

PRAYER ALERT...

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PRaise REPORTS

■ Mega-mosque' recommended for refusal

A planning application for a massive 'mega-mosque' in West Ham has been recommended for refusal. Newham planning officers will ask local councillors to refuse the application in a meeting to be held on Wednesday 5th December 2012 reports the London Evening Standard. Christian Voice members have been meeting for prayer at the site of the proposed development on the first Saturday morning of every month since January 2007. They will be meeting this morning at 10.30am. Stephen Green, National Director of Christian Voice, said this morning: 'We must pray councillors agree with their planning officers on Wednesday evening despite what will be massive pressure from Muslims supporting the proposal.' (See Prayer Alert 37-2912) **Latest: Council has refused planning permission.**

Praise: God for the recommendation and pray once again that the outcome regarding this mega-mosque will be guided by God's Spirit. (2Th.2:13-14)

More: <http://www.christianvoice.org.uk/index.php/2012dec01westham/>

■ Thousands of children are praying for the first time!

The UK has seen 150 Prayer Spaces in schools this year and the movement is crossing borders with schools in Germany, Australia and Uganda catching the vision. The Prayer Spaces in School website is full of amazing testimonies and the following are just two of them. 'The feel of this room is so peaceful - does not feel as though I am at school! Let's you escape + just contemplate about yourself, others + life. We do not allow for us to take time to do this at school. Thank you for touching so many girls lives + allowing them to contemplate + be themselves.' and, 'Much of what we do in school is on a horizontal level in terms of human to human but to actually get a chance to stop and think about that vertical relationship, about humans and our relationship with God. It's a privilege really. It's just wonderful to be able to do it for the children.'

Praise: God for the 24/7 prayer movement and may communion with God continue to be an important part of the lives of our school children. (1Ki.8:28)

More: <http://www.24-7prayer.com/features/1905>

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Christians prefer 'friendship evangelism'

Most Christians believe that sharing their faith with friends is an effective form of evangelism, a new survey suggests. The survey, 'Confidently sharing the Gospel?', was undertaken by the Evangelical Alliance to determine whether Christians are still evangelising in the 21st century. It found a shift in the way that Christians are speaking about their faith, from the open air preaching that typified the evangelism of the 19th and early to mid 20th centuries, to more intimate settings. While only nine per cent said that street preaching was an effective way to talk about Jesus, 80 per cent said that the intimacy of a group of friends was a safer and more effective place to share their beliefs. 57 per cent said it was their actions that would point people to Jesus, rather than their words, with 55 per cent saying they had seen people come to faith through involvement in community projects like food-banks.

Pray: for each of us to find our own path to evangelism. (Jn.4:40-41)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/christians.prefer.friendship.evangelism/31156.html>

■ Press 'need to act' after Leveson

The press have been urged to take action over Leveson Inquiry recommendations to regulate the newspaper industry. Lord Justice Leveson called for a new independent watchdog - which he said should be underpinned by legislation. Culture Secretary Maria Miller told the BBC 'the gauntlet has been thrown down' to newspapers to outline how they would set up tough self-regulation instead. Lord Justice Leveson's 2,000-page report into press ethics, published last Thursday, found that press behaviour was 'outrageous' and 'wreaked havoc with the lives of innocent people'. He said the press - having failed to regulate itself in the past - must create a new and tough regulator but it had to be backed by legislation to ensure it was effective. Following cross-party talks the Department for Culture, Media and Sport will begin the process of drawing up a draft bill implementing the Leveson recommendations.

Pray: that the press will take up the challenge by working together to fulfil the recommendations. (Ps.119:45)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-20551634>

■ Politicians face 'test of civilisation' over elderly care

The Archbishop of Westminster, the Most Rev Vincent Nichols, said politicians will fail a 'fundamental test of civilised society' if they do not find a solution to funding care for the elderly. He said the current system is leaving many elderly, frail and disabled people struggling to meet their basic human needs and needs 'urgent' reform. Highlighting the problems of unemployment, poverty, criminal justice reform and care at a reception in the House of Commons the Archbishop said: 'The decisions that will be made in this building over the months ahead demonstrate the importance of this dialogue between those working on the front line to support the vulnerable, and those tasked with crafting legislation. Perhaps one of the most important areas currently under consideration here is how we care for older and disabled people: a fundamental test of any civilised society.' (See also Prayer Alert 44-2012)

Pray: for Government and society to value and care for the elderly. (Lev.19:32)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/health/elderhealth/9709508/Politicians-face-test-of-civilisation-over-elderly-care-says-Archbishop.html>

■ Youth Parliament rejects campaigning for gay marriage

The British Youth Parliament has rejected campaigning for same-sex marriage, after it came bottom in a vote of priorities for 2013. The issue received just 22 votes, whereas the most popular campaign, a curriculum to prepare young people for real life, got 154 votes. Each year, 11 to 18-year-olds from each part of the UK debate priorities for the coming year in a special session in the House of Commons. George Poole, an 18-year-old openly homosexual MYP (Member of the Youth Parliament) for Cornwall, said that whilst same-sex marriage is an issue 'close to home' for him, he needed to 'think of the young people who won't benefit from this policy'. And Jack Lewis, a 15-year-old MYP for Richmond-Upon-Thames, said there are more important issues to be campaigning about, such as youth unemployment.

Pray: for the Government to note the result of this vote along with the views of so many groups calling for current proposals to be dropped. (Pr.16:9)

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/british-youth-parliament-rejects-campaigning-for-gay-marriage/>

■ Scouts consider removing 'God' from promise

The UK Scouts Association has launched a public consultation on whether an alternative non-religious pledge should be introduced for atheists. The existing Scout Promise reads: 'On my honour, I promise that I will do my best, to do my duty to God and to the Queen, to help other people and to keep the Scout Law.' But the National Secular Society wrote to the Scouts in March to say that atheist children and potential leaders were being excluded because of the reference to God. The Scouting movement is 105 years old but numbers of children joining are on the increase. Membership is up from 444,936 in 2005 to 525,364 this year. There are a further 35,000 young people on waiting lists. UK Scout Chief Commissioner Wayne Bulpitt said, 'We are regularly seeking the views of our members and we will use the information gathered by the consultation to help shape the future of Scouting for the coming years.'

Pray: that pressure from a small atheist minority will not cause the movement to revise its founding principles. (1Cor.3:10)

More: <http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/social/scouts-consider-removing-god-from-promise>

■ Gagged - judge who dared to stick up for marriage

A judge was ordered to keep a 'lower profile' on Tuesday - after he spoke out in favour of marriage. Judicial watchdogs rebuked High Court family law judge Sir Paul Coleridge following protests about his involvement in a campaign to make marriage 'the gold standard of relationships'. Sir Paul is listed as 'founder and chairman' of the Marriage Foundation think-tank and boosted its launch with a series of high-profile interviews and newspaper articles. But a barrister complained to the Office for Judicial Complaints (OJC), the disciplinary body for judges, that Sir Paul was breaking rules that prevent judges associating themselves with any 'organisation, group or cause'. The disciplinary panel, led by Lord Chancellor Chris Grayling and a senior High Court judge, President of the Queen's Bench Division Sir John Thomas, found there had been no judicial misconduct. The OJC said: 'Mr Justice Coleridge has agreed to keep a lower profile role within the organisation.'

Pray: that Sir Paul's interviews will have raised the profile of marriage and may his influence continue to bear fruit. (Heb.13:4)

More: <http://www.anglican-mainstream.net/2012/12/05/gagged-judge-who-dared-to-stick-up-for-marriage/>

■ Come clean with God this Advent

The Bishop of Wolverhampton is encouraging people to admit their transgressions to God this Advent - and be thankful they are forgiven. The Right Reverend Clive Gregory was led to reflect on the issue of sin and forgiveness after recently

receiving a motoring fine. Writing in his Pastoral Letter for December, Bishop Gregory considers the way in which some transgressions come to light and others do not. He recommends Advent as a season to examine our own hearts and hold our failings up to the light of Jesus' teaching so that we can be wiped clean before Christmas. The truth is that countless transgressions (motoring and otherwise) go unnoticed and unpunished every minute of every day. He encouraged people to make themselves accountable to God 'with a fresh transparency' this Advent.

Pray: with thanks for the opportunity to receive forgiveness as we take time to confess and seek the Lord. (1Sam.15:25)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/thank.god.this.advent.says.bishop/31185.htm>

EUROPE

■ Sweden: Row over school ban on mentioning Jesus at Advent

A Swedish ban on mentioning Jesus in school Advent services has been attacked by Government ministers – with one calling it 'ridiculous'. Last week the National Agency for Education in Sweden said end of term services in church were allowed, but prayers, blessings or declarations of faith were prohibited. However, Education Minister Jan Björklund said 'pastors should be able to read the Christmas gospel, refer to the Bible, and explain why we celebrate this Christian holiday'. He criticised the agency's interpretation of the law, and commented: 'If this ridiculous debate continues year after year, I'm ready to review the Education Act'. Social Minister Göran Hägglund said he was 'tired' of having the discussion, commenting: 'The National Agency for Education is straining out gnats and swallowing camels.' Mr Hägglund said Swedish students have bigger things to worry about'.

Pray: against those who attack our faith; and pray that the Education Minister will use his influence to bring about changes in the law. (2Tim.1:13)

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/row-over-swedish-school-ban-on-mentioning-jesus-at-advent/>

■ Eurozone unemployment hits record high

Unemployment in the eurozone hit a record high in October, with more than 170,000 extra jobs lost and youth joblessness at almost 24 per cent, as the economy slumped into recession. Overall, the eurozone had a jobless rate of 11.7 per cent in October, up from 11.6 per cent in September, with the numbers out of work rising to 18.7 million from 18.49 million, the Eurostat data agency said. Year-on-year figures from the agency showed a particularly bleak picture for under 25-year-olds, with almost one in four out of work both in the 17-nation eurozone, and 27-nation European Union - against one in five a year earlier. Compared with October 2011, an extra 279,000 young people were out of work in the EU, and 350,000 in the eurozone in October this year. The youth unemployment rate rose to 23.9 per cent in the eurozone and to 23.4 percent in the EU compared with 21.2 per cent and 21.9 per cent respectively a year earlier, Eurostat said.

Pray: that the authorities across the eurozone will be able to find a solution to the unemployment problem.

More: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2012/11/20121130121846588948.html>

WORLDWIDE

■ NIGERIA: Inside the lion's den

The following is a portion of a report from a British-Kenyan who visited Maiduguri: 'Before the chaos took hold, I remembered Maiduguri as a surprisingly cosmopolitan and peaceful town, with an eclectic mix of people of different faiths, ethnicities, and subcultures; different types of food and music - ordinary people, with a somewhat royal air, steeped in tradition with a somewhat modern and outward look. During my recent time there, I found a Maiduguri under siege by Boko Haram fighters and the Joint Task Force. The colour described above was replaced by a city enmeshed in road blocks, checkpoint and sandbags on every major road and intersection. The city was patrolled by heavily armed military personnel. We heard bombs exploding, and bullets being fired – followed by the screeching of JTF sirens that seemed to be coming from all directions every 2-3 hours. Father David Bridling, from St Patrick's Catholic Church said half the Christian inhabitants of Borno State have left.'

Pray: for the tens of thousands who have fled from Maiduguri. May they know God's provision and protection, especially over this Christmas period. (Ps.11)

More: <http://www.informationnigeria.org/2012/12/inside-the-lions-den-of-nigerias-boko-haram.html>

■ Nigeria: Still safe? Churches burn, 10 killed

Christians living and doing business were said to have been warned earlier in a letter to leave the area or risk being attacked. Then 10 Christians were killed in Kupwal village on Saturday in Chibok Local Government Area when gunmen attacked the village and churches. In a similar attack in Ngala in Borno State, gunmen numbering 50 attacked churches, the police and Immigration posts, leaving several dead and injured. Against this backdrop and recent attacks on the military church in Jaji and the Special Anti Robbery Squad (SARS) Headquarters in Abuja; and in response to media reports that nowhere is safe in Nigeria, the presidency has assured Nigerians that in spite of the situation, the country is still largely safe and secure. The words of assurance by the presidency were contained in a statement signed by the Special Adviser to the President on Public Affairs, Dr Doyin Okupe.

Pray: for God in His mercy to hear the cries of those in fear of activists and criminal gangs and may He enable the government to establish safety across the whole country. (Ps.7:9)

More: <http://www.tribune.com.ng/news2013/index.php/en/component/k2/item/402-gunmen-burn-churches-border-post-kill-10-%E2%80%A2murder-emirate-council-member-%E2%80%A2nigeria-still-safe-presidency>

■ Syria: Weapons of mass destruction

NATO expressed 'grave' concern that the Syrian government may use its chemical weapons and agreed to deploy Patriot surface-to-air missiles to Turkey for protection from any spill-over of the Syrian civil war. Sources reported on Monday that the Israeli government asked Jordan twice in the last two months to grant Tel Aviv a green light to strike what Israel claims

to be Syrian chemical weapons facilities. See: <http://www.globalresearch.ca/israel-asked-jordans-approval-to-strike-syrian-facilities/5314087> US intelligence detected signs that the Syrian regime was moving their chemical weapons components around various sites in recent days, according to a senior US defence official and a second US official. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly about intelligence matters. Last February Al-Jazeera television reported that gas masks were being distributed to Syrian refugees in camps located along the Turkish-Syrian border and humanitarian activists were worried about the possibility of the Syrian regime using unconventional weapons against Syrian refugees. See: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/video/2012-12/05/c_132021049.htm

Pray: that the Syrian Government will not resort to chemical warfare. (Pr.29:7)

More: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/feedarticle/10555850>

■ **Afghanistan: Midwives**

In March NGOs started withdrawing medical care in Afghanistan and we were asked to pray that medical advances would not be lost to people in rural areas that those delivering medical care would know God's provision. Today we hear that in some provinces the number of women dying during childbirth is dropping significantly because more local women are being trained as midwives and then returning to their villages to provide care before, during and after delivery. However there is still concern for some women with difficult cases requiring long journeys to hospital over very poor roads who are not surviving the trip. Please pray for more opportunities for similar organizations and trainers to develop in the country, and that existing programmes are implemented in more provinces; pray also that the midwives and the women they care for would be introduced to the One who is the Father of all Life.

Pray: that throughout Afghanistan all women and children would receive the care they need to live healthy, productive lives (Ps.95:7)

More: <http://www.afghanrelief.org/aro-projects/midwife-project>

■ **Myanmar: Ethiopian-like starvation**

It's a situation being ignored by the international media and governments around the world. In May 2012 violence broke out between Buddhists (Rakhine people) and Muslim (Rohingya people) Although the Myanmar government says the situation is normal, violence continues to occur and between 80,000 - 200,000 people have been displaced. The Rakhine people consider the Rohingya illegal immigrants living in their land, even though many of the Rohingya have lived there for many generations and have no other home. People have set up shelters along the road and the refugee population is swelling into a humanitarian crisis with small children and infants dying on a regular basis. A Christian organization called Partners Relief & Development (PRAD) reported that those needing care is growing every day and there is a need for more teams to go to Myanmar with aid and more world governments to speak loudly against what is happening.

Pray: for light in this very dark place, may the situation come to the attention of world governments and for relief to be released to the starving, dying and homeless. (Ps.4:1b)

More: <http://www.mnnonline.org/article/17966>

■ **Egypt: Morsi opponents continue protests**

Opponents of Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi say they will continue their demonstration against a controversial draft constitution and Morsi's decree granting himself wide-ranging new powers. Police fired tear gas on Tuesday to disperse them. Mr Morsi's Islamist Muslim Brotherhood movement has called for demonstrations in his support outside the palace. Some anti-Morsi protesters have erected tents around the perimeter wall after Tuesday saw tens of thousands of demonstrators besiege the palace and clash with police. Eighteen people were injured in the brief burst of violence, the Mena news agency reported. At one point, the security forces issued a statement saying President Morsi had to be hustled away for his own safety. It was another sign of how deeply divided this country is as a referendum on a new constitution approaches in less than two weeks. Several newspapers refused to go to press on Tuesday in protest at what they said was the lack of press freedom in the constitution.

Pray: for peace and not war to dominate. (Ps.122:7)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20605134>

■ **Hundreds dead in Philippines typhoon**

More than 320 people have died in the southern Philippines after Typhoon Bopha swept across the south of the country. The total number of fatalities, which stood at around 90 on Tuesday, jumped as rescuers on Wednesday reached remote mountain villages cut off by floods and landslides. A government spokeswoman, Fe Maestre, told the Associated Press news agency that at least 151 people died in the worst-hit province of Compostela Valley. That included 66 villagers and soldiers who died in a flash flood that swamped two emergency storm shelters and a military camp as Bopha devastated New Bataan town the day before. Maestre said an unspecified number of villagers remained missing in New Bataan. Bopha swept across the island of Mindanao, destroying homes with 210km per hour gusts on Tuesday before headed towards the South China Sea.

Pray: for the people of the Philippines, for those who are suffering and need relief. (Lam.3:56)

More: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia-pacific/2012/12/201212553732512410.html>

PRAYER FORUM OF THE BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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