

PRAYER ALERT...

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PRAISE REPORTS

■ Iran: Pastor Yousef Nadarkhani released

We are overjoyed to report that Pastor Yousef Nadarkhani, the Iranian pastor on death row for apostasy, was acquitted and released from prison on Saturday. (See Prayer Alert 36-2012) He is now at home with his family for the first time in three years, but is being tightly monitored by the authorities. It is no coincidence that he was released on a day when Christians worldwide were praying for him around the clock! Thank you so much for the part you played in CSW's campaign. Pastor Nadarkhani was due to appear in court to face new charges thought to be linked to crimes against national security. Instead during court proceedings, he was acquitted of apostasy, but found guilty of evangelising Muslims. He was sentenced to three years imprisonment for the latter charge, but released on relatively minimal bail because he had already served all but a month of this time.

Praise: God for this wonderful answer to prayer. (Eph.3:20)

More: <http://dynamic.csw.org.uk/article.asp?t=news&id=1328&search=>

■ Pakistan: Frees Christian 'blasphemy girl'; flown to safety

A 14-year-old mentally-challenged Christian girl accused of blaspheming Islam was released from a notorious prison near the capital Islamabad Saturday, September 8, and flown to an unknown location, an advocacy official involved in her case told BosNewsLife. 'She will not go back to the same Islamabad slum area where she came from because of security concerns,' confirmed Farrukh H Saif, executive director of Pakistan-based Human Rights group World Vision In Progress (WVIP). Video footage seen by BosNewsLife showed heavily armed Pakistani security forces escorting the young girl, who had her face covered, to an awaiting helicopter. Saif said his group is investigating media reports that she has been taken to the women department of Islamabad police headquarters following her release on bail from Adiala Jail. Pakistan's Minister for National Harmony, Paul Bhatti, did not elaborate, saying only that she was flown 'to a safe place' and reunited with her family.

Praise: God that the authorities have seen fit to release Rimsha Masih and pray for her safety and her family. (Ps.4:8)

More: <http://www.bosnewslife.com/23324-breaking-news-pakistan-frees-christian-blasphemy-girl-flown-to-safety>

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Teachers 'face sack' for refusing to endorse gay marriage

Schools will be within their statutory rights to dismiss staff that wilfully fail to use stories or textbooks promoting same-sex weddings, it is claimed. Aidan O'Neill, a senior QC and expert on religious freedom and human rights, also warned that parents who object to gay marriage being taught to their children will have no right to withdraw their child from lessons. In a

report he said that any decision to redefine marriage would have far-reaching consequences for schools, hospitals, foster carers and public buildings. The most serious impact is likely to be felt in the church where vicars and priests conducting religious marriage ceremonies could be taken to court for refusing to carry out a gay wedding, he said. The conclusions - in legal advice commissioned by the Coalition for Marriage - come amid continuing fall-out over Government plans to tear up the centuries-old law on marriage.

Pray: for all those who are being challenged for their faith in the workplace. (Mt.10:20)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/9531803/Teachers-face-sack-for-refusing-to-endorse-gay-marriage.html>

■ Christian Green councillor's disappointment with Party

A Christian councillor has spoken of her disappointment as she faces dismissal from the Green Party for opposing gay marriage. Christina Summers, a member of Brighton and Hove Council, was investigated by the Party after she spoke and voted against a motion in support of the Government's plans to introduce same-sex marriage during a council meeting in July. She did so on grounds of her Christian belief that marriage is a union between a man and a woman. A disciplinary inquiry panel was set up by the Green Party to carry out the investigation. The panel recommended on Monday that Councillor Summers be expelled from the Party. Councillor Summers said that although she had still not been formally dismissed yet, it was unlikely that the Party would change its mind following the public announcement of the panel's recommendation. The panel has no authority to enact the recommendation, which must instead be put to Green Party Councillors to vote on and ratify.

Pray: for those in public office that they will speak out their Christian beliefs boldly and not hold back. (Jn.7:18)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/christian.green.councillors.disappointment.over.party.actions/30629.htm>

■ Plans for mega-mosque re-launched

An Islamic group has re-launched its proposals to build a 12,000 capacity mega-mosque at West Ham, close to the site of the Olympic Park. The proposed development includes a large mosque with 40 ft high minarets, a library and a visitor centre. Tablighi Jama'at, the Islamic sect behind the plans, continued to use the site after permission from Newham Council expired in 2006. The council issued an enforcement notice in 2010 but this was successfully appealed by the group. 5,000 people a week currently use the site for worship. A spokesman for Newham Council's planning department said: 'We are expecting another application by the end of this week and will then start a formal consultation process.' But the plans have been opposed by campaigners who argue that Tablighi Jama'at is a 'sect' which preaches 'separation and segregation.' Two of the London 7/7 suicide bombers, Mohammad Sidique Khan and Shehzad Tanweer, reportedly prayed at a Tablighi mosque in West Yorkshire.

Pray: once again that those who have the authority to allow Tablighi Jama'at to build this mosque will be guided by God's wisdom and not by those with extremist beliefs. (2Th.2:13-14)

More: <http://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/fears-over-revival-of-megamosque-plan-8106304.html?origin=internalSearch>

■ Gay marriage: New Equalities minister backs redefinition

Maria Miller, the newly appointed Minister for Women and Equalities, has voiced her support for controversial plans to rewrite the definition of marriage. Mrs Miller was put in overall charge of the Government's same-sex marriage plans by last week's cabinet reshuffle. Gay campaigners expressed concern, fearing that she wouldn't be supportive enough of same-sex marriage. But Mrs Miller, who was also appointed as the Culture Secretary, revealed her support for the controversial change yesterday. Speaking to the Sunday Times Mrs Miller said marriage needs to be redefined to make sure it 'remains as a relevant and vibrant institution'. She added: 'Look, I think everybody should be married. It's something which creates strength in our society and whether it is two men, two women or a man and a woman it is something which is a way for us to strengthen our society further.' Nearly 600,000 people, including a number of politicians, have signed a petition opposing any change to the current law. It is being run by the Coalition for Marriage.

Pray: for Maria Miller that she will be guided by the Holy Spirit into God's definition of marriage and not be pressured to rewrite the definition. (Heb.13:4)

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/gay-marriage-new-equalities-minister-backs-redefinition/>

■ The legacy of the Paralympics for British Armed Forces

As we watched the closing ceremony of the Paralympics with LCpl Rory Mackenzie, an Army medic who lost his leg in a roadside bomb explosion in Iraq in 2007. While addressing the 80,000 crowd, he reminded us of the huge number of severely injured service personnel who have returned from conflict. The courage and inner strength of these individuals shown through sport is inspiring.

Pray: for the many traumatised and injured British service personnel as they come to terms with life changing injuries, that they may find inner peace and strength from our Almighty Father and have a new and worthwhile future in Him.

More: <http://www.standard.co.uk/news/paralympics-were-a-shining-beacon-for-injured-soldiers-say-closing-ceremony-military-stars-8121536.html>

■ Methodist Church looks to boost evangelism

The Methodist Church has launched a national consultation on evangelism. Methodists across Britain will be asked what evangelism means to them and what they find challenging about it. The online survey will ask them what they think it means to be called by God to share the Good News and what shape evangelism should take in 21st century Britain. A consultation day will take place on 27 November at Methodist Church House in London, bringing together up to 80 Methodists from different contexts. The day will be hosted by the Rev Dr Martyn Atkins, General Secretary of the Methodist Church. He said: 'The reality is that many Methodists are doing wonderful and creative things to share God's love with their communities. We want to affirm that, but also help others to engage more fully with the calling we all have to make disciples of Jesus Christ.'

Pray: for the Methodist Church as it focusses on creative ways to boost evangelism. (2Th.2:14)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/methodist.church.looks.to.boost.evangelism/30632.htm>

■ Christians pray for 'seismic shift' in Britain

Christians gathered in central London on Tuesday to pray for God to unite the Church and change the spiritual climate of secular Britain. It was the last prayer meeting by the organisers of the National Day of Prayer before the big event at Wembley Stadium later this month. Tens of thousands of Christians will gather at Wembley on 29 September to pray for the nation and revival in the Church. Tim Hughes, Matt Redman, Hillsong London and Graham Kendrick are among the artists leading worship on the day. Global Day of Prayer London Convener, Jonathan Oloyede, is playing a key role in the organisation of the Wembley event. He told the crowd to pray that there would be 'no empty seats' at Wembley. He said: 'A seismic shift is taking place across the British Isles and if the Church unites across culture, creed, colour and class then there will be a spiritual climate change all around our nation.' Tickets are available at www.ndopwembley.com

Pray: that this day of prayer will draw many thousands together to pray and praise giving glory to God. (Mt.6:9-10)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/christians.pray.for.seismic.shift.in.britain/30637.htm>

EUROPE

■ EU faces 'lost generation' of almost 8 million young people

The European Commission has indicated it is going to delve further into the employment, social and education policies of member states as it seeks to tackle the job crisis in the EU. The continued eurozone crisis, now in its third year, has seen the Commission make recommendations in policy areas that, pre-crisis, were considered an absolute taboo. OECD secretary general Angel Gurría at the same conference pointed out that for the EU to reach its 2020 goal of having 75 percent employment in the Union, then 17 million jobs will have to be created. Gurría referred to a 'potentially lost generation' of 7.8 million young people who neither have a job nor are in education or training. He added that policy-makers are facing a new phenomenon of 'structural long-term unemployment' where people are unemployed for over two years, and the longer they are unemployed, the harder it is to get a job when one is available. Employment Commissioner Laszlo Andor called it a 'jobs crisis.'

Pray: that ways would be found to meet the needs of the many unemployed, especially the young. (Tit.3:14)

More: <http://euobserver.com/economic/117458>

WORLDWIDE

■ Libya: US ambassador killed in attack on consulate

The US ambassador to Libya has died after an attack by militiamen on the US consulate in the eastern city of Benghazi, reports say. Ambassador Christopher Stevens is said to be among four US officials killed in a protest over a US-produced film that is said to insult the Prophet Muhammad. Protesters have also attacked the US Embassy in Cairo over the film. In the attack in Benghazi, unidentified armed men stormed the grounds, shooting at buildings and throwing handmade bombs into the compound. Security forces returned fire but Libyan officials say they were overwhelmed. A Libyan official has said Ambassador Stevens died from smoke suffocation as a result of the attack.

Pray: that peace will descend on Benghazi and Cairo and this situation will not escalate into more conflict - see below. (Pr.10:12)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-19570254>

■ **STOP PRESS:** Yemen: US embassy stormed in capital Sanaa

Angry protesters stormed the US embassy in Sanaa, Yemen, on Thursday as regional discontent over an amateur US film mocking Islam spread throughout the region. Police used water cannons and fired warnings shots to drive the protesters out of the building, according to an AFP correspondent at the scene. There were unconfirmed reports of casualties on both sides. The protests in Sanaa come two days after a similar attack on the US consulate in the Libyan city of Benghazi resulted in the deaths of four US citizens, including the US ambassador in Libya, Christopher Stevens. There were also reports of fresh scuffles outside the US embassy in Cairo on Thursday, a day after protesters scaled the embassy walls, ripped down the US flag and replaced it with the black Islamic flag.

Pray: against further unrest in the region see above..

More: <http://www.france24.com/en/20120913-crowd-storms-usa-embassy-yemeni-capital-sanaa-film-youtube-benghazi-unrest>

■ Bahrain: Catholic Church plans challenged by Muslim clerics

Plans in the kingdom of Bahrain to build the nation's largest Roman Catholic Church have been challenged by complaints from Sunni Muslim clerics who have signed a petition against any motions to build churches in the Arabian Peninsula, regarded as the birthplace of Islam. Bahrain, which is a constitutional monarchy ruled by King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, is heavily Muslim, with 99 percent of Bahrainian people identifying as either Shia or Sunni. Although the nation also has a significant Christian population, among which are Catholics and Protestants, no official figures exist on their precise count. Religious freedom, while protected by the government, has been the subject of much contention. Sunni and Shia communities are engaged in sectarian battles, The Associated Press reported, and more than 70 Sunni clerics have warned against plans to expand the Roman Catholic Church in the Asian nation.

Pray: that these plans to build would succeed and a Church will bring glory to God. (Ps.24:9-10)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/bahrain.catholic.church.plans.challenged.by.muslim.clerics/30588.htm>

■ **Jordan: Missionary stabbed to death**

A missionary living in Jordan was stabbed to death by a teenager on Tuesday after she caught him stealing in her apartment, police said. The 17-year-old confessed to killing Cheryll Harvey, 55, in her apartment in Barha, the police told the Associated Press. As a minor, the assailant can't be named until he's sent to trial. Police said the suspect was paid by Harvey for grocery runs and other chores, but when she found him going through her purse and began to shout, he grabbed a knife from the kitchen, stabbing Harvey 10 times. A native of Sudan, Texas, Harvey earned an undergraduate and two master's degrees in Education before leaving for Jordan where she taught English for 24 years under the auspices of the Jordan Baptist Society. At press time, it was not determined as to whether Harvey would be buried in Jordan, or if her remains would be returned home.

Pray: for those God calls to the mission field that He will protect them from assault. (Jn.17:15)

More: <http://www.worthynews.com/11720-missionary-killed-in-jordan>

■ **Russia: Shock at Moscow church demolition**

Human rights defenders and church members have expressed shock and outrage at the sudden destruction of a Pentecostal Church in Moscow's eastern suburbs. Unknown workers - backed by police and civil volunteers - began tearing down Holy Trinity Pentecostal Church on the eastern edge of Moscow soon after midnight on September 6, the church's Pastor, Vasili Romanyuk, told Forum 18 News Service from the Russian capital. 'By morning almost the entire three-storey building had been destroyed,' said Forum 18's Felix Corley and Geraldine Fagan. 'This is the Soviet approach - to come in the middle of the night with mechanical diggers,' said Mikhail Odintsov, an aide to Russia's Ombudsperson for Human Rights. The church has struggled to legalise the building it put up with its own money in 1995-6. Andrei Ivanov, spokesperson for the prefect of Moscow's Eastern Administrative District, defended the destruction. 'Everything was done at the decision of the court,' he told Forum 18.

Pray: for the Church in Russia that God would protect it from persecution leading to this form of destruction. (Est.8:6)

More: <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/2012/s12090040.htm>

■ **Burma: Christians face systemic persecution**

Burma doesn't seem to have made as many advances as it first appeared in a year of change. This was the conclusion of The Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO) which released a new report last week. According to their findings, Christian Chin from western Burma are denied religious freedom and face coercion to convert to Buddhism. They're not alone. Dyann Romeijn of Vision Beyond Borders says, 'The report is specifically about the Chin and the persecution that they face, but we're seeing the same things throughout all the ethnic groups in Burma.' CHRO exposed a decades-long pattern of religious freedom violations and human rights abuses including forced labour and torture which has led thousands to flee their homeland. Romeijn says 'along with the abused Chin are members of the Kachin tribes and the Karen. It's bad for everyone. All the same policies that were in place before continue; the Kachin in northern Burma are being highly persecuted.'

Pray: for the protection of God's people against those who persecute them. (Ps.9:13)

More: <http://www.mnnonline.org/article/17664>

■ **Hawaii: Federal court rules on traditional marriage**

A federal court has upheld Hawaii's definition of marriage as a union between one man and one woman. The court rejected a lawsuit that sought to tear down the state's law defining marriage as the union of one man and one woman and Hawaii's constitutional amendment that gives the legislature the power to maintain the timeless definition. Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) attorneys defended the law and the amendment on behalf of Hawaii Family Forum, which the court allowed to intervene in the case in April. 'This ruling affirms that protecting and strengthening marriage as the union of one man and one woman is legitimate, reasonable, and good for society,' says ADF legal counsel Dale Schowengerdt. 'The people of Hawaii adopted a constitutional amendment to uphold marriage and the court rightly concluded that the democratic process shouldn't be short-circuited by judicial decree.'

Pray: that the Hawaii Government will continue defending the current definition of marriage. (Ps.74:22)

More: <http://www.charismanews.com/us/33936-federal-court-rules-on-traditional-marriage-in-hawaii>

PRAYER FORUM OF THE BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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