

PRAYER ALERT...

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Contact Us

Donations

Thur 27 September 2012

■ Praise Reports

- ✦ [National Day of Prayer – 29 September](#)
- ✦ [South Korea: Taxis drive passengers to Christ](#)

■ British Isles & Ireland

- ✦ ['Banks corrupt the people who work for them'](#)
- ✦ [Charity calls for new kind of rental contract](#)
- ✦ [Youth 'blackout' for the persecuted](#)
- ✦ [Tory MPs targeted by US gay marriage campaigners](#)
- ✦ [Joel Edwards to challenge Labour Party on poverty](#)
- ✦ [Hope and Fusion help churches build on Olympics success](#)

■ Europe

- ✦ [German Catholics lose church rights for unpaid tax](#)
- ✦ [Bulgaria: Radical Islam spreads tentacles](#)

■ Worldwide

- ✦ [Pakistan: Appeal for prayers after church stormed](#)
- ✦ [Honduras: Rights lawyer killed at wedding](#)
- ✦ [Pakistan: Anti-Islam film: US condemns polititions bounty](#)
- ✦ [Nigeria: Church bombed in Bauchi](#)
- ✦ [Nigeria: Crackdown on Boko Haram](#)
- ✦ [Syria: To dominate UN meetings](#)
- ✦ [Rwanda: Religion not a business - Archbishop](#)

PRAISE REPORTS

■ National Day of Prayer – 29 September

The Bishop of Pontefract, the Rt Rev Tony Robinson has backed a call for a month of prayer for the Street Angels network which will be launched at a National Day of Prayer event at Wembley Stadium on 29 September. Tens of thousands of people are expected to gather at the stadium to pray for our nation in an event which features artists including Matt Redman, Tim Hughes and Noel Robinson. Street Angels founder, Paul Blakey from Halifax, said: 'Following on from the fantastic day at Wembley, when tens of thousands of people will gather specifically to pray for our nation, we want to encourage people to pray for the communities where our local projects are making a massive difference. We also want to encourage prayer for new opportunities to open up, for a greater reduction in crime, for those we partner with and those who volunteer.'

Praise: God for the gathering of His people in prayer.

More: http://www.wakefield.anglican.org/news/story/national_day_of_prayer_29_september

■ South Korea: Taxis drive passengers to Christ

Moon-ja Kang is one of 450 Christian drivers who belong to the Missionary Taxi Club in Busan, South Korea. They have devoted themselves to telling their passengers about the Lord by playing Christian radio programmes and through personal testimony. 'Each day we spread the gGspel on the road,' said the group's president, Myeong-Woong Ban. 'If a driver gives us the name of any contacts they make, we'll pray for them, embrace them in our heart, and have them connected to a church so they can get to know Jesus.' The taxi missionaries see the streets of Busan as a mission field. Their goal is to deliver all of their passengers safely to an eternal destination. 'I consider serving God as my primary job, and the rest of what I do in this world, secondary,' explained driver Gil-hong Jin.

Praise: God for the work of the taxi missionaries and pray for those that God calls to himself. (Is.55:6)

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

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ 'Banks corrupt the people who work for them'

The Church of England has claimed that banks corrupt the people who work for them. In a scathing report, the Church argues that banking employees with high moral values are being encouraged to leave them at the office door. It is now calling for a debate on whether, instead of a few 'bad apples' being weeded out, the 'whole orchard needs replanting'. The submission to the parliamentary commission on banking standards, urges City workers to draw a lesson from fishermen

who risk losing money by cutting their nets adrift to aid rivals whose boats get into trouble. 'There is evidence that in many professions, but notably in finance and banking, practitioners who have a strong moral sense which they seek to live by in their private lives believe that such standards and ethics are impossible to apply in the corporate world.'

Pray: that the banking community will recognise that building on good moral and ethical standards will bring benefits such as confidence and trust from their customers. (1Co.15:58)

More: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2207470/Banks-corrupt-people-work-Church-England-submits-scathing-report-life-City.html>

■ Charity calls for new kind of rental contract

The housing and homelessness charity Shelter has called for a new kind of tenancy to be introduced across the rental market in England. 'The Stable Rental Contract would provide greater stability to the growing numbers of people who rent their homes from a private landlord,' says the charity. It would also provide landlords with more certainty of a good return on their investment. Shelter's proposals are outlined in a new report, 'A better deal? Towards more stable private renting.' The changes could be introduced immediately within the existing legal framework for private renting in England, without the need for new laws. Campbell Robb, Chief Executive of Shelter, said: 'With a generation priced out of home ownership, renting is the only choice for growing numbers of people but with the possibility of eviction with just two months' notice, and constant worries about when the next rent rise will hit, the current rental market isn't giving people – particularly families – the stability they need to put down roots.'

Pray: that this initiative will be well received and form the basis of a new rental agreement throughout the country. (2Sa.7:10)

More: <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/17069>

■ Youth 'blackout' for the persecuted

Young people across the UK and Ireland will be standing in solidarity with the persecuted church this November. They will unite in a 'blackout' for 48 hours to raise thousands of pounds for young Christians suffering because of their faith. From social media, to mobiles, to TV, gaming, eating or speaking, the challenge is to stay 'silent' in a symbolic gesture of the censorship and isolation experienced by many Christians on account of their faith. The creative fasting is being organised by Open Doors and the idea is to 'make a big noise by keeping quiet'. Open Doors hopes the event will be just as well supported as last year's which raised £30,000 for child victims of persecution. Krish Kandiah, of the Evangelical Alliance and a Blackout supporter said: 'Too often out of sight is out of mind for the persecuted church. This is an opportunity to give time to this important challenge.'

Pray: for a huge response to this challenge and for those who will be taking part. (Jas.1:2-4)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.co.uk/article/youth.blackout.for.persecuted.church/30673.htm>

■ Tory MPs targeted by US gay marriage campaigners

Tory strategists have held meetings with US lobbying experts ahead of a drive to try to win hesitant Conservative MPs around to supporting gay marriage. It is understood that senior Tories met a group of lobbying experts, who have worked with the US campaign group 'Freedom to Marry', ahead of a renewed charm offensive within the party. 'From what we know, the battle that there is, is really to try to convince Conservatives,' said Benjamin Cohen, co-founder of the Coalition For Equal Marriage, which campaigns in support of same-sex unions. 'We are working with them to try to determine the best way of presenting the argument to conservative backbenchers.' The drive is expected to focus less on arguments about equality and rights and more about gay marriage as something which could be 'good for society'. David Cameron has repeatedly stressed his determination to bring in same-sex marriage by 2015.

Pray: for an honest debate that addresses people's concerns rather than one that tries to bully people into submission. (1Pe.3:15)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/conservative/9561555/US-gay-marriage-campaigners-called-in-ahead-of-campaign-targeting-Tory-MPs.html>

■ Joel Edwards to challenge Labour Party on poverty

A special church service with a focus on poverty will be taking place at the start of the Labour Party's annual conference. Joel Edwards, leader of the Micah Challenge anti-poverty movement, will challenge Labour MPs and conference delegates to commit to ending poverty. The Christian movement is mobilising the church worldwide to hold governments accountable to the Millennium Development Goals to eradicate extreme poverty by 2015. Edwards will tell the Labour Conference delegates about The Jesus Agenda, which examines Jesus' mission statement and calls upon Christians to become advocates of the poor and vulnerable. The service takes place at St Ann's Church, Manchester, on 30 September and is being organised by the Christian Socialist Movement. It is a traditional and well-attended gathering point for Christians from all around the country to be a prophetic voice and pray for the Labour Party.

Pray: that the message that Joel will bring will be heard and accepted widely by the delegates. (1Cor.1:18)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/joel.edwards.to.challenge.labour.party.on.poverty/30669.htm>

■ Hope and Fusion help churches build on Olympics success

Share Jesus International, Hope and Fusion will be touring the UK this autumn to help churches stay at the heart of their communities. The Time of Our Lives tour is heading to Weymouth Prayer-house and New Covenant Church on 17 October, with more dates to be announced. It has been a bumper summer for the UK, with the Diamond Jubilee, the Olympics and Paralympics. The events saw thousands of Christians get stuck in to serve their local communities with free family events, festivals and live screenings. The tour will give churches advice on how they can create a 'rhythm of mission' throughout the year using key seasons in the church calendar. The organisations will share simple steps for engagement with some of the big national events on the horizon, including the Commonwealth Games in 2014, Hope 2014, Pentecost Festivals 2013 and 2014, and the Rugby World Cup in 2015.

Pray: that the Hope and Fusion tour will encourage the Church to link mission and community activities to large national events. (Gen.28:3)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/sji.hope.and.fusion.help.churches.build.on.olympics.success/30672.htm>

EUROPE

German Catholics lose church rights for unpaid tax

Germany's Roman Catholics are to be denied the right to Holy Communion or religious burial if they stop paying a special church tax. A German bishops' decree which has just come into force says anyone failing to pay 8% of their annual income tax will no longer be considered a Catholic. The bishops have been alarmed by the increasing number of German Catholics leaving the Church in recent years. They say such a step should be seen as a serious act against the community. All Germans who are officially registered as Catholics, Protestants or Jews pay a religious tax of 8-9% of their annual income tax. The levy was introduced in the 19th Century in compensation for the nationalisation of religious property. Catholics make up around 30% of Germany's population but the number of congregants leaving the church swelled to 181,000 in 2010, with the increase blamed on revelations of sexual abuse by German priests.

Pray: for the Catholic Church that it will not deny rights to those who cannot afford these taxes.

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-19699581>

Bulgaria: Radical Islam spreads tentacles

Belgian police have cuffed members of a radical Islamist group connected with Al Qaeda, local media reported. One of the arrested is of Algerian origin. This spring he visited Bulgaria, police said. The detainees are members of Ash Shabaab, a Somali Islamist group responsible for terrorist attacks in Somalia and kidnapping of foreigners. Their task was to recruit new members for Ash Shabaab and send them to Somalia for organizing new terror strikes. Investigating officers said that one of the arrested travelled from Belgium, where he had asylum, to Bulgaria this spring. In Bulgaria he met with one of his fellow members from Ash Shabaab. The media do not specify whether this person was a Bulgarian or came to the country from abroad. There is no information about terrorist acts being prepared on the territory of Bulgaria. The group numbering seven terrorists was busted in Brussels and Paris during the last week.

Pray: that the authorities will continue to succeed in arresting radicals and stopping Ash Shabaab from increasing its influence. (Job.6:23)

More: <http://paper.standartnews.com/en/article.php?d=2012-09-23&article=40094>

WORLDWIDE

Pakistan: Appeal for prayers after church stormed

The Bishop of Peshawar in Pakistan is asking Christians to pray after a church was destroyed. According to Anglican Alliance, thousands of people stormed the compound in Mardan, near Peshawar last week. They burnt down the church and destroyed the homes of two priests and the head teacher of the church school. The attackers also looted newly installed computers from the school before setting it on fire. No one was harmed in the attack but Bishop Humphrey Peters said the damage had been 'very severe'. 'We will need to rebuild. We are asking for people around the world to keep us in their prayers,' he said. 'The government and faith leaders in Pakistan have a role to play in educating people that they have the right to protest, but to damage property and terrify people in this way is completely wrong. The government and faith leaders should provide the lead in preventing attacks,' he said.

Pray: that God will come alongside the believers and protect them from those that persecute them. (Ps.119:157)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/appeal.for.prayers.after.pakistan.church.stormed/30693.htm>

Honduras: Rights lawyer killed at wedding

A human rights' group in Honduras says a prominent lawyer who represented peasants in disputes with large land owners has been killed. Antonio Trejo was shot dead by unknown gunmen after walking outside the church, where he was attending a wedding, to answer a phone call. Mr Trejo represented lands rights groups in the Bajo Aguan, a fertile palm-oil-producing region. Dozens of people have been killed in land conflicts there in recent years. A statement by the Peasants Movement of the Valley of Bajo Aguan, known by its Spanish acronym, Marca, says he was shot five times outside a church in Tocontin, in the outskirts of the capital, Tegucigalpa. He was taken to a nearby hospital but died of his wounds. Human rights' groups have called on the Central American government to investigate the deaths of dozens of peasants and campaigners in the Bajo Aguan area, in Honduras' northern Colon department.

Pray: for all those who offer their services to the peasants in their fight against greed and corruption. (1Jn.3:12)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-19695587>

Pakistan: Anti-Islam film: US condemns politicians' bounty

The US State Department has condemned a Pakistani minister's offer of \$100,000 (£61,600) for the death of the American maker of an anti-Islam film. It said the step was 'inflammatory and inappropriate'. Railways Minister Ghulam Ahmad Bilour made the offer after a wave of protests against the film across Pakistan and the wider Muslim world. Sunday saw a fresh round of protests over the film in Pakistan, Nigeria, Greece and Turkey. A State Department official told the BBC: 'The President and Secretary of State have both said the video at the core of this is offensive, disgusting, and reprehensible - but that is no justification for violence, and it is important for responsible leaders to stand up and speak out against violence.'

Therefore we find Mr Bilour's announcement is inflammatory and inappropriate. We note that the Prime Minister's office has disassociated itself from his comments.'

Pray: against inflammatory offers and remarks such as Mr Bilour's that they would fall on deaf ears and not lead to more violence. (Ps.7:9)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-19692971>

■ Nigeria: Church bombed in Bauchi

A suicide bomber has attacked a church in Bauchi, northern Nigeria, killing a woman and a child and injuring 48, according to the Red Cross. Police said the bomber's car was stopped at the gates of St John's Church where he detonated explosives packed inside the vehicle. Bauchi has often been targeted by the Islamist Boko Haram group, which wants to impose Sharia law across Nigeria. Sunday attacks on churches took place regularly earlier this year. Doctors in Bauchi warned that many of the injuries were serious and the death toll could rise. Speaking at a nearby hospital, Bauchi Deputy Police Commissioner T. Stevens told journalists: 'The situation has been brought under control. We have our men minding all areas.' Attacks in central and northern Nigeria blamed Boko Haram of having killed some 1,400 people since 2010.

Pray: for a spiritual breakthrough in Nigeria that would lead to a ceasing of terrorist activities. (Ps.7:9)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-19691781>

■ Nigeria: Crackdown on Boko Haram

Nigerian forces have killed 35 suspected Boko Haram members in a crackdown on the insurgent group in the north eastern city of Damaturu, Yobe State the country's military says. 'The Joint Task Force has succeeded in killing 35 Boko Haram terrorists in shootouts between Sunday evening through Monday,' said Lieutenant Lazarus Eli, a military spokesman in Yobe, of which Damaturu is the capital. A round-the-clock curfew was imposed in the city late on Saturday, ahead of the operation that also led to the arrest of 60 suspected Boko Haram members. The curfew has been relaxed and residents are now allowed out of their homes from 7:00am to 10:00pm, Eli said. The ban on movements in Yobe's economic capital of Potiskum has also been eased. Military forces went door-to-door through three Damaturu neighbourhoods beginning late on Sunday and engaged militants in 'a fierce exchange of gunfire' through to the early hours of Monday morning, the spokesman added in a statement.

Pray: for success for the authorities as they seek to control the Boko Haram insurgents. (Pr.10:11)

More: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2012/09/2012924205430561216.html>

■ Syria: To dominate UN meetings

Syria's conflict is expected to dominate the discussion as some 120 world leaders converge on New York for the week-long United Nations General Debate. Government forces are bombing the city of Aleppo even as talks get underway. Meanwhile, there's word from the military that more than 2,000 Syrian soldiers have defected to Jordan since fighting began last year. The number of refugees who have entered Jordan through unofficial border crossings has reached more than 74,000 Syrians. Christian Aid Mission expects that the refugees will greatly increase in the next few months. The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) has reported that 100,000 refugees have fled Syria in the month of August, raising the estimated total number of Syrian refugees to 234,368 as of September 2nd. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights and the Local Coordination Committees have raised their total death toll to between 23,000 and 26,000.

Pray: for the gathering of world leaders that a way forward will be found to bring peace to the region. (Ps.34:14)

More: <http://www.mnnonline.org/article/17713>

■ Rwanda: Religion not a business - Archbishop

The Archbishop of the Anglican Church of Rwanda, Onesphore Rwaje, has reminded religious leaders to treat their churches as holy places of worship and not self-enriching business ventures. While addressing over 50 religious leaders at the Democracy and Peace Week dialogue, Rwaje said some members of the public shun going to church due to disappointment of messages relayed. 'Religious leadership is a calling from God and it is about teaching the Word of God, and not looking for money from the faithful. There are biblical principles urging churchgoers to give offerings and tithes, but it should not be used as a platform to squeeze money out of believers,' Rwaje advised. He added: 'Religious leaders are allowed to have their personal business ventures besides performing their church duties; therefore, they should act faithfully and please God by keeping the two positions independent of each other. They must separate God's work from their personal work'.

Pray: for the leaders of the Church that they will concentrate on building God's kingdom and not on things of the world. (Eph.5:5)

More: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201209211016.html>

PRAYER FORUM OF THE BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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