

PRAYER ALERT...

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BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Archbishop hits out at campaign for mercy killings

The Archbishop of York has condemned a campaign to legalise mercy killings that he feels is being driven by celebrities without any regard for Parliament and the will of the 'silent majority'. Dr John Sentamu's comments came just days after a YouGov poll for The Telegraph found that more than four out of five people believed the law should be amended so that relatives would be allowed to help terminally ill relatives die without facing prosecution. Another poll carried out by ComRes for BBC1's Panorama programme, found 73 per cent thought family or friends should not face prosecution for helping a loved one to die. The Archbishop was quoted by the Daily Mail as saying: The silent majority never get asked. One thousand people out of about 61 million really are not very much guidance. Once you begin to open this particular door, it won't be long before you start having mercy killings'.

Pray: [that the Archbishop will have support to encourage our legislators to rethink some of the detail. \(Isa.10:1\)](#)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/archbishop.hits.out.at.campaign.for.mercy.killings/25210.htm>

■ **INSIGHT ARTICLE: Insights on Human Trafficking in the British Isles**

There are more people enslaved worldwide today than there were 200 years ago in the lead up to the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade. Human trafficking, the modern day slave trade, is the fastest growing form of international crime with an estimated 600,000 – 800,000 people trafficked across international borders each year. Rt. Rev. John Sentamu, Archbishop of York said, 'There has been much discussion of civil liberties – What about the civil liberties of those who have been illegally trafficked into the country to meet the sexual needs of others in the UK. Mercilessly hooked on drugs, physically, mentally and emotionally abused by pimps and clients on a daily basis?' For alarming facts on Human Trafficking in the United Kingdom click the [info](#) button.

Pray: [that those who make a living by crushing the needy, poor and weak in this way would be brought down. \(Pr.11:5\)](#)

More: <http://www.prayer-alert.net/info/0610UKHumanTrafficking2.pdf>

■ Assembly elections called if Northern Ireland Executive falls - PM

The government will call an NI Assembly election rather than just suspending the institutions if the executive falls over failure to agree a policing deal. Prime Minister Gordon Brown made the comment in a telephone call to UUP leader Sir Reg Empey on Tuesday. Mr Brown said the deal under discussion addressed UUP concerns on the 'dysfunctionality' of the executive. The talks at Hillsborough Castle on the devolution of justice and policing power continued late into Tuesday. Sinn Fein and the DUP have been arguing over the timing of the transfer of justice powers to Belfast. Sinn Fein wants the powers transferred immediately. The DUP has said that can only happen when there is 'community confidence' among

unionists. On Wednesday, the Irish News named six DUP assembly members it said were not prepared to accept the deal in its current form and added that a further eight voted no in a secret ballot on a devolution deal.

Pray: that there will be agreement and a successful completion to these talks leading to lasting peace. (Ps.133)

More: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/8494792.stm

■ Young people in Northern Ireland still in love with marriage

Despite rising divorce rates it seems that marriage is still an overwhelming aspiration for young people in Northern Ireland. New figures reveal that over 90% say they want to get married. This information emerges in one of the largest surveys into sexual attitudes carried out in the province. Over a thousand 16-30 year olds were asked about their attitudes and behaviours around relational and sexual issues for the survey, conducted by Evangelical Alliance, Love for Life and Summer Madness. Uniquely, the survey was also designed to probe into whether and in what way faith had an impact in these areas. 87% of young people surveyed said they believe that the Bible has something to teach about relationships and sex. 81% of respondents said they thought pornography was harmful and yet 79% of males had accessed it online. 63% of those surveyed felt that sex before marriage is always wrong.

Pray: that God will protect the minds of the young people of NI that they would hold on to these beliefs. (Heb.13:4)

More: <http://www.eauk.org/media/ni-marriage-survey.cfm>

■ Christians in authority face difficulties, says Duncan Smith

Former Tory leader Iain Duncan Smith has spoken of the difficulties faced by Christians in positions of authority in the UK. In a wide-ranging interview with The Times, the practising Roman Catholic said there was 'a tendency to sneer at religion in the governing classes in this country. To be a Christian today is quite difficult for people in authority because they feel as though they have to apologise for it,' he said. Mr Duncan Smith works nowadays to shape social policy through his think tank, the Centre for Social Justice, and enjoys the ear of Tory leader David Cameron. In the interview, he spoke at length on one of his main passions - fixing 'broken Britain'. He said he had not been able to do anything about this when he became party leader in 2001 but the recession had caused people to start listening to him.

Pray: for God to encourage and protect all his followers who hold positions of authority in public life to have courage and confidence to live their faith. (Heb.13:7)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.co.uk/article/christians.in.authority.face.difficulties.says.duncan.smith/25194.htm>

■ Worship leaders seek revival in UK Churches

Noel Robinson was on a mission over the weekend to see churches set on fire once again by the power of worship. Hundreds of worship leaders came from across the United Kingdom, Europe, Africa and the Caribbean for the Renewal Worship Conference in London. This conference is now in its second year. It aims to help worship leaders see how the transformative power of worship could impact their churches and communities. Other worship leaders sharing some of their wisdom were Graham Kendrick, Ben Cantelon, Sonnie Badu, Steve Thompson, Mark Beswick, Lara Martin and Nicky Brown. Kendrick said a lot of worship leaders were feeling tired and burnt out and needed to come together to 'catch the fresh breath of the Spirit of God.' He welcomed the fact that the conference brought together Christians from many different traditions around one purpose. Three more conferences have been planned for 2010.

Pray: for our church leaders that they will be renewed and refreshed to respond when the Holy Spirit brings about revival. (2Co.4:16)

More: <http://www.christianpost.com/article/20100201/worship-leaders-seek-revival-in-uk-churches/index.html>

■ Christians unite to restore confidence in Bible

Christians have united to dispel the notion that the Bible is tedious and to spread the message that God's Word remains as transformative as ever in today's world. The BibleFresh movement has been launched by more than 50 organisations, including the Evangelical Alliance, Scripture Union and the Bible Society, to boost the confidence of churches in Scriptures throughout 2011, the 400th anniversary of the King James Version of the Bible. The movement is being introduced to the nation by a 13-city tour that got underway in Glasgow last month. Tour stops include Belfast, Manchester, Liverpool, Bournemouth and London. Biblefresh has been launched in response to recent research which found that only one in seven churchgoers felt confidence in their knowledge of the Bible and 76 per cent said they felt the UK was suffering from Bible poverty, where the Bible is no longer at the centre of public or family life.

Pray: for those in this project as they show and reaffirm God's Word to be the basis of Christian faith. (Heb.4:12)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/christians.unite.to.restore.confidence.in.bible/25220.htm>

EUROPE

■ Lithuania steps into European crucifix debate to support Italy

Lithuania has come out in support of Italy in its efforts to revise a ruling of the European Court of Human Rights that obliges State schools throughout Italy to remove crucifixes from classrooms, reports Ecumenical News International. The online news daily www.delfi.lt on 13 January reported that the Committee for Foreign Relations of the Lithuanian Parliament had decided to join the dispute with the European Court, and to defend the right of believers to the public display of religious symbols. 'The public use of crucifixes reflects the Christian tradition of Europe, and should not be considered a restriction of religious freedom,' said Lithuanian Foreign Minister, Vygaudas Usackas. (See Prayer Alert 4509)

Pray: for all those who are standing up for their faith and beliefs despite the pressures of the European Courts. (Gal.6:14)

More: <http://www.eklesia.co.uk/node/11181>

■ European campaigners demand G7 cancel Haiti's debts

Campaigners from across Europe joined with Haitian civil society groups today in condemning the failure of the International Monetary Fund to cancel Haiti's debts, and the Fund's extension of new loans to Haiti. As G7 finance ministers prepare to meet in the north of Canada Friday, campaigners released a statement demanding the immediate and unconditional cancellation of Haiti's entire debt. A cross-party group of British Parliamentarians, led by Sally Keeble MP, also signed a letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Alistair Darling, to support debt cancellation and calling the situation faced by Haiti 'completely unacceptable'. (See also Prayer Alert 0510)

Pray: that the international community would respond positively to bring relief to the people of Haiti. (Ac.4:1)

More: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/EU-delegation-visits-persecuted-Christians-of-Orissa-17529.html>

WORLDWIDE

■ **INSIGHT ARTICLE:** Global: Apostasy - No place to call home

Apostasy from Islam has always been a contentious issue. Although the Qur'an does not prescribe a temporal punishment for apostasy the last part of traditional Islamic theology has advocated the death penalty for a mentally sane male apostate and life-long imprisonment or harsh treatment for a female apostate. Proponents of the death penalty have legitimized their stance from the sayings and deeds attributed to the Prophet Muhammad. The effect of an apostasy ruling on the personal lives of Christians and their families can be far-reaching. As the number of apostate communities has significantly increased in the Middle East, North Africa and Asia over the past twenty years human rights abuses have been more regularly reported. For more information on how the Qur'an is used to support and oppose the death penalty and how we can pray. Click the 'info' button for a summary of Christian Solidarity Worldwide's briefing paper.

Pray: for a mighty outpouring of God's Spirit of truth and revelation over the countries bound by spiritual darkness. (1Tim.2:3-5)

More: <http://www.prayer-alert.net/info/0610Apostasy2.pdf>

■ **INSIGHT ARTICLE:** Nigeria: Report stating terrorists in Jos trained by Taliban

There have been misleading reports on the crisis in Jos. The Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria Plateau State Branch who witnessed everything have produced their assessment of the situation. The text in this 'Insight Article' summarises their observations made in a press report and is fuel for our ongoing prayers for our brothers and sisters in Christ in Nigeria. Over a thousand people were injured and over 3,000 displaced in a wretched humanitarian problem.

Pray: for God to reach down from heaven and rescue His people and to ask Him to comfort them and confound the enemy. (Ps.18:6)

More: <http://www.prayer-alert.net/info/0610NigeriaJossCrisispt.one2.pdf>

■ Cuba: Pastor loses right to appeal

Evangelical pastor Omar Gude Perez who leads a growing Apostolic Reformation Church must complete his six-year prison sentence after being denied the right to appeal. Apostolic Reformation, a network of independent churches, has seen considerable growth in Cuba but Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) said at least thirty church leaders were arrested and detained last year with several threatened to have their homes confiscated. Pastor Omar was tried and convicted last year of 'falsification of documents' and 'counter-revolutionary conduct and attitudes' which CSW reported as 'trumped up charges'. Previously Pastor Omar was charged with human trafficking, then cleared ten months later due to lack of evidence. His wife told CSW that the court's refusal to grant an appeal this time had only confirmed her belief that the arrest and imprisonment of her husband was orchestrated at the highest levels of government. The number of church leaders arrested recently indicates a government policy to crack down on this independent religious group.

Pray: for a revival so powerful in Cuba that the Authorities are caught up in God's purposes for the church. (Ps.89:14)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/disappointment.after.cuban.pastor.loses.right.to.appeal/25202.htm>

■ Iran: More Christians detained without legal counsel

Half of the Iranian Christians arrested in the past few months could face apostasy charges. At least 14 Christians have been detained in Iranian prisons for weeks without legal counsel in the past few months as last year's crackdown continues. We are asked to pray for Maryam Jalili, Mitra Zahmati and Farzan Matin, in Evin prison Tehran since Dec. 24th. (See also Prayer Alert 0210) Authorities promised the release of the three but have yet to act. In Shiraz seven Christians were detained since Jan.11, most of them may face charges of apostasy for leaving Islam. The names of those detained in Shiraz are Parviz Khaladj, Mehdi Furutan, Roxana Furouyi, Behrouz Sadegh-Khanjani, Abdol Reza Ali Haghnejad, Iman Farzad and one identified only as Mahyar. The source said the government was in crisis with so many of its citizens continuing to openly protest against it and that this was an opportune moment to lash out against Christians.

Pray: for Christians in the West to speak out and actively mobilize prayer and support for Christian converts in Iran.

More: <http://www.compassdirect.org/english/country/iran/14572/>

■ Middle East: Christians to stay or flee?

A preparatory document from a Synod of Bishops for the Middle East makes an appeal to the Christian minority there to resist emigration and to openly give witness to the Gospel values of hope, joy, justice and forgiveness in their native communities. The synod outline said a strong faith would provide the courage for enduring the violence, persecution,

prejudice and poverty that Christians in the Middle East often face today. It's a drama that has already changed the Christian landscape in the region and they say 'to stay today in Iraq you need to have a very profound conviction of the value of your faith and a strong sense that the Christian presence is important for the country'. A recent email to Prayer-Alert office reported, 'Praise God that there are a few thousand believers in the Middle East but this is out of millions! We need to see the birth of significant movements to reach significant numbers.

Pray: for more of God's Holy Spirit provision and endowment for our brothers and sisters living and working in the Middle East. (Lk.11:9)

More: <http://www.persecution.org/suffering/index.php>

■ India: Orissa State officials in EU deception

Authorities in Orissa State have forced more than 90 survivors of anti-Christian violence to leave a local market complex where they stayed since the closure of refugee camps this happened just hours before a 12 member European Union delegation from Hungary, Poland, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Britain, Finland and Sweden arrived to investigate the death of over 100 Christians in violent attacks since August 2008. People set up make-shift homes of plastic sheets along the road after fleeing late Wednesday Feb.3rd when their water supply was cut off. Only the family of a man immobile with fractured thighs remained behind. Tens of thousands of other refugees are still struggling to start new lives and roughly 5,600 destroyed homes still need rebuilding - normality has not returned. Hindu radical groups are still threatening Christians and missionaries.

Pray: for God to give independent observers a clear picture of the true scale of the injustice. (Is.59:16,17)

More: <http://www.bosnewslife.com/11388-breaking-news-india-states-removes-christian-refugees-ahead-of-eu-visit>

■ Pakistan: Muslim mob storms Church

Protestant Christians in Pakistan's Punjab province were searching for a place of worship on Wednesday after angry Muslims apparently attacked their partly constructed church injuring scores of worshippers. Muslims armed with clubs and iron rods on December 24 stormed their church in the town of Kalar Kahar in Chakwal District - viewed as a hotbed of Islamic hardliners - 90 kilometres south-east of Islamabad. At least 65 worshippers were severely injured. Pastor Naveed John said the attackers were angry that his congregation had begun building a church on a small piece of land given to them by the local government. The church already had a boundary wall but was still lacking a roof, doors and windows. Worshippers placed Christmas decorations and lights at the construction site and erected a temporary tent for services.

Pray: and ask God to wash over the Punjab province and restore the land to His purposes. (Jer.33:15)

More: <http://www.bosnewslife.com/11369-muslim-mob-storms-pakistan-church-65-injured>

PRAISE REPORTS

■ Supply teacher sacked for offering prayer able to return to work

Olive Jones, a Christian supply teacher from Weston-super-Mare, has been offered the opportunity to return to her old job after North Somerset Council recognised that it can be appropriate for a tutor to share their faith with a pupil or a family, depending on the situation. Mrs Jones was dismissed in November 2009 after attending a meeting with her employers who had received a complaint from a parent that Olive had shared her faith with a sick pupil and asked the pupil's mother whether she could pray for the pupil. Mrs Jones was devastated at the decision made on 25 November, particularly as she was a highly regarded teacher and enjoyed a good relationship with the pupil and her family. She said that the decision was 'completely disproportionate' and that it made her feel as though she had committed a crime. (See Prayer Alert 0110)

Praise: God for His answer to our prayers and pray against further attacks. (Ps.34:4)

More: <http://www.christianlegalcentre.com/view.php?id=970>

■ Labour gives up on Equality Bill clause condemned by Pope

Ministers had tried to include a new definition of a priest in the flagship anti-discrimination law, but church leaders complained that it was far too narrow. They said it would mean religious organisations could no longer opt out of equality rules, and so would face prosecution unless they went against their beliefs by employing homosexuals. Roman Catholics feared they would be forced to admit women to the priesthood. In an unprecedented intervention in British politics, on Monday the Pope declared that Britain's equality laws are imposing 'unjust limitations on the freedom of religious communities to act in accordance with their beliefs'. The controversial clause was struck out of the legislation during committee stage in the House of Lords last week, but clergy feared Labour would try to put it back in before the law entered the statute book. A Number 10 source said: 'We are clear that these parts of the Equality Bill should not go forward.' (See Prayer Alert 0510, 0410)

Praise: God for this further victory over this proposed unjust legislation. (Is.10:1)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstoppers/religion/7139523/Victory-for-religious-groups-as-Labour-gives-up-on-Equality-Bill-clause-condemned-by-Pope.html>

PRAYER FORUM OF THE BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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