

PRAYER ALERT...

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BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ **FRIDAY FOCUS: 20th February - Hope for prodigals - Luke 15:4-7**

God is continually seeking to bring people into a love-based relationship with Him through Jesus.

Pray: • For those not in relationship with God that they will once again feel His presence and realise His unconditional love for them. • For a greater insight of how to pray for a prodigal that we know.

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

■ **A call to prayer for our nation on Saturday 28th February**

In December eighty Christian Leaders from both Houses of Parliament, business, education and most branches of the Church met in the House of Lords to consider the moral and spiritual implications of the financial crisis. The meeting, was jointly chaired by Lord Anderson of Swansea and Lord Forster the Bishop of Chester. There was a strong conviction that together intercessors in the British Isles can do something about the problems in our nation and that God is calling all churches in Britain to a season of prayer and fasting for the nation. 'Blow the trumpet in Zion, Consecrate a fast, Call a sacred assembly; Gather the people, Sanctify the congregation, Assemble the Elders' - Joel 2:15-16. This is a national Call to Prayer!

Pray: for the fullness of the Holy Spirit to lead every gathering this weekend as we seek God's face for our nations. (Joel.2:15-16)

More: http://worldprayer.org.uk/uploads/2009_02_28_Day_of_Prayer_Invitation.pdf

■ **God and the workplace must reconnect says Sentamu**

The Archbishop of York said today that there should be no separation between the life of faith and the workplace. Speaking at the launch of the new God at Work course at Holy Trinity Brompton, Dr John Sentamu said there was a 'desperate need' to reconnect faith in God with the workplace. 'All of life is religious and there is a desperate need to reconnect the sacred and the secular. There is no more urgent time than now to break down the compartmentalised thinking that separates trust in God from the world of work,' he said. He called for greater recognition of the good work Christians are doing in the world. 'Many Christians are living out their lives as the church dispersed in the world of business and commerce every day,' he said. 'They are involved daily in building the Kingdom and have the challenge of living by a set of values that the world thinks are mad.'

Pray: for a greater understanding that the Gospel of Christ is part of every minute of our lives, not just at church but at home and at work too. (Ro.1:16-17)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/god.and.the.workplace.must.reconnect.says.sentamu/22561.htm>

■ Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor: recession may be jolt that selfish Britain needs

Pride, avarice, lust, anger, gluttony, envy and sloth: sometimes it feels as if Britain is in the grip of the seven deadly sins. There are arrogant politicians, greedy bankers, lecherous television presenters, furious trade unionists, obese children, competitive shoppers and an underclass of people who do not work. To the doom-mongers, British society is not broken, it is shattered. According to the Archbishop of Westminster, the economic downturn could be the very thing that brings us to our senses. 'It's the end of a certain kind of selfish capitalism,' Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor said. 'This particular recession is a moment - a kairos - when we have to reflect as a country on what are the things that nourish the values, the virtues, we want to have. Capitalism needs to be underpinned with regulation and a moral purpose.'

Pray: that as people face difficult times they will re-evaluate their lives, reaffirm their beliefs and rediscover God. (Ps.51:13)

More: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/faith/article5728972.ece>

■ Students need to know Bible's 'great stories', poet laureate says

Children should be taught the Bible throughout their education because it is an 'essential piece of cultural luggage' without which they will struggle to fully understand literature, according to the poet laureate, Andrew Motion. Too many students arrive at university to study English literature barely knowing who Adam and Eve were because teaching of the Bible and its 'great stories' is disappearing from the school system, he said. The sermon on the mount and the crucifixion are stories which have influenced story structures ever since, while the book of Ruth is essential because of 'the beauty of the writing'. Children should read the Bible, he said, 'simply because it is full of terrific stories. They speak to us about human nature and the recurring patterns of human behaviour.'

Pray: that children should be given greater opportunities to hear, read and learn the stories of the Bible. (Ro.10:17)

More: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2009/feb/17/bible-stories-education>

■ Libraries put Bible on top shelf in a sop to Muslims

Librarians are being told to move the Bible to the top shelf to avoid giving offence to followers of Islam. Muslims have complained of finding the Koran on lower shelves, saying it should be put above commonplace things. So officials have responded with guidance, backed by ministers, that all holy books should be treated equally and go on the top shelf together. This means that Christian works, which also have immense historical and literary value, will be kept out of the reach and sight of many readers. The guidance was published by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, a quango answering to Culture Secretary Andy Burnham. Critics said such a move implied religious works should be treated as objects of veneration rather than as books to be read. Simon Calvert of the Christian Institute said: 'It is disappointing if the policy of libraries is dictated by the practices of one group.'

Pray: for a rethink on this guidance, for Christian literature and the Bible with its immense historical and literary value, to remain available to all. (Heb.4:12)

More: <http://mychristianblood.blogspot.com/archive/2009/02/18/libraries-put-bible-on-top-shelf-in-a-sop-to-muslims.html#more>

■ Army chaplain's new creed: 'We don't believe!'

The senior chaplain at Sandhurst military academy has dropped the Apostles' Creed from Anglican services saying it might offend religious minorities. The Daily Mail reported that centuries of religious tradition have been sacrificed for the sake of political correctness. Reverend Jonathan Gough dropped the Christian declaration of faith in God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit when he took office last month. A fellow Chaplain said it had been removed 'to stop upsetting cadets who do not believe in God'. This is despite the fact that attendance is not compulsory. Non-believing Sandhurst cadets can and do opt out of church. The Ministry of Defence said the Creed had been withdrawn from services at the Royal Memorial Chapel to make the church 'more inclusive'. A senior member of the Chapel yesterday said the decision to cut the affirmation of faith was ludicrous. He said: 'It's a disgrace. Nobody was told and everybody has been left shocked and angry.'

Pray: that this decision will be reversed and the declaration of our faith be once more central in acts of worship. (Dt.30:16)

More: <http://www.christianvoice.org.uk/Press/press127.html>

EUROPE

■ Italy: Crucifix row teacher barred

A teacher in Italy has been suspended after some students complained that he removed a crucifix from his classroom. Franco Coppoli, a literature teacher from Umbria, took down the crucifix in his classroom arguing that education and religion should not be mixed. Some of his students complained and now the National Education Council has suspended Mr Coppoli for a month. The hanging of crosses in public buildings is not compulsory in Italy but it is customary. The case follows a decision this week by Italy's Supreme Court to quash a conviction of a judge who refused to enter courts where crucifixes were hanging. Judge Luigi Tosti, who is Jewish, had been given a seven-month jail sentence for failing to carry out his official duties. He had earlier issued an ultimatum declaring that either he or the crosses should remain in the courtroom - not both. Both these incidents have re-ignited Italy's debate on crucifixes in public buildings.

Pray: for the church in Italy as it defends 'the faith' and its Christian traditions throughout the nation. (Heb.11:1-2)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/7897802.stm>

■ Turkey: Christian bookshop in Adana vandalized

Following threats from Muslim nationalists, a Turkish Bible Society bookshop in the southern city of Adana was vandalized for the second time in a week on Thursday (Feb. 12). Security camera footage shows two youths attacking the storefront of

the Soz Kitapevi bookshop, kicking and smashing glass in both the window and the door. Bookshop employee Dogan Simsek discovered the damage when he arrived to open the shop. The security camera did not clearly capture the faces of either youth, and police are still attempting to identify the perpetrators. During the first attack on Feb. 7, the glass of the front door was smashed and the security camera mangled. Both have since been repaired. The bookshop has received threats from both Muslim hardliners and nationalists. Last November, a man entered the shop and began making accusations that the Soz Kitapevi bookshop was in league with the CIA, saying, 'You work with them killing people in Muslim countries, harming Muslim countries.'

Pray: for our Christian brothers as they face persecution for their faith that God will send His angels to defend them. (Ps.91:11)

More: <http://www.compassdirect.org/en/display.php?page=news&lang=en&length=short&idelement=5817&backpage=summaries>

WORLDWIDE

■ China: Persecution to escalate in 2009

Most religious liberty monitors believe persecution of the Church will escalate in China during 2009 as the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) tackles growing dissent and anger over repression, injustice and increasing economic hardship. Anger is likely to rise further this year as unemployment reaches critical levels due to the world economic downturn which is lessening global demand for Chinese products. Furthermore, a group of dissident intellectuals published their 'Charter 08' on 10 December 2008 calling for sweeping political and human rights reforms. Despite (CCP) efforts to block access to Charter 08, it has now been signed by more than 2000 Chinese citizens, including prominent intellectuals and officials. Many China watchers are expecting a sharp increase in anger, dissent and 'mass incidents' during 2009, with an equally sharp increase in official reactionary repression. Source: World Evangelical Alliance. Press the more button to read Californian resident's letter home to his family from a Chinese prison.

Pray: for God to build, sanctify and refine his church in China so that in holiness she may shine as a light in the darkness. (2Sa.23:5)

More: <http://chinaaid.org/2009/02/18/california-resident-peng-ming-writes-to-his-family-from-chinese-prison/>

■ China: Evangelical church leaders detained

More than 30 police raided a private evangelical seminar in Nanyang city central Henan province, on February 11th, detaining more than 60 worshippers with four of them still in custody a week after the roundup. China's communist government allows worship only in state-supervised churches, which claim about 11 million members. Christians and clergy in unofficial churches are regularly harassed and detained. The participants came from four provinces for the event at which two South Korean pastors had been invited to speak. The Christians were escorted to a hotel in Nanyang by police, where their personal belongings were taken. They were registered, fined and some were released. It was not clear how much they had to pay. Li Dewei, director of the propaganda office of the public security bureau of Nanyang city, said he did not know about the matter. The two South Korean pastors were expelled from China on Feb. 14 for 'engaging in illegal religious activities,' China Aid said. They were also banned from re-entering China for five years.

Pray: for God to pour out His Holy Spirit and fill Chinese Christians being persecuted for their faith, giving them courage, peace and godly wisdom. (Ac.20:24)

More: <http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5iXYhGqrD6bqOCrzu0Dgsfuyv0XaQD96DPCM00>

■ Global: Sharia law tearing the world in two

Sharia law is gradually working its way into public life in Islamic and non-Islamic nations around the world. An Indonesian Christian reports, 'It's going from one province to another, it's not happening all at once but step by step. Christians are very concerned by what is happening in Indonesia and they also see similar reports coming from other countries.' In Somalia Sharia law caused the beheading of a Christian aid worker convert. In Iran women are legally stoned to death for committing adultery. Afghanistan prostitutes are executed, and the constitution states no law can be contrary to the Islamic law. In Saudi Arabia the Quran is the state constitution and Sharia the legal system. Malaysian constitution declares Islam to be the official state religion, with the death penalty for apostasy. A non-Muslim may not become a citizen of the Maldives. In Egypt Christian converts from Islam are often imprisoned. The Jordanian authorities harshly treat converts from Islam. The list goes on. (resource www.barnabasfund.org)

Pray: against one of the roots of Islamic fundamentalism, the law of apostasy that was birthed in medieval times. (Is.44:24-25)

More: <http://www.cbn.com/CBNnews/543869.aspx>

■ Pakistan: Taliban controls 2/3rds of North West Frontier Province

A resident of Pakistan reports the Taliban already controls 2/3rds of the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) of Pakistan. This week the government has stamped their approval on a peace deal between the Taliban of the Swat valley and the NWFP creating a new law for this uncontrollable portion of Pakistan by implementing Sharia Law. This parallel system of justice has been a key demand of the Taliban for the past two years. Sharia law promises swift justice, something that the people have been wanting for a long time as they see it is the only way to stop the intense fighting that has been going on in the valley. The Taliban have exploited the government's apathy in responding to needs of the people. In the past the Taliban have killed and then publicly displayed the dead bodies of anyone opposed to them, while the Pakistan military has killed more civilians than Taliban insurgents. Large portions of entire villages have been levelled by Pakistan military operations.

Pray: for the people to realise that neither the civilian government nor the Taliban has the power to overcome and restore an everlasting peace and for God to pour out His Spirit of wisdom and justice. (Pr.1:2-3)

More: <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/2009/s09020099.htm>

■ Global: Pastor kidnappings on the rise

Urgent prayer is needed as pastor kidnappings are on the rise in some countries in the 10/40 Window, Window International Network reports. A letter from a pastor in an undisclosed country detailing the abduction of a fellow minister said, 'He is teaching people that Jesus is Lord. Last week when he was teaching in a seminar non-Christians kidnapped him and nobody knows where he is. All leaders who worked with him in the past are not feeling good because he has our cell numbers, and he knows some pastors' home and church address.' Asia News reported another Pastor kidnapped in an undisclosed country was found alive two nights later badly injured. Often kidnapped people are not returned alive. BBC reported from a bishop in South Sudan saying Uganda's rebel Lord's Resistance Army attacked a village killing four people, including a lay minister. Eritrean pastors receive death threats forcing them to move.

Pray: that as the nations make their stand against Christianity, the Lord will release his power, dominion and authority mightily into these and other situations. (Is.11:10-11)

More: <http://win1040.com/blog/2009/02/17/1040-window-emergency-prayer-alert-pastor-kidnappings-on-the-rise-in-the-1040-window/>

■ Zimbabwe: Jailed politician refuses amnesty deal

Officials in Robert Mugabe's party have offered to release imprisoned opposition leaders in exchange for a promise of amnesty for any crimes committed in the past 30-year rule. Roy Bennett who was to be sworn in as deputy agriculture minister before his arrest last week has refused the deal, 'and I think every single Zimbabwean would want him to,' his wife Heather Bennett said. She added her husband is a long-time Mugabe foe who was a thorn in their side when he served as treasurer of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change. They know that with Roy in government, it's not going to be an easy ride for them. He's going to be checking them all the time and she fears they are going to try and put him away for a long time. Bennett's arrest strained the first meeting of the power sharing Cabinet as it made Morgan Tsvangirai look weak by his inability to free Roy Bennett.

Pray: for God's gift of mediation skills for Morgan Tsvangirai enabling him implement workable resolutions for the humanitarian and economic crisis. (Ps.3:1-3)

More: <http://edition.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/africa/02/18/zimbabwe.minister.amnesty/index.html>

PRAISE REPORTS

■ Christians pray for God's glory to come to the UK

Hundreds of Christians packed Westminster Chapel on Friday night to pray for God's glory to return to London and the nation. The night of prayer was the last of seven around the city to launch the 2009 Global Day of Prayer London, part of a worldwide movement to mobilise Christians of all denominations in praying for revival. (See Prayer Alert 0509) Pastor Jonathan Oloyede, convener of Global Day of Prayer London, told believers not to settle at being nominal Christians. 'We need to circumcise our hearts again and ask Jesus for the love to come to our hearts that we felt the first time we met Him. Because God is waiting for his Davids to stand up and for those who will pray that God's glory comes again to this country.' He said 'it was time for the body of Christ to rise up as one in prayer for London, the nation and the world. Or are we just going to play church and fight amongst ourselves?'

Praise: God for the presence of His Holy Spirit as the people gathered worship and praise. (Ex.15:11)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/christians.pray.for.gods.glory.to.come.to.the.uk/22527.htm>

■ Botswana: Harvest is plentiful and workers busy

Globally the least reached people groups are being saved. The following is part of an email sent to PA office reporting on an outreach to the Bushman groups near the Kalahari desert from 9-20 February and then to the least reached people groups in the small villages near Serowe, until 24 March, 'We shall make use of different audio visual support materials, to teach the people about Jesus. A division of Bible Media, provided us with Picture books and a hand winded cassette player and the cassettes in the people groups in different languages, to use to explain the Gospel of Jesus to them. This aid we shall use during the days, explaining the Bible and targeting the children and young people. During the evenings we reach out to the whole community with a 2x3 meter big screen, video projector and sound system, in a central open space and use the Jesus Film and other DVD's. We identify people with leadership skills and give them Bibles and written material and teach them how to use it and start a gathering (church) in their community.' To hear another testimony of how one man saved thousands press the more button below.

Praise: God for those he sends out to serve in His name and pray for his Holy Spirit to continue to reveal God's power globally. (Heb.1:14)

More: <http://www.personaltract.com/downloads.asp>

PRAYER FORUM OF BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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