

# PRAYER ALERT...

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## BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

### ■ David Cameron: Church schools 'under threat'

The Church of England was warned last week that, unless there are further amendments, its 140-year-old partnership with the Government over schools could be ended by the new Academies Bill. The warning came in a client-advice paper from the solicitors that acts for the National Society, the body set up in 1811 to found church schools. The new Bill is potentially the largest change in the provision of education in England since 1870. Before then schools had been provided by voluntary bodies, principally the Church of England. The balance then swung towards state provision; but the new legislation could swing the balance back again to the voluntary sector, says the solicitor's education specialist. 'We suppose that the Government would ideally wish to see the end of local authorities as providers of schools. Modifications to the Bill have been by the bishops in the Lords which would increase diocesan boards' influence over their schools.

**Pray:** that Church schools will continue to underpin the faith of future generations. (Lk.18:16)

**More:** <http://www.churchtimes.co.uk/content.asp?id=97026>

### ■ We must do more on knife crime

David Cameron hinted at tougher sentences for knife crime in the wake of the latest 'absolutely horrific' death of a 15-year-old in London. The fatal stabbing of Zac Olumegbon outside his school in West Norwood on 2 July was raised in Parliament by MP Chuka Umunna. In his response, the Prime Minister referred to a review of sentencing, saying: 'I'm very clear we do need to have the strongest possible signal about how carrying a knife is just unacceptable. We need to send out a signal that it is not a defensive measure, it's not a cool thing to do. It should not happen and the punishment will be tough'. Mr Cameron said the long-term solution was 'to give people an alternative to the gangs they are drawn towards, because they don't have other networks and help and hope in their lives. (See 4th item) Three teenagers, aged 16 and 17, have been charged with Zac's murder.

**Pray:** for the Lord to effect changes to the youngsters' role models. (Mt.18:3)

**More:** <http://www.thisislondon.co.uk/standard/article-23853902-david-cameron-we-must-do-more-on-knife-crime.do>

### ■ Christians must not be sidelined

A senior Government official has said that Christians should not be sidelined for their faith and that Christianity has a valued and important role to play. Eric Pickles, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, said that the Government is keen to look at the church's role in communities for inspiration. He knows the flawed logic of the view that the state can solve society's ills does not work. In an interview with the Sunday Express, he said: 'One of the things I want to do is to use the pastoral experience of the Church of England and the Catholic Church in getting out there into the community. Religious tolerance is immensely important. Religion has a valued and important role in binding our society

together and is a vital part of the cultural fabric of the English and British nations.' It is reported that there are 22,000 Christian charities in Britain providing more than 23 million hours of voluntary service.

**Pray:** for recognition of the vital role that the church plays in the life of the nation. (Mt.5:3)

**More:** <http://www.ccfon.org/view.php?id=1127>

#### ■ Increases in crime documented

The statistics set out in Crimestoppers website are shocking in their summaries of the growth over recent years of all types of crime. Crimestoppers is an independent charity working to fight crime and well worth supporting in our view. It has nothing to do with the BBC's Crimewatch programme. Anonymous information passed to Crimestoppers has led to 100,000 criminals being arrested and charged. This milestone was reached 22 years after the charity was formed in 1988.

Anonymity is assured for those offering information about crimes in their area. An example of a local initiative is shown by the well known boxer, Ricky Hatton. He has joined up with Crimestoppers to encourage people in Greater Manchester to rid their community of crime by passing on information to Crimestoppers anonymously.

**Pray:** that Christ's light will shine into dark places so that justice may be delivered and peace prevail. (Eph.5:8-10)

**More:** <http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org/crime-prevention/latest-crime-statistics>

#### ■ The Pope's visit

Regardless of their faith members of the public have been invited to see Pope Benedict XVI. It emerged that he will meet Nick Clegg, who is an atheist, and Harriet Harman, whose Equality Act has angered the Church. The Government is keen to portray the four-day state visit as a historic event that will enhance the country's standing worldwide and to highlight the pontiff's commitment to social justice in order to head off criticism over the costs and the child abuse scandal affecting the Vatican. Lord Patten is overseeing the visit's planning. He said that the significance of the first-ever state visit by a Pope to Britain was greater than the potential costs. He told a press conference: 'Even if we had known of the parlous state of the nation's finances, I'm sure that wouldn't have been a consideration because the importance of this visit makes its own claim upon modest public support.'

**Pray:** that God will use the Pope's visit in a positive way for many communities. (Ro.8:28)

**More:** <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/religion/the-pope/7873291/Non-Catholics-encouraged-to-take-part-in-Popes-visit-to-Britain.html>

#### ■ Orange Order rejects draft parades proposals

The Orange Order has rejected draft legislation for new mechanisms to deal with contentious parades. The Grand Lodge met in County Tyrone on 6 July to consider the plans. The vote was 37 against and 32 for, with four abstentions. The proposals were drawn up after the Hillsborough Agreement and envisage a focus on dialogue and a code of conduct for both residents and marchers. The DUP said: 'We are the only party to have put proposals on the table to deal with issues surrounding parading and protests, based upon upholding the fundamental right to freedom of public assembly'. The DUP and Sinn Fein set up a six-strong group to work on the matter to propose a new and improved framework to rule on controversial marches. One of those who sat on the working group, Sinn Fein MLA John O'Dowd, said that the vote showed the Orange Order needed to 'wake up'.

**Pray:** for reconciliation between the opposing parties in the province. (Lk.12:58)

**More:** [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern\\_ireland/10534075.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/10534075.stm)

#### ■ Labour leadership candidates compete for Christian support

The Methodist Central Hall in Westminster last week saw hustings where every candidate presented themselves as motivated by firm convictions. David Miliband explained, 'I'm not a religious person but actually I'm a person of faith' and that the Labour Party can learn from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. His brother Ed said he had learnt 'not a religious faith but a simple faith' that 'if you saw an injustice then you had to do something about it'. Andy Burnham, a Roman Catholic, emphasised the Christian origins of his politics insisting that 'the basic tenets of the Labour Party and socialism are one and the same with those of Christianity'. Ed Balls had positive early memories of his parents' Anglican church and that his father's commitment to Labour had grown out of Christianity. Diane Abbott emphasised the values with which she had been brought up, saying 'We could do worse than return to those values of faith, community and family'.

**Pray:** for these candidates that they might gain a true understanding of Christian faith. (Jas.2:14)

**More:** <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/12559>

## EUROPE

#### ■ EU and bank supervision

Plans to set up new European supervisors which would see Brussels have more influence over the way banking is carried out have stalled. MEPs accused EU member states of 'dragging their feet' on a series of reforms that would allow Brussels-based supervisors to oversee, and in some cases overrule, their national counterparts. The European Parliament has agreed to postpone the planned vote on a package of reforms to establish the new EU supervisors until September as question marks hang over whether member states and MEPs will be able to broker a workable compromise. The disagreement on financial supervision spans a number of reforms but in short they all present member states with the same question: more or less EU intervention for Europe's banks? 'The body taking decisions should be the national supervisor,'

an EU diplomat argued. His argument is shared by at least seven member states including several Central and Eastern European countries as well as the UK.

**Pray:** that enhanced EU bureaucratic oversight will not hamper countries' efforts to reduce their national deficits. (Mk.12:17)

**More:** <http://www.euractiv.com/en/financial-services/eu-countries-dragging-their-feet-bank-supervision-news-496056>

## WORLDWIDE

### ■ India: Hindu extremists victimize pastors

In India, Hindu extremists have continued to victimize pastors by using anti-conversion laws as an excuse to attack Christians, thereby limiting church activities. UK based Release International (RI) said in a recent report [www.releaseinternational.org](http://www.releaseinternational.org) that pastors were beaten and cars burnt amid accusations of forced conversion. The RI report stated that on June 23, two pastors from Bethel Assembly of God Church were seriously injured when men attacked them with iron bars in Chandapura, Karnataka state, accusing them of converting people to Christianity by force. Before that attack some extremists burnt at least seven vehicles belonging to the Jesus with Us Pentecostal Church in Mathikere, Tamil Nadu. This attack followed efforts by Hindu extremists to prevent the church holding a four-day convention and that in the event, the gathering went ahead in a different location, under police protection. Eight Indian states have introduced anti-conversion laws however Tamil Nadu has since repealed them.

**Pray:** that the church in India will remain steadfast in their faith and pray that politicians and law enforcers will take a tougher line on extremist elements. (2Th.1:4)

**More:** <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/2010/s10070026.htm>

### ■ India: Extremists chop off Catholic's hand

Suspected Islamic militants have chopped off a Catholic professor's hand in Kerala for allegedly insulting Islam in an exam question paper. Professor T.J. Joseph was attacked on July 4 while returning home from Sunday mass with his mother and sister, a Catholic nun. Kochi inspector-general of police, B. Sandya, told [ucanews.com](http://ucanews.com) that an Islamic extremist group is suspected of the crime and have arrested four people and impounded a vehicle. She said the attackers used the vehicle to block Joseph's car before dragging the professor from his vehicle and chopping off his right hand. The attackers then threw the hand away before fleeing. Church-managed Newman College in Thodupuzha had suspended Joseph, its Malayalam professor, on March 25 for allegedly preparing a question paper with insulting references to the Prophet Muhammad.

**Pray:** against the evil that fills the hearts and minds of those who perpetrate such crimes. (Ph.3:2)

**More:** <http://www.cathnewsindia.com/2010/07/06/muslim-extremists-chop-off-catholic%E2%80%99s-hand/>

### ■ Niger: Christians 'starving', group says

Christians in this vast, drought-prone country on the edge of the Sahara desert, were among those facing starvation after aid groups described the food situation in Niger as 'extremely desperate'. Save the Children warned that up to 380,000 children under five are at risk of death by starvation. Christian aid and advocacy group Barnabas Fund told Worthy News that Christians are 'particularly vulnerable during this time of crisis,' as they comprise just 0.3 per cent of the predominantly Muslim population of over 15 million people. Aid workers in Islamic countries such as Niger have complained that government aid is often not reaching minority Christians. Barnabas Fund told Worthy News in a statement that it is already providing close to 700 Christian families each with 'a 100 kilogram sack of either maize or millet and a 500 kilogram bag of rice.' (See Prayer Alert 1310)

**Pray:** that God would have mercy bringing rain to this parched land and aid from those who have plenty. (Ps.33:18-20)

**More:** <http://www.worthynews.com/8490-news-alert-niger-christians-starving-group-says>

### ■ Nigeria: Eight Christians killed

Christians in two states of Nigeria were mourning the killings of at least eight Christian believers, after Muslim militants reportedly attacked several villages. 'On the night of July 3, several Muslims attacked Kizachi village in Kaduna State and killed five Christians. The Muslims also burned down five Christian homes,' said International Christian Concern (ICC), a well-informed advocacy group. ICC quoted Nigerian sources as saying police had stopped protecting the village on July 2 as the government failed to pay their salaries. There was no immediate comment from Nigerian police. In the second attack, on the night of July 4, 200 Muslims armed with guns and machetes reportedly invaded Ganawuri community, near the town of Jos, which has been the scene of previous deadly sectarian clashes. Three Christians were feared dead in that violence. Rights activists said the latest violence came on the heels of a March 7 Islamic attack against Christians in Jos. (See Prayer Alert 0610, 0710, 1110, 1210, 1310 & 1510)

**Pray:** for God's life giving Spirit to invade the darkness hovering over the region and bring healing and reconciliation. (Is.42:16)

**More:** <http://www.worthynews.com/8499-eight-christians-killed-in-nigerian-muslim-attacks>

### ■ Kyrgyzstan: Christians press for probe after violence

An alliance of Christian humanitarian groups is pressing the government of Kyrgyzstan to launch an investigation into the recent civil conflict that left over a half-million people in immediate need of food, water, shelter, and medical care. 'The civil conflict in southern Kyrgyzstan, which erupted in the first half of June, was characterized by extreme violence, hatred and cruelty,' stated leaders of the ACT Alliance, <http://www.actalliance.org/> including the heads of DanChurchAid, Christian Aid,

and ICCO en Kerkinactie. Though the situation now reportedly appears calm and more stable since the constitutional referendum on June 27, tensions continue and violent acts – including killings and kidnappings – are still reported from southern Kyrgyzstan, according to ACT. Furthermore, in its statement Thursday, the global network of churches and related aid organizations emphasized that ‘there will not be reconciliation without justice, and that justice is based on all facts, which give an objective picture of what has happened. (See Prayer Alert 2510)

**Pray:** that justice will prevail bringing healing and reconciliation. (Ps.106:3)

**More:** <http://www.christianpost.com/article/20100704/kyrgyzstan-govt-pressed-to-launch-probe-on-recent-conflict/index.html>

#### ■ Cuba 'to free political prisoners'

Cuba's Catholic Church has said that the Cuban government will free 52 political prisoners in a major concession to international pressure to improve its human rights. The church said in a statement on Wednesday that five of the prisoners would be released later during the day and allowed to go to Spain, while the remaining 47 would be freed over the next few months. The release will bring down the number of dissidents behind bars on the communist-led island to close to 100 and possibly have positive ramifications for Cuba's relations with countries that have long pressed the government to free political prisoners. Human rights advocates said earlier this week that Cuba had 167 political prisoners, including 10 who were out on parole. The announced release would be the largest since 1998, when 101 political prisoners were among about 300 prisoners freed following a visit by Pope John Paul II.

**Pray:** that the Cuban Government will honour their promises to release all these prisoners. (2Ch.28:11)

**More:** <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/americas/2010/07/201077184956643989.html>

## PRAISE REPORTS

#### ■ GDOP 2010: British feedback - GDOP 2011: vision for the future

If you would like to know what happened on the Global Day of Prayer (GDOP) across the British Isles go to the 'More' link and then to 'GDOP 2010 report from UK' where you will find a shorter summary which has been prepared for the South African organisers. The GDOP team in South Africa have just sent through their vision for the future. Let's all take time to reflect and ask the Lord what is on His heart for our church, community, town, city, village as together we continue to make room for His presence to fill our land as we prepare to welcome the nations in 2012. You can access this vision via the 'More' link then under S Africa news 'GDOP 2011 & beyond.'

**Praise:** that we will see the fulfilment of Hab. 2:14: 'For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea'.

**More:** <http://www.worldprayer.org.uk/gdop---welcome/gdop-news/>

#### ■ The Bible - the story that makes an impact

Over the last 6 weeks, more than 3,700 Christians in the UK have attended the From Eden to Eternity tour, a drama that brings the story of the Bible to life in a little over an hour. As the impact of the drama still resonates in the UK, the influence of the tour is spreading. Wycliffe Bible Translators in the UK asked the Saltmine Theatre Company to produce this show to remind UK Christians of the value of the Bible. During May and June it toured 27 venues across England. After two successful years, plans are already in place to tour From Eden to Eternity again next year. If you would be interested in having the event at your church in March 2011, contact [communications\\_uk@wycliffe.org](mailto:communications_uk@wycliffe.org) Review highlights of the tour can be seen at [www.eden2eternity.org](http://www.eden2eternity.org) and there's still an opportunity to sponsor the translation of a scripture verse.

**Praise:** God for the message of His Word that speaks to all who hear it. (1Jn.2:5)

**More:** <http://www.wycliffe.org.uk/wycliffe/connected/from-eden-to-eternity.html>

#### ■ Prayers raise man from the dead

An audience of 120 doctors from 50 countries sat in stunned silence as a renowned heart doctor produced evidence of how, after he had prayed for a patient who had died and was being prepared for the morgue, was brought back to life after prayer. Dr. Chauncey W. Crandall, who serves at the Palm Beach Cardiovascular Clinic, Florida, made his dramatic presentation which stunned his audience of fellow medical professionals. In his powerful testimony he produced dramatic evidence that was shown on the screen and since made publicly available. 'We had a fifty-three year old man who came to the emergency room with a massive heart attack and his heart had stopped,' he said. 'The medical people had worked on him for over forty minutes in the emergency room and then declared him dead'. Dr Crandall was called to evaluate the patient. The Holy Spirit told him to 'turn around and pray for that man.' When the Holy Spirit talks to you, you have to respond.

**Praise:** God for this demonstration of the Spirit's power. (1Cor.2:4)

**More:** <http://www.prayerforum.org/news/global/man-raised-from-dead/>

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