

PRAYER ALERT...

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BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Atheist help for clergy closet unbelievers

Atheists recently went public with a new website aimed at creating a community for clergy who have lost their faith. The Clergy Project has grown to nearly 100 members since the launch of a private, invitation only, website in March. The Richard Dawkins Foundation for Science and Reason and the Freedom From Religion Foundation have now made the project public in hopes of drawing more pastors, priests, rabbis and other religious leaders who have chosen to 'move beyond faith'. 'We know there must be thousands of clergy out there who have secretly abandoned their faith but have nowhere to turn,' said Dan Barker, a former evangelical preacher who now serves as co-president of FFRF. 'Now they do have a place to meet, a true sanctuary, a congregation of those of us who have replaced faith and dogma with reason and human well-being.'

Pray: for all clergy who are finding faith challenging and pray that the Holy Spirit would bring fresh revelation. (Eph.1:17)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/atheist.help.for.the.clergy.who.are.closet.unbelievers/28773.htm>

■ Judge slates same-sex couples' fight over girls

A High Court judge has criticised a lesbian couple and a male homosexual couple who are fighting over parenting rights for two little sisters they had by IVF. Mr Justice Hedley said: 'The four adults in this case regard the price paid by these two children as an acceptable price for the pursuit of their own adult disputes.' The judge also said: 'The case provides a vivid illustration of just how wrong these arrangements can go.' A social worker informed the court that the older girl has suffered serious emotional harm. The couples met after the women placed an advert in a homosexual publication in 1999 asking for 'a gay man or couple who would like to start a family with a lesbian couple'. The men replied, saying, 'We would love to be father and stepfather'. But relations broke down in 2008 when they fell into a dispute over the girls.

Pray: for the children in this case and for society to recognise the serious problems that may emerge in such flawed arrangements. (Pr.11:3)

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/judge-slates-same-sex-couples%e2%80%99-fight-over-girls/>

■ Bishop of London attacks top public school after it demolishes its chapel

St Paul's has become the first of Britain's top public schools to pull down its chapel and do without a place of worship. It is one of Britain's oldest and most prestigious public schools, founded 500 years ago by the Dean of St Paul's Cathedral. St Paul's School has knocked down its chapel to make way for new science classrooms. The decision has upset the Church of England and brought complaints that the institution is turning its back on its Christian heritage in favour of a more secular approach to education. The Bishop of London, the Rt Rev Richard Chartres, has expressed his dismay in a letter to the

school and the Rev Robert Stanier, an Anglican chaplain and former pupil said he was appalled, 'This is a school with a Christian foundation. They're spending nearly £80 million and yet they can't find any space for a chapel.'

Pray: for the school authorities to reconsider their decision and also that this does not mark the start of a new trend. (2Ki.17:37)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/8829140/Bishop-of-London-attacks-top-public-school-after-it-demolishes-its-chapel.html>

■ Archbishop celebrates 200 years of Church schools

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, preached last Friday at Westminster Abbey in a service to celebrate 200 years of church schools. He spoke of the importance of Church schools in providing an environment for children to become good citizens. Preaching to a packed Westminster Abbey congregation of school children, teachers and Church and education leaders, the Archbishop said that, whether pupils were of the Christian faith or not, Church schools provided a vision for them 'to see the biggest possible picture of humanity and the world they live in.' Church school children from across England and Wales carried specially-made banners to celebrate the founding of the Church of England's National Society in 1811 offering education to the poor in every parish - 50 years before the state joined in. The Revd Jan Ainsworth, Chief Education Officer for the Church of England, said 'Our task is to make sure our Church schools find a place within the new system and to bring other schools into relationship with us.'

Pray: Thank God for the work of the National Society and pray for the future of our Church schools in an increasingly secular society. (Col.3:17)

More: <http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/2219/church-schools-provide-biggest-possible-picture-for-good-citizenship>

■ New website to report inappropriate TV programmes

This will be followed up by an Ofcom investigation. (See Prayer Alert 41-2011) The site is being launched by David Cameron as part of his drive to end the sexualisation of children in Britain. It was one of several recommendations to come out of a government review led by Mothers' Union chief executive, Reg Bailey, which concluded that today's children are being surrounded by a 'wallpaper' of sexual imagery that is robbing them of their childhood. Other measures being introduced by Mr Cameron include a ban on sexually explicit advertising near schools and under-15s being 'brand ambassadors' for certain products.

Pray: that, as this new website is launched that it will lead to many successful challenges to media excesses. (Pro.4:5)

More: http://www.christiantoday.com/article/new_website_for_parents_to_report_inappropriate_tv_programmes/28747.htm

■ Children's Society condemns child border detention

In May 2010 the Government announced that it would end the immigration detention of children, but it is failing to do so say the Children's Society. Between May and the end of August 2011, in aggregate 697 children were held at Greater London and South East ports. Almost one third were unaccompanied children. This could mean as many as 2,000 children could be detained each year. Shockingly the Home Office is not collecting information on the length of detention or reasons why the children have been detained. In December 2010 the Government published details of its new policy to end the detention of children; within this, the Government retained the right to only hold a few dozen families each year in border cases. The Children's Society welcomed the progress made by the Government in response to the 'Outcry!' campaign; a joint initiative between The Children's Society and Bail for Immigration Detainees to end the immigration detention of children.

Pray: that the authorities will stand by their promises. (Ps.36:3)

More: <http://www.ekkleisia.co.uk/node/15569>

■ New Bible for Cornish speakers

Cornish speakers can now read the complete Bible - An Beybel Sans - in their chosen language. The New Testament was translated into Cornish by Prof Nicholas Williams and published in 2002. It has taken him about six years to translate all the books of the Old Testament, using a variety of versions, including Hebrew and Greek texts. An Beybel Sans is written in standard Cornish and its 10 maps also have place names in Cornish. The 69-year-old professor from London, who is considered to be one of the leading experts on Celtic languages, taught himself Cornish at the age of 15 because it seemed 'a bit odd and a bit bizarre'. He told BBC Radio Cornwall: 'One of the reasons we lost the language was because there was no Bible in Cornish. 'Once you have the Bible you have created your literary heritage and I hope this book will be influential in the Cornish revival.'

Pray: for this new version of the Word of God to raise interest and reach new audiences. (Ac.12:24)

More: http://www.christiantoday.co.uk/article/new_bible_for_cornish_speakers/28768.htm

EUROPE

■ Governments called to tackle global hunger

International development agency Oxfam has called upon governments meeting at the UN's Committee on World Food Security (CFS) in Rome to show the political will and take action to tackle the root causes of hunger. With more than 13 million people in dire need of food in the Horn of Africa, food prices set to remain high and volatile, and almost a billion people going to bed hungry every day, Oxfam believes it is clear that existing policies and responses are inadequate to solve the problem. The CFS, which meets from 17 - 22 October 2011, is the global forum where major decisions should be made to tackle hunger. It is the only place in which all governments, civil society, international institutions and the private sector can formally negotiate and coordinate measures to eliminate hunger and ensure food security for all.

Pray: for the success of the CFS meeting currently taking place in Rome. (Ps.146:7)

More: <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/15571>

■ Polish TV bows to church demands

Poland's state TV network has given in to demands by the Roman Catholic Church and promised not to re-employ a 'death metal' rock star on its most popular music talent show. Polish TV's president, Juliusz Braun, issued the following statement on 13 October, 'In connection with press reports about Adam Darski's behaviour during a recent Warsaw club concert provocatively showing a lack of respect for religious convictions, as well as for the sick and handicapped,. The statement was issued after reports that Darski, whose stage name is Nergal, had appeared as a priest and pretended to cure a handicapped person during a Warsaw concert by his band, Behemoth. When it was announced Darski would appear on Voice of Poland, several church leaders and Catholic organizations threatened to withhold their licence fees. Darski's concert stunts have included tearing up a Bible and describing the Roman Catholic Church as a 'criminal sect.'

Pray: as the church makes a stand against the behaviour of 'death metal' bands that the media would hold back from promoting such behaviour. (Jas.1:27)

More: <http://www.eni.ch/featured/article.php?id=521>

WORLDWIDE

■ **INSIGHT ARTICLE: G20 Summit**

As western economies continue to flounder, the G20 meeting in Cannes on November 3rd and 4th has taken on epic importance in the minds of economists. Something has to happen there, western politicians insist, that will save the west, and particularly Europe, from its current deadlock. Many are saying 'the G20 summit must look beyond the west and think of the rest' and 'G20 heads of state, engage yourself finally against hunger in the world', which was written on an Action Against Hunger banner in Paris this week. Also thousands of anti-capitalist demonstrators are expected at the G20 summit despite French police plans to close the Italian border. A recent New York Times headline read, 'No Jobs and No Ideas' as the Occupy Wall Street protests entered their fourth week. For a simple introduction to G20 and prayer points for this years summit click the INFO button below.

Pray: for this year's G20 to unite to implement justice and financial aid for vulnerable regions of the world. (Pr.31:8,9)

Info: http://site.prayer-alert.net/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=345&Itemid=93

■ Southeast Asia/Central America: Worst floods in decades

Torrential rains in Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, cutting off roads and destroying homes and crops have killed 700+ people and affected eight million. The UN is ready to provide humanitarian relief. Sea surges are expected in Thailand from 28 - 30 October which could threaten to break through flood barriers. A landslide alert has also been issued for four Thai provinces. In Laos, 892 homes have been washed away and 2,500 livestock perished. In Cambodia and Vietnam access is difficult to affected zones. Heavy monsoon rains have been drenching the area since mid July. About 8.2 million people in 60 of Thailand's 77 provinces are affected by flooding, and 10 million residents in Bangkok are experiencing more surges of floodwater. See <http://www.timesofoman.com/innercat.asp?detail=50880&rand=> Also in Central America the death toll from rains and mudslides has risen to at least 80, with El Salvador suffering 32 fatalities. The poor weather continues with international highways washed out and thousands of families homeless in a region that the UN classified as one of the most affected by climate change. See: <http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/world/death-toll-grows-in-floods-across-latin-america/story-e6frf7lf-1226169827954>

Pray: for God to come alongside all who call out to him, to strengthen rescue workers and inspire governments as they work to prevent humanitarian disasters. (Ps.72:12,13)

More: <http://www.theatlantic.com/infocus/2011/10/worst-flooding-in-decades-swamps-thailand/100168/>

■ The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Hajj

Saudi Arabia is referred to as 'The Land of The Two Holy Mosques, 'Al-Masjid al-Nabawi' Mosque where Muhammad is buried and 'Masjid al-Haram' the largest mosque in the world situated in Mecca. Muslims make a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in their life if they are able.' This pilgrimage is called Hajj. The dates for the Hajj change each year, this year it starts on November 4th lasting 4 days. Thousands of pilgrims will perform religious acts to be cleansed of their sins by praying at the Grand Mosque, spending a night in a tent at Mina, walking to where Muhammad delivered his final sermon, throwing stones at three pillars representing Satan, sacrificing an animal and walking round a sacred rock seven times. Please pray for those searching for cleansing and forgiveness, and also for the residents of Saudi Arabia where the constitution is based on the Qur'an.

Pray: for Saudis and pilgrims to have their spiritual thirsts truly quenched. (Jn.7:37-38)

More: <http://www.pray4muslimpeoples.org/index.php/resources/100-hajj-2011>

■ Chile: Student protests turn violent

Students and police clashed in Santiago during the latest protest over education reform. Student leaders are demanding wholesale reform of Chile's education system, which they say is unequal and under-funded. Police used tear gas and water cannon against protesters who set up barricades and threw petrol bombs. With more demonstrations planned for Wednesday 26th the government said it will invoke emergency security law to quell the violence. The protest movement started in May by students and are backed by teachers and trade unions after talks with the government broke down earlier this month. Chile's education system is heavily reliant on private funding with 40% of all education paid for by students.

Representatives of the movement went to the heavily guarded presidential palace to present an unofficial plebiscite on their demand for educational reform.

Pray: for a peaceful resolution that implements adequate funding for the country's education. (Is.54:13)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-15358921>

■ **Australia: Government protest Iranian Pastor's death sentence**

The Australian Christian Lobby is calling for the Australian Government to make representations to the Iranian Government about Christian Pastor Yousef Nadarkhani who has been sentenced to death in Iran. ACL's Lyle Shelton said the case is in conflict with the religious provisions of Iran's constitutional law and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which allows freedom of religion and freedom to change one's religion. 'We join with many churches and groups nationally and internationally to condemn the death sentence of Pastor Yousef Nadarkhani', Mr Shelton said. Meanwhile some are saying 'placing Pastor Yousef's case into the hands of high Supreme Leader Ali Khomeini could make or break his chances of an acquittal.' (See last week's Prayer Alert) Voice of the Martyrs director said, 'Whatever decision is made there will be a hefty amount of people who are not happy with it.' see: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/iranian-pastors-life-in-hands-of-supreme-leader-is-that-a-good-or-bad-thing-58164/>

Pray: for international condemnation to succeed in bringing Iran to recognising religious freedom. (Ps.45:4)

More: http://www.international.to/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2879:australian-government-must-speak-out-about-iranian-pastor-sentenced-to-death&catid=80:politics&Itemid=120

■ **India: Human trafficking**

Human trafficking is modern-day slavery in India and has become one of the fastest growing criminal industries in the world. Homeless girls and boys become victims of violence, deceit and compulsion for sexual exploitation or other forced labour. Every day hundreds of thousands of minors are trafficked, sold and forced into prostitution and bonded labour. Helpless poor people, seeking a better life because of poverty, domestic violence or other pressures they have no control over, are brutally oppressed, often sexually abused, raped, beaten, starved and humiliated by those making a god of power and money. So it is heart-warming when we read, 'Two minor girls stuck in prostitution ring in a red light area in Pune were rescued by the Christian organization, Indian Rescue Mission, along with the Social Security cell of Pune police on Thursday, October 13, 2011. Acting on a tip they raided the brothel and rescued Roopa (16) and Gowri (17), and the manager of the brothel was arrested.'

Pray: for God to minister healing to the girls and for more traffickers to be found and punished appropriately. (Ps.64:7-10)

More: http://www.breakingchristiannews.com/articles/display_art.html?ID=9440

PRAISE REPORTS

■ **Brazil: Miracles at city scale**

More than one hundred Brazilian mayors have presented the keys of their city to Jesus, reports Dutch prayer leader and author Pieter Bos. 'In Brazil local deities are so incorporated in the city life and festivals, that at the annual carnival in an official ceremony, most of the mayors hand over the key of their city to Prince Carnival, or Rei Momo. Carnival in Brazil is known for its rampant drunkenness, licentiousness, immorality and violence, but this is a structural problem. Many city mayors are now so desperate to break out of this pattern that they are giving the key of their city to Jesus,' says Bos.

Praise: God for this initiative and pray that He will bless their choice to follow Jesus. (Mt.4:19)

More: http://ausprayernet.org.au/newsletter/DisplayNewsletter.php?e_id=00000002278#st2

■ **Wednesday Afghanistan prayer meetings**

Every Wednesday evening at eight o'clock Afghanistan time, prayer meetings are held in Camp Bastion and other military bases in the region. Christian troops on operations are asked to add their prayers at that time if they are able. A growing number of Christians in various parts of the world are now 'attending' these prayer meetings as 'virtual' members. Please consider joining this band of supporters, the UK time for the meetings is 1630hrs.

Praise: God as they all join together constantly in prayer. (Acts 1:14a)

More: <http://www.afcu.org.uk/>

PRAYER FORUM OF THE BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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