

PRAYER ALERT...

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BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Urgent action call on Equality Bill

Vote in House of Lords 25th January 2010. The Equality Bill threatens to restrict the employment practices of religious organisations—so much so that successful job applicants will not even be required to live out the Faith in relation to sexual ethics. Unfortunately the Government has been interfering with the employment practices of religious organisations since 2003. However, the current Equality Bill makes the situation considerably worse. Under the new Bill, Christian organisations (including Churches) will not be able to refuse employment to someone even if that person lives a lifestyle contrary to the Bible's teaching on sexual ethics. Furthermore, if a Church employed someone who later fell away from the Faith, for example by divorcing his wife and entering into a homosexual relationship, the Church would almost certainly be sued for unlawful discrimination if they terminated the employment on that basis. Click here to watch a 3 minute video:

<http://www.ccfon.org/equalitybill1.php>

Pray: that in our battle with secularism, God's Spirit will prevail as we pray. (1Sa.17:23)

More: <http://www.ccfon.org/view.php?id=956>

■ BBC's 'marginalisation' of religion to be criticised by Church of England's governing body

The BBC's 'marginalisation' of religious programming is to be criticised by the Church of England's governing body. Bishops, clergy and lay members of the General Synod will vote on whether to demand that the state broadcaster explain why its coverage of Christianity on television has declined so steeply in recent years. Output has fallen from 177 hours of religious programming on BBC television in 1987-88 to 155 hours in 2007-08, while the number of general programmes has doubled. A background paper published ahead of the debate next month claims that the few programmes that do still make it onto screens do not celebrate faith but see it as a problem. Mr Holmes, a lay member of the Synod, said that there are now just two regular religious programmes on BBC television: Songs of Praise and The Big Questions. His vote – which is likely to be won - will be held at February's week-long meeting of the Synod in London. (See Prayer Alert 0310)

Pray: for God's guidance as members discuss and vote on this matter. (1Pe.2:15)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newsttopics/religion/7018793/BBCs-marginalisation-of-religion-to-be-criticised-by-Church-of-Englands-governing-body.html>

■ Christian BA worker appeals against cross ruling

A Christian British Airways (BA) employee has begun her appeal against a ruling which allowed the airline to stop her wearing a cross at work. Nadia Eweida, 57, wants the Court of Appeal to overturn a ruling that BA did not discriminate against her and claims £120,000 in damages and lost wages. Miss Eweida, of Twickenham, southwest London, returned to

work for BA after the firm changed its uniform policy. The appeal judges have reserved their decision to a later, unspecified date. The tribunal was told she went home in September 2006 after failing to reach a compromise with managers over the visible display of the plain silver cross on a chain around her neck.

Pray: that common sense and justice will prevail in this court case. (Ps.94:16)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/london/8467132.stm>

■ Only 3% of couples who stay together until child is 16 are unmarried

Just three per cent of couples who stay together until a child is 16 are unmarried, according to new research. Studies by the Centre of Social Justice show that more than 40 per cent of children are now born outside marriage. The think tank created by former Tory leader Iain Duncan Smith also found child abuse has risen 34 per cent over the last four years. Its findings will underpin the Conservatives' pledge to offer tax breaks for married couples in their election manifesto. The Tory manifesto document will seek to end confusion over one of David Cameron's flagship policies as it warns that the Government's 'complacent attitude to commitment' has done 'untold harm' to society. Mr Duncan Smith said: 'The UK spends more public money on children than most other advanced countries, and gets some of the worst results'.

Pray: that Christian marriage remains at the heart of family policies. (Heb.13:4)

More: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1244699/Only-3-couples-stay-child-16-unmarried-study-reveals.html#ixzzOdBfzdY18>

■ Archbishop pleads for more supplies for troops

The Archbishop of York has called on the Government to ensure that British troops in Afghanistan have all the equipment they need. Dr John Sentamu, who visited Afghanistan in 2004, raised his concerns in the House of Lords in response to a statement from the Government on future defence spending. 'Can the Government, hand on heart, be certain that, in the present theatre of war in Afghanistan, all the necessary equipment is available and can be procured?' he asked. 'During the Second World War our factories worked flat out to make sure that our forces were given the necessary equipment. In terms of the modern world, money needs to be made available now, not in the future. We may learn lessons for the future in Afghanistan, but I am worried about the number of fatalities.'

Pray: for funding and timely procurement of equipment by the Government to support those men and women who they send into war. (1Sa.8:12)

More: <http://www.religiousintelligence.co.uk/news/?NewsID=5460>

■ Richard Dawkins pushing a form of 'aggressive atheism', says presenter

Professor Richard Dawkins has been accused of 'parading his own failure of imagination' by failing to consider the possible existence of God in an attack by the author Howard Jacobson, who described the scientist and prominent atheist, author of the best-selling book *The God Delusion*, as 'an angry man' who is pushing a form of 'aggressive atheism'. The writer, who will present the first episode of the forthcoming Channel 4 series *The Bible: a History*, said: 'There will be many a non-believer out there who will find Dawkins's bat-squeak commandments as fatuous as I do. But religion does give an accent of seriousness that has shaped our culture for centuries. This is why I have no time for the new aggressive form of popular atheism. It lacks imagination and, worse still, it lacks curiosity. It doesn't think it has anything to learn from anybody who is not an atheist since, in its view, religion is for fools or children – something mankind needed at the dawn of time but needs no longer because now we have science and Richard Dawkins.' *The Bible: A History* will be shown on Channel 4 on Sunday 24 January at 7pm.

Pray: for God's Spirit to permeate the material presented by Jacobson. (Ps.119:2)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/religion/7018645/Richard-Dawkins-pushing-a-form-of-aggressive-atheism-says-presenter.html>

■ Department of Communities appoints Muslim activist as faith adviser

A Muslim activist advising the Government on religion is the former president of an Islamic student society, which has been linked to extremists. Wakkas Khan was praised by John Denham, the Communities Secretary, for his 'outstanding track record of achievement' when he was appointed faith adviser. The Cheshire-based dentist has a history of criticising the Government for its anti-terror policies, defending extremist groups and meeting radical Islamists. As president of the Federation of Student Islamic Societies (Fosis) from 2004 to 2006, Mr Khan invited Azzam Tamimi, a Palestinian activist and supporter of the terrorist group Hamas, to address a national meeting of students. Mr Khan now sits on an unpaid 13-member panel to 'encourage a deeper and broader relationship between Government and faith communities'. The Department for Communities refused to comment on whether officials knew about Mr Khan's history before appointing him.

Pray: for the British Government to maintain a Christian counterweight in its policies when dealing with non-Christian groups. (Ps.117:2)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/6995869/Department-of-Communities-appoints-Muslim-activist-as-faith-adviser.html>

EUROPE

■ Cardinal says Europe has itself to blame for Islamisation

The Archbishop of Prague, Cardinal Vlk, said Muslims were well placed to fill the spiritual void created 'by Europeans emptying the Christian content of their lives.' 'Europe will pay dearly for having left its spiritual foundations and there may only be a short time left to do something about it. Muslims have many reasons to be heading here, one being to bring spiritual values to the pagan and atheistic lifestyle of Europe. Unless Christians wake up, life may be Islamised and Christianity will not have the strength to imprint its character on the life of people.' The 77-year-old cardinal made his

remarks in an interview to mark his retirement after spending 19 years as the leader of the Czech Catholic Church. He said he did not blame Muslims for the crisis as Europeans had brought it upon themselves by exchanging their Christian culture for an aggressive secularism that embraced atheism. 'Europe has denied its Christian roots from which it has risen which could give it the strength to fend off the danger of being conquered by Muslims,' he said.

Pray: for renewal of our Christian fundamentals in the face of populist secularism and apathy. (Ro.2:1-2)

More: http://ausprayernet.org.au/newsletter/DisplayNewsletter.php?e_id=0000001868#st5

■ Middle East churches can teach Europe how to live with Muslims, says leader

There is much that the Church in Europe can learn from Middle East churches about how to live side by side with Muslims, the General Secretary of the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe has said. Michael Buenker made the comments upon his return from Lebanon, where he took part in the General Assembly of the Federation of Middle East Evangelical Churches last week. Mr Buenker said dialogue between General Assembly delegates and local Muslims during the gathering had given both sides valuable insights and should be continued on a 'regular basis'. 'Church fellowship does not allow itself to be limited by cultural and geographical differences,' he said. With many Europeans feeling uncertain about the growth of Islam on the continent, Mr Buenker said Protestant churches in Europe could learn from their sister churches in the Middle East. Middle East churches were, he said, 'experienced in living together with Muslims'.

Pray: that the lessons will be learnt by the Church in Europe from the Church in the Middle East. (Pr.24:32)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/middle.east.churches.can.teach.europe.how.to.live.with.muslims.says.leader/25116.htm>

WORLDWIDE

■ Nigeria: Riot city under control, says army chief

The Nigerian army says it has regained control of the city of Jos, where fighting between Muslims and Christians in recent days has left scores dead. Lt Col Shekari Galadima told the BBC the city was 'very calm' as the army was enforcing a 24-hour curfew. He insisted there would be no more riots. But a BBC reporter in the region says the violence has now spread to Pankshin town, 100km (60 miles) from Jos. Rights groups say at least 200 people are believed to have died since Sunday. Jos has been blighted by religious violence over the past decade. At least 200 people were killed in an outbreak of fighting between Muslims and Christians in 2008, while some 1,000 died in a riot in 2001. Col Galadima told the BBC's Network Africa programme. 'Our troops in combination with the police are fully deployed and fully on the ground to check all movements.' **BREAKING NEWS:** Txt Msg 21/01: 'There are 2 vehicles with fake soldiers entering compounds and shooting all. Death toll now over 450. Please pray'.

Pray: for peace and protection, that the authorities would gain total control and that they would be given wisdom to handle this conflict. (Ps.5:11)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/8469863.stm>

■ Haiti: Earthquake

As you are certainly aware, Haiti was struck by a devastating 7.1 earthquake. Yet the aftermath of the earthquake may actually prove more catastrophic than the earthquake itself. Consider: in the capital city, Port-au-Prince, there are only a few structurally sound buildings remaining. Food supplies are rapidly diminishing, as are medical supplies. There is no electricity and no water to help this city of over two million people who are now homeless. Hospitals are unable to absorb and care for the many injured, and skilled medical personnel, though arriving daily, are still in short supply. Remember also, there is no functioning government right now in Haiti. In Port-au-Prince there is little heavy equipment to help clear the roads or assist in rescue. Some 40 hours after the quake, most rescue is still occurring by hand. The situation is desperate. We must join them in prayer.

Pray: for the mercy of God to flow and for the kingdom of God to advance. Pray that the powers of witchcraft and voodoo will be broken over that nation and a new day for the Haitian people will arise. (Ps.28:2)

More: http://www.openheaven.com/forums/forum_posts.asp?TID=30629&PN=1&TPN=1

■ Ethiopia: Believer killed as persecution increases

Markos, a successful Christian business man, was murdered on December 20 in a brutal machete attack in the Muslim dominated state of Oromia, Ethiopia. Believers claim that he was killed for giving financial assistance to his church after it was attacked by a mob of Muslim extremists in September 2009. While an investigation into Markos' murder is currently underway, district administrators insist that Markos was killed to create political instability and not for his faith. However, the persecution of believers has increased here and in other areas of the country. Markos leaves behind his wife, Sintayehu, and their seven children aged 10 to 25.

Pray: that, as Sintayehu and her children grieve the loss of husband and father, God will protect them, provide for them, bring about justice and subdue persecution. (Ps.37:28)

More: http://members.opendoorsusa.org/site/MessageViewer?em_id=43341.0&dlv_id=55801

■ Sri Lanka: Presidential campaign marred by deaths and violence

The election campaign for Sri Lanka's presidency, scheduled for 26 January, has been marred by a high number of incidents, many caused by supporters of incumbent President Mahinda Rajapaksa, the Campaign for Free and Fair elections (CaFFE) reported. The Elections Commission Chairman Dayananda Dissanayake intends to resign because of the violence once the election is over. The CaFFE report that was released today contains a detailed list of clashes, targeted attacks against political rivals and murders. The first death occurred on 12 January in Hungama (Hambantota district), Rajapaksa's home area. An armed man opened fire against a bus carrying supporters of General Fonseka, leader

of the opposition and the president's main challenger. One person was killed and ten were wounded in the action, which was blamed on pro-government militias. The following day, Rajapaksa supporters clashed with Fonseka sympathisers in Polonnaruwa, North-Central province. Thousands of people were involved, many getting hurt.

Pray: for peace to reign in this nation and that the conflicts of the past would not influence the elections. (2Ch:20:6)

More: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Sri-Lanka's-presidential-campaign-marred-by-deaths-and-violence-17397.html>

■ **India: Survivors of communal violence ordered to evacuate by government**

About 100 survivors of anti-Christian violence in India's Orissa state have been ordered by the local government to leave a local market complex where they have stayed since the closure of relief camps. News of the order to leave the complex in Gudaygiri town of Kandhamal District, came just shortly before a European Commission team was to visit the region. On Friday, January 15, Christians said it seems been an attempt by authorities to 'show' to the outside world that the government has 'brought back normalcy' in the area, where over 100 people are believed to have died in attacks since August 2008. The violence broke out after Hindus accused Christians of murdering a Hindu leader, charges they strongly denied. 'The local government has ordered the evacuation of people immediately and if we refuse police force will be used,' worried survivors told BosNewsLife. When Hindu mobs began to attack Christians on August 23, 2008, they were forced to leave their villages and their houses were burnt down.

Pray: that God will have mercy on these believers and provide a safe domicile. (1Cor.4:11-13)

More: <http://www.bosnewslife.com/11021-breaking-news-survivors-of-indias-communal-violence-ordered-to-evacuate-by-government>

■ **Colombia: Kogui Christians escape during temporary release for Christmas**

Indigenous Kogui Christians in Colombia, South America, detained by authorities because of their faith in Christ, were released temporarily on December 21. Upon their release, local authorities forced them to sign a document promising to report back on January 10, but they determined as a group not to return. The thirty-three men, women and children were held last October against their will because their Christian beliefs were considered a threat to indigenous traditions. The main constitution of Colombia gives everyone the right to their own religious beliefs, but local authorities in indigenous areas are given a somewhat autonomous rule. Christians in the capital Bogota are attempting to help draw national attention to the situation in hopes of bringing about their official release. But, if the Colombian government rules in favour of the local authorities, they would be able to confiscate the Christian homes and lands. This would leave them without any means of income and would place a ban on all Christian activities.

Pray: for wisdom to the government officials to bring about justice for these Kogui Christians and that the hearts of the indigenous leaders may be softened toward Christians. (Ps.20:1)

More: http://members.opendoorsusa.org/site/MessageViewer?em_id=43341.0&dlv_id=55801

PRAISE REPORTS

■ **Labour concede eviction demands over Mega Mosque**

Councillors for the Christian Peoples Alliance in Newham have welcomed news that Labour has finally conceded their demands for enforcement action against an extreme, separatist Islamic sect in West Ham. Tablighi Jamaat has been unlawfully using the site close to the Olympics park, where they intend to build a mega-mosque for 12,000 worshippers. Leader of the Opposition, CPA Leader Alan Craig is warning that belated enforcement action is unlikely to deter the group from pressing ahead with their plans to become the biggest mosque in Europe. Under electoral pressure, Labour are facing up to their responsibilities and doing the right thing. However, publicly, Labour politicians have bent over backwards to support plans for the mosque, knowing full well that the local community have long opposed it. For three years Newham Council have allowed Tablighi Jamaat to use the site without any planning permission. Yet just weeks before local elections, Labour concedes that the illegal development has to stop.

Praise: God for this good news and pray that Tablighi Jamaat would be stopped completely. (Ex.15:6)

More: <http://www.cpaparty.org.uk/?page=news&id=324>

■ **Heal Our Land previews in London**

Christians in London were treated to a sneak preview of the new interactive prayer and mobilisation event Heal Our Land last week. The prayer concerts are intended not so much to reach non-Christians but rather to rekindle a heart for evangelism in the UK Church. Each concert will be preceded by eight days of dedicated prayer followed by seven days of evangelism in the host city. Speaking at Thursday's preview in Westminster, Dr Clifford Hill of the Centre for Contemporary Ministry said the salvation of the nation lay in the hands of the Christians. 'The church must come together to seek forgiveness and pray for the power of the Holy Spirit to transform the church into all it was designed to be so that we can impact our nation,' he explained. The first full length Heal Our Land performance is expected to take place in April at Liverpool's Philharmonic Hall.

Praise: God for this initiative and that the Holy Spirit will move amongst believers and non-believers alike. (2Cor.1:11)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/heal.our.land.previews.in.london/25097.htm>

PRAYER FORUM OF BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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