

PRAYER ALERT...

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

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PRAISE REPORTS

■ Albania: 2300 make decisions for Christ

At the fall of Communism and state-imposed atheism 20 years ago there were only five known believers in Albania. But recently local churches and Luis Palau collaborated to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ to more than 20,000 people at Tirana's Mother Teresa Square. TiranaFest with Luis Palau, a massive evangelistic campaign, took place in Albania's capital, Tirana, on September 22-23. The square resounded with live music, athletic exhibitions, and a clear presentation of the Good News by Luis Palau and others. 'This was totally different, something that has never happened in Tirana,' Pastor Paulin Vilajeti of Albania Christian Center said. 'Because people were attracted by different events, I believe and I hope that God touched different generations – from children to the old people.' Local church leaders acknowledged the campaign as one of the largest faith gatherings – and the largest movement of churches – Albania has ever seen. See also Prayer Alert 34-20123

Praise: God for the growth of the Church in Albania and for the many decisions for Christ at the TiranaFest. (Joel.3:14)

More: <http://blog.godreports.com/2012/10/2300-make-decisions-for-christ-in-albania/#more-2244>

■ Paraguay: 'Altar of prayer' evidence of revival

The 24 hours of uninterrupted prayer starting every Sunday at 6am involves thousands of people from all Christian denominations, in 85 locations around the country. At that time a small group gather to pray on the top of the hill called Lambaré. This hill overlooking Asunción has become an altar of prayer for many families in Paraguay. 'Christian groups, churches and denominations, whatever we all understand that the personal, spiritual revival movement reaching out to our neighbours and the country in general, is accomplished through prayer,' Some individuals report miracles taking place since they have gathered to pray, including people healed without any medical explanation. But above all, these believers pray for the Gospel of Jesus Christ to reach the whole the country, including government authorities. 'There is a biblical mandate to pray for our country's authorities and we are pleading to God that they be driven by divine wisdom to do the best for our people,' Zully Yegros, a church-goer, said.

Praise: God for the 'altar of prayer' and the evidence of God's answers to prayer. (Jer.29:7)

More: http://www.openheaven.com/forums/forum_posts.asp?TID=40661&PN=1&TPN=1

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Churches challenge Government's green commitment

The Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Methodist Church, the Quakers in Britain and the United Reformed Church have warned that the draft Energy Bill undermines the Government's commitment to meet the UK's carbon targets. They say the

Bill will encourage the construction of more coal and gas-fired power stations, which environmentalists oppose because they produce high levels of carbon emissions. The Churches back recent recommendations from the Committee on Climate Change advising the Government to cut down on carbon-producing energy sources in order to reach the UK's carbon targets. They pointed to a recent study by World Wildlife Fund -UK, which showed that the UK could achieve at least 60 per cent of electricity generated from renewable sources by 2030. The Churches want the Bill to incorporate the Committee on Climate Change's recommendation of a 2030 decarbonisation target.

Pray: that the Government will consider the study seriously as it reviews the Energy Bill and the UK's carbon targets. (Is.45:8)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/churches.challenge.governments.green.commitment/30781.htm>

■ **An opportunity to lead the way in tackling trafficking**

Northern Ireland is faced with the opportunity to stride ahead of the rest of the UK in its support for victims of trafficking, or to simply turn its back on our strong abolitionist heritage and do the bare minimum. If the Government chooses to look the other way, then the situation will only worsen with gross violations of the victims' human rights. After a declaration by the Government in 2010 that they would not opt into the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive (in the mistaken belief that we were already fully compliant), charities spoke up and revealed the extent to which this was not the case. The Government U-turned and announced it would opt-in in 2011. The beginning of 2012 saw amendments made in the Lords to a Westminster Bill in an attempt to bring compliance with the Directive.

Pray: for the NI Government that it would opt-in to the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive. (Ps.94:8)

More: <http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/opinion/news-analysis/an-opportunity-to-lead-the-way-in-tackling-trafficking-16219073.html>

■ **April's tragedy: outpouring of emotion for missing five-year-old**

The people of Machynlleth came together to remember April at an emotional church service last Sunday. The parish priest, the Rev Kathleen Rogers, vowed that 'evil will never win over the good in people' as she praised the extraordinary love and resilience the community had shown in the face of deep despair. The Bishop of Bangor, the Right Rev Andy John, praised the 'extraordinary' determination of the community. 'You have touched the hearts of people across the world,' he told the packed church and the hundreds gathered outside listening from loudspeakers. The congregation stood arm in arm and grasped their children's hands. Tears streamed down many faces. Superintendent Ian John said the Police remained 'totally focused and committed to finding April'. The family and friends of the missing Welsh five-year-old April Jones have been urged to accept that their 'sweet and innocent little girl' is never coming home. Mr Bridger, who knew April's family, has been charged with murder.

Pray: for April's family and that police will find her body so that she can have a proper funeral. (Jn.10:28)

More: <http://www.watoday.com.au/world/aprils-tragedy-outpouring-of-emotion-for-missing-fiveyearold-20121008-277w9.html>

■ **'First Supper' to launch new Centre for Living Christianity**

The newly formed Centre for Living Christianity, dubbed CLiC for short, was launched in Edinburgh last weekend with an informal social event reflecting what it calls its 'relaxed but thoughtful' approach to exploring religious faith in a sceptical age. Those attending heard about the vision and plans for the new initiative, which describes itself as 'exploring faith at the crossroads.' The event's name 'First Supper' is a counterpoint to the well-known 'Last Supper' that Jesus Christ shared with his friends and followers the night before he faced trial and death, and the meal Christians share to participate in his risen life. 'CLiC is for those interested in exploring how to live out Christianity in the modern world, in a way which is thoughtful and faithful,' says the Rev Donald Reid. 'It is about how to understand Christianity from the margins of a society which is both diversely spiritual and secular.'

Pray: for the CLiC initiative and that it may encourage and support many as they seek to live a Christian life. (Lk.9:23)

More: <http://www.ekkleisia.co.uk/node/17109>

■ **Married couples 'will be in the minority by 2050'**

Married couples will be in the minority in little more than a generation, a new report has claimed. The Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) found marriage was increasingly the preserve of the middle and upper classes, since only about 50 per cent of new parents on low incomes were married while the figure rose to nearly 80 per cent for couples earning £21,000. By 2050, families headed by married couples will be in the minority, according to the think tank set up by Iain Duncan Smith, the Work and Pensions Secretary. The CSJ criticised the Government's 'failure' to do more to tackle family breakdown, saying it was 'deeply dismayed by the lack of progress' since the Coalition was formed in 2010. Tim Loughton, until recently Minister for Children, said 'the Government needs to get family policy back on track and 'rediscover' its commitment to family stability. We fail to do so at our peril, socially and economically.'

Pray: for the 'family' as a unit and for the Government to provide much stronger support for families. (Pr.18:22)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/9593369/Married-couples-will-be-in-the-minority-by-2050.html>

■ **Yorkshire churches enter groundbreaking partnership**

Anglican and Methodist churches in Yorkshire have entered into a groundbreaking regional partnership. The Church of England and Methodist Church nationally have been committed to greater cooperation since signing a national covenant in 2003, but now is the first time a covenant has been signed between the two Churches at regional level in Britain. The Covenant Area Partnership, between the Leeds Methodist District and the Ripon and Leeds Anglican Diocese was inaugurated at a special celebration at Trinity Methodist Church in Harrogate last Saturday. The partnership covers 85 Anglican parishes and 65 Methodist churches who will work together in mission and ministry, and consult each other on the deployment of staff and resources throughout the region. 'The lives of both Churches have already been greatly enriched by our determination to work, worship and grow together,' said the Rev Julian Pursehouse, 'It is a fantastic opportunity to

reaffirm our commitment to one another and to live out our calling to serve our communities in a more dynamic and coherent way.'

Pray: for this new partnership and for those tasked with making it work. (Heb.10:25)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.co.uk/article/yorkshire.churches.enter.groundbreaking.partnership/30752.htm>

■ RE in sharp decline

Religious Education in secondary schools is in sharp decline, according to the National Association of RE Teachers (NATRE), – and the much-heralded English Baccalaurate (EBacc) is a major factor. The EBacc is awarded to students achieving grades A*-C in English, mathematics, two sciences, a foreign language and history or geography at GCSE level. It is also the title of new qualifications designed to replace GCSEs. However, according to NATRE, it is narrowing the scope for other subjects, including RE, as schools concentrate on the EBacc subjects. A poll of schools show a rise in the number saying they do not or cannot teach the subject to the legally required standard. In the poll of 625 secondary schools, NATRE found that 24 per cent planned to reduce the number of specialist RE teaching staff in the next academic year, while only 11 per cent planned an increase. Of those planning a decrease, 82 per cent cited the introduction of the EBacc as a factor.

Pray: that the importance of Religious Education would not be ignored by the educational authorities. (Ex.33:13)

More: <http://www.methodistrecorder.co.uk/mrhlines.htm>

EUROPE

■ Europe told to 'step up' fight against trafficking

The Council of Europe's anti-trafficking watchdog has urged countries across the continent to step up the fight against human trafficking. The report by GRETA (Group of experts on action against trafficking in human beings) says that human trafficking is a 'European tragedy'. The annual report claims that women, men and children are falling victim to sexual abuse, labour exploitation or being forced into criminality in countries across the continent. Council of Europe Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland said, 'Many victims are still not being properly recognised or given the support that they need. Furthermore, problems with investigations and prosecutions mean that traffickers are not being sufficiently punished for their crimes. International organisations, national authorities and non-governmental bodies must work together to help put an end to these shocking human rights abuses, which have no place in 21st century Europe,' he said.

Pray: that the tragedy of trafficking would be recognised and governments would take up the challenge to prosecute perpetrators. (Is.61:8)

More: <http://www.theparliament.com/latest-news/article/newsarticle/europe-told-to-step-up-fight-against-trafficking/#.UHMqK4yeA8>

WORLDWIDE

■ Philippines: Muslim rebels agree peace deal

The Philippine government has reached a framework peace agreement with the country's largest Muslim rebel group, President Benigno Aquino says. The deal follows long negotiations with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) to end a 40-year conflict that has cost more than 120,000 lives. The agreement provides for a new autonomous region in the south, on the island of Mindanao where Muslims are a majority in an otherwise mainly Catholic country. The MILF is 'very happy' with the deal, a spokesman was quoted as saying. The agreement was reached after talks in Malaysia and is expected to be signed formally on 15 October in the Philippine capital, Manila. A copy of the framework deal says the parties commit to reaching a 'comprehensive deal' by the end of the year. 'This framework agreement paves the way for a final and enduring peace in Mindanao,' President Aquino said in a speech to announce the deal, referring to the main southern region.

Pray: that this new peace deal will succeed so that Muslims and Catholics will be able to live together in peace. (Ps.34:14)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-19860907>

■ Tanzania: Islamist extremism spreading

Islamisation is increasing at an alarming rate in Tanzania according to a bishop from the country. Bishop Bernadin Mfumbusa of Kondoza warned that religious freedom and other civil liberties were under threat from intolerant radical Muslim influences sweeping in from countries neighbouring the east African nation. Speaking to Aid to the Church in Need, the Catholic charity for persecuted and other suffering Christians, the bishop said: 'We see more and more itinerant Muslim preachers from Saudi Arabia and Sudan entering this country, – and Muslims are increasingly making political demands.' These demands include extending Islamic Sharia law and making everyone subject to it – Muslim and non-Muslim alike. Bishop Mfumbusa said: 'In recent times there has been a constant demand to introduce Sharia into other parts of Tanzania which do not have a majority of Muslims.' Sharia law is already in force in Zanzibar, a semi-autonomous archipelago with an almost completely Muslim population, but it does not apply to other parts of Tanzania.

Pray: against the growth of radical Islam and pray that Christians will be empowered by the Holy Spirit to speak boldly about their faith. (Ac.4:13)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/islamist.extremism.spreading.in.tanzania/30776.htm>

■ Egypt: Coptic children released after initial arrest for 'insulting Islam'

In the wake of the high-profile case of Rimsha Masih, a 14-year-old Pakistani Christian girl arrested for allegedly blaspheming the Qur'an, two Coptic Christian boys face similar accusations in Egypt this week. Nabil Nagy Rizk, 10, and Mina Nady Farag, 9, were arrested Wednesday for insulting Islam, but the attorney general ordered both boys to be released the next day 'due to their young age.' Both families agreed to return to court for questioning, but the boys

previously had been placed in a juvenile detention centre to await their hearing on Sunday. The village imam accused the children of tearing up pages of the Qur'an. Other reports say the boys also urinated on the pages, but the police chief said no one witnessed this incident. According to Ahram Online, Nabil's father Nagy Rizk says the boys are illiterate and did not know the content of the papers which they found in a bag near a pile of street trash.

Pray: for the protection of vulnerable young people from apparent false accusations. (Ex.20:16)

More: http://blog.christianitytoday.com/ctliveblog/archives/2012/10/coptic_children.html

■ **Egypt: President Mursi pardons 'revolutionaries'**

Egypt's President, Mohammed Mursi, has pardoned all those arrested since the beginning of last year's popular uprising that ousted Hosni Mubarak. A post on the president's official Facebook page announced an amnesty for crimes and misdemeanours committed 'in support of the revolution'. The decree could lead to the release of several thousand people. The 'comprehensive pardon' announced by the new president on Monday applies to anyone who was charged with or convicted of 'crimes and misdemeanours or attempts to commit them in support of the revolution and the realisation of its goals'. The pardon applies to all those arrested from 25 January 2011, the first day of the revolution, until 30 June 2012, when Mr Mursi took office. It covers those who are awaiting trial as well as those already serving jail sentences. The only exception will be those accused of murder.

Pray: that this amnesty will help to establish justice for all. (Lev.19:15)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-19877428>

■ **Iran: Christians are persecuted even in cyber space**

What can be concluded from increased cyber-attacks on Mohabat News website is its effectiveness in spreading news and influence across the Iranian community. However, it seems that along with development of technology, Christian persecution, especially the persecution of Iranian Christians by the Islamic regime of Iran and Islamists, has adopted a new shape and form, reports Iranian Christian news agency, Mohabat News. Mohabat News is a key voice of the Farsi-speaking Christian community, launched on December 9, 2010 with the primary objective of disseminating news on Christians all around the world in both Farsi and English. The website, however, was blocked by the Islamic regime's security officials two months after it was launched. Since then many attempts have been undertaken to silence Mhabat News, three of these attempts by the cyber services staff of the Islamic Republic.

Pray: that the voice for Farsi-speaking Christians will not be silenced but be set free. (1Cor.2:13)

More: <http://www.christiantelegraph.com/issue17616.html>

■ **Nigeria: Army 'opens fire on civilians' in Maiduguri**

Nigerian troops have opened fire and burnt buildings in the north-eastern city of Maiduguri, reportedly killing 30 civilians. The shootings came after a bomb blast targeting the army had injured two soldiers. On Sunday, the army said it killed 30 Boko Haram members in another north-eastern city, Damaru. Eyewitnesses in Maiduguri said soldiers began to indiscriminately open fire on residents and set fire to homes and businesses. An Associated Press reporter in the city reportedly counted 30 bodies and 50 buildings that had been set ablaze. Unnamed nurses at the local Umaru Shehu Hospital were quoted by Reuters News Agency as saying that 30 bodies in civilian clothes had been brought in, with a further five corpses in military uniforms. 'Initially, soldiers that came after the explosion harassed residents, whipping them,' one person told AFP News Agency. 'But later they went on a shooting spree and started setting homes and shops on fire.'

Pray: for peace across this nation that those who kill and maim from each side be stopped and that peace would reign. (Ps.34:14)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-19875391>

■ **Venezuela: Chavez re-elected, Christians fearful**

Amid allegations of voter fraud, Hugo Chavez has won another six-year term in office with 54% of the vote. According to reports, many Venezuelans in the United States are disappointed by the news. They claim their candidate Henriques Capriles lost despite exit polls showing otherwise. Typically results of Venezuelan elections are announced the following day, but this election was announced within hours of the polls closing. Executive Director of Spanish World Ministries (SWM) Daniel Sandoval says, 'Among the true believers, there is a sense of disappointment. There's a sense of fear about what will happen in the next few years. But, we are certain that God is in charge of whoever is president in Venezuela.' The fear is understandable. In 2006 Chavez forced many expatriate missionaries from the tribal areas of the country. This time around, however, Chavez is sending mixed signals.

Pray: that God's people will stay strong against any fears and disappointments. (Ps.34:4)

More: <http://www.mnnonline.com/article/17768>

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**