

PRAYER ALERT...

An initiative of the Prayer Forum of the British Isles & Ireland
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Issue 47-2012

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Thursday 22 November 2012

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PRaise REPORTS

■ Christian employee wins Facebook comments case

A Christian who was demoted because of a comment he wrote on his Facebook page opposing gay weddings has won a court case against his employers. The post was made outside of working hours by Adrian Smith and was not visible to the general public. His employers, Trafford Housing Trust, said the comments amounted to 'gross misconduct' and claimed they could bring the organisation into disrepute. It emerged in evidence that the Trust was worried it would lose a gay rights charter award if it failed to take action against Mr Smith. They then demoted him from his managerial position and cut his salary by 40%. Mr Smith took the Trust to court on the grounds that the disciplinary action was a breach of contract and his human rights. The High Court judge ruled today that the Trust had no right to demote Mr Smith over his Facebook comments and that its actions were a 'serious' breach of contract. (See Prayer Alert 43.2012)

Praise: [God for Mr Smith's victory but also pray for him as he has not been reinstated to his former position. \(Ps.33:5\)](#)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/christian.employee.wins.facebook.comments.case/31062.htm>

■ Pakistan: Rimsha Masih's case has been dismissed

Rimsha Masih, the 14-year-old mentally disabled girl from Pakistani, is free. A Pakistani court dismissed Rimsha's case. Her case has drawn international condemnation and concern about the rights of religious minorities in the Muslim country. In August, Rimsha was charged with burning pages of the Koran, but she was granted bail in September after a Muslim cleric was detained on suspicion of planting evidence to stir up resentment against Christians. The cleric is now on trial for fabricating evidence. Tahir Naveed, Rimsha's lawyer, said the Islamabad High Court's decision to throw out the case was based on the fact that no one had seen her burning the pages of the Koran, Reuters reported. (See Prayer Alert 34-2012 & 37-2012)

Praise: [God for Masih's release and pray that the cleric will be correctly judged. \(Job.34:17\)](#)

More: <http://www.mnnonline.org/article/17920>

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Starbucks in row over Internet porn free-for-all

Coffee giant Starbucks is failing to filter out pornography from its free in-store wi-fi, leading to concerns about children accessing inappropriate material. The coffee chain was warned over a year ago about the problem but still has not rectified the situation. Baroness Massey, a former chairman of the Family Planning Association, highlighted the issue in the House of Lords and called on the Government to remind 'high street companies of their duties to protect our children'. She cautioned: 'In Starbucks anyone can have full access to anything the Internet has to offer including the most obscene websites.' Baroness Massey said that McDonald's had 'told its wi-fi supplier that it did not want customers coming in to bring up pornographic images that people sitting on nearby tables may see'. Speaking for the Government, Viscount Younger of Leckie said he was 'alarmed'. He said the issue would 'certainly' be followed up to 'find out what can be done to resolve it'.

Pray: [that pressure on Starbucks to change its policy over access would succeed. \(Ps.12:7\)](#)

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/starbucks-in-row-over-internet-porn-free-for-all/>

■ Vince Cable attacks corporate 'tax abuse'

Business Secretary Vince Cable has condemned corporate tax avoidance as 'completely unacceptable', saying there are 'appalling stories of abuse'. He told the BBC's Andrew Marr Show UK authorities should do more to stop it. However, he said that tackling the issue required international agreement as well as domestic action. His comments came after executives from Starbucks, Google and Amazon were grilled by MPs, although the firms say they operate within the tax rules. The executives were questioned earlier this month by the Public Accounts Committee about how they used favourable European tax jurisdictions for their UK businesses. Starbucks, for example, has made a taxable profit only once in its 15 years of operating in the UK. As a consequence, the company is thought to have paid just £8.6m in corporation tax over the period. Mr Cable told Andrew Marr: 'The best off in society have got to contribute more, and that includes companies.'

Pray: that our Government will be successful in dealing with companies who avoid their full corporation taxes. (Mk.12:14)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-20384428>

■ Help for offenders

'Offenders should be 'met at the prison gate' by mentors who can help them escape a life of crime.' said Chris Grayling the Justice Secretary. He has plans for a major extension of mentoring provided by voluntary groups and private companies on a payment-by-results basis, calling for an 'enlightened' approach to dealing with criminals and to decry the tragedy of inmates leaving jail with no idea how to get their lives back on track. This proposal comes during 'Prison Week' when Christians are asked to pray for those administering justice and those within the criminal justice system. May those ministering to offenders be given the wisdom of Solomon for the tasks they are engaged in, and good judgment as they guide prisoners on their daily journey through the prison system. See: <http://www.prisonweek.org/>

Pray: that the implementation of the mentoring system will grow and produce a new path for ex-prisoners to follow. (Ps.139:11-17)

More: <http://uk.news.yahoo.com/mentor-every-inmate-released-jail-051453731.html>

■ Dawn raid in Home Counties

A gang of eight Asian men aged between 20 and 28 were arrested in High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire on suspicion of being part of a Home Counties paedophile ring, after a girl told police how she'd been raped and abused for five years from the age of 12. Only one victim has come forward so far, detectives believe the paedophile ring is responsible for abusing others. Many believe sex abuse reports 'turn a blind eye to Asian gangs' even though they account for a quarter of all cases. There is only one organisation serving the needs of parents, carers and wider family of child sexual exploitation victims in the UK. It is called 'CROP' and has a family-centred approach to tackling child sexual exploitation by supporting, encouraging parents and families to be actively involved in responding to the devastating, complex and multiple issues that arise as a result of the sexual exploitation of their child. See <http://www.cropuk.org.uk/>

Pray: for more courageous victims to come forward. Pray for additional organisations to minister to the abused and may all that is hidden be revealed. (Ps.9:16-18)

More: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2235658/Eight-men-held-dawn-raid-suspected-Home-Counties-paedophile-ring.html>

■ CAFOD challenges supermarkets and government on hunger

Catholic aid agency CAFOD has launched a new food campaign to hundreds of supporters at Westminster Cathedral in London. 250 campaigners from all over England and Wales met to launch a new initiative that aims to improve the food system. The campaign highlights the fact that a handful of supermarkets and food companies dominate the food system, making the rules that decide cost, price and standards. They often also control access to vital resources such as land, seeds and water. Yet 50 per cent of the world's food is grown by small-scale farmers in developing countries. With little power in the global food supply chain, these farmers are often forced to agree to big companies' demands regardless of how unfair these may be.

Pray: for the Hungry for Change Campaign to be well supported and have a very real impact in bringing about change to the global food system. (Pr.14:31)

More: <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/17388>

■ Death in Ireland becomes global flashpoint over abortion

Pro-choice activists from Ireland to India are protesting the death of Savita Halappanavar, a 31-year-old Indian woman who was denied an abortion at a hospital in Galway, Ireland, in late October. In Dublin, an estimated 6,000 protesters rallied to legalize abortion in heavily Catholic Ireland, which has stringent anti-abortion laws. Similar marches in Galway, where Halappanavar died, and at the Irish Embassy in the Indian capital Delhi called for the Dublin government to amend the abortion law or abolish it entirely. Irish Prime Minister Enda Kenny says he will not rush into a decision on the right to abortion. He called any connection between Halappanavar's death and Irish abortion law a 'tragic coincidence.' Doctors are still investigating Halappanavar's death to determine whether an abortion would have made a difference or not.

Pray: for sensitivity by the Irish authorities especially in cases of medical requirements. (Pr.31:9)

More: <http://blog.christianitytoday.com/ctliveblog/archives/2012/11/ireland-death-prompts-global-debate-on-irish-abortion-ban.html>

■ Women Bishops

The Most Reverend Rowan Williams told the ruling General Synod that the Church of England could be seen as 'wilfully blind' to modern trends and priorities after 324 Synod members voted for women bishops, but Church voting rules meant 122 votes against were enough to block it. However, the Archbishop of York said the principle had been accepted. Seeing the faces of those captured by the BBC immediately after the Synod meeting, the sense of despair and frustration was

apparent. What happens next will show whether those passionate about this issue care more about a cause or God's Church. May both sides across the globe be gracious and accept the outcome without pointing the finger. With democracy we regularly don't get the results we want.

Pray: for Synod members to discuss how to move forward on the issue. (Ps.133:1)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-20423664>

EUROPE

■ New EU Commissioner opposed for holding Christian views

A consortium of homosexual, secular humanist and abortion groups are campaigning against the appointment of the Maltese Dr. Tonio Borg as the new EU Health and Consumer Protection Commissioner. The objection, they say, is nothing more than that Dr. Borg is a Catholic, with 'staunchly conservative and outdated' views on homosexuality, divorce and abortion. A document released by the European Parliament's Intergroup on LGBT Rights admits that a Commissioner's personal religious beliefs are not 'topics of EU competence.' However, they maintain that Borg's 'issues of conscience' would 'prevent him from being an impartial commissioner.' The group say they fear that since 'all 27 Commissioners are always consulted before Commission proposals are made public; this would give him considerable influence across EU competences'.

Pray: that the rights of all Commissioners be accepted and listened to and not blocked by pressures from those who oppose their views. (Jas.3:17)

More: <http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/new-eu-commissionar-opposed-for-holding-christian-views.html>

■ Brussels bans annual Christmas tree display – It may offend Muslims

Brussels replaced its popular Christmas tree exhibit this year at the city centre due to concerns that it may offend the local Muslim population. An 'electronic winter tree,' will take the place of the traditional Christmas Tree and Nativity scene at the city centre of Grand Place, reports Brussels News. The electronic sculpture will stand 25 metres (82 feet) tall and consists of a set of television screens, reports Brussels Expat. 'During the daytime you can climb to the top of the tree where you will be able to enjoy a panoramic view of the city,' the website explains. 'As soon as it becomes dark the tree turns into a spectacle of light and sound. Every ten minutes an amazing show will unfold.'

Pray: against this over sensitivity by the authorities over the use of Christian symbolism during this season. Have they asked the Muslims and are they now offending Christians? (Jn.6:61b)

More: <http://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2012/11/brussels-bans-annual-christmas-tree-it-may-offend-muslims/>

WORLDWIDE

■ NIGERIA: Education

A £230 million British aid programme to support schools in Nigeria has failed to produce any major improvement in pupil learning. The Independent Commission for Aid Impact said the UK's education programme in Nigeria was being undermined by a shortage of effective teachers and a lack of support from local state governments. They found 1/3 of the eligible children - 3.7 million - were still not in school, while those that were received little 'education'. Education programmes in Nigeria operate in a very challenging environment, with poor infrastructure and unpredictable state funding contributing to the poor learning outcomes for pupils' basic education. The findings further add to the pressure on MPs over the aid budget, with many Tories strongly opposed to David Cameron's commitment to maintain overseas aid at a time of spending cuts at home. To pray for Nigeria also go to

http://www.pray4nigeria.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=327:day-3-falling-standards-of-education&catid=47&Itemid=285

Pray: for God to touch the hearts of those in positions of influence to give the much needed aid to countries less fortunate than themselves. (Dt.15:8)

More: <http://www.standard.co.uk/news/world/nigeria-aid-not-helping-education-8334851.html>

■ Gaza ceasefire goes into effect

A ceasefire has gone into effect in and around the Gaza Strip, after Israel and Hamas agreed to cease hostilities. Many Palestinians in Gaza City took to the streets to celebrate the truce on Wednesday night, blasting car horns and setting off fireworks from rooftops amid celebratory gunfire. The Egyptian foreign minister announced the ceasefire agreement hours before it took hold at 19:00 GMT on Wednesday. Mohamed Kamel Amr thanked all parties involved in mediating the truce as he made the announcement in a joint news conference with US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in the Egyptian capital, Cairo. Under the ceasefire terms, Israel was to stop all aggression against the Gaza Strip from land, sea and air, including cross-border incursions and targeted killings. Palestinian factions were to cease all rocket fire and attacks from Gaza towards Israel, including along the border.

Pray: for God to enable all attempts at mediation, particularly that it does not simply enable both sides to re-arm and carry on as heretofore. (Ex.24:3 & Ps.33:16-17)

More: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/11/2012112117122494611.html>

■ Afghanistan: National Army (ANA)

A British Army Padre on his 2nd Afghanistan tour in two years notices a changed attitude between the ANA and local residents. Notwithstanding recent 'green on blue' incidents there is a more relaxed atmosphere, with bouts of friendliness and laughter being observed between the locals. This is an important change and a cause for celebration. It speaks of trust on the one hand and comfort on the other, which a community needs so that it can grow, develop and flourish. He commented on normal life unfolding as he watched the gates of the school opening and 'within minutes what must have

been a couple of hundred children were running out and starting for home; some on bikes, others grabbing a lift precariously, still others running, chasing and playing. It could have been anywhere in the world, except this isn't anywhere. - This is the 'Green Zone' Helmand'.

Pray: that this positive attitude will prevail and grow within all the communities in Afghanistan and that on the withdrawal of the allied troops in 2014, peace will be maintained. (Pr.8:12-16)

More: <https://www.facebook.com/notes/1st-battalion-the-mercian-regiment-cheshire/padres-blog-by-revd-robin-richardson-6-nov-2012/468838306501701>

■ **Somalia: Christian beheaded**

Islamic fighters of the militant al-Shabab group have beheaded a devoted Christian for 'leaving Islam' witnesses and other sources said on November 17. Local Christians and Muslims, who were not identified, told reporters that Farhan Haji Mose, 25, was murdered Friday, November 16, in the troubled African nation's coastal city of Barawa. The militants reportedly accused the young man of 'being a spy and leaving Islam.' African media said the Christian's 'body was split into two then dumped near the beach.' This was the fourth Christian known to have been beheaded since September last year when two Christians were beheaded. There was no immediate response from al-Shabab, but the group has vowed to rid Somalia from Christianity. Militants have also publicly flogged and paraded other Christian converts. This incident came despite claims by peacekeepers that they have made progress ousting al-Shabab militants from key strongholds.

Pray: for the young man's family to know God's comfort and for the Christian community to be strong in the face of such violent opposition. (Ps.35:1-3)

More: <http://www.bosnewslife.com/24737-breaking-news-somalia-militants-behead-christian-for-leaving-islam>

■ **Mexico: Top mob prosecutor resigns**

The nation's top organized crime prosecutor José Cuitláhuac Salinas abruptly resigned on Thursday, a month after investigations into officials for leaking information to Mexico's largest drug trafficking organization. Mr Salinas and other top prosecutors faced being replaced in the coming months with the arrival of the new presidential administration on Dec1st, leaving commentators puzzled as to why he would leave now. On November 6th Federal law enforcement agents and army troops were assigned to protect judges since in light of threats from organized crime groups judges presiding over crimes of violence and organized crime in Mexico are at risk. Measures have been taken to provide them with armoured vehicles, and requesting the Mexican army to accompany a judge at a given time when issuing a ruling on drug trafficking cases. See: <http://latino.foxnews.com/latino/news/2012/11/06/security-stepped-up-for-mexican-judges/>

Pray: for God to be able to work through the judicial system, pray for integrity to be its hallmark and may the crimes associated with drug trafficking be reduced and eventually removed. (Pr.1:10)

More: http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/17/world/americas/jose-cuitlahuac-salinas-mexicos-top-mob-prosecutor-resigns.html?ref=americas&_r=0

■ **Congo: Humanitarian crisis growing**

Aid groups say a humanitarian crisis in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo will intensify now that rebels have taken Goma. The World Food Programme (WFP) says aid workers are taking shelter in its compound in Goma, which is protected by UN peacekeepers. Its operations for internally displaced people are temporarily suspended. WFP and Doctors Without Borders both estimate 60,000 people who were staying in refugee camps in the area have fled. Doctors Without Borders has extra medical staff and supplies on the way to Goma to respond to any additional medical and humanitarian needs. Its cholera treatment centre is preparing for a new influx of cases as thousands arrive and set up camp in and around the city. Even before the latest fighting between rebels and the Congolese army, North Kivu was the centre of an extended humanitarian crisis.

Pray: for an enabling of appropriate aid and support for the 2.4 million displaced people who have lived through years of rebel and militia fighting. Pray for those suffering mental anguish, physical injuries and spirits in defeat. (Ps.116:3)

More: <http://blogs.voanews.com/breaking-news/2012/11/20/aid-groups-crisis-in-drc-to-grow/>

■ **Nepal: Sex trade victims**

Nepal is one of the largest epicentres for sex trafficking; conveniently nestled between trafficker exporting destinations like India and China, and not far from the Middle East. NGO's estimate at least 15,000 Nepali women and girls are trafficked into India each year and around 7,500 are trafficked within Nepal's borders.

Nepali women who have been abducted and forced into this life refer to themselves as 'the walking dead.' Most of them have AIDS or are HIV positive. Their environment is one of cruelty, abuse, and hopelessness. They are victims in an industry that is growing. Today we can pray for Vision Beyond Borders who are working to rescue one life at a time through a safehouse in Nepal that rescues women and girls from the sex trade. The women find refuge, hear the Gospel message, and learn a trade to support themselves. Some of those rescued have been inspired to help rescue others.

Pray: for more NGOs to help these women. Pray for hope. Pray for the missionaries. Pray for recovery. Pray for these women to find Christ. (Ps.138:6-7)

PRAYER FORUM OF THE BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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