

PRAYER ALERT...

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PRAISE REPORTS

■ Victory in Maidstone lap dancing case

Yesterday (22 October) Maidstone Council threw out an application for lap dancing to take place at a venue located seconds away from Maidstone town centre in Kent. The Christian Legal Centre supported local residents who argued that such a venue was not suitable in an area being regenerated by the Council where there are already schools, churches and shops nearby. Maidstone Council received more than 100 letters of objection in advance of the hearing and the Council heard from a member of the town's street pastor scheme. Michael Phillips, the solicitor representing many of the objectors, said that granting the application would be wholly inappropriate and would effectively be turning Bank Street, where the premises are located, into a sex street. His arguments persuaded the Council, who rejected the application on the basis that a licence for lap dancing would be inappropriate in that location.

Praise: God for the success of this objection. (Job.5:12)

More: <http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/victory-in-maidstone-lap-dancing-case>

■ 10,000 Egyptian youth gather in desert to worship

Earlier this month about 10,000 Christian young people came from all across Egypt for three days to worship the Lord and to seek God's blessing for their country. The worshippers, mostly ranging from ages 13 to 30, gathered from 10 o'clock in the morning until 8 each evening. Many travelled hundreds of miles to the worship site in the middle of the desert north of Cairo. 'To sit among over 10,000 young people, worship with them in a roaring holy noise, listen to powerful and challenging messages and pray for God's powerful presence in our lives; really, it is hard to describe in words,' says a Christian leader. 'Sitting at the very back of the small soccer stadium gave me a good view of the scene. Thousands were sitting to my right, thousands to my left and thousands more in the middle. Hardly any empty gaps!'

Praise: God for this gathering and may He bless all those who attended. (Gen.28:3)

More: <http://www.opendoorsusa.org/press/press-release/2012/Oct/10000-Young-People-Gather-In-Desert-to-Worship-God>

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Demoting Christian housing manager was 'over-reaction'

A housing trust's decision to demote a Christian after he said on Facebook that gay weddings in churches were 'an equality too far' was described as an 'extraordinary over-reaction' in court yesterday. Adrian Smith lost his managerial position and had his salary cut by 40 per cent after his employer, Trafford Housing Trust, said his Facebook comments amounted to gross misconduct. Yesterday Mr Smith's lawyer, Hugh Tomlinson QC, said: 'The whole thing is a huge and extraordinary

over-reaction', as he also raised suggestions of entrapment. Mr Smith is trying to recover his lost earnings, and his case is supported by The Christian Institute, a national charity that protects the civil liberty of Christians. The court will decide whether the Trust breached Mr Smith's employment contract and interfered with his right to free speech. The case is set to conclude this week although judgment is expected at a later date. (See Prayer Alert 43-2011)

Pray: for Mr Smith and for the outcome of this case. (1Pe.3:15)

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/qc-demoting-christian-housing-manager-was-over-reaction/>

■ **Sentamu: We're at a moral crossroads over care for elderly**

The Archbishop of York has urged David Cameron to tackle the 'great injustice' of care for the elderly, warning we risk growing into a 'sick society' if there are no improvements in the way vulnerable pensioners are treated. Speaking out in support of the Daily Mail's Dignity for the Elderly Campaign, Dr John Sentamu said it was wrong that tens of thousands of pensioners are being forced to sell their homes to pay for care which is often less than adequate. He said the Government has reached a 'moral crossroads' and must decide whether to build a society that supports the vulnerable or 'one where individuals face whatever life throws at them on their own'. In a separate intervention, the former Liberal Democrat care minister Paul Burstow also challenged Mr Cameron to act quickly to fix the 'broken system' amid signs that the Government is planning to delay introducing a cap on the cost of care.

Pray: for the elderly and especially those who are most vulnerable and in need of a well-planned system of care and support. (Ps.71:18)

More: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2221184/Sentamu-moral-crossroads-care-elderly-sick-society-improvements.html>

■ **Churches pray for healthcare workers**

Churches across the UK said prayers last Sunday for doctors, nurses and others working in healthcare. Healthcare Sunday is held each year by the Christian Medical Fellowship, Christian Nurses and Midwives, and the Healthcare Christian Fellowship. It is an opportunity to show their support for healthcare workers as they live out God's call to care for the sick. Dr Peter Saunders, Chief Executive of Christian Medical Fellowship, said: 'Many more people pass through our hospitals and GP surgeries than through our churches, and Christian doctors, nurses and other healthcare workers play a key role as Christ's hands and feet with the opportunity to touch people's lives at what can be their greatest time of need. They also face big ethical and moral pressures in a workplace which is often hostile to Christian faith and values. As ordinary Christian disciples facing these challenges and with their own personal, spiritual and emotional needs, they need our prayer and encouragement.'

Pray: for all those who work in healthcare often under severe pressure of work, and for some, their faith, too. (Pr.16:24)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/churches.pray.for.healthcare.workers/30832.htm>

■ **Bishop's call for marriage tax break**

The Bishop of Chester has called for the Government to honour its pledge to recognise marriage in the tax system. Bishop Peter Forster said if plans were not introduced in the next Budget, it was unlikely there would be time to bring in the tax break before the election. He said 'a financial recognition of marriage would send a powerful symbolic message into society.' Initiating a debate on children in the House of Lords, he said: 'At the end of the day, Governments cannot simply wash their hands when moral issues are presented, because government is intrinsically a moral activity. To recognise marriage in the tax system would say something important about the wider importance of marriage to society.' He asked Baroness Garden of Frognal, who was responding to the debate for the Government: 'Can the Minister please tell us when this pledge - I underline the word pledge - in the coalition agreement will start to be implemented?'

Pray: for the Government and the Opposition to understand the importance of family and to actively support it in their legislation and the tax system. (Pr.11:29)

More: <http://religiousintelligence.org/churchnewspaper/?p=28708>

■ **Rules of Engagement for our servicemen and women**

Following the news of the five Royal Marines being charged for murder of a Taliban insurgent. Let us reflect on the stressful circumstances and difficulties that face our Servicemen and women in Afghanistan. Please pray that our Service personnel will hold fast to the Rules of Engagement regardless of tiredness, workload, the stress and trauma of seeing their comrades being killed and injured, and the adrenaline produced by fear of danger especially in close combat. Please pray that every soldier is able to make the right split second decision in the heat of the moment. Please also pray for justice for the five Marines and care and support for their families.

More: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2217537/Royal-Marines-charged-5-custody-charged-murder-tour-Afghanistan.html?ITO=1490>

■ **Abortion is 27 percent of deaths in England and Wales**

Disturbing reports coming from England and Wales as national statistics show that more than a quarter of all deaths in the countries are caused by abortions. The numbers were released by the Office for National Statistics of the UK and offers a complete accounting of the mortality statistics for all deaths that occurred in 2010. The report listed a total of 493,242 deaths in England and Wales from 'all causes' in 2010. This number includes 224 babies who died 'before, during or after birth.' However, the 224 babies who died were not represented in the 189,574 human deaths from abortion in England and Wales in 2010. Adding the total number of pre-born babies who died as a result of abortion in 2010 to the total number of human deaths in England and Wales for that same year produces an overall total of 682,816 deaths. This leads to 27 percent or 189,574 of the 682,816 deaths being caused by abortion.

Pray: that as these staggering statistics become public that moves will be made by the authorities to change legislation to protect life. (Jn.17:15)

More: <http://global.christianpost.com/news/abortion-is-27-percent-of-deaths-in-england-wales-189000-babies->

■ Court 'forces' gay adoption on Northern Ireland

A judge has controversially ruled that Northern Ireland must allow gay couples to adopt children, despite widespread opposition. Northern Ireland's health minister, Edwin Poots, has vowed to 'urgently appeal' against the ruling, warning that it could hinder further adoption reforms. An official public consultation into whether to allow gay adoption in Northern Ireland showed that 95 per cent of respondents were opposed to the move. But the taxpayer-funded Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission took the matter to court, and a judge ruled in their favour last Thursday. Mr Poots says the ruling has not altered his position or the position of his department. He said: 'It is my intention to urgently appeal this judgment and I am taking this action with a heavy heart.' He added: 'I have already publicly declared my intention to reform Northern Ireland adoption law because reform is much needed and long overdue'.

Pray: that the appeal will reverse the decision and allow Godly judgement to rule. (Jn.9:31)

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/court-forces-gay-adoption-on-northern-ireland/>

EUROPE

■ Germany: Ban on distribution of Bibles at public schools in Berlin

The International Gideons are known for distributing free pocket Bibles - mostly at schools, hospitals, hotels and medical practices. They were forbidden to distribute any more Bibles at public schools in Berlin by the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs. A letter from the Berlin Senate Department of Education, Youth and Science, clearly requires the distribution of Christian Bibles to stop reasoning from an administrative regulation of 2011 which implies that on state property 'Advertising of ideological religious or political nature' is prohibited. Responding to the Senate's letter Wendel, the chairman of Gideons in Germany, points out that the pocket Bibles don't contain any 'advertising for churches, clubs, or the International Gideon Federation'. Furthermore, the ministerial conference earlier recognized these Bibles as school materials. Wendel asked the Education Senator to reconsider and to withdraw his decision.

Pray: that the Education Senator will reconsider in light of earlier decisions and give approval. (Ro.12:2)

More: <http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/ban-on-distribution-of-bibles-at-public-schools-in-berlin.html>

WORLDWIDE

■ Israel: 'Jerusalem is our capital'

Following Prayer-Alert's report last week entitled, 'Muslim leaders discuss Jerusalem,' Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu rebuffed European criticism over the construction of new housing units in a Jewish neighbourhood of Jerusalem, insisting that the Holy City belongs to the Jews. Last week Israel's Interior Ministry approved the construction of 800 new apartments in the southern Jerusalem neighbourhood of Gilo. Gilo is home to tens of thousands of Israeli Jews and new construction there is by no means out of the ordinary. However, Britain, France and the European Union immediately expressed their displeasure with Jewish sovereignty over the entirety of Jerusalem, calling the new apartments an 'obstacle to peace.' Netanyahu said the world can call it whatever it wants, but his government will not 'impose any restrictions on construction in Jerusalem.' The Israeli leader added that Jerusalem 'is our capital' and the Jewish nation has a connection to Jerusalem that is as 'ancient and powerful' as the connections Europeans have to their respective capitals.

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

More: http://www.breakingchristiannews.com/articles/display_art.html?ID=10673

■ Nigeria: How Boko Haram smuggles weapons

On Wednesday Oct 24th ex-militants in the Niger-Delta reported a secret conduit through which the militant Islamic sect Boko Haram transports weapons/ammunition into the country with the help of a top government official (name withheld) using his influence to circumvent Nigerian Customs. Earlier this year, speaking at a church service marking the 2012 Armed Forces Remembrance Day, President Goodluck Jonathan had said that members of the Islamic sect had infiltrated the three arms of government at the federal level. He confessed that combating Boko Haram was complicated as members of the Boko Haram sect were in the armed forces, the executive, legislature and judiciary. Last Sunday after three days of Islamic attacks against churches and other targets that left dozens dead, hundreds of residents began fleeing north-eastern Nigeria. See: <http://www.worthynews.com/11819-nigeria-militants-attack-church-and-other-targets-dozens-killed> Boko Haram's militant campaign and the military response are believed to have left more than 2,800 people dead since 2009.

Pray: that the government will be able to improve security. Pray for protection of soldiers and citizens in crisis-hit areas. (Pr.24:3-4)

More: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201210230708.html>

■ Malawi: Hungry not able to access food

The following is taken from a report giving two examples of the challenges faced in Malawi. 'I have been staggered at the increase in prices of items in shops. Basics of sugar, bread and salt are very expensive for most and out of reach for many to buy. Meat is inaccessible for most in the villages. Maize (the staple food) has doubled in price and most of those we visited have had no harvest. (I heard on the radio that 'there is 800,000 tonnes of maize in the silos from previous years') This is appalling. The folks in the villages and mountain areas are the forgotten people. Also, 'A young man came, whose father had died. He had a growth on his neck and some bush doctor cut it and it spread. The young man is now responsible for his mother and siblings; plus his own wife and one small child. He just sunk into a chair; he was so weak from walking,

gaunt from hunger, with nowhere else to go. Could I help him with little money to buy some corn husks? He brought a lump to my throat. I knew his father well'

Pray: that the hungry would have access to food banks, and may God strengthen those working amongst the disadvantaged and disabled. (Mt.25:34-36)

More: <http://www.torchtrust.org/smartweb/international/malawi>

■ Lebanon: At a turning point

Christians must continue to pray for Lebanon, Syria and the entire Middle East region, said Naji Daoud, Executive Director of SAT-7 (a Christian radio broadcasting station in Lebanon). He made the appeal after a car bomb killed the head of the Lebanese intelligence agency, and several others in a largely Christian neighbourhood of Beirut. He asked for prayer in these difficult days for Lebanon. As al-Hassan was a known opponent of the Assad regime, there is some speculation that the bombing is connected to the ongoing violence in Syria, which continues to spill into Lebanon. His death triggered violent demonstrations in Beirut and there have been calls for the Lebanese Prime Minister to step down. Naji Daoud called upon Christians in the region to 'live faithfully'. He said, 'The Lebanese find themselves at a turning point. We must keep praying for Lebanon, Syria and the whole Middle East.'

Pray: for the peace of Lebanon, that it will not become the victim of a proxy war between the different political and religious rivals in the region - such as the Gulf Arabs, Iran, and the Sunni and Shia worlds. (Ps.4:8)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/lebanon.at.a.turning.point/30881.htm>

■ India: Persecution continues

In parts of India Christian pastors and communities are being continually persecuted. The following are just a few instances of persecution that need our prayers:- Pastor beaten and prayer meeting disrupted on 18 Sept in Karnataka. Prayer meeting stopped on 26 Sept by alleged Hindu extremists in Karnataka. Gospel meeting disrupted on 28 Sept by alleged Hindu extremists in Madhya Pradesh. Pastor arrested On 30 Sep in Uttar Pradesh. Baptism service disrupted on 2 Oct in Orissa. Pastor beaten unconscious on 11 Oct in Karnataka. Pastor arrested on false accusation of enticement on 12 Oct in Chhattisgarh. Pastor beaten up on 14 Oct in New Delhi. We are asked to pray for the persecuted families as they rebuild their lives, ministries and homes. Also this week the Evangelical Fellowship of India called on the Indian Government to observe international human rights requirements with regards to the Dalit Christian's constitutional rights.

Pray: for the government to grant Scheduled Caste status to Dalit Christians and take steps to pre-empt violence against Christian communities and pastors. (Ps.121)

More: <http://www.efionline.org/>

■ America: Elections, outcome important to the world

Given the turbulent times we live in, both financially and in terms of international politics - with Iran and Israel rattling sabres, and North Africa increasingly unstable - the outcome is not only hugely important to America but also to the rest of the world. Despite the rise of China and the rapid growth of other nations, such as India and Brazil, the US remains the dominant player on the global stage. It is still a military colossus and the engine room of the global economy, with its capacity for innovation and wealth creation undimmed. America was created through rebellion against the authority of the British monarch, George III, and consequently hostility towards the concept of an all-powerful leader is still woven deep into the fabric of American life. This separation of powers can lead to deadlock and obstructionism in Washington, weakening the scope of the President to provide the leadership the world so badly needs. Theoretically Evangelical Christians vote Republican, while urban voters back the Democrats, and African-Americans vote Democrats, while white population supports Republicans.

Pray: against any roots of rebellion as America votes and may God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven. (Mt.18:18)

More: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-2222109/US-Presidential-Election-2012-The-outcome-important-America-rest-world.html?ito=feeds-newsxml>

■ Indonesia: Authorities close down Churches in Aceh,

At the prompting of Islamic extremists, authorities in Indonesia's Aceh Province have forbidden nine churches to worship, saying they are 'illegal,' reports Jeremy Reynolds, Senior Correspondent for ASSIST News Service. According to a story by Morning Star News, Illiza Sa'aduddin Djamal, Deputy Mayor of Banda Aceh, capital of Aceh Province, called pastors of nine churches and five Buddhist monasteries for a meeting on Oct. 15, said Veryanto Sitohang, head of rights group United North Sumatra Alliance. Representatives from five of the nine churches attended the meeting. Morning Star News reported they were forced to sign an 'agreement' saying they would stop all activities because they did not have official permits. Those permits are obtainable only by meeting very difficult requirements from local governments, Sitohang told Morning Star News. The other four churches will also be told to sign the agreement soon, he added.

Pray: for the Church in Aceh that it will stand firm against persecution. (1Cor.16:13)

More: <http://www.christiantelegraph.com/issue17717.html>

PRAYER FORUM OF THE BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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