

# PRAYER ALERT...

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

Issue 0509

Website

Contact Us

Donations

Friday 30 January 2009

## ■ British Isles & Ireland

- [FRIDAY FOCUS: 30 January - Hope for the homeless - Isaiah 58:6-9](#)
- [Christian couple 'felt forced' to give up grandchildren for adoption](#)
- [Tips on cannabis being handed out in schools](#)
- [Young people need more weekend night activities, campaigners say](#)
- [Ambitions for church unity 'unrealistic', say leaders](#)
- [Crystals versus Christ](#)
- [Global Day of Prayer invites participation in 'Seven Nights of Prayer for London'](#)

## ■ Europe

- [Business leaders face credibility crisis at Davos](#)
- [New EU climate plans don't add up, warns Christian Aid](#)

## ■ Worldwide

- [Iraq: Provincial elections](#)
- [Congo: Massacred bodies found](#)
- [Saudi Arabia: Authorities arrest Christian convert](#)
- [Zimbabwe: Cholera deaths top 3,000](#)
- [Sri Lanka: May ban religious conversions](#)
- [Iran: Three Christians arrested from homes in Tehran](#)
- [Pakistan: Terrorists control large territory](#)

## ■ Praise Reports

- [South Africa/ Egypt: God visits children](#)
- [Burundi: Jesus breaks the power of witchcraft](#)

## BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

### ■ **FRIDAY FOCUS: 30 January - Hope for the homeless - Isaiah 58:6-9**

Tomorrow is the beginning of Poverty & Homelessness Week (31st Jan – 8th Feb) incorporating Homelessness Sunday on 1st February.

**Pray:** • For an increase in provision of accommodation, work, food and support for those that are living on the streets.  
• For God's blessing on organisations that work with the homeless, i.e. Shelter, The Salvation Army, etc.

**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)

### ■ **Christian couple 'felt forced' to give up grandchildren for adoption**

A Christian couple who say they felt forced into giving up their grandchildren for adoption said they would never have done so if they had known they would be placed with a homosexual couple. They wanted to bring up the five-year-old boy and his four-year-old sister in their own home but said they were forced to give them up by social workers who had concerns about the couple's age and their health. The 59-year-old grandfather, who has seven children of his own, told the Daily Telegraph: 'There is no way we'd have allowed the children to be adopted if we'd known they were going to a gay couple'. The couple only found out last week that two homosexual men would be adopting the children in the next few weeks, and said that when they objected they were warned they may never see them again.

**Pray:** for the family involved in this situation that somehow the decision by the Social Services would be reversed. (Lev.18:21)

**More:** <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/family/4374149/Christian-couple-felt-forced-to-give-up-grandchildren-for-adoption.html>

### ■ **Tips on cannabis being handed out in schools**

Tips on how to best smoke cannabis and the benefits of the drug are being handed out to school children, it has emerged. The 20-page booklet 'Know Cannabis' spells out how the drug can make you feel relaxed and makes music 'sound better' as well as whether to use bongs or buckets and how to roll a joint. It is not until page 14 that the document points out that the drug is illegal but is being handed out to young teenagers preparing for their GCSE's at schools in the North East. It comes as the drug was reclassified from Class C to Class B. The Government's claim that the U-turn was a sign of taking a tougher stance faced further embarrassment as magistrates said it was not to be treated as seriously as other Class Bs.

**Pray:** that the protests from parents would be heard by the authorities and this booklet would be withdrawn. (Tit.2:1-2; 6-7a)

**More:** <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/4348287/Tips-on-cannabis-being-handed-out-in-schools.html>

### ■ Young people need more weekend night activities, campaigners say

Councils are being urged to make sure youth clubs in their area open at weekends. The association representing youth clubs today launched a campaign to get more clubs to open on Friday and Saturday nights. The government's youth strategy aims to provide more activities for young people. But research from Clubs for Young People found that two out of three of the local authorities contacted did not know if any of their clubs were open on a Friday or Saturday night. This chimes with a report by the Audit Commission, published today, which described funding for youth leisure services as a 'dog's breakfast'. 'If Tesco and local fish and chip shops can open at weekends, why can't youth clubs?' said Simon Antrobus, chief executive of Clubs for Young People. Darren Snow, the manager of Crew Club on the Whitehawk estate, Brighton, said: 'The more fun activities there are, the less likely young people are to get engaged in negative activities.'

**Pray:** for our young people and for youth provision that promotes positive activities and for a more purposeful role in local communities. (Pr.10:4)

**More:** <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2009/jan/28/young-people-youth-clubs>

### ■ Ambitions for church unity 'unrealistic', say leaders

Christians across the UK may be praying to be one this week, but church unity remains an unlikely prospect, say the leaders of the UK's main denominations. The heads of the Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, Roman Catholic and United Reformed Churches spoke candidly this week of a loss of impetus in national efforts to bring about unity in their personal responses to questions put to them by the Church Times and Baptist Times. There is still at grassroots a great enthusiasm for unity - and a fair amount of impatience with denominational structures that are seen as failing to deliver it. 'Local Churches Together groups often have a good level of commitment,' said the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, 'but you won't find much interest in what you might call the 'negotiating' side of unity'.

**Pray:** that the unity often seen at local levels will continue and build and may in turn influence the more formal discussions between denominations. (Ro.15:5)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.co.uk/article/ambitions.for.church.unity.unrealistic.say.leaders/22369.htm>

### ■ Crystals versus Christ

While church numbers have been falling for years, these days the trend is for spirituality with no links to organised religion. Now the Church is on a mission to convert the so-called spiritual-but-not-religious, reports Jolyon Jenkins. At the Mind Body Spirit Fair, held in Telford last autumn, you could consult a clairvoyant, purchase psychic healing, or stock up on healing crystals. You could also, if you wanted, talk to Mark Berry. He is a Christian missionary to Telford, sent there by the Church of England and the Church Mission Society, because Telford has one of the lowest church-going populations in Britain. 'God's mission is not just about recruiting people to an institutional church,' he says. 'It's about wanting to bring peace, reconciliation, hope, and to bring a kind of holistic connection with the whole of humanity as creation and all of that, and wanting to bring a restoration of relationship with God and with the spiritual.'

**Pray:** for those who spread the Gospel to people who recognise a spiritual need in their lives but are unsure where to look to meet that need. (Lev.19:31)

**More:** <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/7853494.stm>

### ■ Global Day of Prayer invites participation in 'Seven Nights of Prayer for London'

Believers in the UK are invited to take part in a concentrated prayer effort that will be held from Wednesday, Jan. 28th through Friday, Feb. 13th, with seven prayer evenings at locations in London and Essex. The event is being organized by the Global Day of Prayer (GDOP) in hopes of engulfing 'London in revival prayer and mission.' In addition to the 7 days of prayer, the GDOP is asking Believers worldwide to join a prayer movement that involves praying the Lord's Prayer at noon every day from now until Pentecost Sunday, May 31st, 2009. 'We are holding 7 Nights of Prayer for London in 7 different regions throughout London and Essex. We are inviting every church to come and meet together to pray and hear the threefold vision of the Global Day of Prayer London. For more information on the regions involved in the 7 Nights of Prayer for London, visit the link provided.

**Pray:** for the meetings across London that God would meet with His people powerfully. Pray also for other GDOP initiatives across our nations that God would bless them and increase their number. (2Ch.7:14)

**More:** [http://www.breakingchristiannews.com/articles/display\\_art.html?ID=6306](http://www.breakingchristiannews.com/articles/display_art.html?ID=6306)

## EUROPE

### ■ Business leaders face credibility crisis at Davos

Political leaders, central bankers, and business elite from around the world are gathering in the Swiss resort town of Davos for the annual World Economic Forum - a five-day event that started January 28. More than 40 heads of state or government and some 2,000 global business leaders are expected to attend the forum, which will largely be dominated by discussions of the global financial crisis, according to Klaus Schwab, the event's founder and executive chairman. In an interview Schwab says this year's event presents an opportunity to create a unified voice on ways to move out of the financial crisis. 'We have over 90 different countries assembled. We have nearly 50 heads of states and government. The key challenge will be to create, really, a voice of solidarity - a voice of unanimity,' Schwab said. Meanwhile, as delegates meet in Davos, a self-declared 'alternative forum' will be taking place in Brazil. Known as the World Social Forum it gives opponents of globalization a platform to air their views concerning the past decade.

**Pray:** for the delegates that they would receive Godly wisdom leading to just solutions. (Job.28:20;28)

**More:** [http://www.rferl.org/content/Business\\_Leaders\\_Face\\_Credibility\\_Crisis\\_At\\_Davos/1375490.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Business_Leaders_Face_Credibility_Crisis_At_Davos/1375490.html)

### ■ **New EU climate plans don't add up, warns Christian Aid**

New European proposals for a global deal on climate change do not add up to a just or effective plan, Christian Aid is warning. The proposals, which are released Wednesday, will neither protect billions of poor people's right to development nor prevent catastrophic global warming. It is the first time that the European Commission has published suggestions about the climate deal that must be adopted in Copenhagen this December. Christian Aid said the step towards a negotiating position is welcome, as are some of its more innovative ideas about paying for climate change adaptation and mitigation. However, Dr Alison Doig, Senior Climate Change Adviser at Christian Aid, says: 'These proposals will not ensure that developing countries can prioritise poverty eradication and survival. The suggestions about which countries should pay for tackling and adapting to climate change, and how much they should contribute, are too crude to protect poor people.'

**Pray:** that despite the decisions made earlier, the EU would reconsider and adopt a fair, just and a more effective plan. (Pro.14:31)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/new.eu.climate.plans.dont.add.up.warns.christian.aid/22396.htm>

## WORLDWIDE

### ■ **Iraq: Provincial elections**

The Provincial Elections in Iraq take place on 31 Jan 09 and they are very significant in a number of ways, both for the Iraqi people themselves, and also for the men and women of the British, Coalition and Iraqi Armed Forces, and the Iraqi police. It is important to ensure security so people can vote without fear. It is also very important that people turn out to vote. The Sunni community boycotted the elections in 2005 and so this is a real test of the fragile and nascent democratic roots of this country. The results will be significant for peace and stability in the coming months, building up to national elections in December and will determine in the minds of many (especially Sunni) insurgents whether giving up violence is worth it.

**Pray:** for God to confound Shia and Sunni men of violence from now until early Feb. and supernaturally aid the Iraqi Army and Police to withstand and prevent suicide bombers (particularly females) and vehicle-borne bombs. (Ps.7:9)

**More:** <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=5883&l=1>

### ■ **Congo: Massacred bodies found**

At least 100 bodies linked to a massacre by Ugandan Lord's Resistance Army fighters have been found by local self defence forces in a remote corner of the Democratic Republic of Congo's north-eastern Orientale province. 'At least 900 Congolese have been killed since the beginning of operations, compared to around 40 LRA killed,' a UN spokesman said. The LRA is also accused of conducting large-scale kidnappings and rapes as well as forced recruitment of minors, all of which has led to a major humanitarian crisis in the region. The civilian population are, in effect, caught between the conflicting parties and the violations committed against them which are described by Human Rights Commissioner as 'Grotesque'.

**Pray:** for God's anointing on the joint military counter-operations to enable properly planned and executed solutions and protection for the civilian population. (Ps.55)

**More:** <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/africa/2009/01/2009128174414570725.html>

### ■ **Saudi Arabia: Authorities arrest Christian convert**

Five months after the daughter of a member of Saudi Arabia's religious police was killed for writing online about her faith in Christ, Saudi authorities have reportedly arrested a 28-year-old Christian man for describing his conversion and criticizing the kingdom's judiciary on his Web site. Hamoud Bin Saleh was arrested 'because of his opinions and his testimony that he had converted from Islam to Christianity.' Bin Saleh, was detained for nine months in 2004 and again last November for a month, was reportedly being held in Riyadh's Eleisha prison. His website chronicled his journey to Christ which began after witnessing the public beheading of three Pakistanis convicted of drug charges and his research into Islamic history and law and Saudi justice.-Read his story by clicking the more button.

**Pray:** for God's wisdom and spiritual discernment for Hamoud as he walks his Christian vocation. Pray also that the government will recognise personal blogging as a private Christian activity to be allowed under Saudi law. (Pr.4:10-13)

**More:** <http://www.compassdirect.org/en/display.php?page=lead&lang=en&length=long&idelement=&backpage=&critere=&countryname=&rowcur>

### ■ **Zimbabwe: Cholera deaths top 3,000**

'Zimbabwe's water, sanitation and health systems have collapsed, and the death toll from the cholera outbreak has now passed the 3,000 mark.' reports the UN's World Health Organization. The latest figures represent an increase of more than 1,000 deaths in just two weeks. Meanwhile, the MDC's (Movement for Democratic Change) leader sounded more upbeat about power-sharing, a day after his party denied it had agreed to join a unity government next month. He said it would go ahead if the rivals resolved their long-running disputes.

**Pray:** for a supernatural removal of all opposition to a workable coalition government and release of essential relief for the sick and homeless of Zimbabwe. (Ps.9:8-13)

**More:** <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/7855666.stm>

### ■ **Sri Lanka: May ban religious conversions**

As global news reports the 300 dead civilians in the climax, and please God the end of the Sri Lankan war, the Sri Lankan Parliament is on the verge of passing a law to ban religious conversions. After amending a draft 'Bill for the prohibition of the forcible conversions' that went through parliament on January 6th the way should be clear for a final vote in February.

The bill criminalizes any act to convert or attempt to convert a person from one religion to another religion by the use of force, fraud or allurements. The penalty could be seven years jail and/or fined up to 500,000 rupees (US\$4,425). Civil rights groups say it will infringe the constitutional rights of freedom of religion and legitimize harassment of religious minorities. Sri Lankan Christians are concerned that key sections are open to wide and subjective interpretation, that criminalize legitimate religious activity and social action by faith-based organizations or individuals.

**Pray:** against any law that would inhibit Christians from acts of charity towards poor, needy, orphans and widows, or educating within a Christian environment. (Ps.121:6-8)

**More:** <http://www.religiousintelligence.co.uk/news/?NewsID=3735>

#### ■ Iran: Three Christians arrested from homes in Tehran

Authorities are holding without charge Jamal Ghalishorani, 49, and his wife Nadereh Jamali who were taken from their home in Tehran between 7 and 8 a.m. on January 21st, about a half hour after arresting Hamik Khachikian, an Armenian Christian also living in Tehran. Ghalishorani and his wife are Christian converts from Islam which is 'apostasy' in Iran and potentially punishable by death. They belong to house churches, hold jobs and are not supported as clergy. The arrests come as part of a tsunami of arrests in the past months which may be part of a concerted, nationwide government plan against non-Islamic faiths. 'We are quite sure that these arrests are part of a bigger operation from the government', a source said. 'Maybe up to 50 people were arrested. In Tehran alone already '10 people were arrested on January 21.'

**Pray:** for their release and that the active churches in Tehran will bring Christian life to the dying soul of Tehran and many will discover Jesus and the change only He can bring. (Is.32:1-5)

**More:** <http://intercessors.wordpress.com/2009/01/26/iran-three-christians-arrested/>

#### ■ Pakistan: Terrorists control large territory

A reliable source speaks out on condition of anonymity. He said that while Pakistan tells India, the U.S. and the rest of the world that the country doesn't allow terrorists to operate internally, the Taliban has successfully consolidated its control in the Swat Valley banning women from the marketplace, killing dozens of innocent people daily leaving the bodies in the street or hanging on a pole in shopping areas some of them headless. 'They have bombed 200 schools, banned girls' education, killed politicians, policeman and their relatives, destroyed dozens of homes, barber shops where men's beards are trimmed, music shops and threatened bus drivers with suicide bombers if they do not stop playing music on their buses. People need to know what those in leadership positions mean when they say they will not allow terrorists to operate on its soil. When will these leaders, who were elected less than a year ago, finally decide to take a stand and protect the very people who elected them to office?'

**Pray:** that the leadership of Pakistan would boldly address terrorist infiltration, and enter into joint ventures with neighbours to achieve this. (Job.5:16,17)

**More:** <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/2009/s09010180.htm>

## PRAISE REPORTS

#### ■ South Africa/ Egypt: God visits children

The Paarl Gymnasium school in Cape town has over 600 students, with 400 participating in one of the 70 student-led Christian cell groups. When they were asked how they approach challenging personalities, their response was, 'We tell our cell group's intercessory team the name of the student, and then mobilize every Cell leader to connect with the student by showing small acts of kindness. Giving some chocolate, buying them a cup of coffee or just befriend them. The problem student is swamped with kindness and prayer, then invited to an evangelism adventure camp and presented with the message of Jesus. They may or may not follow Jesus but the relationships grow and many become cell group members. Also a children's prayer conference in Egypt reported, 'Day after day the children experienced God's powerful presence. Of the 200+ children most had encounters with Jesus; seeing visions, weeping in intercession and repentance, being healed or overwhelmed by His Presence. In one session God touched the boys, one after the other, to utter fervent and passionate prayers, prophetic words and proclamations for their land.'

**Praise:** and rejoice for godly children giving witness for their heavenly father. (Ps.127:3)

**More:** <http://www.joelnews.org/promo/jni642.htm>

#### ■ Burundi: Jesus breaks the power of witchcraft

Great Lakes Outreach reaches out to the lost in Burundi. Some of their stories could have come straight from the book of Acts. In Muyinga, a prostitute called Victoria was kidnapped by cannibal witchdoctors who took a bite out of her thigh, but found she 'tasted bitter', and so they didn't eat her. Instead they cursed her and she became dumb. For three weeks Victoria hadn't said a word, when the evangelists arrived. She'd gone to the local administrator to press charges, and he challenged the team: 'If you want us to listen to you about your Jesus, then do something for this girl.' They promptly gathered around her, prayed in Jesus' name, and Victoria began speaking again! The whole community was blown away by this obvious demonstration of God's power. Two months on there is a church of a hundred members.

**Praise:** God for His almighty power and transformation. (Mt.16:18)

**More:** <http://joelnews.squarespace.com/thisweek/jesus-breaks-the-power-of-witchcraft.html>

## 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.

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