

PRAYER ALERT...

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www.prayer-alert.net editor@prayer-alert.net

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Website

Contact Us

Donations

Thursday 23 August 2012

■ Praise Reports

- ✦ [B&B owners win right to appeal to Supreme Court](#)
- ✦ [The Word of God in 667 languages and counting!](#)

■ London Games 2012

- ✦ [Paralympians to celebrate Games in St Paul's](#)
- ✦ [Four Paralympic flames kindled around UK](#)

■ British Isles & Ireland

- ✦ [Discipleship in the North of England](#)
- ✦ [Drugs are too easy to get hold of, warn grieving parents](#)
- ✦ [Putting the 'fair' back into welfare](#)
- ✦ [Christian radio ad ban decision can be appealed](#)
- ✦ [Sainsbury's chief and Church leaders criticise plans for Sunday trading reform](#)

■ Europe

- ✦ [Albania: Small church, big effect leading up to TiranaFest](#)
- ✦ [Holland: God returns to the city](#)

■ Worldwide

- ✦ [Pakistan: Christian homes torched, churches attacked after jailing girl](#)
- ✦ [Nepal: Christians and Muslims must 'leave or risk attack'](#)
- ✦ [Lebanon/Syria: Deadly fighting over Syria grips north Lebanon](#)
- ✦ [Egypt: Christians endure crucifixions: 'More blood will be shed,' Says Expert](#)
- ✦ [India: Churches try to broker peace in Assam](#)
- ✦ [Sri Lanka: Mob violence against southern Christians](#)

PRaise REPORTS

■ B&B owners win right to appeal to Supreme Court

A Christian couple who were fined because of their 'marrieds only' policy for double rooms at their guest house in Cornwall have won permission to take their case to the Supreme Court. Earlier this year the Court of Appeal upheld the verdict that Peter and Hazelmary Bull had breached equality legislation and discriminated against Martyn Hall and his civil partner Steven Preddy after refusing them a double room due to their 'marrieds only' policy for double rooms. Mr Hall and Mr Preddy were awarded a total of £3,600 in damages. Now the Supreme Court, the highest court in the land, has decided to hear their case, and may overturn the decision of the Court of Appeal. Andrea Minichiello Williams, CEO of Christian Concern, said: 'This case is one of many where the judiciary have severely restricted freedom of religion in favour of homosexual rights.'

Praise: God for this change of direction by the authorities to allow a right of appeal. Now may God over-rule. (Job.5:8)

More: <http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/sexual-orientation/christian-bb-owners-win-right-to-appeal-to-supreme-court>

■ The Word of God in 667 languages and counting!

Faith Comes By Hearing has added five new language recordings to their catalogue of Audio Scriptures this month. Combined, these five languages represent more than 169,000 people who now have God's Word in audio available in their heart language. The new releases are: Ayta Mag-antsi - Philippines; Kandozi - Peru; Kebu - Uganda; Quichua - Northern Pastaza - Ecuador/Peru; Terena - Brazil. These recordings are possible because of the dedicated work and partnership of many translation ministries and Bible Societies around the world. Our catalogue of Audio Scripture features a total of 667 languages, but changes regularly with new additions every month. Notably, New Testaments in 94 languages have been added in just the last 12 months. Spoken in almost every country in the world, these recordings as a whole represent a potential outreach to more than 5 billion people - or in other words, two-thirds of the world's population. This unprecedented access via the Digital Bible Platform continues to expand rapidly.

Praise: God for this opportunity to harness technology to spread the Word. (2Th.3:1)

More: <http://www.faithcomesbyhearing.com/word-god-667-languages-and-counting>

2012 LONDON GAMES



■ Paralympians to celebrate Games in St Paul's

St Paul's Cathedral will echo with an unaccustomed sound on the Sunday after next: a three-a-side wheelchair-basketball game is to be played beneath the dome during a service to mark the opening of the Paralympic Games the following

Wednesday. The Bishop of London, the Rt Revd Richard Chartres, will preside, and the service will begin when Chris Holmes, the blind Paralympian swimmer, runs in through the Great West doors with a laurel wreath, and places it on the altar. Baroness Grey-Thompson, who won 16 Paralympic medals during her sporting career, will give the address. Lord Coe and Dame Tessa Jowell MP are expected to attend. In a message to the 2700 young people who volunteered to be 'ambassadors for Christ' during the Games, Bishop Chartres said: 'Without seeking to undermine the Prime Minister's emphasis on the virtues of competition, I think that you all deserve a medal.'

Pray: that the success of the Games will continue and the Paralympic Games will add to the amazing legacy already achieved. (Heb.12:1)

More: <http://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2012/17-august/news/uk/paralympians-to-celebrate-games-in-st-paul%E2%80%99s>

■ Four Paralympic flames kindled around the UK

Four Paralympic flames have been kindled at the top of the highest peaks of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland ahead of next week's Games. They were created on Northern Ireland's Slieve Donard, Snowdon in Wales, Scotland's Ben Nevis and on Scafell Pike in England's Lake District. Four teams scaled the highest peaks of the home countries to spark the flames which will come together at Stoke Mandeville on Tuesday. The Games start the following day. The flames are being carried down in lanterns ahead of celebrations in London, Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast over the Bank Holiday weekend. A 24-hour relay will leave Stoke Mandeville, the spiritual home of the Games, to arrive in Stratford in time for the opening ceremony in London.

Pray: that the flames will once more unite the nations.

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-19333610>

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Discipleship in the North of England

The Archbishop of York is inviting 120 young adults from across the north of England to Cranmer Hall for a residential conference on the 19th-20th September. It is hoped that all present will be encouraged and equipped by worshipping and praying together, sharing vision, skills, imagination, and energy - and by having the opportunity to hear some key speakers and take part in relevant and engaging seminars. Archbishop Sentamu will speak at the event on the subject of: 'Is the Church really up for this?' There will also be contributions from Gavin Calver (National Director Youth for Christ) and Bishop Justin Welby (Bishop of Durham). The organisers pray that the Holy Spirit will use the event to direct those attending and equip them to share Christ wherever they are across the north of England. Attendance, accommodation, and food at the conference is free to those invited.

Pray: for a growing number of young people to take up the Gospel message and seek discipleship. (Ph.2:3-4)

More: <http://www.archbishopofyork.org/articles.php/2591/discipleship-in-the-north-of-england>

■ Drugs are too easy to get hold of, warn grieving parents

Drugs are everywhere and far too easy for teenagers to get hold of, warn the grieving parents of a teenage girl who died after taking ecstasy. They criticised websites for glorifying the effects of drug use and blamed peer pressure for the death of their daughter, 16-year-old Serena Harding. The judge, sentencing three men for supplying the teenager with drugs, said the 'misguided individuals' were part of a culture which believes that taking drugs such as ecstasy is harmless. Miss Harding collapsed after taking ecstasy whilst on a night out with friends to celebrate her exam results. Mr and Mrs Harding warned: 'It's too easy for teenagers to get hold of drugs. Drugs are everywhere and somebody will always know somebody who will sell you some.' Three men were sentenced for supplying Miss Harding with the drugs, one of whom was said to be a close friend of Miss Harding.

Pray: for the authorities that they will be able to find the source of these dangerous drugs blocking the supplies and jailing those responsible. (Rom.13:5)

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/drugs-are-too-easy-to-get-hold-of-warn-grieving-parents/>

■ Putting the 'fair' back into welfare

This is the theme of an expert panel discussion that will take place at the Greenbelt Festival, at 11am on Saturday 25th August 2012. The controversial Welfare Reform Act has reignited debate about the scope and nature of public support for children, carers, disabled people and vulnerable people in society. So is 'the welfare state' a thing of the past? Who is welfare for? Who provides for whom? And what is the role of voluntary and faith bodies? This Children's Society panel in association with the Christian think-tank Ekklesia looks at the future of 'welfare for all' in tough economic times, and asks how fairness and creativity can help chart fresh ways forward. The speakers are: Sam Royston (Children's Society policy adviser) - Sue Marsh (Disabled activist, Spartacus Welfare Campaign) - Savi Hensman (Care and equalities adviser, Christian commentator) - Simon Barrow (Ekklesia think-tank).

Pray: that the discussions will lead to a wider understanding of fairness in this generation and beyond. (Pr.2:9)

More: <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/16944>

■ Christian radio ad ban decision can be appealed

A Christian radio station has been given the go-ahead to appeal a court decision which upheld a ban on an advert asking Christians whether they are being sidelined at work. In its decision to grant the appeal, the court said the radio station's case is 'Arguable and important'. Premier Christian Radio had criticised the decision in April this year as 'reminiscent of a totalitarian state'. The Radio Advertising Clearance Centre (RACC) stopped it from being aired, claiming that it was 'directed to a political end'. But lawyers for Premier said: 'The advertisement was not a political message but a request for information which could then be used as part of the normal democratic process, where ideas and views are expressed in

public discussion, contradicted, answered and debated.' The ad quoted surveys showing that 60 per cent of active Christians were being increasingly marginalised at work. (See also Prayer Alert 17-2012)

Pray: for this case when it is heard at the Appeal Court as it underlines the erosion of free speech of faith groups. (2Co.10:5)

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/christian-radio-ad-ban-decision-can-be-appealed/>

■ **Sainsbury's chief and Church leaders criticise plans for Sunday trading reform**

The head of Sainsbury's has stepped into the row over Sunday trading with a warning to ministers not to extend opening hours all year round. Justin King, the group's chief executive, said the restrictions on opening hours - suspended during the Olympics and Paralympics - were 'a great British compromise' and should not be abandoned. In a second attack, the Church of England teamed up with a union and a shopkeepers' group to call for curbs on opening hours to remain in place. The interventions come as some Conservative ministers seek to scrap the law that restricts big stores to six hours' trading on Sundays, in a measure aimed at boosting economic growth. Mr King says the regime has 'great merit' for both shoppers and workers. 'Maintaining Sunday's special status has great merit for our customers and our colleagues, and relaxing Sunday trading laws is certainly not a magic answer to economic regeneration.' (See also 33-2012)

Pray: that any move to further extend the Sunday trading hours will be firmly rejected by Government. (Ex.20:8)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/retailandconsumer/9484765/Sainsburys-chief-and-Church-leaders-criticise-plans-for-Sunday-trading-reform.html>

EUROPE

■ **Albania: Small church, big effect leading up to TiranaFest**

Like many Eastern European nations, Albania prides itself on an atheistic worldview. When the Soviet Union was in its prime, inquiries into the existence of God or any higher being were quickly stamped out. Most young people in Albania grew up believing 'there was no God.' In 1967, the government closed all religious institutions, and Albania became the first atheistic state in Eastern Europe. Private religious practice wasn't allowed again until 1990, and with not even an underground church in sight, the Good News had to start from scratch in Albania. A mere two years ago, the government granted legal status to over 100 of the country's evangelical churches. A small but passionate group of believers in the nation's capital city want to change this societal outlook. Though the group may be small, their influence is mighty. On September 22, believers will gather in the city of Tirana for an evangelistic outreach called TiranaFest with Luis Palau.

Pray: that the church will be blessed and increase in numbers through this outreach. (Gen.1:22a)

More: <http://www.mnnonline.org/article/17577>

■ **Holland: God returns to the city**

It doesn't happen often that church planting makes the headlines of secular newspapers, but on 31 July 2012 Dutch newspaper Het Parool opened with 'God returns to the city'. The article reports that 1,500 citizens of Amsterdam joined so-called 'new churches', and that 10 more of these churches are planned for the next three years. Since three Reformed churches joined hands in re-evangelizing the city, new church groups are popping up everywhere. This adds to the already blooming immigrant and free Evangelical churches in the Bijlmer area of the Dutch capital. The Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics reports that 17 percent of the inhabitants of Amsterdam see themselves as part of the Christian tradition. The Church in the Netherlands is still in decline, but not as marked as in the past. Church planting provides a new stream of life in the cities.

Pray: for the ongoing growth and new life of the Church in Amsterdam. (Gen.17:2)

More: http://joelnews.org/#6cc/custom_plain

WORLDWIDE

■ **Pakistan: Christian homes torched, churches attacked after jailing girl**

Christians from the UK will be meeting outside the Pakistani High Commission in London on Wednesday to protest the arrest of an 11-year-old girl for blasphemy. The girl, named in reports as Rimsha Masih, has Down's Syndrome. She was accused by Muslims of burning pages of the Koran and was arrested by police after a mob surrounded her home in Mehrabadi, Islamabad. Rimsha remains in police custody and hundreds of Christians have reportedly fled the area in fear. Muslims torched Christian homes and 'destroyed' a church in a slum area of Islamabad while suspected militants shot at another church outside Pakistan's capital, after the jailing of a mentally handicapped Christian girl for 'blasphemy', witnesses said on Tuesday. President Asif Zardari has called for an investigation into her arrest. The protest in London is being organised by the British Pakistani Christian Association (BPCA).

Pray: or fRimsha that her unfortunate actions will be recognised as something unintentional. Pray that the investigation by the authorities will clear the situation and bring peace. (Mt.5:9)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/uk.christians.to.protest.arrest.of.pakistani.girl/30513.htm>

■ **Nepal: Christians and Muslims must 'leave or risk attack'**

Hindu extremists in Nepal have threatened to attack Christians and Muslims unless they leave the country. Members of the Nepal Defence Army (NDA) made threatening phone calls to several senior church figures and issued leaflets threatening violence against both Christians and Muslims. In one call, extremists threatened to bomb a cathedral in Kathmandu – the target of a violent attack by the NDA in 2009. In another call, the group insisted that Nepal is a Hindu nation where Christians and Muslims are 'not welcome'. The threats have prompted a police investigation and forced churches to hire security guards. The NDA has claimed responsibility for several attacks on Christians, church organisations and mosques in

recent years. It has taken advantage of political instability since the end of Nepal's civil war to pursue its armed struggle to create a Hindu state.

Pray: for God's perfect peace and protection over Christians in Nepal. Pray particularly for wisdom for church leaders. Pray that moderate Christians, Muslims and Hindus in Nepal will commit to working together to build the future of their nation. (Is.26:3)

More: <http://www.releaseinternational.org/pages/posts/nepal-christians-and-muslims-must-leave-or-risk-attack-1012.php>

■ **Lebanon/Syria: Deadly fighting over Syria grips north Lebanon**

Seven people have been killed and more than 70 wounded after fighting in northern Lebanon between two Muslim communities divided over Syria. Street battles between Sunnis and Alawites in the city of Tripoli continued for a second night running. Old rivalry between the two groups has been fuelled by conflicting loyalties in the conflict across the border. Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, an Alawite, is battling largely Sunni opposition fighters. Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati, himself a Sunni, appealed to both sides to end the 'absurd battle' rocking Tripoli, a city of nearly 200,000 people and the country's second-largest. 'We have repeatedly warned against being drawn into this blaze that has spread around Lebanon,' he said, speaking of the violence in Syria. He urged Tripoli residents 'not to allow anyone to transform you into ammunition for someone else's war'.

Pray: against further spread of this conflict. Seek God's solution and peace for all people. (Pr.29:22)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-19340754>

■ **Egypt: Christians endure crucifixions: 'More blood will be shed,' Says Expert**

There are disturbing reports coming out of Egypt that hardline Muslim Brotherhood supporters are crucifying opponents of President Mohamed Morsi, creating a panic within religious minority communities. Several Middle East news agencies are confirming reports that some of the Muslim Brotherhood operatives have 'crucified those opposing Egyptian President Muhamad Morsi, naked on trees in front of the presidential palace while abusing others. It's anyone who is resisting the new government in this particular case, the people attacked and crucified were secular protesters upset because of Morsi's hostile campaign against the media,' said Raymond Ibrahim, a fellow with the Middle East Forum and the Investigative Project on Terrorism, according to Al Khabar News. Egyptian Christians and other religious minorities are subjected to this archaic form of execution because radical Muslims are following Islamic doctrine, which allows for enemies of Allah to be crucified

Pray: that the enemy will be held back and these atrocities cease. (Ps.55:9)

More: <http://europenews.dk/en/node/57427>

■ **India: Churches try to broker peace in Assam**

Churches are initiating steps to broker peace and restore harmony in the northeast Indian state of Assam, which has been rocked by bloody clashes between local ethnic Bodo people and Muslim migrants. 'We have hosted leaders of both communities twice already. We are now preparing a larger meeting of both communities after Ramadan,' Roman Catholic bishop Thomas Pulloppillil of Bongaigaon diocese that comprises the troubled region, told ENInews on 15 August. The clashes have left 78 dead and over 400,000 refugees. Three dozen leaders of Baptist, Catholic, Lutheran and other Protestant churches had to travel in tractors, motorbikes and even boats to reach relief camps sheltering displaced families in remote areas even as sporadic violence continued. 'Brokering peace is not an easy task in the present situation. But we are trying our best to restore harmony,' Benzilaigra Moshahary of the Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church (NELC) and a member of the Inter Church Peace Mission, told ENInews.

Pray: that God will protect His people as they seek to do His will. (Eph.4:3)

More: <http://www.eni.ch/featured/article.php?id=5868>

■ **Sri Lanka: Mob violence against southern Christians**

A senior pastor and his wife were ambushed and brutally beaten by a large mob, in one of several recent attacks on Christians in southern Sri Lanka. Release partners report that the Assemblies of God pastor and his wife were travelling back by motorbike from a friend's home in Matara district when they were set upon by about 40 men. The attackers beat and threatened to kill the couple unless they ceased their ministry in the Deniyaya area. The mob then dragged the couple back to the home they had just visited – interrogating the pastor's friends with threats and beating him again. Eventually, the pastor and his wife managed to escape and summon police protection. Despite their injuries, they decided not to go to hospital for fear of further attack. The mob is also reported to have threatened two Methodist church workers in Deniyaya on the same day, demanding that they too leave the area.

Pray: for God's peace to fill Christians in Sri Lanka. Pray specifically for Christians targeted in recent attacks. Pray that their ministries will grow and that their witness will draw many to Christ. (Ps.7:9)

More: <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2012/Jul-11/180164-iran-warns-media-against-reporting-impact-of-sanctions.ashx#axzz20JGhQ1kh>

PRAYER FORUM OF THE BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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C/O World Prayer Centre, Cornerstone House, 5 Ethel Street, Birmingham, B2 4BG, England**