious beliefs was 'needed' after applying to intervene in four cases involving religious discrimination in the workplace that have come before the European Court of Human Rights. The organisation has now been given leave to intervene in the cases but announced this week that it will no longer be arguing for reasonable accommodation indicating it would be willing to intervene in cases involving public displays of faith in the workplace but not in cases involving employees with regards to their views on same-sex relations. In the face of the latest U-turn the Evangelical Alliance and CARE have expressed their deep disappointment and concern.

Pray: for the Evangelical Alliance, CARE and noticeable public opinions to be heard and acted upon. (Ps.11:7)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.co.uk/article/equality.bodys.urn.on.religious.liberty.disappoints.christians/28474.htm>

■ Religion 'no longer fits in with modern day life'

A Church of England study found church attendance in the UK has fallen by 50% over the past 40 years, and Reverend Canon Dr Jeni Parsons, from Gloucester thought congregations were falling because of huge pressure, 'Pressure to get money to pay the mortgage or rent, pressure to get their children to football, or simply to work on Sundays.' she said, 'People's lives are so different that we have to make our church available when they're ready, not when we're ready.' She added Sunday morning service attendance is low, but 'very big' for baptisms, weddings and funerals.

Pray: for God to equip and enable His church to relevantly meet the spiritual and emotional needs of 2011 in the British Isles. (Mt.5:16)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-gloucestershire-14395228>

■ 888-mile cycle to raise money for Egyptian Christians

Andrew Johnston, Christian Solidarity Worldwide's advocacy director is cycling the length of Britain to raise money for Christians in Egypt. Andrew set off from John O' Groats on Sunday and will be working his way 888 miles south to Land's End where he hopes to arrive by August 31st. Funds raised will go towards the 'No Way Out' campaign supporting the church in Egypt. He will pass Manchester on Friday before stopping over at the Greenbelt Festival at the Cheltenham Racecourse this weekend. For decades Christians in Egypt have faced discrimination and violence, he hopes to raise £1,000 to support Egyptian Christians through prayer, solidarity and action. Over 15,000 people have already supported the campaign by signing a petition urging the UK and US Governments and the European Union to do what they can to bring an end to religiously-motivated violence. According to CSW there have been at least 20 attacks on religious minorities since the January revolution.

Pray: for Andrew's stamina and protection and for minorities to be treated equally in the new Egypt. (Pr.29:14)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/888mile.cycle.to.raise.money.for.egyptian.christians/28480.htm>

EUROPE

■ France: Feels like teen spirit

This summer some 100,000 young people from around the world – mostly between the age of 15 and 30 – will gather outside a village in the middle of France. They've been arriving since June to pitch tents, strike up friendships, enjoy plenty of music, and they'll continue to come until September. But this isn't some Gallic Glastonbury – it's a Christian community and the crowds will sing psalms not pop songs. At the heart of Communauté de Taizé, named after the small village near the site, are over 100 monks who live together very simply in a life devoted to prayer, singing and silence. Drawn from over 30 different countries the community is ecumenical with Catholics and Protestants worshipping together. When asked why so many young people come, Brother David said 'It's not to tell them what they should or should not do, it's to let them have that time of meeting with themselves, with others, and with Christ.'

Pray: for the Taizé community and the many visitors to learn more about and grow closer to Christ. (1Co.14:26)

More: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/feels-like-teen-spirit-thousands-of-young-people-flock-annually-to-a-christian-camp-in-rural-france-2339347.html>

■ Latvia: Pastor in former USSR utilises internet

Alexey Ledyayev, the leader of the international Christian movement 'New Generation' revealed his reasons for blogging, something that was never allowed in the dark days of the Soviet Union. He said, 'Some watch sermons - some don't. Some read books - some don't, the future is internet.' Pastor and journalist Ledyayev leads a 5,000-strong non-denominational church in Riga, Latvia that he founded in 1989 after emigrating from Kazakhstan. He notes the main aim for the media and every journalist is to get to the truth, 'which will help someone live'. 'People are different now. Yesterday the biggest sin was smoking in school toilets, now this age group indulge in drugs and sex. Divorce was once a great sin, but now it's nothing to many. Yesterday abortion was a horrible blasphemy over human life, but it is a usual thing now. Church must be more effective and modern today.'

Pray: for more Christian wordsmiths and innovators to utilise the internet across the nations as they address standards of immorality in open and frank discussions. (Ro.10:14)

More: <http://www.assistnews.net/STORIES/2011/s11080112.htm>

WORLDWIDE

■ Mongolia: House Church leaders detained

Fifteen house church leaders from two remote regions of China have been in detention since mid-July as local police try to extort money from their families before releasing them, threatening labour camp detention if bribes not paid. It all began on July 26th when local police and Security Protection Department entered a meeting where twenty one church leaders were planning summer church activities for the area. They confiscated everything at the meeting, and the pastors were criminally detained on suspicion of 'using a cult organization to undermine national law enforcement.' Police failed to notify the families or provide them with paperwork for the detention. Six were very elderly and in poor health, the detention centre refused to accept them and they were released. To date fifteen are still being held in the Wuhai detention centre.

Pray: for their health and spiritual wellbeing and for their release with no pre-conditions; also that believers will grow stronger in the face of persecution. (Ps.12:5)

More: <http://www.christiannewswire.com/news/5947917606.html>

■ Libya: Future leadership concerns

'The leadership transition raises questions whether the government replacing Qaddafi' will be Islamist or secular or somewhere in-between.' Walid Phares, a Middle East analyst states, 'Weeks from now we could see the beginning of tensions between the Islamist part and the secular part of the Transitional Council.' See:

<http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2011/08/22/libyan-revolution-raises-immediate-questions-over-what-comes-next/>

Meanwhile a draft new constitution created by the Libyan rebels' transition council has been leaked on conservative internet blogs. (Authenticity of the document has yet to be confirmed or denied by the council). The part of the draft that raises so much concern is Article 1 stating, 'Islam is the religion of the state and the principal source of legislation is Islamic Jurisprudence (Shari'a).' The rest of the draft constitution would be agreeable, including religious freedom, guaranteed human rights, freedom of the press, and academic pursuits, plus other staples of Western democracies. But the possibility of Iranian-styled theocracy replacing the dictatorship has alarmed bloggers and posters on the Internet.

Pray: for civil order in the land, sanctuary for innocent victims, for tribal differences to be settled peacefully and for Libya to step into a Christian democracy. (Pr.28:2)

More: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/new-constitution-for-libya-to-enforce-sharia-law-54392/>

■ Iran: Families of jailed hikers ask for prayer

Two American hikers imprisoned in Iran for more than two years were sentenced to eight years on Saturday on charges of illegal entry and espionage. Their families hoped authorities would free them during the Islamic month of Ramadan, when pardons are often handed down. Their families pleaded with the authorities in Iran to show compassion and allow them to return home. Both men pleaded not guilty to the charges. Their lawyer, Masoud Shafiei, said he would appeal the verdict. Josh Fattal, Shane Bauer and Sarah Shroud were arrested in 2009 when they inadvertently entered Iran while hiking in the northern Iraq. Shroud was released on \$500,000 bail in September 2010, but Iranian authorities refused to release her two companions. Iranian chief prosecutor Jafari Dowlatabadi said Shroud's case 'is still open and she will be tried in absentia.' Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said she is 'deeply disappointed' with the sentence.

Pray: for a change of heart by the Iranian authorities and for the release of Josh and Shane. (Ac.5:19)

More: http://www.evangelicalnews.org/indiv_pr.php?pr_id=20204

■ Horn of Africa: in need of 'immediate' action

The head of the World Council of Churches is calling upon governments in the Horn of Africa to do everything they can to ensure aid reaches those in need in the worst famine in decades. The World Food Programme is warning that around two million Somalis face starvation. WCC General Secretary Rev Dr Olav Fykse Tveit said that more people were dying as a result of blocks to food aid. Al Shabaab rebels are reportedly blocking tons of aid, burning supplies of food and medicine. 'This interference with humanitarian aid is inhumane and must be strongly condemned,' said Dr Tveit. 'People of all ages are dying, hour by hour. Governments must find workable solutions to the political circumstances that hinder the delivery of water, food and other supplies. The famine is a human tragedy that should be addressed immediately, regardless of political struggles in a given nation. Innocent lives are at stake,' he added.

Pray: for the international community, African churches and church aid agencies to move swiftly. (Ps.33:18).

More: http://www.christiantoday.com/article/church_leader_says_horn_of_africa_in_need_of_immediate_action/28481.htm

■ Syria: Crackdown continues

Syria's military assaults continue in a bid to silence the uprisings of the 'Arab Spring,' it's like a game of 'Whack-a-Mole.' Whenever security forces gain control in one place another town rises up and they have to start over again. Greg Musselman, with Voice of the Martyrs reports, 'There's slaughter going on there, and people are being killed. As a result there is another refugee crisis. The risk of sectarian trouble is also rising. Some refugees are Christians who were targeted in Iraq so you have the Assyrian and the Chaldean Christians that left Iraq now in a situation where they have to leave again.' The mass movement of people also means new opportunities. People that have been locked under Islam and have

not had an opportunity to respond to Christ are going to places like Turkey. Some have come to Christ as a result of moving out of closed countries.'

Pray: that God would use every situation to achieve His purposes for the land and the people; and what the enemy plans for evil will be turned upside down. (Pr.28:28)

More: <http://intercessors.wordpress.com/2011/06/17/syria-continues-crackdown/>

■ **Philippines: New hope, new fear**

The Philippines is one of two predominantly Roman Catholic nations in Asia, the other being East Timor. The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) is one of two Islamist groups located in the southern Philippines, the other being the Abu Sayyaf. Both are fighting against the Government of the Philippines. On Wednesday, four days after President Benigno Aquino met with leaders of the rebel (MILF) in Tokyo a series of fire-fights between the rebel group and one of its breakaway factions broke out killing many and displacing thousands from their homes. The violence dampened the optimism raised by the significant meeting between government and rebels which all hoped would lead to the signing of an official peace accord. Three years ago Corruption watchdog Transparency International ranked the Philippines in the top rung of countries most affected by bribery in the world. According to the corruption watchdog, it is the police, politicians and judges who are the most corrupt. See: <http://araymanila.wordpress.com/2007/12/07/bribery-in-philippines-among-worst-in-world-%E2%80%94-ti-2-part/>

Pray: for the nation to regain peace and stability through honest negotiations. (Pr.29:4)

More: http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia/MH25Ae01.html

■ **Ramadan 'Night of Power'**

On August 26 or 27, 2011, Muslims around the world will celebrate the holiest night in Islam - Laylat al-Qadr (the Night of Power). This is when they believe an angelic messenger delivered the 'first revelation' of the Qur'an to Mohammad. They expect to have divinely inspired dreams and see visions. They also believe that on Laylat al-Qadr, special angels perform special missions. If they worship with enough diligence on this night, Muslims think their sins will be forgiven. It is also known as the Night of Destiny. Many Muslims spend all night in prayer in hopes of receiving direction or experiencing something supernatural.

Pray: that the Lord to reveal Himself to Muslims on this night. Pray for them to have dreams and visions of Jesus Christ. (Act. 2:17)

More: <http://www.win1040.com/post.php?id=1285>

PRAISE REPORTS

■ **Pro footballer faith is 24/7**

Darren Moore has played for clubs such as Portsmouth, West Brom and Derby during an impressive career revealed he converted to Christianity after Bradford City assistant boss Wayne Jacobs invited him to a Christians in Sport meeting in 1999. 'Even though I had become a professional footballer I had doubts that I wasn't good enough. But after I attended that meeting I became a Christian and I realised that God loved me, it was an amazing experience. He said, 'This is a 24-7 thing for me. Just as you build a relationship with your partner or your wife you have to build one with the Lord. He wants to be with you through the good and the bad times.' In his spare time, as well as being a regular at church, he also is active in Christian charity Faith in Football along with fellow stars Linvoy Primus and Lomana Lua-Lua.

Praise: God for Darren's openness about his faith and pray that his witness will encourage others to seek the Lord. (1Ch.16:10)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.co.uk/article/pro.footballer.faith.is.247/28463.htm>

■ **Evangelist's revival meetings in England**

A British evangelist who shot to fame after holding a nine-month revival in America is holding meetings in the UK next month. Nathan Morris, who runs 'Shake The Nations Ministries' ran the Bay of the Holy Spirit Revival in Mobile, Alabama, alongside Pastor John Kilpatrick and worship leader Lydia Stanley. The Revival, which lasted from July 2010 until April this year saw thousands travel from all over the world and there were reports of many notable miracles. Now former drug user Nathan Morris, who hails from south Yorkshire, is back in Britain preaching at New Life Church in Hull from September 16 to 18, and Bethshan Church Newcastle from September 23 to 25. Large numbers are expected to travel from all parts of the UK to attend the meetings. Nathan, 32, recently tweeted: 'Join with me in prayer that God will pour out His Spirit in the upcoming UK meetings.'

Praise: God for evangelists and missionaries and pray that God would prepare hearts to receive all He has for us. (Ac.2:28)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/evangelist.nathan.morris.to.hold.meetings.in.hull.and.newcastle/28476.htm>

PRAYER FORUM OF THE BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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