

PRAYER ALERT...

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

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PRaise REPORTS

■ Olympics: The Church's response

Churches across the UK served their communities, welcomed visitors and blessed people just as Jesus would have done. An estimated 500,000 attended church-organised community festivals. The More Than Gold Athlete Family Homestay Programme hosted 280 guests from 20+ nations in 160 homes for 2,000 nights of free hospitality. The athletes supported won a total of 45 medals including 8 gold. 300 Games Pastors provided 13,000 hours of service to travellers at 24 locations including ten major rail stations, two airports, a coach station and key tourist sites. 30+ teams of 350 musicians and creative artists from 30 nations in 40 venues contributed 440 hours of live performance and 434 days of exhibitions. Over 2,100 volunteers from 40+ countries worked with about 300 churches distributing 225,000+ Olympic and Christian pin badges during conversations, water distribution and as a gift to travellers. And much much more.

Praise: God and give Him thanks for answered prayer throughout the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

More: <http://www.worldprayer.org.uk/files/2012/10/Answered-Prayers-from-The-Prayer-Baton-Relay.pdf>

■ The impact of Alpha in prisons

Did you know that over one third of prisons in the United Kingdom currently run an evangelistic Alpha course? This ministry - Alpha for Prisons - has the vision to give every man and woman in prison the opportunity to come to know Christ through participating in the course and to transform society through the establishment of prison ministries. Prison Fellowship England & Wales, through its volunteers, works for the restoration of the lives of prisoners and victims, and their families. PF is a volunteer-led organisation with a small team of paid staff. There are over 1,700 volunteers throughout England and Wales who pray for prisoners, run Sycamore Tree courses, co-ordinate Angel Tree, write letters to prisoners and have various other roles to support Prison Chaplaincy. Over the past years Alpha for Prisons has also taken off in Africa.

Praise: God for all the volunteers bringing new life to those in prison. (Ac.5:20)

More: <http://www.liverpool.anglican.org/index.php?p=1547>

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Archbishop marks the beginning of Hate Crime Awareness Week

The Archbishop of Canterbury has spoken out to mark the beginning of Hate Crime Awareness Week. He said, 'Hate crime is a fundamental challenge to an individual's dignity and identity. As such it should have no possible place in a society that respects the dignity of all and it should find no possible justification in any kind of religious belief. Christian faith has at its core the conviction that God values each of us infinitely and it should spur us on to combat hatred and prejudice wherever we encounter them.' An act of remembrance for the victims of hate crime was held in St Paul's Cathedral last Saturday and was supported by 17-24-30, an organisation founded to support the victims of the London nail bomb attacks in 1999.

Pray: for God to change the hearts of mankind to quench hatred and nurture caring love towards one another. (1Jn.2:9)
More: <http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/2644/archbishops-statement-to-mark-the-beginning-of-hate-crime-awareness-week>

■ Christians unite against corruption

Churches have united in London for the historic launch of a global Christian response to corruption. EXPOSED is being led by Christian organisations including Micah Challenge, The Salvation Army, Bible Society and the World Evangelical Alliance. It is the first time that so many Christian organisations have united to stand against corruption. The campaign aims to shine a light on corruption, which they warn is a major contributing factor to global poverty. Campaign chairman and International Director of Micah Challenge, Rev Joel Edwards, said: 'No nation is immune. This current economic crisis means that greed, the excesses of corporate cultures, dishonesty and unaccountable behaviour have touched us where it hurts. EXPOSED is here to join an increasing chorus of concern, which says 'enough is enough'. On launch day Occupy London activists staged a protest by chaining themselves to the pulpit in St Paul's Cathedral. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-19943083>

Pray: for people worldwide to commit to and promote practical steps for ethical behaviour in business, government, the Church and wider society. (Ac.2:40)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.co.uk/article/christians.unite.against.corruption/30807.htm>

■ PM warned not to ignore Christian voters

The head of Britain's largest Christian broadcaster has warned the Government that it would be ill-advised to ignore the rights of Christians. Peter Kerridge, Chief Executive of Premier Christian Radio, has written to the Prime Minister reminding him that the number of regular church attendees across Britain outnumbers the combined membership of the three main political parties by nearly 10 to one. 'Politicians would do well to heed the views of Christians who are, quite clearly, more faithful to their beliefs than the dwindling numbers of party members,' said Mr Kerridge in his letter. He said the attendance at the three main party conferences had been 'embarrassingly low' this season and that the 'deserted conference halls' were an accurate reflection of the declining membership of the three main parties from a total of around 1.4 million in 1991 to less than half a million in 2012.

Pray: that politicians would heed the rights of Christians and the power of the Church. (Ps.74:23)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/dont.ignore.christian.voters.pm.warned/30823.htm>

■ Boris says marriage is a relic of the 'Stone Age'

London Mayor Boris Johnson says the nation needs 'to move beyond the Stone Age' by redefining marriage. He supports David Cameron's plan to rewrite the meaning of marriage, saying: 'Frankly I can't see what the fuss is about.' He made the dismissive remarks in an article for The Independent. He said marriage 'has been here since before the Stone Age, and now it needs to move beyond the Stone Age'. Prime Minister David Cameron avoided mentioning his controversial gay marriage policy in his keynote speech at the Tory Party conference. However, in what may be a coordinated manoeuvre by Tory top brass, Chancellor George Osborne, Foreign Secretary William Hague, Education Secretary Michael Gove, and Equalities Minister Maria Miller have all voiced their support for changing the definition of marriage. Last weekend it was revealed that over 70 per cent of Tory constituency chairmen want the plans to be dropped and nearly half say they have lost members because of the policy.

Pray: for an end to glib and superficial statements and for a deeper understanding by proponents of how the changes will impact the vast majority of the population - the current definition of marriage to remain unchanged. (Pr.8:1)

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/boris-says-marriage-is-a-relic-of-the-stone-age/>

■ Universal Credit: Disabled people 'to lose out'

Up to half a million disabled people and their families stand to lose out under the government's proposed Universal Credit, a report says. The Children's Society, Citizens Advice and Disability Rights UK say 100,000 households with children could have incomes reduced by up to £28 a week. They are urging ministers to reconsider their plans. But the government called the report 'highly selective' and said it could lead to 'irresponsible scaremongering'. The Universal Credit will replace Jobseeker's allowance, tax credits, income support, employment and support allowance - formerly known as incapacity benefit - and housing benefits with a single payment. The system will be 'piloted' in parts of north-east England next April and will come into force across Britain for new claimants from October 2013. Existing claimants will be transferred to the new system in stages until 2017. Universal Credit will be capped at £26,000 per household.

Pray: that the Government will reconsider their plans affecting disabled and children and adults from low income families. (Job.6:29)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-19966370>

■ Churches meeting growing demand for emergency food

More people in the UK are turning to church-run food-banks to cope with the rising cost of living. The Trussell Trust said 100,000 people had received emergency food from its network of foodbanks in the last six months. New food-banks are being opened by the Christian charity at a rate of three a week to meet the demand. The network has fed almost 110,000 people across the UK since April 2012, compared to just under 129,000 people during the whole of the 2011 to 2012 financial period. Trussell Trust is expecting to feed over 200,000 people by the end of the 2012 to 2013 period. The increase in demand is being put down to rising food and fuel costs, together with static incomes, high unemployment and changes to benefits. With winter just around the corner, the Trussell Trust said it feared more Britons would be so hard up that they cannot afford to eat.

Pray: that the ability of the Church to provide for the needy will match the demand. (Ps.20:2)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/churches.meeting.growing.demand.for.emergency.food/30821.htm>

■ Scottish teen abortion percentage second highest in world

Scotland has the second highest percentage of teenage abortions in the world, new statistics show. A study from researchers in the US revealed 24 per cent of all abortions in Scotland occurred in the under-20 age group. Only Cuba had a higher proportion of teenage abortions figure, at 29 per cent. Report author Gilda Sedgh, of the Guttmacher Institute in New York, said: 'We can only speculate that the levels of unprotected intercourse among adolescents are relatively high in Scotland'. The study showed that 15 to 19-year-olds make up just 15 per cent of the total population of Scotland, and yet account for almost a quarter of all Scottish terminations.

Pray: that the trend for teenage abortions be reversed and adolescent education improved.

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/scots-teen-abortion-percentage-second-highest-in-world/>

EUROPE

■ French government ready to redefine marriage

On 31st October, Francois Hollande's cabinet will assess a draft copy of legislation which, if approved, would redefine marriage in France despite growing opposition. The French president has promised that same-sex 'marriage' will be introduced by mid-2013. The draft legislation will propose a redefinition of marriage so that it is 'contracted between two persons of different sex or of the same sex', according to French Prime Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault. The document will also set out provisions for same-sex couples to adopt children. These provisions will not be extended to unmarried same-sex couples. Ayrault said: 'After a very broad consultation process that, of course, involved religious leaders, I've made up my mind. This is about ensuring fairness and equality that reflects the evolution of our society'. However, many mayors and deputy mayors across France have warned that they will not preside over same-sex ceremonies if the law is changed. Over 1,200 of them have signed a petition against redefining marriage.

Pray: against this legislation and further moves to redefine marriage. Pray that the mayors speaking out against such moves will hold fast to their beliefs. (Heb.13:4)

More: <http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/sexual-orientation/french-government-ready-to-redefine-marriage>

■ Final report: care system failed to protect Dutch children

The Samson Committee investigating the abuse of children in state care in the Netherlands since 1945 is accusing the entire system - from the government to the foster care service to care homes themselves - of failing to do enough to protect children against sexual abuse. In releasing its final report on Monday, tellingly titled 'Surrounded by care, still not safe', the committee said it would send 42 sexual abuse files to public prosecutors for consideration - this out of the 800 claims it received in the two years since it's been investigating sexual abuse cases of children in care. 'We don't have any insight into the criteria they used for sending cases to the public prosecutor, but they must have reason to think they can still make cases after all these years,' says Jolien Verweij, spokesperson for the Dutch NGO Defence for Children International. 'But any chance to do something is good.'

Pray: that the care system in the Netherlands would be upgraded to enable it to meet the needs of those they serve. (1Pe.5:2)

More: <http://www.nmw.nl/english/article/final-report-care-system-failed-protect-dutch-children-0>

WORLDWIDE

■ Israel: Muslim leaders discuss Jerusalem

In a Tehran meeting between senior Hamas official Mahmoud al-Zahar and Iran's Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi, Mr Salehi said, 'The wave of Islamic Awakening in the Muslim world, especially in regional countries, is a great opportunity and valuable potential for Palestine. This comment followed a conference last month entitled 'Resistance - Islamic Awakening and Liberation of Palestine.' The Iranian Foreign Minister noted that with the establishment of popular governments in Muslim countries the regional nations and countries will strongly continue their efforts to defend Palestine until the liberation of al-Quds (Jerusalem). Salehi said, 'Iran did its best to make the summit adopt powerful stances on Palestine and the final result of those efforts were quite favourable.' Al-Zahar expressed hope that during the presidency of the Islamic Republic, the rights of the Palestinian nation would be defended stronger than before, emphasizing that the Palestinian people will continue their resistance against the Zionist regime of Israel and will not withdraw from their rights and principles.

Pray: for the peace of Jerusalem (Ps.122:6,7)

More: <http://www.presstv.ir/detail/260498.html>

■ Iran: Massive arrests of Evangelicals

'Between 100 and 400 Christians have been detained over the last 10 days in Istahan, Shiraz and Tehran by the intelligence service. 'Protestant Christians are now viewed as enemy number one of the state,' said a spokesman for the Iranian Church. 'We need urgent prayers,' he added when asked what believers need most. At least seven members of the Church of Iran in Shiraz, have been detained including Mohammad Roghangir, Sister Roxana Foroughi. (this is the second time for her) Others were identified as Suroush Saraie, Eskandar Rezaie, Bijan Haghighi, Mehdi Ameruni and Shahin Lahooti. They were taken to the notorious detention centre Plaque 100 of Iran's Intelligence Ministry. Seven received suspended five year sentences for 'action against the national security.' Many detainees have been forced to say they will no longer attend church services in exchange for freedom. There was no immediate response from Iranian officials.

Pray: for all who are suffering 'various medical problems' because of prison mistreatment; pray also for international outcry to shame Iran into ceasing its persecution of their 100,000+ Christians. (Ps.31:1)

More: <http://www.bosnewslife.com/24042-breaking-news-iran-launching-massive-arrests-of-evangelicals>

■ Nigeria: Most Sadistic Killers

Nigeria's Boko Haram has been accused of crimes against humanity. In a country where college students are lynched in tough neighbourhoods, the most depraved killers are still not considered terrorists by the State Department. The group is

one of the deadliest organizations in Africa, accused of killing at least 1,500 people between June 2009 and September 2012. Its victims are the Police, Christians and Muslims it sees as betraying the true faith. They sabotage oil pipelines, take down automated teller machines and rip up telephone lines in a violent jihad against the West. This week clashes intensified between Boko Haram and Nigerian security forces as the government claimed credit for killing the group's spokesman. Meanwhile, a series of explosions rocked the northern city of Maiduguri – thought to be more work of Boko Haram. Boko Haram's name translates into 'Western education is a sin.'

Pray: that Boko Haram would be designated a terrorist organization and for the world to understand there is a need for more protection of innocent Nigerian lives. (Ps.34:6,7)

More: <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2012/10/16/nigeria-s-most-sadistic-killers-why-is-boko-haram-not-designated-a-terrorist-group.html>

■ Saudi Arabia: Calling Christians to pray during Hajj

Next week millions of Muslims from all over the world will be on pilgrimage to Mecca performing a sacred act called the Hajj. For many the Hajj is the pinnacle event of their lives because they are commanded to make a Hajj at least once if they are able. This year Hajj starts Oct. 24th, lasting 3-4 days. See the Hajj 2012 prayer video on the link below. The Hajj is a demonstration of the solidarity of the Muslim people, and their submission to God. On the second day of Hajj pilgrims pray a prayer at noon called Muna - Arabic meaning 'to wish or aspire' - as they seek a closer relationship with God. We can pray that they discover and receive the free gift of communion through the Holy Spirit. On day three pilgrims stand on the 'mountain of mercy' and cry from noon to sunset, 'Allah I am here.' Many then spend the night in prayer. Please pray for those seeking God to be found by the One who paid the price for the remission of sins.

Pray: for seekers to know God's grace, and for Jesus to reveal himself through dreams and visions. (Eph.2:8,9)

More: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ZwGT2K8JH8>

■ West Africa: Food crisis

Over 19 million are hungry. The greatest needs are in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Niger and Senegal. Several seasons of crops have failed leaving nothing to harvest. In many instances this has been followed by floods which wiped out crops and food stores. Families across West Africa have faced successive emergencies, have nothing stored to see them through another poor harvest and food prices have risen by 40%. Christian Aid has released the following prayer, 'We pray for our sisters and brothers caught up in a cycle of drought and hunger, for parents struggling to find food and seeing their children go hungry, for farmers seeing their crops fail and livestock die. May the leaders of the nations act with insight and urgency, bringing relief to those who suffer now. We join our voices with those who call for an end to poverty. Amen.'

Pray: for God in His mercy to release the provisions needed for those caught in the poverty/hunger trap. (Ps.57:1)

More: <http://www.christianaid.org.uk/emergencies/current/west-africa-food-crisis/index.aspx>

■ Pakistan: Prayer walks and persecution

Occasionally a team of intercessors travels to Pakistan. They spend time worshipping God and praying earnestly for His will to be done in various places. Later this month a team will once again prayer walk Pakistan and we have been asked to pray for their safety. Pray that their times of worship will be sweet music to God, and that they will hear God's heart for the people and the Land. Pray that God will move in the hearts of the local people. Also we are reminded that the ongoing violence continues to take a toll of innocent civilians, including women and children. Pray for the many families who have lost loved ones to the violence, for widows and orphans with no source of income and for those who have been severely injured or crippled. Please also please pray for 16-year-old Christian Ryan Stanten accused of sending a blasphemous text message; he has been charged with 'blasphemy' which carries the death penalty.'

Pray: that the Prince of Peace will bring peace to Pakistan. (Ps.147:1-6)

More: <https://barnabasfund.org/UK/News/News-analysis/Another-Christian-teenager-held-for-blasphemy-in-Pakistan.html>

■ Pakistan: Peace march and soul searching

Recent days demonstrate a battle for Pakistan's soul. On Sunday there was a Peace March organised by Imran Khan heading for the home of Qari Hussain (main trainer of suicide bombers) and Baitullah Mehsud (former TTP leader - Pakistan Taliban). The demonstration was in opposition to US drone strikes against Islamic militants in Pakistan's tribal regions. Many see the choice of location communicating another message. Was there support for terrorists being expressed? Or a suggestion that Imran Khan would make peace with militants showing contempt for a 'secular leader'? On October 10th a 14-year-old girl campaigning for the rights of girls to be educated was shot by a militant group. Many are asking what has led to so many being enslaved by such regressive thinking. Many in Pakistan are shocked and doing some soul searching.

Pray: that, as people across the nation pause to look deeply within, many will be challenged to seek the path of true peace. (Deut.4:36a)

More: http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2012\10\17\story_17-10-2012_pg3_4

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**