

PRAYER ALERT...

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BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ PM challenged to support prayer for Britain

In the midst of another wave of recession and record prison figures following the riots, and an onslaught of bad news in the media, one thousand leaders from across the UK will gather at Wembley Stadium's Great Hall next week to ask God to heal battered Britain. Carry The Torch leaders prayer summit on September 17, coordinated by the Global Day of Prayer London, comes at a very strategic time as the UK faces several challenging social issues. GDOP London was even mentioned in Prime Minister's Questions in the House of Commons this week, when Member of Parliament for Enfield-Southgate David Burrowes said: 'In the wake of the riots, is this not a good time to support the forthcoming Global Day of Prayer, which in London is going to be taking place at Wembley Stadium?' Prime Minister David Cameron responded by commending all combined efforts of communities in response to the riots.

Pray: for the prayer summit and that God will empower and inspire all those attending. (2Co.9:8)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.co.uk/article/british.pm.challenged.to.support.prayer.for.britain/28595.htm>

■ Christianity meets high street consumerism in Christmas ad

Christianity meets high street consumerism in Christmas ad which ChurchAds.net is planning to display in shopping centres. A trendy nativity scene will be used in a poster aimed at reminding Brits that Jesus is the true meaning of Christmas. Christian charity Church-Ads.net launched the poster for its Christmas advertising campaign last week. It shows the nativity scene with 'trendy twenty-somethings, designer fashion and luxury gifts', as part of its 'Christmas starts with Christ' promotion, which is now in its third year. In the poster, the shepherds are represented by a cycle courier and plasterer. The wise men are shown as three successful entrepreneurs and their gifts are iconic 'treasures' of modern culture: a Swarovski crystal perfume bottle, a Fabergé egg and a replica Damien Hirst skull. All are 'sharply dressed'.

Pray: that this initiative will raise awareness that Christmas is about Christ. (Rom.16:6)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/christianity.meets.high.street.consumerism.in.christmas.ad/28607.htm>

■ End 'intrusive' equality surveys, says Govt minister

People using public services should not have to answer 'intrusive' equality questionnaires on subjects like sexual orientation, a government minister has said. Eric Pickles, the Communities Secretary, has issued statutory guidance to councils which clarifies that there is no requirement for them to carry out 'lifestyle or diversity questionnaires'. The move follows revelations that Islington Council asks people wanting to join a library if they are transgender. (See last week's Prayer Alert). It comes after a grandmother was asked about her sexual orientation after she complained about her council's bin collection service. Mr Pickles continued: 'Local residents shouldn't be asked to reveal detailed personal

information just because they've enquired about getting their bins emptied or how to join their local library. Clamping down on such town hall activity will save taxpayers' money and protect the privacy of residents of all backgrounds.'

Pray: for the new guidance to be fully adopted by all councils and departments. (Pr.13:10)

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/end-intrusive-equality-surveys-says-govt-minster/>

■ Children 'biggest losers' of benefit cap

New analysis, released Monday by The Children's Society, shows that the government's proposed cap on benefits will cut support for more than 200,000 children. Children will be around nine times more likely than adults to be affected. The Department of Work and Pensions' proposed scheme aims to promote fairness and get adults back into work by limiting benefits for out-of-work households to £500 per week for couples and families with children. But analysis by The Children's Society suggests that children will be by far the biggest losers if the proposals become law - with three quarters of the total number of individuals affected being children. The charity found that the cap will impact around 50,000 households, 95 per cent of which are estimated to have children. These families will lose an average of £93 a week - the equivalent to around double the average weekly family food bill.

Pray: that the Government would not ignore the most vulnerable in our society. (Is.58:10)

More: <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/15357>

■ MP wants to force churches into same-sex unions

A member of David Cameron's government is calling for a ban on marriages at Christian churches if they refuse to also perform same-sex unions. 'As long as religious groups can refuse to preside over ceremonies for same-sex couples, there will be inequality,' wrote Mike Weatherley, the Conservative MP for Hove and Portslade, in an August 21 letter to Cameron. While Weatherley's proposal is currently a 'minority view,' it 'could quickly become a main stream point of view,' warned Neil Addison, national director of the UK's Thomas More Legal Centre. The UK's 2004 Civil Partnership Act, which legalized same-sex unions, forbade them from being performed in religious venues or from using religious imagery. But Cameron's Coalition government has proposed an amendment to the 2010 Equality Act that would allow churches and other religious venues to perform same-sex unions if they choose.

Pray: that this proposal would not gain support within parliament and lead to a further erosion to God's laws. (2Ki.17:37)

More: <http://www.lifesitenews.com/news/british-mp-urges-government-to-force-churches-into-same-sex-unions>

■ Scottish Catholic opposition to homosexual 'marriage'

A senior Catholic clergyman has voiced strong opposition to the Scottish Government's proposals to introduce homosexual 'marriage'. Bishop Tartaglia, of the diocese of Paisley, argued that should the Government allow for homosexual 'marriage', it would not deserve the trust of the Scottish people. The Bishop used tough language to challenge the State's authority, saying that: 'Marriage is an institution which does not owe its existence or rationale to governments or legislatures. Governments do not have the authority to say what marriage is or to change its nature or to decree that people of the same-sex can marry.' The Bishop also warned ministers that churches may be forced to solemnise homosexual partnerships against their will, a claim which has been denied by supporters of the proposals. His comments followed those of the Archbishop of Glasgow, who said over the weekend that homosexual 'marriages' would be 'meaningless' as it would not result in the creation of a natural family.

Pray: that Church leaders will continue to speak out boldly against any action that would degrade marriage. (Heb.13:4)

More: <http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/sexual-orientation/senior-scottish-catholic-voices-opposition-to-homosexual-%E2%80%98marriage%E2%80%99>

■ Bible tour heads to 66 cities

Church insurance specialist, Chris Knott Insurance, has picked up the tab for a unique Bible tour taking place this month. The tour is part of year-long celebrations marking the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible. Premier Christian Radio presenter, the Rev Victor Robert Farrell, will preach from the 66 books of the Bible at each stop of the 66 city-tour over 66 days. He set off from London on Sunday and will finish back in the capital on November 16 - 16/11, a reference to 1611, the year the King James Bible was completed. Rev Farrell said: 'What makes this tour so unique is that this is potentially the last year we'll have just 66 cities in the UK. The Queen can grant city status to any growing town and it is expected she will do so next year as part of her Diamond Jubilee celebrations.'

Pray: for this opportunity to promote the Bible around the country; may all those that hear be blessed. (Ps.40:5)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/bible.tour.heads.to.66.cities/28617.htm>

EUROPE

■ Hungary: Churches take over state schools

Local government officials in Hungary are handing state-owned schools over to churches, unable to afford their upkeep during the economic recession, according to church sources. 'Churches are entitled to run schools in Hungary as public service providers, receiving the same taxpayers' money as public sponsors,' said Balazs Odor, ecumenical officer of Hungary's Reformed Church, in an interview with ENInews. 'The school system has its own problems here, which affect church-run schools as well. However, it's generally true that the wellbeing of church schools is better looked after since each has a community behind it,' he added. In April, the premier Viktor Orban's centre-right government steered through a new national constitution that states Hungarian citizens 'recognise the key role of Christianity in upholding the nation.' A

new religion law in July strengthened the position of mainstream churches when it deprived all but 14 of Hungary's 358 registered churches and religious associations of legal recognition, and required others to re-apply for court registration after parliamentary approval.

Pray: for the work of the Church as it takes on the role running schools and teaching the young. (Dt.32:2)

More: <http://www.cbn.com/cbnnews/world/2011/September/Fighting-the-Ghosts-of-Bosnia-with-Love-Hope/>

WORLDWIDE

■ North Korea: Prayer video - a 'Must See'!

Several hundred South Korean church leaders, along with international intercessors and prayer leaders, will gather near the DMZ, the border between North and South Korea, to pray for the Lord's deliverance and transformation of North Korea, probably the most oppressive and evil situation on earth - Prayer Initiative for North Korea, September 18-22. The link below shows a just completed prayer video on North Korea that will be used in conjunction with PINK. This hard-hitting, heart-stirring video was produced by Ken An and SohMyoung Lee, Korean film producers with the Pan Pacific Film Festival in Los Angeles. Please see it, let your heart be broken, and pray fervently for the liberation of North Korea and reintegration with its southern sister of South Korea. Share the video with intercessors and prayer leaders you are in touch with.

Pray: for His anointing, guidance and unity in the Spirit for this crucial initiative. May we all have God's heart for North Korea. (Jer.29:11)

More: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hv6E2ReEbGI&feature=youtu.be>

■ Israel and the Palestinian territories

The UN will be voting on a resolution to grant Palestine (the West Bank and the Gaza Strip) statehood on September 20, 2011. As the vote approaches, violence against Israel is on the rise. On a single day in August 2011, terrorists armed with bombs and guns attacked buses, cars and army patrols, killing seven. Terrorists fired more than 80 rockets into Israel the weekend of August 20 and 21. These attacks have been ongoing with dozens of missiles hitting Israel each day. In response, Israel began air raids, bombing targets in the Gaza Strip. On September 20, the UN General Assembly will vote on whether or not to allow the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to become member nations. Even if the vote is in favour of membership for the territories, it could still be vetoed by the UN Security Council.

Pray: for Christians globally to understand that the most important resolution is for everyone in the land to enter into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Pray for the will of the King of all nations to be done. (Je.10:7)

More: <http://www.win1040.com/post.php?id=1304>

■ Zimbabwe: Archbishop of Canterbury requests meeting with Mugabe

The Archbishop of Canterbury is hoping to have face to face discussions with Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe next month amid the violent persecution of Anglicans in the country. Rowan Williams has requested a meeting with the Zimbabwean president when he travels to Harare as part of a tour of the south of the continent, according to his spokeswoman. Williams, who will become the first prominent British representative to visit Zimbabwe's capital in a decade, is making the journey in an attempt to 'show solidarity' with Anglicans in the region, she said. In recent months priests are said to have been beaten and arrested by police, staff evicted from church buildings and property seized, while some Anglicans have allegedly been arrested and murdered. Some have questioned whether Williams would make the trip due to the violent regime, but Lambeth Palace said there had never been any debate over the matter.

Pray: that the Archbishop will be given the insight and wisdom in approaching Mugabe that would lead to positive resolutions. (Pr.21:30)

More: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/sep/08/archbishop-canterbury-robert-mugabe>

■ Indonesia: Troops sent after deadly clashes in Ambon

The Indonesian government has sent hundreds of security personnel to the eastern city of Ambon following sectarian clashes that left five people dead and 80 injured. The violence was sparked by rumours a Muslim motorcycle taxi driver - who police said died in a traffic accident - had been killed by Christians. It erupted on Sunday, when rival groups clashed at the man's funeral. Houses, cars and motorbikes were set on fire during the violence. Ambon - the provincial capital of the Molucca islands - has been hit by sectarian violence in the past. Conflicts between Christians and Muslims between 1999 and 2002 left more than 5,000 dead and half a million people displaced.

Pray: for peace to reign in Ambon and the Molucca islands and cessation of the violence. (Ps.7:9)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-14879139>

■ Kazakhstan: Bids to tighten grip on religious freedom

The government of Kazakhstan is renewing its efforts to restrict religious freedom in the country under proposed changes to legislation that would require all religious groups to re-register with the state. President Nursultan Nazarbaev told Parliament that amendments to the religion law will be adopted in the current session, which ends in June 2012. The details have not yet been made public, but the head of the new state Agency of Religious Affairs, Kairat Lama Sharif, said that the law will require all currently registered religious organisations to re-register. The government previously tried to amend the religion law, in 2008, increasing the harshness of penalties for unregistered religious activities. But the move was blocked by the Constitutional Council the following year. Officials vowed that they would try again, and it is feared that the new amendments will be essentially the same.

Pray: that this fresh move by the Kazakh government would again be thwarted. (Is.8:10)
More: <http://www.barnabasfund.org/Kazakh-government-bids-to-tighten-grip-on-religious-freedom.html>

■ **Somalia: Convert to Christianity kidnapped, beheaded**

A kidnapped Christian convert from Islam was found decapitated on Sept. 2 on the outskirts of Hudur City in Bakool region, in south-western Somalia. Juma Nuradin Kamil was forced into a car by three suspected Islamic extremists from the al Shabaab terrorist group on Aug. 21, area sources said. After members of his community thoroughly combed the area looking for him, at 2 p.m. on Sept. 2 one of them found Kamil's body dumped on a street. The kidnapping and subsequent manner of murder suggests that al Shabaab militants had been monitoring him, Christian leaders said. Muslim extremists from al Shabaab, a militant group with ties to al Qaeda, have vowed to rid Somalia of Christianity, and they control the area some 400 kilometres from Mogadishu. A Christian who saw Kamil's body said it bore the marks of an al Shabaab killing.

Pray: for God's protection over all believers and that the influence of al Shabaab will be broken. (Ps.5:11)

More: http://www.compassdirect.org/english/country/somalia/article_120184.html/

■ **Burma: Army accused of commandeering Church**

Kachin Christians have accused Burma's military of violating their religious rights after government troops seized control of the Katsu Kachin Baptist Church in the village of Katsu, transforming it into a military outpost complete with fortifications, trenches and land mines. 'They took over the church in Katsu village and started fortifying it,' said Mai Li Awng, spokesperson for a local Kachin relief group. 'They have banned local villagers from going to the church or moving around the area. It's not appropriate to take over a church and turn it into a military base. It's a human rights abuse.' Members of the church sent a letter to Kachin State Chief Minister La John Ngan. 'We therefore respectfully would like to urge the Kachin State Chief Minister to remove the mines, give us the normal situation around the church as before and the right to travel safely to farms and paddy fields by taking necessary actions'.

Pray: that the ongoing abuse by the military authorities against Christians would cease. (Ps54:2)

More: <http://www.worthynews.com/10941-burmese-army-accused-of-commandeering-kachin-church>

PRAISE REPORTS

■ **Jersey to hear the Gospel**

Every resident in Jersey will hear the gospel after being sent the story of Jesus on CD. Around 89,000 people will be asked to listen to Mark's gospel when it drops through the letterbox in the next few weeks. The recording is part of a Bible Society initiative called 'You've Got The Time'. The whole of the New Testament has been dramatised in 40 half-hour audio clips, which can be downloaded from the Bible Society's website. When church leaders heard about the project they asked the Bible Society if they could put part of the recording, by The Riding Lights Theatre Company, on CD. One of the project organisers, Rev Martyn Shea, says, 'We want to demonstrate the love of God and want people to hear the good news of the Bible. This resource and the way the Riding Lights Theatre Company act it, was exactly the way we want the church to present the Bible in the community.'

Praise: God for this wonderful opportunity to spread the Good News. (Is.52:7)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/jersey.to.hear.the.gospel/28616.htm>

■ **Japan: Youth revive Japan's dying Church**

Whether they're in church or standing on a street corner, the members of Grace Tokyo Church loudly sing their songs of praise. The congregation's young people are part of a new youth movement that many Japanese Christians hope will revive Japan's churches. Philippines native Glen Nabarrete, who serves as the head pastor at Grace Tokyo said 'I believe in this church. One of the things we have that a lot of Japanese churches don't have is a lot of joy and a lot of laughter,' he said. Nabarrete continued 'I think that's one quality that God wants to bring to this nation. Joy in serving God. 'We let the young people step up, do preaching. Young people love it, they want to participate for the growth of the church.' The youth go out of their way to spread God's love, singing gospel songs on the street, even when reprimanded by the police.

Praise: God that He is using the young people to bring new life to the Church in Japan. (Ez.9:9b)

More: <http://ausprayernet.org.au/newsletter/DisplayNewsletter.php>

PRAYER FORUM OF THE BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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