

Prayer Alert . . .

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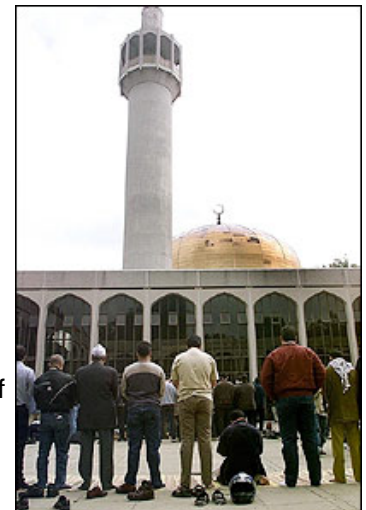
FRIDAY 15 JULY 2005

- **British Isles & Ireland**
 - [Religious hate law clears Commons](#)
 - [Britons honour victims of London bombings](#)
 - [Blair seeks to tackle extremism](#)
 - [Schools get racial tension advice](#)
 - [G8: Summit outcome: Hope instead of terror](#)
 - [Cancer funds benefit from green and blue wristband sales](#)
 - [Anglicans and Methodists edge closer towards unity](#)
 - [Dissidents 'tried to kill police'](#)
- **Europe**
 - [European Commission proposes new EU policy on reducing poverty](#)
 - [OSCE to discuss terror and rights](#)
 - [Italy detains 174 in major sweep](#)
- **Worldwide**
 - [Children die in Baghdad car bomb](#)
 - [Hunt for child killers in Kenya](#)
 - [Tensions between Eritrea and Ethiopia are felt in the church](#)
 - [Church outrage at Zimbabwe raids](#)
 - [Politics threaten Aceh peace deal](#)
 - [Sri Lanka on alert following surge in rebel attacks](#)
 - [Nepali Christians ask for prayer while keeping the faith amid severe persecution](#)
- **Praise Reports**
 - [Hurricane Dennis – Not as bad as it could've been](#)
 - [G8 Edinburgh rally: a day to change the world](#)
 - [Celtic cycle challenge to benefit three charities](#)
 - [Antigua to adopt street pastors](#)
- **Looking Ahead**
 - [Dates for your diary](#)

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

Religious hate law clears Commons

Government attempts to clamp down on expressions of religious hatred have cleared the Commons, but are set for a rocky ride in the House of Lords. MPs gave the Racial and Religious Hatred Bill a third reading by 301 votes to 229, a majority of 72. Shadow minister Dominic Grieve said the bill would not improve race relations. The plans, which have failed to make it through Parliament twice before, cover words or behaviour intended or likely to stir up religious hatred. Jews and Sikhs are already covered by race-hate laws. They will now undergo scrutiny in the House of Lords. Christians now fear that the bombings on 7/07 have added fuel to the Government's drive to get this law through to the statute books. A demonstration outside the Houses of Parliament took place on Monday 11th July. An estimated 1,000 Christians turned up to protest against the third reading in the Commons of the Religious Hatred Bill. Christians have a number of concerns about the Equality Bill. Although well-intentioned, the introduction of a ban on religious discrimination could have a profound affect on the British way of life. There is a real risk that the non-discrimination provisions, rather than benefiting the Christian faith, will undermine our Christian heritage. *Let us continue to pray for this Bill, that despite the Commons approval the Lords will put forward meaningful reasoned amendments and the government will listen.* (See also item 3 below)



Muslim groups have led calls for new laws

Britons honour victims of London bombings

Office workers wordlessly filled the streets, construction workers removed their hard hats and London's famous black cabs pulled to the side of the road as Britain silently paid tribute to the victims of four terrorist bombs that struck a week ago Thursday. Queen Elizabeth II stood motionless outside Buckingham Palace, and a crowd filled Trafalgar Square, where many could be seen wiping away tears and hanging their heads in prayer during the two-minute tribute that began at noon. The silence was broken only by the tolling of Big Ben. In the northern city of Leeds, the home of at least two of the four suicide bombers, young Muslims wearing prayer caps paused in silence before a series of speeches by local imam, a minister and community leaders. www.guardian.co.uk
Continue to pray for the injured and for the families of those who have lost loved ones in this atrocity.

Blair seeks to tackle extremism

Tony Blair has called for tougher laws and a global drive to tackle the "evil" ideology behind the London bombings. Mr Blair said there would be "profound shock and anxiety" after the news the suspected suicide bombers were British. Talks are to begin on bringing in new laws covering preparations for attacks and to make it easier to deport people trying to "incite hatred", he told MPs. Mr Blair, who is to host a summit of UK Muslim leaders, said the "moderate and true voice of Islam" must be mobilised. In Parliament, Mr Blair said there was "a need and a willingness to act". Consultations would begin in the next couple of weeks over possible new anti-terror legislation, due to be published this autumn, he said. The laws would focus on measures the police and security services believed necessary to "combat the incitement and the instigation of terrorism as well as the acts of terrorism themselves". Mr Blair met Muslim MPs on Wednesday morning to discuss how to tackle "this evil within the Muslim community". "In the end, this can only be taken on and defeated by the community itself," he said. The prime minister condemned any attacks on British Muslims, saying the vast majority were decent and law abiding. www.bbc.co.uk *Although understandable, pray that the authorities will not rush through legislation without due consideration. Pray indeed for the Muslim community as they face up to the possible repercussions.*

Schools get racial tension advice

The UK's biggest union for teachers is telling members to be prepared for increased ethnic tensions between pupils, following the London bombs. The National Union of Teachers said there had been problems in some areas. Teachers from minority ethnic groups, particularly Muslims, might also be vulnerable from some pupils and parents, its guidance said. General secretary Steve Sinnott said open discussion was the best way to counter ignorance "We are determined that they will not cause division in our schools." Pupils and teachers must be protected from abuse and threats. "The best way to deal with such problems is to bring them out in the open, to discuss them and ensure that all involved understand that racism is not acceptable." Pupils and teachers must be able to carry on their normal lives free from fear." He said negative and stereotyped views of Islam and Muslims contributed to prejudice. Teachers should be especially vigilant for signs of name-calling, abuse and bullying and intervene early to prevent things from escalating. www.bbc.co.uk *Pray for our young people and their teachers that they will not get caught up in any ethnic prejudices.*

G8: Summit outcome: Hope instead of terror

The G8 Summit wrapped up Friday, with world leaders agreeing to substantially increase the aid money for Africa from the current 25 billion per year to 50 billion by 2010. The plan includes 3 billion dollars of support for Palestinians as an "alternative to the hatred." Summit host Tony Blair said, "We speak today in the shadow of terrorism, but it will not obscure what we came here to achieve." Blair admitted the agreement was not all he had hoped for but that it was "real, achievable progress." A list of accomplishments during the 3-day conference included:

- Support for new trade deals.
- Endorsed cancellation of debt for 18 of the world's poorest nations.
- Universal access to AIDS treatment.
- Renewed commitment for a peacekeeping force in Africa.
- African leaders promised to move toward democracy and to follow the rule of law.

Blair's major disappointment was a lack of commitment from President Bush to combat global warming by reducing the greenhouse gas emissions that may cause it. President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria expressed his gratitude to the leaders for the focus on Africa and "their resolve not to be diverted by these terrorist acts." Prime Minister Blair, closing the summit, stated, "There is no hope in terrorism, nor any future in it worth living. And it is hope that is the alternative to this hatred, so we offer today this contrast with the politics of terror."

www.breakingchristiannews.com *Praise God for the accomplishments achieved, although not all that was hoped for, may it be just the beginning*

Cancer funds benefit from green and blue wristband sales

Cancer patients in Scotland are set to benefit from money raised by the sale of anti-bigotry wristbands. Strathclyde Police joined forces with the Old Firm to launch their latest weapon in the fight against sectarianism in April this year. About 25,000 blue and green wristbands, which read "Say No to Sectarianism" were distributed to

200 schools. The bands will go on public sale at the end of this month with proceeds going to cancer patients in various hospices. Justice Minister Cathy Jamieson, who will launch the scheme, welcomed the ability of those who made a stand against bigotry to reach out to help cancer sufferers. Police believe the fashion accessories will prove popular with young fans. *Pray that this initiative will help to raise awareness about sectarianism as it also benefits cancer patients.*

Anglicans and Methodists edge closer towards unity

The Church of England inched [closer to the Methodists](#) yesterday when the General Synod in York welcomed a report designed to resolve many of their differences. The two Churches took the first steps towards healing their 200-year-old rift two years ago when they signed a covenant under which they will move towards sharing services, clergy and resources. It raised the prospect of unity between the two denominations, which separated over disputes about the ordination and authority of bishops. The synod yesterday unanimously commended for study an interim report from the committee overseeing the covenant, which examined the two faiths' contrasting approaches to issues such as communion and ministry. Introducing the report, which highlighted examples of co-operation, the Bishop of Peterborough, the Rt Rev Ian Cundy, said he wanted Anglicans to take the covenant "to heart". During the debate speakers compared the agreement to a marriage, demanding serious effort and commitment to overcome the inevitable disagreements. www.telegraph.co.uk *Once again an attempt to move towards unity. Pray that these steps will be guided by the Lord who said 'I will build His Church'*

Dissidents 'tried to kill police'

Dissident republicans in Northern Ireland were behind a deliberate attempt to kill police officers during rioting in north Belfast, the PSNI has said. Nine devices were thrown in total - six of them exploding. Defending their operation, the police said 22 of the new type baton rounds were fired only after they came under bomb attack. About 100 police officers were injured, but only two required hospital treatment. The trouble began when nationalists attacked police after an Orange Order parade passed the Ardoyne shops area. Police fired the new baton rounds known as attenuated energy projectiles (AEP), which were introduced last month. Petrol bombs and three blast bombs, as well as bottles and bricks, were thrown at the police during disturbances on Tuesday. Assistant Chief Constable Duncan McCausland said the trouble was clearly orchestrated but added that Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams and MLA Gerry Kelly did make efforts to calm the situation. www.bbc.co.uk *As the annual Orange parades take place pray against any further violence and that peace will reign.*

EUROPE

European Commission proposes new EU policy on reducing poverty

The Commission has unveiled an ambitious proposal defining the EU's new development policy. "If we really want to make poverty history, we have to act together," said Development Commissioner Louis Michel. Aiming to eradicate poverty at its core in line with the UN's Millennium Development Goals, the Commission has adopted a proposal which seeks to cover the aid and development assistance needs of all developing countries within a single framework of principles. The EU is the world's biggest aid donor, accounting for 55% of all development assistance. Some 20% of this is managed by the Commission. The proposal, which calls for a joint statement by the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission by the end of 2005, highlights the importance of partnership with the developing countries and the promotion of good governance, human rights and democracy. It emphasises the role of civil society and addresses the problems associated with conflict situations and failed states. The second part of the proposals, due out later this year, will provide guidance for implementation at EU level. At the G8 summit in Gleneagles, Scotland, Commission President José Manuel Barroso pledged 1 billion euro per year to support the trading capacity of developing countries. www.EurActive.com *Let us pray for the EU and the Commission as they seek ways to work together and make poverty history.*

OSCE to discuss terror and rights

Europe's security body, the OSCE, is to hold a meeting in Vienna focusing on the need to respect human rights in the fight against terrorism. Human-rights experts and government officials from member countries will be discussing how to provide security without diminishing civil liberties. The meeting in the Austrian capital has been planned for some time. But organisers say the attacks in London last week have given the event a tragic relevance. Experts from a number of OSCE states in Europe, North America and Central Asia will be looking at ways to ensure that human rights are respected in the fight against terrorism. The OSCE's Christian Strohal says the matter is one of the most urgent and difficult issues the world is facing today. The organisation has warned that counter-terrorism measures which fall outside the framework of the rule of law can lay the foundations for more insecurity. Defence lawyers from Britain and Uzbekistan will be discussing some of the challenges they face when defending people suspected of terrorist acts. The meeting will also be exploring ways to ensure that torture of terrorist suspects or prisoners does not occur as part of the fight against terrorism. *As the delegates gather for this meeting pray that they will not make decisions out of fear but seek answers that will be effective.*

Italy detains 174 in major sweep

Police in Italy are questioning 174 people detained in a nationwide crackdown on suspected Islamist extremists. Police and anti-terror units jointly checked the identity and background of more than 400 people in some 200 raids stretching from Milan to Naples. But more than half of those questioned were released after a short while. On Tuesday, Interior Minister Giuseppe Pisanu warned that terrorism was "knocking on Italy's door". Italy has dramatically stepped up security checks in the wake of the London bombings. *As countries step up security pray against panic in the fight against terrorism.*

WORLDWIDE

Children die in Baghdad car bomb

At least 26 Iraqis, almost all of them children, have been killed by a suicide car bombing in south-eastern Baghdad. A US soldier is also said to have died in the blast. Another three US soldiers are reported to have been injured. A car drove up to a US army vehicle and blew up as troops gave sweets to the children, a witness said. Hundreds of Iraqis have died in attacks by militants opposed to the US presence and a Shia-led government that took charge in Baghdad earlier this year. Many Iraqi civilians, mostly children, were around the Humvee at the time of the blast," US military spokesman Sgt David Abrams told the Reuters news agency. Another witness told the AFP news agency: "Children gathered round the Americans who were handing out sweets." Suddenly a suicide car bomber drove round from a side street and blew himself up," he said. www.bbc.co.uk *As we remember our dead following the London bombings let us remember Iraq who suffers these atrocities almost daily. Pray for all the families caught up in this latest horror.*

Hunt for child killers in Kenya

President Mwai Kibaki has appealed for calm as he vowed that police would hunt down the perpetrators of a massacre in a north-east Kenyan village. Hundreds of armed men surrounded a primary school and nearby houses and opened fire as children were making their way to school early on Tuesday. Police say 45 people died in the revenge attack by the raiders feuding over water and pastures. One mother watched as gunmen killed her two children and beheaded her husband. "I appeal for calm as the government embarks on a security operation to track down the perpetrators of the attack," Mr Kibaki said. Most of those killed were women and children and 14 of the children killed were under 10 years old, the police said Tuesday's raid in Turbi village - populated by the Gabra clan - is blamed on the rival Borana from Ethiopia. The two groups have feuded over water and pasture in the semi-arid region. Cross-border raids for livestock are common in the area but correspondents say this is one of the most deadly such attacks in Kenya's history www.bbc.co.uk *Let us seek the Lord for a ceasing of these hostilities between the Gabra and Borana peoples.*



This woman was shot in the face

Tensions between Eritrea and Ethiopia are felt in the church.

Open Doors Moeller says this has had an impact on believers. "Border conflicts between Eritrea and Ethiopia continue to mount. The government of Eritrea continues to use the pretence of instability as a means of keeping the population without basic freedoms including religious freedoms." As a result, life feels like that of a state at war. Religious freedoms have been fiercely curbed, although many incidents are difficult to substantiate through an effective media blackout. But, as reports of persecution trickle out, Moeller says, the strength of the church is building. "This is one of the great paradoxes of the church. Throughout history, where the church has been most severely persecuted, the church grows the most." There are still 16 full-time pastors and nearly 900 Eritrean Christians who are known to be held in prisons, military confinement camps and shipping containers for meeting secretly for prayer and worship outside government-approved churches. So far, none of the prisoners have been charged in court or brought to trial by government authorities. Since May 2002, the government has refused to legalize religious groups outside the Orthodox, Catholic, Lutheran and Muslim faiths. www.mnnonline.org *Continue to pray for this area of Africa and for the conflicts to cease. Pray that those incarcerated will soon be released. Praise God for the growth of the Church even under persecution.*

Church outrage at Zimbabwe raids

South African church leaders have accused Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe of "trampling on humanity" with the recent destruction of houses. A South African church delegation has just completed a visit to Zimbabwe to see the consequences of raids on shack dwellers and informal traders. Shack demolitions over the past two months have left more than 200,000 people homeless, according to the UN. The government says the crackdown is aimed at ridding cities of criminals. The police have this week started demolitions in more affluent parts of the

capital, Harare. Eddie Make, deputy secretary general of the South African Council of Churches (SACC) said a visit to the Caledonia transit camp near Harare, to which people have been relocated, had caused the delegation "a lot of pain". "People had literally been removed from their places of abode and dumped in a remote area with no cover other than plastic sheets and pieces of wood they had cut from surrounding trees in order to protect them from the winter cold," he told the BBC's Network Africa programme. Mr Make said the delegation appreciated that governments have a responsibility for law and order. "But we are of the opinion that this is not creating order," he said. "Rather, it is disrupting the lives of people www.bbc.co.uk www.zimbabwesituation.com (See Prayer Alert 29 & 30) *Pray that this lead by the African Church will be taken up by the politicians in putting pressure on Magabe.*

Politics threaten Aceh peace deal

Indonesian officials and Aceh rebels are holding a fifth round of peace talks in Helsinki, with both sides saying a deal is within reach. "We have still not reached agreement but I think we are almost there," rebel spokesman Bachtiar Abdullah said. He was speaking after the two sides met separately with an EU delegation and the chief mediator, former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari. Indonesia's team said before the talks it was confident of reaching a deal. However delegates negotiating a peace deal for the Indonesian province of Aceh are still divided over the thorny issue of the rebels' political representation. Indonesian Vice-President Jusuf Kalla said the government was "sticking with its position" that the rebels could not form a political party. But the Free Aceh Movement (Gam) wants to contest elections and to have a say in local politics. The talks were first initiated in the wake of December's tsunami that killed at least 120,000 people in Aceh. About 15,000 people have died in the three decades-old conflict. Over the past four rounds of talks, the two sides appear to have made progress on many of the broad issues at stake. (See Prayer Alert 27) *Pray that the two sides will be able to reach agreement that will bring lasting peace.*

Sri Lanka on alert following surge in rebel attacks

Sri Lankan security forces went on red alert today, military officials said, securing a supply corridor into the restive east following a surge in attacks blamed on Tamil Tiger rebels that have endangered the country's shaky cease-fire. Suspected rebels shot and wounded a police officer today in the north-eastern town of Trincomalee in the latest of 10 bombing and shooting attacks since Tuesday, said military spokesman Brig. Daya Ratnayake. Police and military reinforcements were sent to the country's eastern region to secure power lines and a key route used by thousands of troops and civilians, military officials said. The heightened alert came a day after rebels shut down political offices in government-controlled areas, accusing the government of failing to protect rebels travelling through those areas. Dozens of Tigers started pulling back yesterday into rebel-held territory from eastern cities of Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Ampara. www.iol.ie *Continue to pray for Sri Lanka that there will be a speedy solution to this ongoing conflict between the Tamil Tigers and the government.*

Nepali Christians ask for prayer while keeping the faith amid severe persecution

According to a report by ANS, Believers in Nepal are standing strong in their faith even in the midst of torture. But as persecution and political turmoil increase, Nepalese Christians are asking for prayer support from brothers and sisters-in-Christ worldwide. The area, located between China and India, has been in upheaval since 1996 when Communist Maoist Rebels first began to rise up and usurp the monarchy and government. Since 2001, the insurgents have reportedly murdered 12,000 people. Early this year, King Gyanendra has taken back control of his government, while making a call to safeguard democracy. His Royal Nepal Army is actively fighting the rebels. Though the Maoists have succeeded in closing some churches in the Katmandu Valley, Pastor Gurung, a minister in the area, says the faith of Nepalese Christians is growing steadily. Pray for the believers that God would continue to multiply our numbers. "In spite of all of these problems and difficulties," added Pastor Gurung, "they are on their knees praying to the Lord that one day these people (Maoists) will also kneel down before the Lord and worship him. That is how we are praying and believing in the Lord." In the 1960's there were only about 50 Christians in Nepal. Today there are estimated to be nearly 500,000 Believers. www.breakingchristiannews.com *Let us pray for the Nepalese Christians in their support just as they have requested.*

PRAISE REPORTS

Hurricane Dennis – Not as bad as it could've been

Though still racking up damage estimates of nearly 2.5 billion dollars, Hurricane Dennis turned out not to be quite the "menace" many were afraid it would be. Interestingly enough, as the storm continued on its path through the gulf early Sunday, it escalated to a category 4, but by the time it made landfall, Dennis was downgraded to category 3. (See Prayer Alert 31) *Praise God that it was not as bad as it could've been and thank the many who were praying that the hurricane's winds would decrease and "be still". As other hurricanes form continue to pray.*

G8 Edinburgh rally: a day to change the world

What a day! An estimated 225,000 people from the UK and across the world gathered in Scotland's capital, to put pressure on the G8 leaders to make decisions which will benefit the world's poorest people. With so many people marching in Edinburgh, and with live links to the Live 8 concerts, it was a day nobody will forget. See www.tearfund.org for reports, photos and videos from those in Edinburgh making history on Saturday 2 July.

Celtic cycle challenge to benefit three charities

This year's end-to-end tour of Ireland via bike will benefit three different charitable organizations. The Celtic Cycle Challenge is scheduled for July 15th through the 23rd and will help raise money for Aid International, aiding the poor; Open Doors, serving persecuted Christians worldwide; and United Christian Broadcasters (UCB). The cycle challenge consists of 412 miles covering Ireland's length from north to south. It begins in Cobh on this Friday, July 15th, ending in Portrush a week later on Saturday, July 23rd. For more information on the Celtic Cycle Challenge, visit www.bikerides.net More...<http://www.ucb.co.uk> *Pray for this initiative that the monies raised will benefit many as it raises awareness of these Christian charities.*

Antigua to adopt street pastors

Following the success of the [Street Pastors](#) initiative in cities across the UK, plans are now in motion to establish the innovative crime prevention scheme in the Caribbean. Street Pastors' founder, Rev Les Isaac, recently visited the island of Antigua as part of a delegation to host an educational conference about the scheme, which was launched in January 2003 following the shootings of four young teenagers in Aston, Birmingham. (See *Prayer Alert* 20) *Praise the Lord for the growth of this movement that brings glory to God and help to needy areas.*

LOOKING AHEAD

19th-21st July: *European Purpose Driven Church Conference* with Rick and Kay Warren. The conference sessions will address such issues as: attracting and keeping a crowd, worship that is a witness, building your congregation, discipling new Christians, motivating and empowering people for serving, what makes a healthy church and leading your church through change. At the Nottingham Arena, Nottingham, UK Bookings can be made online at www.purposedrivenuk.com

23rd-26th July: *Baptist World Alliance Women's Leadership Conference* to be held at Aston University Birmingham.

27th – 31st July: *The Baptist World Congress* where over 11,000 Baptists from over 114 countries will attend at the International Convention Centre and National Indoor Area in Birmingham. Speakers include Steve Chalke and former President of the United States, Jimmy Carter.

2nd – 9th August: *Fire from the North, Prayer & Worship Conference*, Shetland. During a gathering of Scandinavian intercessors in 1996, God spoke through a prophecy that He wanted a conference to be held in Shetland that would link Christians from the UK and Scandinavia to pray together for Europe. www.ruachministries.org/

4th–21st August: *Merseyfest* is gearing up to be Britain's largest urban mission for 2005. We urgently need YOUR help. Please pray for: Team - wisdom and continued favour with those in authority; Church to arise to the challenge; necessary financial breakthroughs; people to register early; church across the nation to help us through prayer, giving and serving. Details www.merseyfest.com

9th – 11th September:- *The Lawyers Christian Fellowship National Conference*: this year we will meet at Hothorpe Hall in Leicestershire. Teresa Conradie will be giving the keynote speech (Teresa is chairman of the South African Christian Lawyers' Association) and Rev. Simon Robinson addressing the theme: "The truth will set you free." www.lawcf.org

www.prayer-alert.net