

PRAYER ALERT...

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BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Opportunities for the church in Cameron's 'Big Society'

Christians have welcomed the launch of Prime Minister David Cameron's 'Big Society' initiative as a way of getting everyone involved in their communities. Spelling out his vision in Liverpool on Monday, Cameron hailed the Big Society as 'the biggest, most dramatic redistribution of power from elites in Whitehall to the man and woman in the street'. He wants to see more people at the grass-roots level work together to improve the quality of living for all through voluntary work. Initiatives include the local buy-out of a rural pub and the recruitment of volunteers to keep museums open. Steve Clifford, General Director of the Evangelical Alliance, said Christians are already at the heart of serving their communities, and should grasp this opportunity to get further involved. Steve Chalke, founder of Faithworks and Oasis, welcomed the thinking behind the 'Big Society'. 'This is what the church has always been about so there are enormous opportunities for churches in all of this.

Pray: for Christian groups to prayerfully consider how this opportunity can be used for God's work. (1Th.5:15)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.co.uk/article/christians.see.opportunities.for.the.church.in.camerons.big.society.pla>

■ Christians unfairly targeted for hate crime prosecutions

Christians in Britain are being unfairly targeted for hate crime prosecutions, according to a new report by the Civitas think-tank. The report, entitled A New Inquisition: Religious Persecution in Britain Today, also warns that existing hate crime legislation poses a danger to freedom of speech. Jon Gower Davies, the report's author, said: 'Some police forces and the CPS [Crown Prosecution Service] seem to be interpreting statutes in favour of ethnic and religious minorities and in a spirit hostile to members of the majority population, defined as 'White' or 'Christian'.' Many of the prosecutions have been for causing 'religiously aggravated intentional harassment, alarm or distress' under the Public Order Act. The report's findings are likely to be welcomed by many Christians who have become increasingly alarmed at the growing number of Christians encountering problems with over-zealous police officers. Critics of such offences say they are open to being misapplied, so that otherwise lawful behaviour is wrongly criminalised.

Pray: for the balance to be redressed and that which was considered normal Christian debate can once again be deemed acceptable. (1Th.2:4)

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/christians-unfairly-targeted-for-hate-crime-prosecutions/>

■ Archbishop of York launches new national charity

The Archbishop of York launched the Acts 435 charity nationally at the General Synod. The charity helps churches to make a practical difference in their local communities helping those who are going through tough times financially. In the face of

further government austerity measures the Archbishop has said it is important for the Church to reach out to those in need. He said: 'Acts 435 is designed to help us fulfil Christ's calling and give to those in need. I hope and pray that it will be a wonderful blessing to those on the receiving end of these gifts of love. May it also be a source of joy to the donors as they see the immediate impact of their generosity on those struggling to make ends meet.' Acts 435 is a Christian Charity, within the Church of England to bring immediate help to people in financial need. It works by matching up those who want to give with those in need.

Pray: for this innovative new approach to the operation of a charity and for its success. (1Jn.4:11)

More: <http://www.archbishopofyork.org/2934>

■ Half a million in grants to support the dignity of life

Thanks to the generosity of parishioners up and down the country, the Catholic Archbishops of England and Wales were able to distribute over £500,000 in grants in support of life over the last two years. The annual Day for Life is dedicated to celebrating the dignity of life from conception to natural death and the annual collection taken up in Roman Catholic parishes on the last Sunday in July each year is used to give grants to life-related activities supported by the Catholic Church. The Archbishop for Day for Life, Archbishop Bernard Longley said: 'I wish to extend my thanks to the generosity of parishioners up and down the country who give so generously to the Day for Life collection each year. Your generous giving enables us to support so many worthy projects and organisations – all working in different ways to promote the dignity of life from conception to natural death.'

Pray: for the generosity of parishioners this Sunday and that their donations will be powerfully used. (Dt.15:10)

More: http://www.catholicchurch.org.uk/Catholic-Church/media_centre/press_releases/press_releases_2010/Half-a-million-in-grants-to-support-the-dignity-of-life

■ British Forces training teams in Afghanistan

British Forces training teams are on target and have just finished training 1000 Afghan soldiers. The recent conference on Afghanistan has endorsed President Hamid Karzai's goal that Afghan forces should lead security operations across the country by 2014. Hopefully this will encourage a new determination for peace and unity. (See also World item below) The number of British military personnel killed on operations in Afghanistan since 2001 stands at 324 after two soldiers were shot dead while trying to rescue a wounded colleague in the Lashkar Gah district of Helmand province on 21 July. Of all those killed, 39 have died from accidents, illness, or non-combat injuries. Others have yet to be assigned a cause of death.

Pray: for the families of all the soldiers who have lost their lives and for supernatural intervention to bring about real peace and unity in Afghanistan. (Job.22:21)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-10687527>

■ Spiritual encounters at London Psychic Fair

The annual 'Mind Body Spirit' Psychic Festival in London, England claims to be at the forefront of innovation in the world of the supernatural, natural healing, and personal growth. Thousands of people who attended this year's festival were looking for advice, direction in life, healing and new products to make life better – everyone was looking for practical and spiritual solutions. This year Youth With A Mission had a booth at the festival, staffed by volunteers ready to talk with and pray for festival-goers. The teams were pleasantly surprised by how open people were to talk to them and receive prayers for blessing and healing. Many of the people who received prayer later brought friends back because of the impact of the words of truth and hope spoken to them. The team would pray throughout the day asking God for specific people and situations He wanted to address.

Pray: that all the divine appointments will bear fruit and lead to many new believers. (Zec.10:2)

More: <http://www.ywam.org/News-Stories/news/Spiritual-Encounters-at-London-Psychic-Fair>

EUROPE

■ Kosovo: An important week

Two and a half years have passed since Kosovo unilaterally declared independence from Serbia, but the initial flood of recognitions has slowed to a trickle. The country is in limbo. What do Mauritania, Swaziland, Somalia, Djibouti and Vanuatu have in common? Not a lot, but they are the only countries that have recognised Kosovo as a sovereign state this year. Kosovo is supported by the United States and the EU heavyweights, but with it's path to UN membership firmly barred by Russia and China on the Security Council, and with a clear majority of countries having decided, for now, not to offer it recognition. Serbia wants to get into the EU, and many worry that a protracted struggle over Kosovo will annoy Britain, France and Germany. Kosovo wants to be a normal country, that can apply for UN membership.

Pray: that Kosovo will at last be recognised and that Russia and China would withdraw their objections. (Ps.37:3-4)

More: <http://blogs.aljazeera.net/europe/2010/07/19/important-week-kosovo>

■ EU to hold atheist and freemason summit

Brussels is to hold an EU summit with atheists and freemasons in the autumn, inviting them to a political dialogue parallel to the annual summit the bloc holds with Europe's religious leaders. While the EU is a secular body, the three European presidents of the commission, parliament and EU Council, alongside two commissioners, on Monday met with 24 bishops, chief rabbis, and muftis as well as leaders from the Hindu and Sikh communities. The annual dialogue, which has taken place since 2005, is for the first time this year made legally obligatory under Article 17 of the Lisbon Treaty. Under pressure

from Belgium, which constitutionally protects and financially supports humanist organisations as well as churches, the EU has been forced to hold a mirror-image summit, but of atheists, scheduled for 15 October. However, in a move that perplexed and annoyed humanist groups, the EU atheist summit will also welcome under the rubric of 'non-religious groups', the Freemasons, the secretive fraternal organisation, according to commission spokeswoman Katharina von Schnurbein.

Pray: [that this recognition will not lead to a further breakdown in Europe's Christian roots. \(Lk.3:6\)](#)

More: <http://euobserver.com/9/30506>

WORLDWIDE

■ **Kyrgyzstan: Authorities targeting Uzbeks**

Fresh the violence, now the fear. Uzbeks in southern Kyrgyzstan report that Kyrgyz authorities are rounding up Uzbek men without probable cause. Many of the arrests are taking place during the pre-dawn hours. In some cases, Uzbeks say they are paying a ransom to secure their loved ones' release. Several deaths in custody have been reported. Those living in predominantly Uzbek areas of Osh, Kyrgyzstan's southern capital, say they now dread the onset of night. 'We have decided to guard our streets at night between about 23:00 and 05:00 so we can somehow try to put a live shield against the Kyrgyz military and police, who rush into our neighborhoods at night and take away our sons, husbands and brothers,' Minura, a 45-year-old Osh resident, told EurasiaNet.org. Like most sources discussing the ongoing ethnic tension in Osh, she asked her last name not be printed. 'They took away my husband about a week ago after searching our house' she said.

Pray: [for a breakthrough to the healing of relationships that would bring lasting peace following the conflicts. \(Ps.28:5\)](#)

More: <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/61554>

■ **Pakistan: City tense after 'blaspheming' Christians shot**

Police reinforcements have been called into the Pakistani city of Faisalabad a day after two Christians charged with blasphemy were shot dead outside court. Clashes broke out in the city, home to a large Christian community, after the brothers were gunned down. Pastor Rashid Emmanuel, 32, and Sajid, 24, were accused of writing a pamphlet critical of the Prophet Muhammad; a rights activist said they were framed. Pakistan's controversial blasphemy law carries the death penalty for such an offence. A police officer who was escorting the brothers from a district court on Monday was critically wounded when the unidentified gunmen opened fire and then escaped. At least 10 people were reportedly injured as stone-throwing and rioting broke out in a Christian neighbourhood of the city afterwards. Police reinforcements from nearby districts have been called in to restore order. The brothers, from the Waris Pura area of Faisalabad, were arrested earlier this month.

Pray: [to the Lord that He would send His angels to protect His saints from the enemy. \(Mt.13:41\)](#)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-10696762>

■ **Nigeria: CSW calls for 'urgent' security review**

The head of Christian Solidarity Worldwide has called upon the Nigerian authorities to urgently review security arrangements for the volatile Plateau State after another deadly attack on Christians last Friday. Ten people, including children, are believed to have been killed in the attack on Mazah village by Fulani Muslims in the early hours of Friday morning. The attackers frightened villagers out of their homes by firing gun-shots before hacking them down with machetes as they attempted to flee. They also burned homes and churches to the ground. CSW said the attackers focused on important residents in the village, attacking the homes of the local councillor, the village head and a church leader. Villagers claim that although security forces arrived at the village in time to stop the attackers, they stood back and remained outside the village until the attack had come to an end before entering.

Pray: [that God would equip His saints and put His protection around them. \(Eph.6:10-18\)](#)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/csw.calls.for.urgent.security.review.after.fatal.attack.on.christians.in.nigeria/26315.htm>

■ **Philippines: Peace talks**

Benigno Aquino III, the newly-installed president of the Philippines, won the office by the largest plurality in the nation's history. Perceived as a lacklustre senator for years, the son of the nation's two icons of democracy now has Filipinos believing that he may just be able to work miracles. Two of Aquino's most popular decisions to date have been his appointments to the embattled justice department and the previously unimpressive peace adviser's office. As well as sending feelers out to the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the communists, Teresita Deles, the new presidential peace adviser, has also sat down with the media to outline the government's plan for building a lasting peace. Such transparency - which contrasts sharply with the previous administration's preference for keeping its cards close to its chest - has made many in the Philippines feel part of the process and opened the door to constructive discussion.

Pray: [that the new government will put God at the centre and seek peace and reconciliation. \(Job.21:22\)](#)

More: <http://english.aljazeera.net/focus/2010/07/201072163220859727.html>

■ **Afganistan: Kabul conference objectives a challenge**

Although the war-weary Afghans have welcomed holding the international conference on Afghanistan, the Kabul Conference, in their soil as a good omen for their future, they doubted it would achieve its goals set out at the one-day forum. Outlining his government's plans at the conference, President Hamid Karzai said that he wants the international

community to channel at least 50 percent of the funds contributed to Afghanistan through the Afghan government, to support his reconciliation programme and help to fight corruption as part of efforts for ensuring good governance. However, achieving these ambitious goals, the reconciliation with Taliban militants and bringing them into the mainstream of society seems the most challenging task. Taliban insurgents who had regrouped in 2006 and staged a violent comeback after being driven out of power by a US-led military campaign in late 2001 have repeatedly rejected any offer for talks.

Pray: that the objectives laid down, although challenging, will be successful in bringing agreement and reconciliation. (Ps.133)

More: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/indepth/2010-07/21/c_13408126.htm

■ **Uzbekistan: Crackdown on Christians worsens**

Several unjust rulings have been made against Christians since the start of 2010. The homes of numerous Christians as well as churches have been raided, and many Christians have been fined for sharing their faith, holding religious services, and illegally distributing Christian literature, according to Forum 18 News. Within the last three months, however, pressure has increased to the point of unlawful imprisonment. 'In the last several months, 10 Christians have been sentenced to administrative detention for their Christian activities--that can mean something as simple as holding a Bible study in their home,' says Carl Moeller, president of Open Doors USA. 'This is four times the amount of detentions that we saw last year.' It's unclear as to exactly why the crackdown has become so much worse so quickly. Moeller confirms, however, that the Uzbek government favours uniformity, not diversity. A rise in numbers of any group could be considered social and political dissension.

Pray: for the Church in Uzbekistan that the authorities would cease its persecution. (2Th.1:4)

More: http://www.fcnn.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1881:crackdown-on-christians-worsens-in-uzbekistan&catid=128:christian-news&Itemid=594

PRAISE REPORTS

■ **Audio Scriptures could reach 200,000 with the Gospel**

Five more Audio New Testaments have been completed and released to reach tens of thousands of people with the Gospel, reports Mission Network News. These new Audio New Testaments represent 184,000 people throughout Mexico, Guinea, Papua New Guinea and Colombia. The five new releases bring the number of audio Scripture recordings released by Faith Comes By Hearing to 521. The Audio New Testaments that have now been made available are: Chinanteco de Tepetotutla, Ipili, Mazateco de Ayautla, Ticuna, and Yalunka. The production of these five audio Scriptures will not only make the Gospel available to a host of people, literate as well as illiterate, but it also brings Faith Comes By Hearing closer to its goal of recording audio Bibles in 2,000 languages by the year 2016. People often receive Audio New Testaments from Faith Comes By Hearing in the form of solar-powered Proclaimers, which contain the entire New Testament and can be hand-cranked or set in the sun to work.

Praise: God as the people receive audio Scriptures that they would understand and embrace the His Word. (Heb.4:12)

More: <http://www.christiantelegraph.com/issue10402.html>

■ **Nepal: HCJB installs new radio station**

Local volunteers spent months building, connecting electricity, and finishing groundwork all for one big project. A third HCJB Global FM radio station which has finally been opened in Nepal. The new station has a range that should enable it to reach roughly 200,000 people with its broadcasts. This is an especially welcome feat in an area which, according to HCJB, has 'few Christians and even fewer churches.' The introduction of democracy in the country provided a host of opportunities for HCJB partnerships in Nepal. In 2009, HCJB supplied equipment, installation, and training to put its first two partner stations in motion in Nepal. The new station has aroused excitement among local Christians, 11 of whom volunteered for on-air training. HCJB's Nepali partner who initiated this station hopes to plant churches now that the station has been set up.

Praise: God for this wonderful news and the opportunities that it will bring. (Is.42:7)

More: <http://www.mnnonline.org/article/14493>

PRAYER FORUM OF BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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