

## PRAYER ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

# Prayer Alert . . .

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## BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

### Churches condemn violence upsurge

The leaders of the four main churches in Northern Ireland have described the present level of violence on the streets as "totally unacceptable". Homes, schools and churches in County Antrim have been targeted, whilst parts of Belfast have seen rioting. In a statement issued after meeting Secretary of State Peter Hain the churchmen described such attacks as "immoral" as well as criminal. Mr Hain said the violence was "staining the reputation of Northern Ireland". "We are absolutely united, standing together to say this grizzly violence - sectarian but also between loyalist groups - must end," he said. Catholic Archbishop Sean Brady, Church of Ireland Primate Archbishop Robin Eames, Presbyterian Church leader the Reverend Harry Uprichard and Methodist leader the Reverend Desmond Bain issued the statement on Wednesday. [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk) *Seek the Lord for a real breakthrough that will bring lasting peace and reconciliation in NI in answer to this united Christian demand.*

### Irish churches make reconciliation the focus for Christian unity

Churches across Ireland, drawing from deep experience of conflict in their own communities, have made reconciliation the key theme of global prayers for Christian unity set for 2006. On Tuesday Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, the official ecumenical body, launched worship resources specifically prepared for the annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January 2006. Representing the Irish Inter-Church Meeting (which brings together the Protestant, Anglican and Catholic church leaders, north and south), the Rev Mary Hunter said that Irish Christians had chosen as the focal text for the week, Matthew 18.15-22. This is a Gospel passage where Jesus promises to stay with his followers even if there are just two or three of them. He then calls on them to forgive "not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times." The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity worship materials are available from [www.ctbi.org.uk](http://www.ctbi.org.uk). *Praise God for this timely and significant subject for the whole Church to get behind in prayer.*

### Patients 'not getting best care'

Patients are not receiving the newest and best treatments because guidance on what should be available is not being implemented, a watchdog says. The Audit Commission found a third of English NHS trusts were unable to introduce all recommended treatments in 2002-3. The report blamed poor financial management, as many were not assessing the costs of forthcoming treatment. But health managers said rises in the price of drugs had caused problems. The findings illustrate the so-called "postcode lottery" of care is still happening - in recent years problems over access to cancer and infertility treatments have been highlighted. [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk) *Pray that financial restraints and profits will not be the reasons for lack of care.*

### Archbishop of Canterbury warns on elderly and euthanasia

Dr Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury, has issued a warning that a permissive approach to voluntarily ending life in Britain could undermine fundamental commitments to the needs of the elderly. In a keynote speech to a charitable foundation on the challenges confronting an ageing society, Dr Williams said that "the current drift towards a more accepting attitude to assisted suicide and euthanasia in some quarters gives me a great deal of concern." He continued: "What begins as a compassionate desire to enable those who long for death because of protracted pain, distress or humiliation to have their wish, can, with the best will in the world, help to foster an attitude that assumes resources spent on the elderly are a luxury." He said: "I am certainly not ascribing to the defenders of euthanasia or assisted dying any motive but the desire to spare people unnecessary suffering. But I think we have to ask the awkward question about how this might develop in a climate of anxiety about scarce resources." [www.ekklisia.co.uk](http://www.ekklisia.co.uk) *Pray for those who make these decisions that they will respect the needs of those involved. Also to remember that life is God's to give and to take away.*

### Spiritual battles over Birmingham

Saturday, 10 September is the date chosen by the Pagan Society to hold its first gathering outside of London. The City will host witches from across Europe, wizards, heathens and polytheists - people who worship more than one god; together with members of one of the first known witches covens in England. Organisers say all interested in alternative religions, New Age beliefs; fortune telling or spiritualism and the environment are welcome. At the same time, World Prayer Centre [www.worldprayer.org.uk](http://www.worldprayer.org.uk) prayer day will be taking place in Birmingham Christian Centre at which Christians will declare the Lordship of Christ, worship and praise the one true God and pray for Birmingham, the Nation and the Nations. When we planned our prayer days at the beginning of the year, we did not know of the Pagan Society's gathering. But God did. So we shall by God's grace stand proclaiming the Kingdom of God over our city, cities, nation and nations. Come and stand with us. [www.prayer.tv/](http://www.prayer.tv/) *Pray with those who gather at the World Prayer Centre that the enemy will be destroyed as the Lordship of Christ is declared over the Pagan Society gathering.*

## EUROPE

### New EU law to boost child drugs

The European Parliament has approved a law intended to boost the production of children's medicines. The law obliges firms producing a drug for adults in the EU to test whether it can also be used for children. It also gives firms a new incentive to produce children's drugs, by adding six months to the patent protection period. At present most of the drugs prescribed to children have not been tested for paediatric use, forcing doctors to guess the right dose. The law was passed a day after UK scientists unveiled a study suggesting that two-thirds of children treated in hospital are given drugs that have not undergone appropriate tests. The French Conservative MEP who shepherded the law through the parliament, Francoise Grossetete, described it as a big advance for science and health. "This is about saving children's lives," she said. British Labour MEP Linda McAvan also described the vote as a breakthrough. [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk) *Pray that this new legislation will bring about the desired results and that profits and greed will not be a reason for its failure.*

### UK hosts EU counter-terror talks

European Union interior ministers are meeting in Britain to discuss ways of improving anti-terrorism measures. The talks in Newcastle come two months after 52 people were killed in suicide bomb attacks in London. UK Home Secretary Charles Clarke said on Wednesday that governments needed new intelligence-gathering powers even if they curbed personal freedoms. He said it was crucial to agree EU-wide rules for the retention of electronic data from e-mails and telephone calls. Mr Clarke wants agreement by the end of next month, and a law enacted by the end of the year. EU interior ministers agreed in principle at an emergency meeting just after the London bombings, but member states differ over the details. [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk) *Pray that these new powers will be reasoned and not taken in fear and haste.*

## WORLDWIDE

### United Nations millennium review summit

On September 14th - 16th, Heads of State from around the world will converge on New York for the Millennium Review Summit. This is the first official chance the world has to check in with itself and find out how progress is going on achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Set in 2000, this list of eight targets is supposed to be achieved by 2015. With five years gone, and only ten to go, are we on track and what needs to happen to make sure we get there? Running alongside the MDG discussions, there is a reform process happening within the UN itself. Big issues like who should be on the Security Council, and how should the UN monitor and react to Human Rights abuses are also being discussed. At the end of the Summit there will be a declaration, agreed by all the Heads of State, which will state what the community of nations believes is important, and what they think needs to change. A blueprint for what will happen at an international level in the coming few years. It won't, in itself, do much on the aid, trade and debt agenda, but it will enshrine certain principles and actions as agreed norms, and will be the standard bearer for international agreements on a range of important issues for years to come. To find out more about the UN and the Millennium Development Goals go to [www.undp.org/mdg/](http://www.undp.org/mdg/) *That's why it is important we get behind this event with our prayers. Pray for our Heads of State will as it looks at these weighty issues and the reform of the UN.*

### Car bomb attack kills 16 in Basra

At least 16 people have been killed and 20 injured in a car bomb attack in the southern Iraqi city of Basra. The explosion took place on Wednesday evening outside a restaurant near the city centre which was packed with members of the Iraqi security forces. It was the worst car bombing in Basra since the US-led invasion in 2003. The attack follows the killing of four US

security guards and two British soldiers in separate incidents earlier this week [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk) *Continue to pray for the ongoing problems in Iraq. Pray particularly against the perpetrators of these atrocities and for those who have lost loved ones.*

#### **At least 14 Christian homes set on fire in West Bank**

A Palestinian Christian village in the West Bank, northeast of Ramallah, was attacked by Muslim extremists from neighbouring villages that set fire to at least 14 homes. One of the persons involved said the attack was about family honour, not religion. The incident occurred on Saturday evening in the village of Taybeh, lasting until early Sunday after Palestinian Authority Special Forces dispersed the attackers, the Jerusalem Post reported. Houses in the 1,500 person town were looted, with many families forced to leave to neighbouring Christian villages. No deaths were reported. Dozens of Palestinian Authority officers were placed in the village following the attack to maintain the peace. AP reported that the root of the problem began when a Muslim woman fell in love with her boss a Christian, in an affair that lasted two years. Six months ago, she became pregnant. According to reports, her family became aware of the affair a few days ago and by Thursday morning she was found dead in her family's village "We burned their houses because they dishonoured our family, not because they are Christians," said a cousin of the Muslim woman. [www.christianpost.com](http://www.christianpost.com) *Pray for protection for our Christian brothers and sisters as they face up to living in challenging situations. Pray that their faith will be a living witness to all they meet.*

#### **Indonesian Christians Sentenced to Jail**

Three Indonesian women are going to jail for holding Christian services at a local school. The women's defence team argued that the services were intended only for Christian students. Nevertheless, the court convicted the three mothers of trying to convert Muslim children. This is happening on the island of Java, in the town of Indramayu. The court sentenced them to 3 years imprisonment and a fine of \$158. The defence lawyers have been only given one week to make an appeal to the higher court. This is a crucial decision for them to make. Because, while the verdict for Eti, Ratna and Rebecca can be overturned, the possibility also exists that the 3 women will get a longer sentence — which is usually the case for most Christians facing trial in Indonesia. [CWNews.com](http://CWNews.com) *Pray for Eti, Ratna and Rebecca that the Lord will continue to strengthen them and pray that the appeal will bring their speedy release.*

#### **Islamic militants force Churches to close**

There is more bad news, from the island of Java, Indonesia. There, Islamic militants have forced 35 churches near the city of Bandung to shut their doors in the past month. The attacks began after a meeting of the country's top Islamic clerical group in late July. Muslim leaders complained to the Indonesian Islamic Council about the growth of Christianity in western Java. The Council then issued an edict: it said religious pluralism is un-Islamic and that non-Muslims do not have the same rights as Muslims [CWNews.com](http://CWNews.com) *Pray for the Church in Java that the Lord will bless them and enable them to extend His Kingdom.*

#### **Archbishop: Iraqi constitution 'real threat' to religious freedom**

The Archbishop of Westminster has urged the UK's Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, to intervene in the drafting of the Iraqi constitution to remove a clause which he says could deprive minorities of their basic rights as citizens. Cardinal Murphy-O'Connor wrote to the Foreign Secretary on Friday after church leaders in Iraq sounded the alarm over Article 2(a) in the draft constitution, which was submitted on 25 August. The Article states that "no law can be passed that contradicts the undisputed rules of Islam", in the Associated Press (AP) translation. Although Church leaders "do not question that Iraq will be an Islamic state, nor object to Islam being considered one source of legislation among others, they are most alarmed by the phrase" in Article 2(a), Cardinal Murphy-O'Connor wrote to Jack Straw. The Cardinal warned that if the clause remained it could have "devastating consequences" for Iraq's ancient Christian minority, and "fatally undermine" Britain's plans for a stable democracy in the region. The draft will be voted on in a general referendum and ratified by the general assembly on 15 October, but discussions are under way to fine-tune the draft. [www.ekklisia.co.uk](http://www.ekklisia.co.uk) *Let us pray that this Article 2a will not be accepted.*

#### **IN HURRICANE KATRINA'S WAKE . . .**

*Further to last weeks Prayer Alert Special our prayers are still urgently required for the ongoing situations in the Southern States of the USA. Below are a small selection of news items which flood in every day.*

#### **World aid offers pour in**

Offers of aid and assistance from around the world for victims of Hurricane Katrina continue to pour into the U.S. So far 94 countries and international organizations have offered aid, according to a State Department spokesman. Some of the aid is already being put to use. MREs (meals ready-to-eat) from Germany and Italy are being distributed and medical assistance from Italy is being accepted. Planes and helicopters from Canada and Singapore are being used to transport evacuees. Emergency supplies from Britain, Japan and Mexico also are being delivered. Canada is also sending three naval ships and a coast guard vessel packed with supplies and 1,000 military personnel to the disaster area. The United States is also awaiting the arrival of two Greek cruise ships to house evacuees. Spain is sending two Hercules cargo planes with relief supplies. The first of the two planes will carry 6,000 rations of emergency food, and the second plane will carry a water purification plant, cleaning gear, first aid and sanitary equipment, field hospital tents and cots, electrical generators and blankets. Much of the money being donated by foreign governments is expected to be used for recovery efforts. Eventually, the United States will need help with forensics once bodies are recovered. A State Department official said there were "absolutely no political considerations" being taken into account, and that the U.S. government "is not turning anything down." [www.cnn.com](http://www.cnn.com)

#### **Bush asks world to support Katrina victims through faith-based groups**

President Bush on Tuesday praised faith-based and private charitable organizations and urged the world to continue giving generously for the victims of Hurricane Katrina by assisting those groups. "We've got people who represent thousands of volunteers who are in the midst of helping save lives," Bush said. "If you want to help, support the Red Cross or the Salvation Army or your church or the United Way." Bush's meeting came a day after his Labour Day visit to the disaster region and nearly a week after the Hurricane left tens of thousands stranded in flooded streets. In a separate meeting with Cabinet members also on Tuesday, Bush acknowledged that the initial federal response was "unacceptable" and said he will ask

Congress for more money for Katrina relief than the US\$10.5 billion in emergency funds already appropriated by Congress last week. In the meantime, he urged charitable groups to continue their good works and Americans to continue giving money to support the private sector. Christian groups represented at the meeting included the Southern Baptist Convention, Evangelical Lutheran Church, Catholic Charities, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, YMCA and the Salvation Army.  
[www.christiantoday.com](http://www.christiantoday.com)

#### **Louisiana Pastors' group organizing assistance for hurricane victims**

The charitable arm of a Louisiana pastors' council is moving at full tilt in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, providing everything from physical and spiritual sustenance to chainsaw crews to help in clean-up efforts. [PRC Compassion](#) is a division of the Pastor's Resource Council, a coalition of Louisiana churches and pastors formed several years ago to provide for community needs. According to the group's website, PRC Compassion is providing: temporary shelter; food and water; various heavy equipment; labourers to work in the shelters and cut down trees; and counsellors for the emotional needs of those affected by the Hurricane Katrina and the aftermath. The local churches in the state are supporting 10,000 people who lost everything. The coalition of pastors has been successful in getting 150 18-wheelers of food and water to the state. Still, the needs are overwhelming. [www.WorldNetDaily.com](http://www.WorldNetDaily.com)

#### **'Maybe God is going to cleanse us'**

A report by LifeSiteNews quotes New Orleans City Council President Oliver Thomas -- after witnessing the horrors first hand and hearing talk of Sodom and Gomorrah -- as saying, "Maybe God's going to cleanse us." Noting that the name Katrina means "pure" and that God has everything in control, Michael Brown of Spirit Daily News said, "I don't believe in coincidences and I think that everything is interwoven." [www.lifesite.net/ldn/2005/sep/05090111.html](http://www.lifesite.net/ldn/2005/sep/05090111.html)

## **PRAISE REPORTS**

#### **Another Toronto area Church catches God's fire**

Revival has hit another Toronto area church with numerous changed lives and book of Acts style miracles. According to evangelist Tom Scarrella, Church Without Limits, located in Pickering, was already experiencing a level of revival before he came for special meetings last month. The church of a couple hundred members has a large percentage of young people and uses the G-12 approach to cell groups. The special meetings only lasted three nights, but according to Scarrella, "There were hundreds laid under the power in every hallway, doorway, and entry way of the church as God's holy presence enveloped that church." He estimates praise and worship lasted nearly two hours each evening with services running from about 6 or 6:30 pm to 1 or 2 am. About half a dozen other area churches are expected to attend the next set of meetings scheduled for September 16th through 19th. Church Without Limits meets at the facilities of Saint Paul's on the Hill Anglican Church, Pickering. <http://www.churchwithoutlimits.com> Tom Scarrella Ministries <http://www.scarrella.com> *Praise God for this revival and pray that there will be many more!*

## **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](#).

**20-22 September:** Prayer Association of British Isles and Ireland meeting near Dublin. *Pray for clear guidance as to how to hear the Lord together*

**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)

**5th October – 3rd 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)

**8th October:** *Day of Prayer for Nigeria* At All Souls Clubhouse, 141 Cleveland Street, London. 10am - 3pm. Admission is free. Tea and Coffee will be provided, please bring a packed lunch

**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)

**[www.prayer-alert.net](http://www.prayer-alert.net)**