

# PRAYER ALERT...

An initiative of the Prayer Forum of the British Isles & Ireland  
www.prayer-alert.net editor@prayer-alert.net

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## BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

### ■ FRIDAY FOCUS: January 9th - Hope for our nations - Psalm 2

During this difficult time -

#### Pray:

- That as a nation, we will seek God and turn from our wicked ways and that He will hear from heaven and have mercy on us and heal our land.
- For wise judgement for Gordon Brown, Alistair Darling and the Government on how to deal with the current financial situation and how to stabilise the economy.

**More:** [http://worldprayer.org.uk/uploads/Friday\\_Focus\\_Prayer\\_Points\\_Jan\\_2009.doc](http://worldprayer.org.uk/uploads/Friday_Focus_Prayer_Points_Jan_2009.doc)

### ■ Church of England publishes prayer for the redundant

The Church of England has published a new prayer for the growing ranks of the unemployed to help them through troubled times. The prayer has been written to offer comfort to those who have been sacked as the economy heads into recession, by recognising their fears and suggesting that belief in God can help them cope. It includes the verse: 'Hear me as I cry out in confusion, help me to think clearly, and calm my soul.' The Church has written a second prayer from the viewpoint of someone who has kept their job while others in the same office or factory have lost theirs, describing their feelings of sadness, guilt and worries about the future. It asks of God: 'In the midst of this uncertainty, help me to keep going: to work to the best of my ability, taking each day at a time.' The two prayers have been published on the Church of England's website and are also being printed in a leaflet to be handed out in churches.

**Pray:** that people will understand the power of prayer in helping us face the difficulties of the economic downturn whatever our own circumstances. (Eph 6:18)

**More:** <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstoppers/religion/4141516/Church-of-England-publishes-prayer-for-the-redundant.html>

### ■ It's time to appoint Britain's first woman bishop

Senior politicians are in favour of breaking up the all-male enclave of the 26 bishops in the House of Lords, the cleric tipped to become Britain's first female Anglican bishop believes. Canon Jane Hedges says that there is increasing discomfort at the highest levels of the Establishment that the power wielded in the Lords by bishops is entirely in the hands of men. As Canon Steward at Westminster Abbey, she is in a position to know. She has access to the corridors of power and has met nearly everyone at the highest levels of the Establishment, from the Queen and the Prime Minister down. In an interview

with The Times, Canon Hedges, 53, said: 'We pick up from parliamentarians that there would be strong support for women bishops.'

**Pray:** that all those involved in resolving the often controversial problems will be open to the Holy Spirit in prayer so that they will work towards a church that best meets the purposes of God. (Pr.1:5)

**More:** <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/faith/article5435299.ece>

#### ■ New Evangelical Alliance leader brings fresh hope

The Evangelical Alliance has appointed Steve Clifford - chair of Hope 08 and Soul Survivor - as its new General Director. Clifford, 54, whose innovation has been behind a range of exciting national Church campaigns in the past decade, will take over the role as head of one of Britain's oldest evangelical organisations in early April. Already a long-serving Evangelical Alliance board member, Clifford says he is inspired by the direction the Alliance is taking and honoured to be following in the footsteps of previous General Director Joel Edwards. 'The Church is alive and kicking in the UK and evangelicals are often at the forefront of local initiatives,' he said. 'At this time of incredible change and crisis, there are wonderful opportunities for the Church to present the good news of Jesus in words and action. The Evangelical Alliance is uniquely positioned to bring evangelicals together to serve our communities and to work together with others to see our nation transformed.'

**Pray:** for Steve as he prepares to take up his new role and that as he takes time to pause, reflect and listen to God he will be open to the Holy Spirit's leading. (Pr.1:5)

**More:** <http://www.eauk.org/articles/new-general-director-announced.cfm>

#### ■ Ghurkhas decision delay criticised

The government has been criticised for delays in producing a new policy on Ghurkha veterans wanting to settle in the UK. The Ghurkhas - backed by Joanna Lumley - won their case in September. The High Court had decreed that immigration rules that excluded from the UK, Ghurkhas who retired before 1997, was unlawful. The government was to review all cases by the end of 2008 but it has now asked a tribunal for a further three months. A solicitor for the Ghurkhas said he would ask the tribunal to enforce the ruling unless ministers took action. David Enright said a new policy had been promised before Christmas but the government 'did not know' when it would be published. He said he would be going back to the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal in 21 days to ask it to enforce the original ruling. Mr Enright said there were more than 300 veterans in the UK waiting for their cases to be decided.

**Pray:** for our government that they will not go back on their promises but honour them. (Mt.5:37)

**More:** <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7815775.stm>

#### ■ Atheist bus ads say 'probably no God'

As atheist adverts hit the British nation's buses on Tuesday, one faith-based think tank says they will only get people thinking more about God.' So wrote Maria Mackay for the UK website, [www.christiantoday.com](http://www.christiantoday.com) She said that The British Humanist Association's adverts carry the slogan 'There's probably no God. Now stop worrying and enjoy your life.' They will appear on 600 buses across the country, including 30 of London's bendy buses, as well as London tube stations. The posters are the atheist answer to a number of high profile Christian advertising campaigns on London buses and billboards, notably the Alpha Course, whose posters ask, 'Is this it?' and 'If God did exist, what would you ask him?' The public theology think tank Theos has welcomed the campaign, saying it will encourage more people to think about the existence of God. (See Prayer Alert 4308, 4808)

**Pray:** that God will use this advertising to raise awareness that will promote genuine enquiry that will in turn bring people to Him. (Ro.8:28)

**More:** <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/2009/s09010043.htm>

## EUROPE

#### ■ Spain: Atheist bus ad campaign provokes bitterness in Barcelona

The posting of atheist advertising on Barcelona's buses has been branded 'an attack on all religions'. Next week, Barcelona will become the first city in predominantly Catholic Spain to copy the controversial UK campaign. Madrid, Valencia and other cities are being targeted to run similar campaigns. Campaigners say that with 20% of Spaniards professing they do not believe in God, it is time atheism becomes a visible phenomenon. 'It is time for non-believers to make themselves seen and display their pride in their own convictions,' said the Catalan Atheists group. The campaign has provoked a reaction from the Catholic archbishopric of Barcelona. 'Faith in God is not a source of worry, nor is it an obstacle for enjoying life,' it said in a statement. 'It is an attack on all religions,' said Javier Maria Perez-Roldan of the church's Tomas Moro centre, blaming the socialist government for the privately funded campaign. 'The government has created an atmosphere of belligerence.'

**Pray:** that this campaign will lead people to seek the truth and find the living God. (Ac.14:15)

**More:** <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/jan/07/atheist-bus-advertising-spain>

#### ■ Spain: A battleground for Church's future

The Macías Picavea primary school hardly looks like the seat of revolution. But it has become a battleground in an intensifying war between church and state in Spain. In an unprecedented decision here, a judge ruled in November that the public school must remove the crucifixes from classroom walls. Although the Roman Catholic Church was not named in the suit, it criticized the ruling as an 'unjust' attack on a historical and cultural symbol - and a sign of the Spanish state's

increasingly militant secularism. If the judge's ruling was the latest blow to the Catholic Church's once mighty grip on Spain, the church's response showed Spain to be a crucible for the future of church-state relations in Europe. Since 2004, the Socialist government has legalized gay marriage and fast-track divorce, and it is seeking to loosen laws on abortion and euthanasia. But in response, the church and religious Catholics have been pushing back, seeking a greater voice in public life. The result is that the church is in a full-throated war with the government.

**Pray:** for the soldiers of Christ that God will equip them for the battle. (Eph.6:10-20)

**More:** [http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/06/world/europe/06church.html?\\_r=1&hp](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/06/world/europe/06church.html?_r=1&hp)

## WORLDWIDE

### ■ Israel/Gaza: Gaza's children in the firing line

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 660 Palestinians have been killed since 27 December, including 176 children and 86 women; 2,950 have been injured, of whom 40 percent are children and 18 percent women. A statement released by the Israeli Foreign Ministry on 6 January said: 'Israel is doing all it can to avoid harming non-combatants; any collateral injury to them is the responsibility of Hamas.' Children are vulnerable for other reasons: 50,000 of them were malnourished in Gaza before the offensive and half of those under two had anaemia, according to Save the Children. Furthermore, all primary healthcare services for the population, including vaccination services, have stopped, according to the WHO, placing children at risk of diseases such as hepatitis and measles. An estimated one million people, including 560,000 children, are living without water or electricity, said Save the Children. Lack of electricity for heating at night presents a hypothermia risk for children, particularly babies and newborns, it added.

**Pray:** for children caught up in this conflict that they will be protected not just physically but mentally from the horrors of war. (Ps.72:4)

**More:** <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=82250>

### ■ Israel/Gaza: Holy Land Christians seek urgent prayer

With the International Red Cross warning of a 'full-blown' humanitarian crisis in Gaza, Bible Societies in the Holy Land have appealed to Christians to pray and support those caught up in the conflict between Israel and Hamas. 'Our hearts are broken as we witness the escalation of hostilities in Gaza and southern Israel,' said Victor Kalisher, Director of the Bible Society in Israel, in a joint message issued by the Bible Societies of Israel and the occupied Palestinian Territories. 'Israelis and Palestinians are at war; we are not. Through our single identity in Christ and his lordship we experience his peace, practice his love, and hold on to him as our hope'. The Bible Societies are asking Christians to pray for a 'speedy end' to the war and respect for the sanctity of human life, as well as for Bible Society staff in the Holy Land as they continue to reach out to communities with the Word and practical aid.

**Pray:** Let us join together with all those who are seeking a speedy end to this conflict and seek God with a cry in our hearts for His mercy. (1Kg.8:28)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/holy.land.christians.seek.urgent.prayer/22262.htm>

### ■ Iran: 70,000 Students ready for suicide attacks against Israel

In comments monitored on Tuesday, the state-run Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) said over 70,000 Iranian students have volunteered to be suicide bombers against Israel. IRNA added the students are waiting on President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's response to their request in an open letter for permission to fight Israel in support of Hamas. There was no immediate response from the hard-line Iranian leader, but Ahmadinejad said earlier that Israel should be 'wiped out from the map' and cast doubt on the Holocaust in which an estimated six million Jews died. IRNA said five hard-line student groups and clerics launched a registration drive for suicide bombers last week, but it was unclear how many had registered. The latest reported preparations for suicide attacks came shortly after IRNA reported that several Iranian students broke into the British Embassy residence in Tehran, accusing Britain of supporting Israel. There were no reports of injuries and the protest soon ended.

**Pray:** against this move amongst the students and pray that the President will be granted real wisdom. (Pr.6:16-19)

**More:** <http://www.bosnewslife.com/4983-iran-70000-students-ready-for-suicide-attacks-against-israel>

### ■ Zimbabwe: Cholera cases on the rise

The outbreak of cholera in Zimbabwe has flared up once again, with more than 1,000 new cases reported in a single day, the United Nations has said. According to the World Health Organisation, the outbreak had recently shown signs of slowing but is now once again on the rise. On Tuesday, 1,080 new infections were reported, with 21 people dying. More than 1,700 people have died since the beginning of the cholera outbreak in August last year, with about 35,000 infections across the country. The rapid spread of the waterborne disease has been blamed on the collapse of Zimbabwe's health and sanitation infrastructure. Human rights groups say the humanitarian crisis has been exacerbated by the refusal of Robert Mugabe, the Zimbabwean president, to acknowledge the extent of the problem. Last month, Mugabe said the cholera outbreak was being used as an excuse by Western powers such as Britain to invade Zimbabwe and overthrow him. (See Prayer Alert 4708)

**Pray:** that the health professionals will be able to control this outbreak and seek the Lord once more for a solution to the overall problem of just leadership. (Am.5:14-15)

**More:** <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/africa/2009/01/2009177649830576.html>

### ■ Korea: Global prayer request

On January 14th, the 102nd anniversary of the Great Pyongyang Revival, the most important Christian revival in Korean history, Christians around the globe are being encouraged to intercede and fast for a spiritual breakthrough in North Korea. For six years in a row North Korea has been on the top of Open Doors' persecution list. Christians have been beaten, arrested, tortured, or killed because of their religious beliefs. A local source estimates the number of underground Christians to be at least 200,000, and it's likely that there are as many as 400,000 to half-a-million believers. At least a quarter of the Christians are imprisoned for their faith in political prison camps, from which people rarely get out of alive. However, the Christians are brave and they dream of reopening the churches of their forefathers. Source: NK Prayer Network, Open Doors, <http://www.joelnews.org/frontpage.htm>

Also South Korea's Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant leaders have together declared 2009 as the Year of Prayer for Christian Unity. The Christian unity year will kick off with a prayer service on January 18 at the Olympic Hall in Seoul.

**Pray:** for the people of North Korea and especially for the Christians in their suffering that God would use them for His purposes. Pray for unity of all believers. (Ro.15:5)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/korean.christian.leaders.declare.2009.a.year.of.unity/22255.htm>

### ■ Christian group condemns Burma human rights violations

Christian Solidarity Worldwide says the recent rape and murder of a seven-year-old girl demonstrates the 'culture of impunity' reigning throughout Burma's military regime. The girl is believed to have been shot and killed by a government soldier in the village of Ma Oo Bin in Karen State, north Burma, on December 27. The girl's parents and village leaders reported the case to the local commanding officer but no action has been taken, in spite of eye witnesses coming forward. CSW is supporting calls from the Karen Women's Organisation for the immediate arrest and prosecution of the perpetrator, and for action against the commanding officer for failing to act.

**Pray:** for the Karen peoples as they continue to suffer under the hands of the Burmese military regime. (Mt.5:10)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/christian.group.condemns.burma.human.rights.violations/22251.htm>

## PRAISE REPORTS

### ■ Cuba: Pastors trial suspended

Thank you for your prayers on behalf of Reverend Roberto Rodriguez. (See Prayer Alert 0109) Christian Solidarity Worldwide has learned that the trial, scheduled for that day, was suspended. This may be due to the unexpected attention the case received outside of Cuba. As you may recall the dates of the notification of the trial schedule and the trial itself, which came so close together and just after Christmas, indicate that the authorities hoped that this would go unnoticed by the rest of the world. We are also confident that this is a result of your prayers and intercession. We appreciate your rapid response and would encourage you to continue to pray for Reverend Rodriguez. Although the trial itself was suspended, the charges against him still stand and it is possible he will be brought to trial at a later date. This experience, of course, is extremely stressful and has had a negative impact on the Reverend's health. Source: CSW.

**Praise:** God for the suspension of the trial and pray that the charges against Reverend Rodriguez and his son Pastor Eric Rodriguez will now be dropped. (Js.5:16b)

**More:** Please type or paste in full url starting with <http://>

### ■ USA: Pastor's story of kindness sparks idea for '365 Club'

A small, spontaneous act of kindness by a Chicago area pastor has inspired the creation of the '365 Club' – a Facebook group whose members are each committed to performing 365 acts of kindness in 2009. Since its founding last Friday, more than 250 people have joined the club that so far has a collective commitment to perform more than 100,000 acts of kindness in 2009. The 365 Club was inspired by a real-life story of kindness from Pastor David Ferguson. He had walked into a Kinko's store holding a Starbucks coffee last Friday when one of the employees joked, 'Hey, where is mine?' Ferguson immediately asked, 'What do you want - I'm buying!' He posted his Kinko's-Starbuck story on Facebook and not long after his friend took the idea and set up a Facebook group, '365 Club'. Its motto is: 'Small things done with great love can change the world!' See The 365 Club on [www.Facebook.com](http://www.Facebook.com)

**Praise:** God for this accessible way of spreading the Word of God with simple acts of kindness. (Col.3:12)

**More:** <http://christianpost.com/article/20090105/pastor-s-story-of-kindness-sparks-idea-for-365-club.htm>

## PRAYER FORUM OF BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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Prayer Alert is a partnership project of the Prayer Forum of the British Isles and Ireland  
C/O World Prayer Centre, Cornerstone House, 5 Ethel Street, Birmingham, B2 4BG, England