

PRAYER ALERT...

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PRAISE REPORTS

■ Charities say holiday giving has been happy

By last week many charities had already raised more compared with 2010, and some are even expecting a windfall, a new Chronicle of Philanthropy poll finds. Fifty-four percent told The Chronicle that they raised more money in November and the first part of December than they had at this point last year. One out of five of the 152 organizations in the survey said contributions are outpacing last year's donations by 20 percent or more. That is one reason many groups expect 2011 to end well. Six out of 10 charities predicted they would close out the year with an overall gain in donations. 'Things are looking very strong,' says Traci Coker, director of the World Vision Gift Catalogue. 'We're slightly ahead of last year right now.' Some social-service charities that have worked to do a better job telling their stories are also seeing success.

Praise: God for the generosity of spirit demonstrated across the world at this time. (Ps.150:6)

More: http://philanthropy.com/article/Half-of-Charities-Say-Holiday/130130/?sid=pt&utm_source=pt&utm_medium

■ Germany: 4,000 new Jesus followers

Four years ago a grassroots mission movement was ignited among young people in Germany under the name 'No Limit'. Since then 7,000 Christians have been mobilized to reach out to non-believers and 4,000 new people started following Jesus. Many healings happened on the streets, like a 15-year old who saw a blind person see again. A young teenager prayed with a paralyzed man who was completely healed. A team prayed in a hospital for a woman battling cancer; a short time later the Physician declared her completely healed. This Winter evangelism outreaches take place in over one hundred cities around the world. A large Summer2Go outreach is in preparation for 2012.

Praise: God for the growth of this mission movement among the young. (Lk.9:6)

More: <http://nl.thull-hosting.de/index.php?id=4&L=1>

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ INSIGHT ARTICLE: School bullying and suicide

Last week charities called for social networking websites to stop bullies sending messages anonymously because of its damage to children. See <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/facebook/8886108/Web-bullies-target-children-in-their-homes.html> Earlier this year a spokesperson for Christian-teachers.org said, 'Young people being bullied at school are not able to make the most of themselves, their talents, their ability to learn, to contribute, to be happy and just be a child.' and 'It is time to get beyond hollow phrases like 'challenging behaviour', 'behaviour management', and 'social inclusion' and get to grips with the real issue of bullying. How can we ensure that every child in every school feels happy, safe and secure? It's intolerable that anyone feels so powerless, so alone, so miserable that they would contemplate suicide as their only way out.' For insights to aid intercession into this subject click the 'Info' button.

Pray: that more education professionals would recognise and act upon the contradiction of basic human rights that bullying represents. (Pro.12:18)

Info: http://site.prayer-alert.net/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=358&Itemid=93

■ Cameron calls for return to Christian values

David Cameron has declared that 'Britain is a Christian country and we should not be afraid to say so', in a speech to mark the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible. Mr Cameron told Church of England clergy gathered in Oxford that a return to Christian values could counter the country's 'moral collapse' and blamed a 'passive tolerance' of immoral behaviour for this summer's riots, Islamic extremism, City excess and Westminster scandals. His words will delight traditionalists in his party and Christian groups that claim believers are increasingly marginalised. He said the King James Bible was as relevant today as at any point in its history. He went on to say 'We are a Christian country. And we should not be afraid to say so. Let me be clear: I am not in any way saying that to have another faith – or no faith – is somehow wrong but that the Bible has helped to give Britain a set of values and morals which make Britain what it is today.'

Pray: for such views to be reflected in Government policy and public life. (Lk.8:21)

More: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/dec/16/cameron-king-james-bible-anniversary>

■ Christians are 'evil' for backing marriage, says Tesco R&D boss

Christians are 'evil' if they resist the redefinition of marriage to allow for same-sex marriage, the Head of Research and Development at Tesco.com has said. The company has already faced criticism for dumping its support for the Cancer Research 'Race for Life' and sponsoring London's gay pride festival. The 'evil Christians' comment was made by Nick Lansley, Head of Research and Development for the Tesco website. He wrote: 'I'm also campaigning against evil Christians (that's not all Christians, just bad ones) who think that gay people should not lead happy lives and get married to their same-sex partners.' Director of The Christian Institute, Colin Hart, said: 'I won't be shopping at Tesco this Christmas, and I am repeatedly hearing from other Christians who have already come to the same conclusion'. Mr Lansley is entitled to his opinions and Christians are entitled to choose not to shop at Tesco.

Pray: for a more balanced view by Tesco to respect and not alienate the Christian community. (Dt.13:3-4)

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/christians-are-evil-for-backing-marriage-says-tesco-rd-boss/>

■ Methodist project wins cultural approval from Olympic organisers

The London 2012 Organising Committee has given the go-ahead for a community arts project linked to the Methodist Church to feature as part of the Cultural Olympiad. LOCOG awarded an Inspire Mark – its official seal of approval – to the Outside/In project, which will see young people and adults from different parts of Newcastle telling stories about themselves, their history, culture and communities through art. The artists' work will feature as four exhibitions at The Holy Biscuit from March through to July 2012. The Holy Biscuit (formerly Shieldfield Methodist Church) is a community arts space partnered with The Methodist Church and The Biscuit Factory – an independent art gallery in Newcastle upon Tyne. Ish Lennox, Olympic and Paralympic Games Coordinator for the Methodist Church said: 'It's fantastic that a Methodist project has won an Inspire Mark. We are completely committed to engaging with the Cultural Olympiad. Methodist Christian Discipleship is life-long and whole life.'

Pray: for this project and all those involved in running it in 2012 and beyond. (Ps.5:12)

More: <http://www.methodist.org.uk/index.cfm?fuseaction=openlogod.newsDetail&newsid=548>

■ One in four young women admit they had underage sex

More than a quarter of young women today lost their virginity when they were below the legal age of consent, an NHS survey has revealed. According to the study 27 per cent of 16 to 24-year-olds had underage sex. By comparison, just four per cent of women now aged 55 to 69 first had sex when they were underage. NHS Information Centre chief executive Tim Straughan said: 'The survey paints a picture of sexual behaviour which is changing over the generations, with younger women beginning to have sex younger.' Across all age groups, the statistics show that 14 per cent of women lost their virginity before the age of 16 compared with 20 per cent of men. The average age for losing virginity was 17, although for those now aged 16 to 24 it was 16. Diane Abbott, the Shadow Public Health Minister, commented: 'The rising numbers of girls having under-age sex is alarming.'

Pray: that ways would be found to reverse these statistics and improve moral standards. (1Cor.6:9)

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/one-in-four-young-women-admit-they-had-underage-sex/>

■ Jennifer Saunders criticises sexualisation of pop music

Comedienne Jennifer Saunders says she does not like the sexualisation of pop music and is concerned about the effect of online pornography on boys. The actress, who is married with grown up daughters, criticised the sexual content of music videos, saying: 'I don't think it helps society'. Miss Saunders also commented that the proliferation of pornography on the internet is fuelling a wrong attitude towards women. She told Stylist magazine, in response to a question on pop's sexualisation: 'I don't like it. I find the whole R'n'B sexual videos stuff really annoying.' She said: 'I think they are having to re-educate boys on how to treat women in schools, because of the internet and the amount of porn they see. I think that's a shame.' Last month a leading head teacher said the 'liberal dogma of the past' has left us with the 'moral abyss of the present', as she hit out at the sexualisation of children.

Pray: that more people at all levels of our society would speak out against our falling moral standards. (Jas.1:21-22)

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/jennifer-saunders-criticises-sexualisation-of-pop-music/>

■ Pagan wins 'family life' human rights case

An American woman who claims to worship Norse gods has won the right to stay in Britain because of her 'family life' with her boyfriend and his wife. The Home Office refused Emily DiSanto, permission to stay in Britain because the law bans polygamous relationships. But now she has won an extraordinary legal case in which she is allowed to remain on the basis

of her human right to family life. Emily now shares Alan and Anne-Marie Caulfield's marital home in south-east London with his two children – one by each of the women. The case is the latest example of how human rights laws are being used to overturn the decisions of ministers in immigration cases in what critics say are dubious circumstances. This decision also shows the definition of family life is now widening far beyond the conventional couple with children and has implications for immigrants who believe in polygamy, which is still practised in parts of the Muslim world and – illegally – by breakaway Mormons in the USA.

Pray: for God's hand on the lives of these people and also for the courts to recognise the primacy of monogamous marriage in our society. (2Sa.22:31)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/immigration/8963019/Pagan-wins-family-life-human-rights-case.html>

EUROPE

■ Hungary: Battle for legal recognition of churches

In June, Prayer Alert reported on a draft religion law that constituted oppression because it discriminated against minority religious groups and would create an oppressive religion law inconsistent with fundamental human rights. See Prayer Alert 25-2011. This week Hungary's Constitutional Court has annulled the new law that would have withdrawn legal recognition from all but a handful of the country's registered religious associations. Praise God! However, a church commentator warned that the ruling was 'just a technical delay,' and predicted the law would still be enforced from the start of 2012.

Pray: that any changes in Hungary's law would not violate the right to religious freedom. (Ex.22:28)

More: <http://www.eni.ch/news/item.php?id=5367>

■ Spain: Soaring sales of morning-after pill

Use of the abortifacient morning-after pill in Spain has risen by 83% in 2010, the first full year of over-the-counter availability of the dangerous drug, according to a report by ANSAMED news service. The Spanish Ministry for Health approved the sale of the morning-after pill without a doctor's prescription, and with no age restriction, in September 2009, citing a need for emergency contraception and to reduce unwanted pregnancies. 'It is an emergency method of contraception, not to be used except in emergencies,' said Health Minister Trinidad Jimenez in a press release at the time. 'We don't want it to become another means of contraception.' However, mounting evidence has shown that the drug is both ineffective for its stated purpose of reducing unintended pregnancies, and is being abused the world over as a common method of contraception. A contraception and abortion pushing organization, RH Reality Check, admitted that the morning-after pill, 'is not as effective in reducing unwanted pregnancy rates as we once hoped.'

Pray: for availability of the morning-after pill to be re-considered in light of these statistics.

More: <http://www.lifesitenews.com/news/unrestricted-availability-of-abortifacient-morning-after-pill-in-spain-resu>

WORLDWIDE

■ Egypt: Good news amidst concerns

Ramez Atallah the General Director of The Bible Society of Egypt writes, 'Now when they had departed - behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Rise, take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child to destroy him.' (Mat. 2:13) For many centuries Egyptians have been proud that when God's Son needed refuge He came to their land for shelter and security. Today as the bright sunshine of the Arab Spring is being overshadowed by darkening clouds of the Arab Fall many Christians and moderate Muslims are seeking to flee from Egypt for freedom.' For Ramez comments regarding 'why Islamist parties have a majority of the votes' and 'unprecedented breakthroughs for the gospel' in Egypt click the 'More' button for encouragement and prayer.

Pray: for God to continue to flood his Egyptian church with the love of Christ, that casts out all fear. (1 Jn. 4:18)

More: <http://hosted.verticalresponse.com/829923/8286a76943/1566502707/71f8713e24/>

■ North Korea: Uncertain future

With North Korea's Kim Jong-Il's death there is fear and uncertainty. Only God knows what will happen next but we can pray for His purposes to be fulfilled through this event. North Korea is the world's worst persecutor of Christians, the following statements are from a Prayer Alert INSIGHT article published earlier this year. 'Those discovered to have any kind of faith or religious belief (and their families to three generations) are executed or sent to concentration camps for life; a North Korean concentration camp survivor told Congress North Korea's No.1 enemy is God; a nuclear holocaust would be inevitable if South Korea engaged North Korea in war.' See http://site.prayer-alert.net/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=357&Itemid=93 Open Doors requests prayer for the 'Secret Christians' within the government to gain more power and influence, for Christians to share about Jesus without fear of retaliation, and for the 50,000 Christians in prison camps.

Pray: that the change of leadership would bring about a shaking and eventual removal of North Korea's tyranny. (Ps.10:14,15)

More: <http://blog.opendoorsusa.org/blog/bid/111596/Persecuted-Christians-and-a-Post-Kim-Jong-Il-North-Korea>

■ China: No religion in politics allowed

'There is no room for religion among the members of the Chinese Communist Party,' said the vice president of the United Front. There is a real concern within the United Front that many members of the party, disillusioned by the fall in ideals, corruption, and materialism are discovering or rediscovering a religious dimension. It is not unusual for at least one third of party members to visit a Buddhist master on weekends, or meet up with a Catholic bishop, or start praying in a Protestant community. Some believe the Maoist tone of the above comment regarding religion is a sign of an internal power struggle

ahead of the imminent change of leadership of the Communist General Secretary and Premier of the People's Republic of China.

Pray: that Chinese politicians will not use religion to gain attention and orchestrate agendas in the lead up to elections next year. (Ps.107:16)

More: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Get-behind-me-Satan:-No-religion-for-the-Chinese-Communist-Party-members-23491.html>

▣ **Falklands: Unrest between UK and Argentina**

The Foreign Office has hit out at Argentina following the decision on Tuesday by Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and Brazil (a South American trading bloc) to ban boats with a Falkland Islands flag from their ports. British diplomats warned, 'Britain's determination to protect the overseas territory should not be underestimated.' Urgent discussions are being carried out with countries in the region to establish what concrete effect the ban would have. But tensions have been raised by this symbolic rebuke to Britain. An agreement circulated by the Argentine foreign ministry stated the four countries vowed 'to adopt all the measures it is possible to impose to impede the entry of boats flying the illegal flag of the Malvinas (Falkland) Islands.' José Mujica, Uruguay's president said, 'We hold nothing against the U.K. but we have a lot in favour of Argentina.'

Pray: that this disagreement will not escalate, for wise advice to be given and adhered to, and for sailors and merchants to continue unhindered. (Pr.12:15)

More: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2011/dec/21/falklands-boat-ban-row-argentina>

▣ **Nigeria: Threats to disrupt Christmas in Jos**

The Plateau State capital of Jos was targeted by a series of bombings last weekend, in which one man died and 11 people were injured, including one woman. Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) said threats to disrupt Christmas celebrations in the area have been circulating for two weeks. Commenting on the weekend's events, the Chief Executive Officer of CSW Nigeria said, 'I believe that northern elders could contribute more towards ending these frequent attacks on innocent citizens. It is rather worrying that the recently concluded northern Nigeria peace summit produced no statement regarding the Boko Haram militia, which has unleashed violence in several states of Northern Nigeria.'

Pray: for stronger security in both Plateau and Kaduna States, and for peaceful Christmas celebrations in Jos. (Ps.23:4,5)

More: <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/2011/s11120073.htm>

▣ **Iran: Christians fear attack at Christmas**

'Evangelical Christians in Iran fear a massive crackdown by security forces around Christmas and Pastor Youcef Nadarkhani may be executed earlier than authorities suggest', said Firouz Khandjani a council member of the pastor's Iranian Church. Iran's judiciary uses the Christmas time to detain and harass Christians thinking the world may forget the believers as everyone is busy with Christmas shopping. He warned that official suggestions that Pastor Nadarkhani's execution for abandoning Islam would be postponed may be a trap to confuse the international community. Last week observers close to the case said judges were ordered to 'do nothing' for one year - however Firouz Khandjani stressed 'It has become clear that Iran's government may want to execute him earlier and saying he will be held one year more does not necessarily mean an earlier execution isn't possible.'

Pray: for Pastor Youcef to be continually aware of God's presence and protection and for Iranian Christians to know the fullness of Christ's peace and joy at this time. (Ps.146:7-9)

More: <http://www.bosnewslife.com/19551-breaking-news-iran-christians-fear-christmas-crackdown-pastor-still-facing-execution-bosnewslife-exclusive>

▣ **Philippines: Flash floods death toll nears 1000**

Flooding in the southern Philippines last Friday was caused by tropical storm Washi which dropped a month's worth of rain in 24 hours. Since then aid agencies have delivered body bags, food, water and medicine to over-crowded evacuation centres as officials dig temporary mass graves for bodies that are already in advanced decomposition. The country is in a state of national calamity. Most of the damage was in the southern port cities of Cagayan de Oro and Iligan. Officials report a shortage of water and food for almost 50,000 homeless people. About 143,000 people were affected in 13 southern and central provinces.

Pray: for God to work through Aid agencies, for Christians to know God's peace and to demonstrate Christ's love to suffering neighbours.

More: <http://www.voanews.com/english/news/asia/Philippines-Flood-Death-Toll-Nears-1000-State-of-Calamity-Declared-135937703.html>

PRAYER FORUM OF THE BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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