

PRAYER ALERT...

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

Issue 0709

Website

Contact Us

Donations

Friday 13 February 2009

■ British Isles & Ireland

- [FRIDAY FOCUS: 13th February - Hope for those seeking work - Phil.4:4-7](#)
- [Anglicans reaffirm uniqueness of Christ](#)
- [Primary school receptionist 'facing sack' after daughter talks about Jesus to classmate](#)
- [Preacher ad was 'irresponsible'](#)
- [Foster mother struck off for letting Muslim girl convert to Christianity](#)
- [Church throws open female bishops dispute](#)
- [Marriage Week Northern Ireland](#)

■ Europe

- [Belarus: Danes deported for praying in church](#)
- [Portugal: Bishops fight homosexual marriages](#)

■ Worldwide

- [Australia: Victoria in mourning](#)
- [Zimbabwe: Christian alliance wants prisoners freed](#)
- [Israel: Livni scores surprise win, but not clear victory](#)
- [Iran: At 30, so much done so much left to do](#)
- [Burma: Massive church closures](#)
- [Iraq: Post provincial elections](#)

■ Praise Reports

- [Canada: Bus banner battle](#)
- [Smacking row family win right to adopt](#)
- [Christian nursing home funding restored after 'sexual orientation' flap](#)

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ **FRIDAY FOCUS: 13th February - Hope for those seeking work - Phil.4:4-7**

With the increasing uncertainty in the global economy, and the threat of unemployment and redundancy looming for some. **Pray:** • For the stimulation of cash-flow into the economy to encourage bank lending, to improve consumer confidence and create new jobs. • For many people to turn to God in their crisis and find His love, support and wisdom.

More: http://worldprayer.org.uk/uploads/Friday_Focus_web_version_Feb_2009.doc

■ **Anglicans reaffirm uniqueness of Christ**

The Church of England on Wednesday reaffirmed its commitment to sharing with people of all faiths and none. The Gospel of Jesus Christ as the only saviour. A motion passed by the General Synod commits bishops to drawing up new guidelines on the uniqueness of Christ in multi-faith Britain and to offering examples of good practice 'in sharing the Gospel of salvation through Christ alone' with people of other faiths and of none. The motion was put forward by lay member Paul Eddy, who said the motion was not about targeting one particular faith group. 'It is talking about sharing Jesus Christ with people of other faiths and of none, including in this country loads of people who are atheists for whom we need examples of good practice.' The Bishop of Rochester, the Rt Rev Michael Nazir-Ali, said Christians had an obligation to witness the transforming love of Christ to all people. 'We should not target anyone but no one is excluded either,' he said.

Pray: for the church as it takes up the challenge to share the love of Christ with those of other faiths and none. (Mk.13:10-11)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/anglicans.reaffirm.uniqueness.of.christ/22502.htm>

■ **Primary school receptionist 'facing sack' after daughter talks about Jesus to classmate**

A primary school receptionist, Jennie Cain, whose five-year-old daughter was told off for talking about Jesus in class is now facing the sack for seeking support from her church. Mrs Cain sent a private email to close friends to ask for prayers for her daughter after she was called into the school where she worked to be reprimanded. Her daughter Jasmine had been overheard by a teacher discussing heaven and God with a friend and had been pulled to one side and told off. Mrs Cain contacted 10 close friends from her church by email but the message fell into the hands of Gary Read, the headmaster of school where she works. The mother of two is now being investigated for professional misconduct for allegedly making claims against the school and its staff. She has been told she may be disciplined and was warned she could face dismissal.

Pray: for Mrs Cain in her present situation and for all Christians who feel increasingly constrained in living their faith by excessive political correctness in a secular society. (Mt.5:10)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopping/religion/4590870/Primary-school-receptionist-facing-sack-after-daughter-talks-about-Jesus-to-classmate.html>

■ Preacher ad was 'irresponsible'

Vulnerable people with illnesses could have been misled by a preacher's leaflet, the advert watchdog has ruled. Don Double was described as a 'healing evangelist' on a poster and leaflets distributed by the All Nations' Church in Cardiff. The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) said words like blindness, aids, and cancer used on the leaflets was 'irresponsible'. The church accepted the word 'healing' should not have been used. It said Mr Double would not describe himself as a 'healing evangelist' and no guarantees of success were given in the literature. The ASA ruled the advert must not be used again in its current form and warned the church not to include serious medical conditions in its publicity. 'We considered that some potentially vulnerable readers might infer that Don Double could offer treatment for those conditions. We therefore concluded that the ad was irresponsible and likely to mislead.'

Pray: for wisdom and discernment for Don and his team as they offer the healing power of Jesus to those in need. (Lk.9:1-6)

More: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/south_east/7882007.stm

■ Foster mother struck off for letting Muslim girl convert to Christianity

A foster mother has been struck off the register for allowing a Muslim girl in her care to convert to Christianity. The woman, who has looked after more than 80 children in the past ten years, is considering launching a legal challenge to the decision. Although she is a practising Anglican, she said she had put no pressure on the girl who was baptised last year at the age of 16. She said social workers had also raised no objections to her own attendance at church. But officials insist she failed in her duty to preserve the girl's religion and should have tried to stop the baptism. Last April, they ruled that the girl, now 17, should stay away from church for six months. The foster mother's removal from the register followed in November.

Pray: for all our Christian brothers and sisters on the front line, that God will bless them and protect them in their role. (2Tim.2:15)

More: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1139285/Foster-mother-struck-letting-Muslim-girl-convert-Christianity.html>

■ Church throws open female bishops dispute

On Wednesday the Church of England reopened the debate on female bishops when after two hours of argument and division its national assembly, the General Synod, agreed to send a draft law allowing women to be ordained as bishops for amendments. The decision means the church will not see its first female bishop until 2014 at the earliest as revisions to the legislation are bounced back and forth between Synod and committees. There also remains a possibility that the legislation will be rejected in its final form, an outcome that would seriously undermine the prospect of women ever becoming bishops. Nigel McCulloch, the Bishop of Manchester, said 'It is open season once again and everything is reviewable. Many of us are painfully aware we shall be faced with some searching and unwelcome dilemmas as we decide how to vote on these proposals and the amendments they attract.'

Pray: for the church leadership that they will be open to God as they proceed with such controversial issues for the Church of England. (1Th.5:25)

More: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2009/feb/12/synod-debate-female-bishops-law>

■ Marriage Week Northern Ireland

Marriage Week UK celebrates the diversity and vibrancy of marriage as the basis for family life and draws to a close on Valentine's Day. It was launched in England around ten years ago, now replicated in countries like Germany, the Czech Republic and Switzerland. Evangelical Alliance is bringing together a group of organisations to introduce Marriage Week to Northern Ireland. Running from Monday 9 - Sunday 15 February 2009 the week will seek to encourage those who are preparing for marriage, as well as those who are already married to invest in their relationship in a special way. It is also an ideal time to think about supporting those in our churches and local communities who, at whatever stage in their married lives, are on this journey together. In the Republic of Ireland Marriage Week Ireland will also be launched in the same week.

Pray: that these initiatives will help our islands focus on the importance of marriage and families. (Gen.1:27-28a)

More: <http://www.nationalmarriageweekni.co.uk/>

EUROPE

■ Belarus: Danes deported for praying in church

Two Danish visitors to Belarus were detained by police and are being deported as they expressed 'ideas of a religious nature', in the words of the deportation order, Forum 18 News Service has learnt. 'We were praying, reading and speaking from the Bible, greeting the people, and praying together,' one of the two, Erling Laursen, told Forum 18. Neither of them was leading the worship service they attended. Police took video footage of the two praying in Gomez's Living Faith Church, but refused to say who had recorded it 'to protect our colleague'. The Church's pastor said that a young man he had never seen before filmed a worship service with his mobile phone. The Pastor said that 'it's not news to us that the security organs are watching. They visit and watch us secretly.' The KGB secret police closely monitors all religious communities.

Pray: for the church in Belarus and its visitors that they will continue to preach the word in spite of KGB pressures. (Ac.5:38a-39)

More: http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article_id=1253

■ Portugal: Bishops fight homosexual marriages

The Catholic bishops of Portugal have resolved to fight plans to legalize homosexual marriage in their country. The leader of the ruling Socialist Party announced his support for homosexual marriage in January, and on Wednesday February 11th, the Permanent Council of the Portuguese Episcopal Conference (CEP), has announced that 'the organizations of the Church will move to combat the proposal by the Socialist Party to equalize homosexual unions with matrimony.' Fr. Manuel

Morujao, a spokesman for the CEP said, 'Same-sex marriage is an offence against marriage that is, by its nature, heterosexual.' He also stated that the movement to create 'homosexual marriage' is a 'threat' to Portuguese society and is moving along an erroneous path. The Grand Master of the Portuguese Grand Orient, an association of Freemasons, said that while 'the Catholic Church has all the right to have its opinion,' the 'Portuguese people and their representatives will decide freely and won't be subject to the pressures of any religious organization.'

Pray: against the spirit behind this intention to approve homosexual marriages. (2Co.10:4-5)

More: <http://www.lifesitenews.com/ldn/2009/feb/09021110.html>

WORLDWIDE

■ Australia: Victoria in mourning

Police say they are unable to report a complete breakdown of deceased by location while they complete their validation process. On Thursday evening official bushfires death toll stood at 181. An Australian online newspaper is recording the names and faces of the Victorians who have been tragically killed and those who are missing, feared dead, in Australia's worst natural disaster. Prayer Alert invites intercessors to visit the web site and pray for the families and communities represented by the individual postings at: <http://www.news.com.au/heraldsun/story/0,21985,25030476-5018723,00.html> Amidst the devastation some amazing stories are being reported. Fire-fighter David Nicholls in Narbethong thought he was about to die cowering in a drain clutching his wedding album as the firestorm thundered over him. He was barely able to stand when he emerged from the culvert under the Highway. His vehicle was a charred wreck but his wedding photos were intact. 'I came out wearing a pair of shorts and my fire brigade uniform,' he said. David is still fighting the fires that almost claimed his life.

Pray: that all the resource needed to restore communities and comfort families, would be released. (Ps.23:4 & 2Cor.1:3-4)

More: <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,25045376-12377,00.html>

■ Zimbabwe: Christian alliance wants prisoners freed

The Zimbabwe Christian Alliance hopes the country's proposed government of national unity will see the rule of law established in the country immediately and that it will release all political prisoners. The Group classified as political prisoners include Roman Catholics, Protestants, Anglicans, Evangelicals and Pentecostals. The Christian Alliance welcomed 'with cautious optimism' the finalisation of talks 'which opens the way to the formation of a government of national unity. Immediate needs for Zimbabwe include agencies of government to be apolitical in their delivery of services, NGO's free to distribute food and other commodities without interference from government, all political prisoners released forthwith, the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe to return to its original mandate of keeping the resources and distributing them as directed by the government. Also for the framework of issues of transitional justice and reconciliation to be worked out together with the Church to heal the 'cancer at the heart of the nation'.

Pray: for God to inspire all those who will be placed in leadership positions in the new coalition and work through each of them as they use the gifts God has given him. (Eph.4:15-16)

More: <http://www.eni.ch/featured/article.php?id=2714>

■ Israel: Livni scores surprise win, but not clear victory

Scoring an unexpected victory at the ballot box Tzipi Livni won 28 seats for the Kadima party, with Bibi Netanyahu, leader of the Likud, capturing 27. Livni described the election as being about whether or not Israel should go for peace, casting Tuesday's vote as a choice between hope and fear and emphasizing that negotiations on a final-status peace deal with the Palestinians must continue. 'Israel must combine military might with diplomatic initiative. He who thinks Israel can have security without some kind of peace process is fooling himself, fooling the public and doesn't understand the world we live in.' she said. Netanyahu has said in the past that he will not be held to any 'peace' deals that might be struck before the elections, nor will he countenance talk of giving up the Golan Heights or swapping 'land for peace'

Pray: for God to create a workable leadership conciliation of ideas and ideologies that would lead to peaceful relationships with neighbouring people groups. (Is.51:16)

More: <http://jta.org/news/article/2009/02/10/1002910/vindication-for-livni-in-surprise-victory>

■ Iran: At 30, so much done so much left to do

The internal and external challenges Iran faces on its 30th birthday are daunting. The Islamic Republic needs to adapt rapidly to changing conditions globally. If it can become more flexible it can regain the vitality of its youth. The world around Iran is changing and Iran's foreign policy position needs to adapt to these developments. From Russia to Turkey, Iraq, Central Asia, and Washington, the priorities of foreign states are evolving by the day and Iran cannot afford to continue interacting with these states in the same manner. The challenge for the next few Iranian administrations will be to prevent the Pasdaran (Revolutionary Guards) from strangling Iranian society. The Pasdran influences economy, politics, security forces, and higher education. Failure to allow Iran's democratic theocracy freedom could invite serious internal unrest, as nearly two thirds of Iranians are under the age of 30 and are eager to have a government that represents them. Most homes in the cities have Satellite TV and the BBC has recently started broadcasting 24/7 in Farsi.

Pray: for a sweeping spiritual climate of change over Iran that will cause freedom of religion as Iranians interact with the west. (Ps.24:7-10)

More: http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&article_id=99235&categ_id=17

■ Burma: Massive church closures

Dozens of British legislators expressed concern on February 10 over reports of massive church closures in Burma seen as 'the most significant crackdown' on Christian activity in the military-ruled Asian nation in years, and affecting as many as 80 per cent of churches. Christian Solidarity Worldwide said 33 British parliamentarians signed a motion urging the United Nations Special Reporter for Freedom of Religion and Belief, Asma Jilani Jahangir, to investigate violations of religious

freedom in Burma as 'at least 100 churches were closed in the capital Rangoon last month. Fifty pastors were reported to have been forced by authorities to sign documents promising to stop holding church services, 'under threat of prison for non-compliance.'

Pray: for God's hand to remove violence and human rights violations, for His protection over Christian communities and His creative inspiration for NGO's as they look for ways to enter closed areas. (Pr.17:15 & 26)

More: <http://www.bosnewslife.com/5785-british-legislators-protest-massive-hurch-closures-in-burma>

■ Iraq: Post provincial elections

Thank you for your prayers for the Provincial elections on 31 Jan 09. They took place in a positive and enthusiastic atmosphere with a comprehensive security plan executed mostly by Iraqi security forces, supported by the Coalition troops. During the Election Day, there were no suicide bombers and no vehicle-borne bombs. All parties have flagged up the elections as significant in advancing democracy and in demonstrating improved security. However, the Independent High Electoral Commission must now deal with complaints from the parties and announce the results of their findings (there is no evidence yet of significant fraud), the new Provincial Councils must form up and elect new Governors and, because no single party gained an overall majority in any Province, coalitions that are able to govern effectively will be required. This will be a test of true collaboration between parties. There is a need for sectarian issues to be resolved with Arab-Kurd disputes in Ninawa Province, and intra-Shia disputes in the Southern Provinces and Baghdad.

Pray: for effective coalitions to be established that will govern wisely; for the election of noble and wise Governors. Pray also that the men of violence will continue to be confounded, confused and captured. (Ps 5: 4-6)

More: http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20090209/wl_mideast_afp/iraqpoliticsallawi

PRAISE REPORTS

■ Canada: Bus banner battle

Following the popularity of a bus advertising campaign in Britain saying God 'probably' does not exist a Canadian secular/atheist group The Freethought Association of Canada, is planning a similar campaign on Canadian busses in Toronto, Alberta and Halifax. The United Church of Canada however co-opted the atheists' slogan for its own campaign. Its publicity uses atheists' wording, and adds an additional slogan, 'There's probably a God. Now stop worrying and enjoy your life'. There is a check box beside each phrase. The advert directs people to a church Web site, wondercafe.ca, where visitors can join discussions of faith matters. The Rev. Keith Howard, director of the church's outreach initiative, said its campaign would launch with a national newspaper advertisement. 'We thought it was a good opportunity to talk about God, it seems particularly appropriate at a time when God is being called upon to sanction everything from football to wars.' At the same time, the Humanist Association of Canada has begun fundraising for its own bus campaign 'You can be good without God.

Praise: God for the spiritual battle over Canada and ask Him to move in power through this media battle to bring many people into his kingdom. (Ps.33:11-12)

More: <http://www.eni.ch/featured/article.php?id=2711>

■ Smacking row family win right to adopt

A family has won the right to adopt a girl after they were banned when the father smacked a child for swearing. Newham Council originally banned the family from adopting the half-sister of a boy they were raising in a decision which was overturned and branded bizarre by the High Court. But following the ruling the council still refused to reunite the siblings. The couple launched a legal battle challenging the decision, and Newham Council has finally approved the parents for adoption. The father of the family said he was 'deliriously happy' following the outcome. 'I can't describe how happy I am and how relieved my family is. It has taken two years to get to this point. My son is absolutely delighted. He is only eight but we have kept him informed all the way through and he is excited he will now grow up with his sister.' Mr Justice Bennett who overturned the ruling, called it an unreasonable decision made 'in dangerous territory'.

Praise: God for common sense and just decisions. (Pr.23:12-14)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/4592575/Smacking-row-family-win-right-to-adopt.html>

■ Christian nursing home funding restored after 'sexual orientation' flap

A UK Christian nursing care home that had been threatened with loss of funding for having the wrong opinions about homosexuality has had its grant restored. The Brighton & Hove city council backed down as Pilgrim Homes, the 200-year-old Christian charity that runs the home in question, as well as nine others, was preparing for legal action for religious discrimination. In early January, it was revealed that the city council had revoked a £13,000 grant, after elderly residents, some of whom are retired Christian missionaries, had refused to answer questions about their 'sexual orientation,' saying the questions were 'intrusive.' The residents were branded as being 'closed to the gay community' by the council and the home was accused of being guilty of 'institutionalised homophobia.' (See Prayer Alert 0109)

Praise: God for this answer to prayer and pray that God will continue to equip His people to stand firm in situations like this. (2Th.2:13-15)

More: http://www.openheaven.com/forums/forum_posts.asp?TID=26240&PN=1&TPN=1

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.