

## PRAYER ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

# Prayer Alert . . .

**Draft Issue 38**

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FRIDAY 2 SEPTEMBER 2005

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## BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

### **MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY to lobby Parliament**

On Wednesday 2 November 2005 campaigners will stage a mass lobby of Parliament calling for trade justice not free trade. Thousands of people are expected to come to London to lobby their MP as part of the MAKE POVERTY HISTORY campaign. It will build on the unprecedented public mobilisation around the G8 summit in July and the significant work of the Trade Justice Movement which in recent years has staged the largest-ever mass lobby of Parliament in Westminster and the biggest national lobby of MPs in their constituencies. Half a million people in the UK have already cast a vote for Trade Justice in a special ballot calling on the Government to support fairer trade rules. Many millions more watched as the G8 leaders failed to deliver the changes needed on trade. They will now increase the pressure on the UK Government to take the lead at the forthcoming World Trade Organisation (WTO) meeting in Hong. [www.makepovertyhistory.org](http://www.makepovertyhistory.org) *Let us once more get behind this movement in prayer. Pray for that breakthrough that is required to see significant changes.*

### **Future Archbishop of York Sentamu attacks racism in Church of England**

The first black archbishop has attacked racism in the Church of England, saying that the Church is infected with institutional racism and is still a place of "pain" for many black Anglicans. According to the Telegraph newspaper, Dr John Sentamu, the Archbishop-designate of York, has criticised fellow Church leaders in the foreword of a new book, for failing to deal with discrimination in the organisation properly. Dr Sentamu will soon be enthroned as the second most senior cleric in the Church hierarchy and his comments will carry an impact to the Church. He is certainly expected by many to place racism, one of the Church's most sensitive issues, as one of the main focuses of his agenda whilst in office. 'Rejection, Resistance and Resurrection', the new book to which Dr Sentamu contributed to, tells the true story of the rejection felt by many black Anglicans and speaks out on racism in the Church. Dr Sentamu is a former high court judge of Uganda and had fled the Idi Amin regime to become the Bishop of Birmingham. He has been a powerful speaker against racism for decades. [www.christiantoday.com](http://www.christiantoday.com) *Let us pray that any problems of discrimination and racism within the Church will be rooted out.*

### **Divorce rate highest since 1997**

The number of divorces granted in the UK has reached its highest level since 1997, new statistics reveal. In 2004, the number increased by 0.2% to 167,116 from 166,737 the previous year, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) figures show. Men and women in the 25 to 29 age bracket continued to have the highest divorce rates. Charity Relate said the rise was due partly to an increasingly "individualistic way of living". The number of divorces in England and Wales alone dropped slightly by just 91 to 153,399. The average age at divorce for men and women in England and Wales saw a slight increase to 42.7 years for men

and 40.2 years for women, compared to 42.3 and 39.8 respectively in 2003. And the average length of marriage for divorces granted increased from 11.3 years to 11.5 years. The rise in the number of UK divorces is the fourth successive annual increase. Cheryl Turner, head of public policy for Relate, said the increase was related to a "changing society" in which life was "moving at a faster pace". *Let us pray against this continued trend and for a return to the God given gift of marriage.*

#### **Yob culture alive and well - Youths stone fire-fighters three times in 40 minutes**

Fire crews were attacked with stones and bricks three times in 40 minutes as they tried to tackle blazes in the Lothians this week. The crews were attending a fire in Niddrie and another two in the Knightsridge and Craigshill areas of Livingston when they were set upon by groups of youths. The three attacks, which are the latest in a series of escalating violence against fire-fighters. Union officials warned it was "only a matter of time" before a fire-fighter was seriously injured. The windscreen of an appliance from Newcraighall was smashed when around 15 youths aged 13 to 15 launched the first attack. And the Livingston crew, who were attacked when they were called out to Knightsridge, found what appeared to be a dent from an airgun pellet on the side of their engine. The same crew was attacked again 40 minutes later when they went to extinguish a burning sofa in Craigshill. A spokesman for Lothian and Borders Fire Brigade said: "Unfortunately, we are getting used to these kinds of attacks and we have certain procedures in place to deal with it. [www.scotsman.com](http://www.scotsman.com) *Continue to pray against this yob culture amongst our young people. Pray that the Lord will raise up Godly people to influence them.*

#### **Possessing violent porn punishable by prison sentence**

A ban on possessing extreme pornography will be announced by the Government today in an effort to curb access to websites that glorify necrophilia, female strangulation and torture. Under proposals to be published by the Home Office, it will be an offence punishable by up to three years in jail to have images of serious sexual violence and other obscene material. Britain has tried for more than 40 years to control access to pornography by closing off the source through the Obscene Publication Act, under which it is illegal to publish material "likely to corrupt or deprave". But the internet has rendered the law almost redundant because the images can be viewed easily from abroad without penalty. Ministers hope that the creation of a new offence of possession of violent and abusive pornography - unique in any western jurisdiction - will make it easier to combat and reduce demand for it. A similar law already exists for child pornography and has led to numerous prosecutions.

[www.telegraph.co.uk](http://www.telegraph.co.uk) *Praise God for another step against these despicable practices.*

#### **Methodist Church highlights concerns about young people**

In the aftermath of bleak statistics that 27% of young people who live in urban areas have considered taking their own life, the Methodist Church is organising events to explore the well being of young people. This recent research commissioned by the Commission on Urban Life and Faith and the information from the World Health Organisation that young people in Britain are amongst the unhappiest in Europe, has sparked action by the Church. The research found that 70% of young people said they felt life was worth living and 52% said they often feel depressed. The Methodist Church has indicated that there is a pressing need to consider the well being of young people in Britain, especially those in areas of multiple deprivations. Steve Pearce, Methodist Secretary for Children, said: "Young people in our towns and cities face tremendous pressure, and we owe it to both them and those who work with them to offer all the time, support and insight we can. [www.ekklesia.co.org](http://www.ekklesia.co.org) *Pray that the Church will take up the challenge that these statistics bring and seek ways to address the young people's needs.*

#### **Churches mark ten years of Racial Justice Sunday**

Churches around Britain and Ireland will mark the tenth anniversary of Racial Justice Sunday on 11 September. Racial Justice Sunday always falls on the second Sunday of September. Most of the major Churches in Britain and Ireland (including Anglican, Catholic, Orthodox, Pentecostal and Protestant) invite their members to use the day to celebrate diversity, reflect on racism, pray for racial justice and contribute to the Racial Justice fund, which supports projects working for equality and community cohesion and improving community relations. Acting Moderator of the Churches' Commission for Racial Justice, Ms Pat White, said: 'Although it is a coincidence that the tenth anniversary of Racial Justice Sunday falls on 11 September, it is very appropriate. The attacks on New York and Washington on 11 September 2001 and the London bombings in July this year both led to very real tensions between different communities. There has been a lot of scapegoating and stereotyping. Since the 7 July bombings, there has been a huge rise in racist and anti-Muslim attacks. [www.ctbi.org.uk/news/](http://www.ctbi.org.uk/news/) *Let us join in prayer to celebrate the diversity of God's Church and seek his wisdom to bring about lasting changes.*

## **EUROPE**

#### **President Chirac announces air tax for aid**

French President Jacques Chirac has said his government will take steps to introduce a tax on air tickets next year to fund additional aid for Africa. In a speech to ambassadors on Monday, Mr Chirac also said France and other countries would propose a worldwide tax at a UN summit in September. Correspondents say the French president has been urging other world leaders to impose a levy for some time. In May, the EU agreed in principle to a voluntary tax on air travel. However, only France, Belgium and Germany have said they will introduce a compulsory tax, while Malta, Cyprus and Ireland will give passengers a choice as to whether or not they pay it. Some European countries and organisations are completely opposed to the tax, which is expected to be in the region of two to three euros. [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk) *Let us pray that many other nations will sign up to this initiative and the UN summit will have the opportunity to ratify an agreement.*

#### **EU to seek freeze on terrorist finances**

On 21 September the EU's Court of First Instance will give the first ruling on challenges to the legality of EU legislation to freeze the assets of those financing terrorism in implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions. *Pray that the Court will reach the right decision*

#### **EU Environment Ministers to discuss agriculture**

Agriculture and Environment Ministers meet 9-12 September. Top of the agenda is the proposal to reform the rules for the production and marketing of sugar. But Ministers are likely also to consider the risks to the EU of avian flu. At a meeting of

vets in Brussels on 25 August there was no decision that safeguard measures were needed to protect poultry from contagion from migrating birds. *Pray for this second major discussion of the sugar regime that EU Ministers would work for a just outcome for EU producers and producers in developing countries. Pray also that God would give Ministers the wisdom to know whether protective measures against avian flu are necessary and, if so, the ability to agree effective measures quickly.*

## WORLDWIDE

### HURRICANE KATRINA – See *Prayer Alert Special* attached

#### **Iraq begins to bury stampede dead**

The first funerals are taking place in Iraq of the victims of Wednesday's stampede during a Shia religious procession in the capital, Baghdad. More than 960 people died in the stampede, apparently triggered by rumours of an imminent suicide attack. Shia leaders have accused supporters of former leader Saddam Hussein of starting the rumours. Cabinet ministers fell out over the stampede but Prime Minister Ibrahim Jaafari rejected calls for sackings. Community leaders are calling for calm, fearful that Wednesday's tragedy could stoke further violence. The stampede was the largest single loss of life in Iraq since the US-led invasion more than two years ago. It occurred after mortars were fired on crowds near the Kadhimiya mosque - the burial place of a venerated Shia religious leader. At least seven died and more than 30 were wounded. *As people grieve over those that died pray against any further violence and blame.*

#### **Iraq charter a 'recipe for chaos'**

Parts of the Iraqi draft constitution are a "recipe for chaos", Arab League Secretary General Amr Moussa has said. He told the BBC the Arab League shared Sunni Muslim concerns over federalism and the fact the charter does not identify Iraq as an Arab country. The US and UK have played down Sunni leaders' rejection of the text, which will go to a referendum by 15 October. About 2,000 Sunnis in Saddam Hussein's home town of Tikrit took to the streets to voice their opposition to the plan. Many waved pictures of the former Iraqi leader, and a statement was read out denouncing the constitution as a "Jewish" document that would divide Iraq along sectarian lines. In Baghdad, thousands of Shias gathered to show their support for the draft constitution, which offers a measure of autonomy for millions of Shias in the oil-rich south. Plans are being made to distribute copies of the text around the country. Shia and Kurdish negotiators have endorsed the document, but negotiators from the Sunni minority refused to put their names to it. They fear the proposals would lead to the break-up of the country into a Kurdish north and Shia south, depriving the Sunnis of access to the country's oil resources. [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk) *Let us continue to pray for the Iraqi government that they will be able to find the way forward to unity despite their differences.*

#### **Christians in Iraq tell of 'state terrorism'**

As Iraqis wait for the vote on their controversial new constitution, Christians working in Iraq have highlighted concerns about an emerging 'state terrorism'. Many Iraqis reportedly believe that things are going from bad to worse in the country with fears about corruption in the new government and brutal violence of newer Iraqi special police commandos, trained by the US and operating under the Ministry of Interior. Peggy Gish, a member of Christian Peacemaker Teams which has maintained a continuous presence in Iraq since before the invasion, has indicated that the picture given by the U.S. government is very different to what real Iraqis are thinking and feeling. Speaking from Iraq, she has suggested that many Iraqis believe that the American military has lowered their quality of life and set back their progress of building a peaceful and democratic society. "Of the three million residents of Sadr City, a poor area of Baghdad, 72% have hepatitis A or E, because of polluted water" she said. "Poverty is severe, with an estimated 40% unemployment, and increasing malnutrition. Cheaper foreign goods flooding the market and the take over of Iraqi businesses and oil production by U.S. companies continue to erode the economy. "Iraqi people live in daily fear of explosions and kidnappings by the violent resistance groups as well as violent house raids, indiscriminate roundups, abusive interrogations and imprisonment by U.S. and Iraqi forces. [www.ekklelesia.com](http://www.ekklelesia.com) *Let us pray for our Christian brothers and sisters that they will be protected and used in the building of peace and stability.*

#### **South Korea's Asia II gathering brings Jews and Christians together**

CWNNews reports on a two-day summit named Asia II, which was held in Seoul, South Korea, with almost 500 pastors from Korean churches in attendance, as well as Jewish political leaders from Jerusalem. The gathering was the second meeting held to foster better communication between the two faiths. Two of the goals of the Korean Christian members of the National Assembly were to gain a greater understanding of what Israel is going through with the pullout in Gaza and the West Bank and to better understand a joint resolution, which would be declared. By the end of the conference, the Koreans were in full support of the resolution that commits them to take a stronger stance in backing the Jewish state, as well as, promoting trade, tourism and also spiritual ties to Israel. More summits are being planned in Asia for next year, and they may also be extended to South Africa and Europe. [www.breakingchristiannews.com](http://www.breakingchristiannews.com) *Praise be to our one true God for the understanding achieved.*

#### **Pray for Zimbabwe**

Through conversation recently with people with an intimate knowledge of Zimbabwe, we have learned that the situation is in practical terms going from bad to worse. 25% of the nation has been mortgaged to China including mineral rights, communications, electricity and transport. *We are asked to pray* for the nullifying of agreement with foreign nations that in some way impede the gospel and result in the release of even more spiritual powers. *We should also pray for* unity within the body of Christ so that neither denominationism nor personalities are allowed to affect what God wants to do. *We also should pray for* the ending of the drought and famine (there has now been three years of this) and for food to get through. *Let's also pray for* democracy to be restored and that when the time comes for a handover of political power that there would be a smooth transition with no bloodshed. These last three requests have come from political leaders with a Christian commitment

#### **Africa – UN to discuss goals**

A key UK objective for the EU Presidency (and the UK Presidency of the G8) is to increase resources for Africa through more aid and debt relief. Tony Blair will represent the EU at the UN Summit, 17-23 September in New York (the summit to discuss Millennium development goals). *Pray that the EU agreement in May to double aid to Africa and the outcome of the G8 summit*

*in July will make a key contribution, that the goals for development will be reached, and that aid will be targeted effectively to relieve poverty.*

#### **Powerful countries set to betray hopes of millions at UN World Summit**

Less than three weeks away from the UN World Summit, the world's largest ever anti-poverty campaign is gravely concerned that countries including the United States are undermining the Summit outcome, and ensuring its failure. The Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP) warns that by cutting agreed wording designed to end poverty, governments are trying to edit away the future of the world's poorest people. The current draft of the Summit outcome declaration contains strong statements on fighting poverty. However, the United States has proposed deleting key wording on tackling global poverty and disease. The proposed US changes include cutting all references to the Millennium Development Goals - the internationally agreed targets for halving world poverty. The US also wants to cut all references to small arms controls and weaken wording on all governments' responsibility to protect civilians in cases of mass killing such as the Rwandan genocide. The United States is the main culprit in trying to water down the proposals, with the tacit approval of many other governments. Japan's Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder are even threatening not to attend the crucial Summit. If the declaration is so substantially weakened, the largest gathering of world leaders in history will result in failure. *Pray for this World Summit and all the decisions that will be made. Pray against any watering down of past agreements*

#### **Persecution of Christians grows in Saudi Arabia under new King Abdullah**

AsiaNews has reported that, with the death of King Fahd and the arrival of King Abdullah, the persecution by the Saudi Kingdom of believers of religions other than Islam, especially Christians, is on the rise. In a story posted on their website, AsiaNews says that their sources in the Saudi capital have confirmed that the religious police, the Muttawa, has raided the homes of foreigners, especially suspect homes (i.e. those where Christians live). "This has forced many groups, who used to meet in the privacy of their home to pray, to stop this activity," said the AsiaNews story. "Furthermore, fear is such that people have stopped meeting out of fear that the police might link them to one another. Indians are particularly targeted. In the last few months, nine Indians were arrested for illegal religious activities. "According to Indo-Asia News, things have become so tense that India's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia sent a circular to Indian nationals living in the country warning them that the number of Indians in detention for engaging in religious activities was growing. He told them not to organize prayer meetings in private homes or preach in any way. He also advised his government to warn all those leaving for Saudi Arabia to leave religious books, Bibles, photos, or icons behind." [www.assistnews.net](http://www.assistnews.net) *Continue to pray for Christians in Saudi as the persecution continues. Pray that they will be strengthened and protected.*

## **PRAISE REPORTS**

#### **Burundi swears in born-again Christian as new President**

Elected by Parliament last week, Pierre Nkurunziza - a born-again Christian and former Rebel leader - is Burundi's new President. Nkurunziza (41), part of a younger generation of Hutu leaders, says he is against tribalism and supports peace, justice and security for all. However, the new president faces the challenge of bringing peace and stability to civil war-torn Burundi, while reassuring the minority Tutsis of a secure future in the hands of a democratic, Hutu majority government. [www.breakingchristiannews.com](http://www.breakingchristiannews.com) *As another African nation chooses a Christian as a leader pray that they will remain strong in their faith and not be corrupted by power.*

#### **87,000 Churches Planted In Latin America**

At a church planting congress in 1998, representatives of Latin American nations set the very ambitious goal of planting a total of 500,000 new Christian churches by the year 2010. Dawn Ministries has published a progress report on their web site, which shows that the target will be reached if the development continues at the current rate. Five nations have already reached their original target and set new national targets. Guatemala, the first Latin American nation to have a process based on the Dawn strategy following their initial Congress in 1984, reached the target of 7,000 new churches in only five years. They then set another target of a further 5,000 churches, which has also already been reached. [www.dawnministries.org](http://www.dawnministries.org) *Praise God for this tremendous growth and pray that it will be ongoing. Pray for those countries that still have challenges to meet.*

## **LOOKING AHEAD**

**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](http://www.lawcf.org)

**10 September:** *White Band Day 2.* During the second GCAP mobilisation day, thousands of people will be holding breakfast meetings with politicians, all night vigils, rallies outside state buildings, jamborees, petitions and early morning press calls. Also go through the website to find out more [about the campaign](#) and to be in touch with the GCAP [national coalitions](#).

**21st September:** Churches representing over 560 million Christians world-wide are being invited to mark the *United Nations International Day of Peace*, as an *International Day of Prayer for Peace* – for a second year running. The initiative calls on Christian churches all over the world to arrange for services or vigils on 21 September, as well as to include prayers for peace in their services on the Sunday before or after that day [www.ekklesia.co.uk](http://www.ekklesia.co.uk)

**5<sup>th</sup> October – 3<sup>rd</sup> November:** *30-Days of Prayer for the Muslim World.* For the latest "30-Days" news and for prayer materials during Ramadan 2005 [www.30-days.net](http://www.30-days.net)

**29th October:** *Trumpet Call III* - Back to the NEC Arena for a third National Trumpet Call Day of Prayer. Make sure the date is in your diary [www.worldprayer.org.uk](http://www.worldprayer.org.uk)