

PRAYER ALERT...

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

Issue 0409

Website

Contact Us

Donations

Friday 23 January 2009

■ British Isles & Ireland

- [FRIDAY FOCUS: 23rd January - Hope for my community - Leviticus 19:13-18](#)
- [Archbishops encourage families to demonstrate kindness over Lent](#)
- [Prayers for 'let down' children](#)
- [Schoolgirls are being lured into prostitution, MP warns](#)
- [Black Anglican leader says church must grasp chance for change](#)
- [BBC presenter says it's difficult to speak about God](#)
- [Christian bus driver protests 'no God' ads](#)

■ Europe

- [Turkey: Lawyers move to expand scope of Malatya trial](#)
- [Rome: Pope helps Catholics to discern true visions from fakes](#)

■ Worldwide

- [USA: Obama's search for spiritual home](#)
- [Gaza: Smuggling tunnels operating again](#)
- [Middle East: Reconciliation](#)
- [Bangladesh: Confidential prayer request](#)
- [DR Congo: Uganda rebels torch crowded church](#)
- [Iraq: Fresh anti-Christian violence](#)
- [Eritrea: Christian deaths mount in prisons](#)

■ Praise Reports

- [USA: Gaza rightly remembered](#)
- [Italy: 'No God' bus ads banned](#)

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ **FRIDAY FOCUS: 23rd January - Hope for my community - Leviticus 19:13-18**

God loves your neighbourhood. **Pray:** • For God's presence to come in my family, my street, my community, my town, my city, and my work place. • For perseverance for all those involved with work in their communities; for God's favour to bring the transformation that is needed in my area.

More: http://worldprayer.org.uk/uploads/Friday_Focus_Prayer_Points_Jan_2009.doc

■ **Archbishops encourage families to demonstrate kindness over Lent**

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York, Dr Rowan Williams and Dr John Sentamu, are encouraging families to share in simple acts of kindness together during this Lent. The third instalment of the Church of England's 'Love Life Live Lent' promotes the idea that doing something positive for friends, neighbours or the wider local community can be as transforming and spiritually beneficial as 'giving something up' for Lent. The Archbishops say: 'With God's help we can change the world for good. Together we can build better and more generous communities. Together we can lighten the load on our planet. We show God's love when we do these things.' This year, Love Life Live Lent returns with two pocket-sized booklets published by Church House Publishing, based on the 'best of' the previous series – one for children, and one for young people and adults – and, new for 2009, the family book packed with extra hints, tips and advice on completing a Lent's worth of actions as a family.

Pray: for the Church as it reaches out during Lent revealing the love of God building a better world. (1Jn.4:7)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/archbishops.encourage.families.to.demonstrate.kindness.over.lent/22359.htm>

■ **Prayers for 'let down' children**

Church leaders in Doncaster prayed together for the town's children, after seven died from abuse or neglect. An inter-denominational hour of prayer was held in the Minster on Wednesday evening, attended by leaders of other Christian churches. Organiser the Rev Mark Wrigglesworth said it was an opportunity to express regret that children had been let down by the people of Doncaster. He continued: 'It provided an opportunity to pray for the children and those who work with them, including the inquiry teams, and also to celebrate all the good things that children bring to enrich our lives.' A government inquiry was ordered and serious case reviews set up into the deaths involving neglect and abuse of seven children in the town. Two of the children were murdered by their fathers and four were under the age of one at the time of their deaths.

Pray: for all those affected by these terrible events and for the work of the Church in supporting them. (Ac.1:14)

More: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/south_yorkshire/7841669.stm

■ Schoolgirls are being lured into prostitution, MP warns

Labour's Barry Sheerman, chairman of the Children, Schools and Families Select Committee, claimed skilful methods were being used by criminals to lure teenagers into the sex trade. He warned the 'growing national problem' was being made worse by the use of the 'sophisticated techniques' and new technology. In a Westminster Hall debate, Mr Sheerman said: 'Children as young as 12 are brought into a life of prostitution'. He likened the psychological techniques employed at first to those used by US cult leaders. He added: 'These men who prey on children have great skill in identifying the vulnerability of these children whatever the background they come from.' He added: 'It is getting worse because of the technology. Children are more vulnerable through the internet and through mobile phones.' Mr Sheerman said there was evidence that where multi-agency approaches were used between police and child services the problem could be curtailed.

Pray: that the authorities would work together to form a seamless approach to the problem.

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/4303775/Schoolgirls-are-being-lured-into-prostitution-MP-warns.html>

■ Black Anglican leader says church must grasp chance for change

A senior black Anglican has said that the Church of England and the Anglican Communion should grasp the climate of change signalled by Barack Obama's ascendancy, using it to transform their own culture. Rev Rose Hudson Wilkin, chair of the Church of England's Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns, said 'It is totally right that there was joy inside the tears of many for the whole of the United States. But the moment also gave the world a new iconography - a first family that is not defined by any one ethnic group. This is a symbol of immense significance to millions of people, not just in America but across the world.' She went on: 'As a Church we must decide on how we will respond in the light of this truly transformative moment. Despite the contentious issues around the world-wide Communion, the election of Obama is a prophetic pointer to the possibilities which open up if hearts and minds have the confidence to change by the power of the Holy Spirit.'

Pray: for the Church around the world as it responds to the challenge to play its part in the new approach to justice and freedom for all as set out in President Obama's inaugural speech. (Gal.6:10)

More: <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/8412>

■ BBC presenter says it's difficult to speak about God

BBC presenter Jeremy Vine has spoken about the difficulties he faces in openly discussing his Christian faith on air. In an interview with Reform magazine, the Radio 2 and Panorama presenter admitted he found it difficult to reconcile his beliefs with his job. 'One of the things I think, which may sound bizarre, is that Christ is who he said he was. I don't think I'd put that out on my show; I suppose there is a bit of a firewall between thinking that and doing the job I do.' Mr Vine, who converted to Christianity in his twenties and is a practising Anglican, went on to say it would be problematic for him to share his beliefs during discussions on his radio programmes. He continued: 'You can't express views that were common currency 30 or 40 years ago. Arguably the parameters of what you might call 'right thinking' are probably closing. Sadly, along with that has come the fact that it's almost socially unacceptable to say you believe in God.'

Pray: for Jeremy and those like him who find it difficult to declare the Christian faith in work. Pray against so called political correctness that implies Christianity must be suppressed for fear of upsetting other people. (2Co.12:10)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.co.uk/article/bbc.presenter.says.its.difficult.to.speak.about.god/22337.htm>

■ Christian bus driver protests 'no God' ads

A Christian bus driver refused to drive buses carrying the advertisement that declares 'There's probably no God'. Speaking to BBC Radio Solent, Ron Heather said he felt 'shock' and 'horror' at the slogan on the adverts when he turned up for work last Saturday. Mr Heather told BBC Radio Solent, 'I was just about to board and there it was staring me in the face, my first reaction was shock horror. I think it was the starkness of this advert which implied there was no God. I felt that I could not drive that bus, I told my managers and they said they haven't got another one and I'd thought I better go home, so I did'. Some Christians have generally welcomed the adverts, saying they provide an opportunity to talk about God. The Advertising Standards Authority has ruled that it does not breach the advertising code, it assessed 326 complaints. (See Praise item and Prayer Alert 0209)

Pray: for all those who challenge the world view for the sake of their faith. (Col.2.6:8)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/christian.bus.driver.protests.no.god.ads/22328.htm>

EUROPE

■ Turkey: Lawyers move to expand scope of Malatya trial

Lawyers in the case of three Christians who were murdered for their faith here are lining up witnesses in an effort to expand the accused from five young suspects to subversive forces at the top of state power. Evidence in recent hearings suggests the April 2007 murders in southeast Turkey were instigated by Ergenekon, a loose collection of ultra-nationalist generals, businessmen, mafia and journalists who planned to engineer a coup d'état in Turkey. At a hearing at Malatya's Third Criminal Court last Friday, plaintiff attorneys said they would like to call as a witness Ergun Poyraz, a journalist arrested in 2007 who has been linked to Ergenekon. Prosecuting attorneys said they believe that Poyraz was not directly involved in planning the murders but has important knowledge of the players within Ergenekon. They hope his testimony will help sort out the tangled web of connections and determine the role of Malatya security forces in the attack. (See Prayer Alert 1607)

Pray: that the truth will come out and lead to justice for those who died for their faith. (Pr.28:5)

More: <http://www.compassdirect.org/en/display.php?page=news&lang=en&length=short&idelement=5762&backpage=summaries>

■ Rome: Pope helps Catholics to discern true visions from fakes

The Pope is publishing guidelines for assessing the truth of heavenly visitations in the wake of a big increase in fraudulent claims. Benedict XVI wants the Church to be more thorough in its investigations into claims by people who say they have had visions of Mary or Jesus. The criteria will also enable bishops to identify false messages, stigmata, weeping and bleeding statues and Eucharistic miracles. Exorcists may even be involved in discerning whether some supernatural occurrences are from God or are demonic. A handbook will give detailed instructions on how bishops should deal with various types of apparition. It is reported that the Pope is worried that Catholics are being deceived by 'pseudo-mystics' and led astray.

Pray: for discernment and an openness to the Spirit of Truth to reveal God's truth. (1Cor.2:14)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/vaticancityandhollysee/4223793/Pope-orders-bishops-to-root-out-false-claims-of-visions.html>

WORLDWIDE

■ USA: Obama's search for spiritual home

Barack Obama and his family have been on the lookout for a church ever since the president-elect left Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago in May, in the wake of the controversy sparked by his former pastor Rev. Jeremiah Wright Jr. Obama said at the time his presence at the church had created a hardship for other members of the congregation. So those considerations are no doubt on the Obamas' minds as they continue their search. On Sunday, Obama and his family attended service at the historic and predominantly black Nineteenth Street Baptist Church in Washington, D.C. one of several the Obamas are considering as they search for a new place of worship. Sunday's service was the first Obama had attended in five months. The President attended a service on Inauguration Day at St. John's Episcopal Church near the White House.

Pray: for President Obama and his family as they adjust to the lack of privacy, imposed changes in life-style, isolation from established friendships and all the many large and minor decisions to be made in the coming weeks. Also pray for good communication within the administration team. (Ps.32:8;Heb.13:17)

More: <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2009/01/19/obama-family-searches-new-church-spiritual-home/>

■ Gaza: Smuggling tunnels operating again

As security envoy Amos Gilad met Egyptian officials Thursday to discuss a long-term truce with Hamas, AP Television News showed Palestinian smugglers filling fuel trucks with petrol that came through a tunnel from Egypt, workers clearing blocked tunnels and bulldozers carrying out repairs. One of the goals of the IDF offensive was to stop smuggling through hundreds of tunnels under the border. Pray for intelligence cooperation regarding arms shipments en-route to Sinai being smuggled into Gaza. Last week the cooperation led to both Israel's and Egypt's refusal to allow an Iranian boat - claiming to be carrying humanitarian aid - to dock in Egypt or in Gaza. The assessment in Jerusalem and Cairo was that the boat was loaded with weaponry for Hamas. Pray also for the Egyptian side of the Philadelphi Corridor, where Hamas digs its smuggling tunnels, where Egypt has 750 border policemen and asked Israel to increase that number to 2,000.

Pray: that the borders are kept open to food, fuel, medicine and everything necessary to respond to this man made humanitarian disaster and closed to the inflow of weapons and military forces. (Ps.75:6-7)

More: <http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1232292926583&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull>

■ Middle East: Reconciliation

As conflict in the Holy Land persists, believers in Israel and Palestinian areas can be found on both sides of the conflict. They too are impacted by the cycle of violence and enmity that is present in their societies. At the same time, many Palestinian Arab Christians and Israeli Messianic Jews have reached across the extensive gap between their peoples and developed relationships. Many believers in the land have chosen to pursue reconciliation, following Biblical commandments to love our neighbours, brothers and even our enemies. In order to foster and facilitate the process of reconciliation, Palestinian and Israeli congregational leaders founded the ministry of Musalaha in 1990. 'Musalaha' is an Arabic word that means forgiveness and reconciliation. Be encouraged and visit their website by clicking the more button below, while continuing to pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

Pray: and ask God to promote, encourage and support Musalaha and all agencies and individuals working for unity and peace at such a time as this. (Col. 3:13,14)

More: <http://www.musalaha.org/perpose.php>

■ Bangladesh: Confidential prayer request

Part of a prayer request from a missionary/scripture partnership movement asking for prayer for believers and churches who reach out cross-culturally in a growing fellowship. They are asking for God's blessing on new members, and those who will leave their home country to unite with us in 2009. Please pray for creative ideas to use our gifts and talents, and wisdom in how to best use our time. Please pray that we make prayer a priority in our lives and in our work. Pray for our weekly Wednesday group prayer meeting, team prayer times, staff morning devotion and our personal time with God. Pray for workers to facilitate partnerships through which believers will share the Gospel despite social boundaries, and for the forthcoming seminar to bring all participants to a better understanding of who God is and how He works in our lives.(for info on unreached people of Bangladesh click more below.)

Pray: for this and many other groups of pioneer missionaries touching the lives of the unreached and putting hope into words and actions. (Job.5:16)

More: <http://www.joshuaproject.net/definitions.php#unreached>

■ DR Congo: Uganda rebels torch crowded church

It is not clear how many died in a report that Uganda's rebel Lord's Resistance Army torched a church crowded with worshippers holding a prayer vigil in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The attack was the group's latest on villages in the north-east DR Congo, and happened on Saturday in a community just 130km (80 miles) from Dungu, which is the military base of Operation Lightning Thunder - the joint multi-national offensive on the rebels. Human Rights Watch says the LRA has killed at least 620 Congolese civilians and abducted more than 160 children since Christmas Eve. New York-based Human Rights Watch said it had unearthed evidence of a wave of killings by the LRA between 24 December and 13 January in DR Congo. Last week the UN refugee agency UNHCR said the Congolese village of Duru was deserted after the rebels had attacked with looting, killing and burning. (See also Prayer Alert 0109)

Pray: for God's comfort, peace and relief to bereaved, injured, traumatised and homeless people; and for authorities outside of the situation to protect and give relief to this Christian community. (Mt.5:3-10)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/7837526.stm>

■ Iraq: Fresh anti-Christian violence

The abandoned body of 36 year old Christian, Chourik Bagrad, was found in the east of the City of Mosul yesterday by the army. AsiaNews sources confirmed that it was a an execution style killing with multiple gunshot wounds to the head. Chourik Bagrad was a Christian from the Armenian Church and his brother works in Mosul University. The same sources report a Christian man was kidnapped on New Years Eve in Mosul and held hostage for four days. He was only freed after the payment of 50 thousand dollars ransom. During his detention he was tortured over and over again. 'If we hadn't paid the ransom they would certainly have killed him.' the source confirms. 'They are criminal gangs, who kidnap for money. They want the Christian' money.' (Ps.27:2,3,5,&6)

Pray: that the government will improve security standards, and remove the terrorists attempting to drive Christians from their place of birth. (Ps.27:2,3,5,&6)

More: <http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=14227>

■ Eritrea: Christian deaths mount in prisons

Three Christians incarcerated in military prisons for their faith have died in the past four months in Eritrea, the most recent on Friday Jan.16th of a 42-year-old man in solitary confinement. Mehari Gebrenegeuse Asgedom died at the Mitire Military Confinement centre from torture and complications from diabetes. He was a member of the Church of the Living God. Incarcerated Christians from throughout Eritrea have been transferred to the Mitire prison in the country's northeast. The government of President Isaias Afwerki has stepped up its campaign against churches it has outlawed, earning it a spot on the U.S. Department of State's list of worst violators of religious freedom.

Pray: against President Isaias Afwerki's continued horrific anti-Christians regime in Eritrea and for God to bring supernatural comfort to those in appalling conditions. (1Co.4:11-14)

More: <http://www.compassdirect.org/en/display.php?page=news&lang=en&length=short&idelement=5764&backpage=summaries>

PRAISE REPORTS

■ USA: Gaza rightly remembered

A quote from Bono on his U2's concert at Barack Obama's inauguration concert, 'freedom is not just an American dream, its also an Irish dream, a European dream, African dream, Israeli dream,' and then a pause followed by, 'AND ALSO A PALESTINIAN DREAM!' This was followed by the song, 'In the name of love'.

Praise: God for the boldness of those who speak out God's truth, love and purposes from a position of influence. (Ps.118:14 & 1Jn.4:18)

More: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1p3o8NnvBa8>

■ Italy: 'No God' bus ads banned

Italian atheists have lost a bid to run 'no God' advertisements on city buses after strong opposition from conservative political parties. The ads wording, 'The bad news is that God doesn't exist. The good news is that you don't need him' were to have been put on buses in Genoa, home to the Catholic cardinal who is head of the Italian Bishops Conference. The mock-up was ready and the contract was sent to the group for signing but the publicity agency changed its mind and said the ad could not run it because it violated an ethics in advertising code, according to Giorgio Villella of The Italian Union of Atheists and Rationalist Agnostics. Atheists in Barcelona, London and Washington have already run 'no God' ads on city buses. (See Prayer Alert 0209)

Praise: God for clear reasoning by the publicity agency and ask the Lord to silence any appeals and overturn any decisions to attempt to run the ads in other Italian cities. (Gal.6:7)

More: http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20090117/od_uk_nm/oukoe_uk_italy_atheists/print

PRAYER FORUM OF BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

Please feel free to distribute Prayer Alert to anyone you feel will benefit from its ministry. All we ask is that you do not edit or change it in any way or charge for its use without contacting us for written permission.