



PRAYER ALERT...



An initiative of the Prayer Association of the British Isles & Ireland
www.prayer-alert.net editor@prayer-alert.net

Issue 3406

Website

Contact Us

Donations

Friday 8 September 2006

■ British Isles & Ireland

- [I will quit within a year - Blair](#)
- [Marriage is best for bringing up children, says Tory study](#)
- [Three more British soldiers are killed in Afghanistan](#)
- [Christian faces court over 'offensive' gay festival leaflets](#)
- [Church supports gay-snub firemen](#)
- [Churches Called to 'Stand Up Against Poverty'](#)

■ Europe

- [The Balkans still urgently needs our prayers](#)
- [Brussels seeks ways to keep EU-Turkey talks afloat](#)

■ Worldwide

- [Persecution increases in Uzbekistan](#)
- [One million lose homes in India floods; relief is poor](#)
- [Despair over Darfur](#)
- ['Virtually untreatable' TB found](#)
- [Malaysian Prime Minister calls for restrictions on evangelising Muslims](#)

■ Praise Reports

- [Scotland now has its first full-time Christian radio station.](#)
- [Methodists celebrate 'enthusiastic' year of non-stop prayer](#)
- [Church leader released as Vietnam amnesty sees 5,300 prisoners freed](#)

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ I will quit within a year - Blair

Tony Blair has confirmed he will be stepping down as prime minister within the next 12 months. Mr Blair said the Labour conference in two weeks' time would be his last. He did not set a precise date but said he would do so in the future - when it was in the best interests of the country. And he apologised for the internal rows in the Labour party over his exit saying the past week 'has not been our finest hour, to be frank'. The announcement follows 48 hours of bitter feuding and a string of resignations over Mr Blair's refusal to name an exit date. Mr Blair said: 'I think what is important now is that we understand that it's the interests of the country that come first and we move on.' I would have preferred to do this in my own way but it has been pretty obvious from what many of my Cabinet colleagues have said earlier in the week.

Pray: let us pray that this will now bring an end to the media speculation. Pray for our government and all in the parliament that they will be led by the Holy Spirit in their decisions and not by man's ideas.

More: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/5322094.stm

■ Marriage is best for bringing up children, says Tory study

Marriage is the best environment to raise children and offers the greatest chance of a stable upbringing, an independent study commissioned by the Tories reveals today. Unmarried parents are up to five times more likely to experience family breakdown, according to the survey of 15,000 families carried out for the social justice policy review group headed by Iain Duncan Smith, the former Tory leader. The findings will put intense pressure on David Cameron to offer voters a cast-iron guarantee that he will put marriage at the heart of Tory policies on the family. Some of the Conservative leader's advisers want him to tone down the party's support for marriage because they fear the party risks alienating support from unmarried families. A statement from Mr Duncan Smith's policy review said: 'By tacitly promoting cohabitation and undermining marriage, policy-makers are exposing more children to the perils of family breakdown, reflected in higher levels of crime, anti-social behaviour, education failure and mental and emotional disturbance.'

Pray: Dare we say 'we told you so, as this is Gods plan?' (Gen 2; 24) Let us continue to pray that findings like this will lead to changes being made by the authorities and government.

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml;jsessionid=WN3RS345F1A4BQFIQMGSFGGAVCBQWIV0?xml=/ne>

■ Three more British soldiers are killed in Afghanistan

Three British soldiers died in Afghanistan Wednesday, bringing to 35 the number killed since British forces were sent to the south of the country earlier this year. One soldier was killed and six injured by a landmine. A Ministry of Defence spokesman said that five of the injured were in a serious condition. A second soldier was killed in a separate clash in the same area in a platoon house. A defence source said he was the victim of 'indirect fire, possibly a grenade'. The third fatality was a soldier who died of his injuries sustained last Friday. Nato forces involved in Operation Medusa claimed that around 700 Taliban fighters were trapped in an area 20 miles south-west of Kandahar city. Nimrod flights resumed

yesterday with an aircraft taking off from RAF Kinloss in a training exercise. They were suspended after 14 Service personnel were killed when their reconnaissance plane crashed on Saturday.

Pray: that God will protect our forces as they face their enemies. Pray for their enemies that they will find the one true God and that the truth will set them free. (Math 5: 44)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml;jsessionid=WN3RS345F1A4BQFIQMGSFGGAVCBQWIV0?xml=/news/2006/09/07/wafghan07.xml>

■ Christian faces court over 'offensive' gay festival leaflets

A police force was caught up in a freedom of speech row after its officers arrested an anti-gay campaigner for handing out leaflets at a homosexual rally. South Wales police admitted evangelical Christian Stephen Green was then charged purely because his pamphlets contained anti-gay quotations from the Bible. Mr Green faces a court appearance today charged with using 'threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour' after his attempt to distribute the leaflets at the weekend 'Mardi Gras' event in Cardiff. A spokesman for the police said the campaigner had not behaved in a violent or aggressive manner, but that officers arrested him because 'the leaflet contained Biblical quotes about homosexuality'. The arrest of Mr Green by the South Wales Minorities Support Unit provoked a furious row. The decision to prosecute Mr Green is the latest in a series of police initiatives aimed against those who have expressed public disapproval of homosexual behaviour. The leaflets quoted Leviticus 18.22, Romans 1:25-27.

Pray: for all those who stand by Gods word and are persecuted for their faith. Pray for the police as they try to interpret the law that they will make wise and just decisions.

More: http://www.dailymail.co.uk/pages/live/articles/news/news.html?in_article_id=403815&in_page_id=1770

■ Church supports gay-snub firemen

A Roman Catholic archbishop has given his support to nine fire-fighters disciplined for refusing to hand out leaflets during a gay rights march. They will go on 'diversity training' courses after refusing to hand out leaflets at the Pride Scotia event which took place in June. Glasgow Archbishop Mario Conti said they 'had legitimate concerns about being the subject of taunts and jokes'. He said in some cases their religious sensibilities would have been offended. Archbishop Conti said: 'We have followed this case with concern. There was no question of these officers' competency or commitment being called into question, nor was there any suggestion that they were refusing to come to the assistance of people in danger. They were asked, while in uniform, to hand out leaflets during a demonstration where they had legitimate concerns about being the subject of taunts and jokes, and in which in some cases, their religious sensibilities would have been grossly offended by people dressed as priests and nuns lampooning the Church.'

Pray: for those who stand firm on their Christian principles that their witnessing will bring honour to our Lord.

More: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/glasgow_and_west/5304524.stm

■ Churches Called to 'Stand Up Against Poverty'

The organisations that came together last year for Make Poverty History are urging churches to participate in this year's global follow-up month of action, under the slogan 'Stand Up Against Poverty'. Millions of people will come together across the world to make clear to politicians the strength of feeling for the cause of economic justice. Commencing on 14 September, ahead of crucial World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) meetings in Singapore, the month will culminate in a White Band Day (World Poverty Day) on 17 October. In the UK the month of action will be launched by the Christian Aid event 'The Beat Goes on' in London on 14 September. Campaigners in the UK will be taking action on debt, trade, aid and HIV/AIDS, as well as taking part in a global world record attempt on 15 to 16 October. A comprehensive online Toolkit is available and can be accessed at www.bond.org.uk/campaign/toolkit/churches.htm

Pray: for the world governments that they will take the opportunity to really make a difference and Stand Up Against Poverty.

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/news/society/churches.called.to.stand.up.against.poverty.during.month.of.action/1059.htm>

EUROPE

■ The Balkans still urgently needs our prayers

A video war was waged in the Balkans recently. Serbian television showed video footage from 1995 ostensibly showing Croatian and Bosnian soldiers executing Serbian citizens and setting Serbian villages on fire. Bosnian and Croat officials denied the authenticity of the videos. The Bosnian president declared that the Serbian region of Bosnia would not prosper 'because it was built on genocide, war crimes and ethnic cleansing'. Clearly there's one fact no one denies: little reconciliation has taken place in the Balkans over the past decade. Serbia is widely regarded as a pariah state in Europe. The citizens of Montenegro voted to dissociate their state from Serbia. No solution for Kosovo's relationship with Serbia has emerged. The problem is passed like a hot potato from diplomat to diplomat. Evangelicals in Serbia are worried about a controversial new religion law rushed through the National Assembly. The law requires churches outside of seven 'traditional' faiths to reapply for legal status and pay property taxes. This includes Baptists, Pentecostals, Anglicans, Methodists, Adventists and others who have worked in Serbia for decades.

Pray: that a spirit of reconciliation would breakout within the Balkens to enable healing and forgiveness to flow. (James 5: 17)

More: <http://www.ywameurope.org/news/word/readWord.asp?word=241>

■ Brussels seeks ways to keep EU-Turkey talks afloat

In a bid to keep EU-Turkey talks from derailing completely, Brussels is considering ways of putting off dealing with the thorny Cyprus question until after Turkish elections next year. The Financial Times reports that enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn is seeking to put the nub of the issue – access to Turkey ports and airports by Cyprus – before the European Court of Justice. This would effectively defer the question until next year and after Turkey has been through its parliamentary elections. Member states have given Turkey until the end of this year to open its ports to Cyprus but Ankara has refused to do so until the EU makes good on a promise to end the isolation of Turkish Cypriots in the northern part of the island. The EU insists that the two issues are not linked resulting in a stalemate which analysts suggest will be almost impossible to get out of before Turkey's elections.

Pray: As they seek a way forward pray that they will face up to the question of Cyprus once and for all and not defer by accepting another stalemate.

More: <http://euobserver.com/9/22347>

WORLDWIDE

■ Persecution increases in Uzbekistan

During August Barnabas Fund received reports from Uzbekistan indicating increasing persecution of Protestant church leaders and their families, many of whom have now gone into hiding. This follows a surge of anti-Christian activity in Uzbekistan over several months. It is believed that this is linked with the 15th anniversary of Uzbekistan's independence, today, 1st September. A well-known church leader and evangelist, Sergey Hripunov, was given a week to leave the country with his wife and children. This is the second incident of deportation of a church leader from Uzbekistan in a month. The leader of a church started by Sergey Hripunov was given only 24 hours to leave the country with his wife and two children, the youngest of whom was only two weeks old. They were given no reason for the order, nor was there a court order accompanying it.

Pray: for Christians in Uzbekistan that they will remain strong in their faith and that the Lord will protect them from persecution. (Eph 6: 10 – 13)

More: http://www.barnabasfund.org/archivenews/article.php?ID_news_items=212

■ One million lose homes in India floods; relief is poor

At least one million people have lost their homes to floods in eastern India, but government relief is slow and inadequate, voluntary groups said on Wednesday. The flooding, triggered by annual monsoon rains over the past week, has hit an area where 2.3 million people live and damaged thousands of acres of paddy in the coastal state of Orissa. But days after floodwaters submerged hundreds of villages in 12 of Orissa's 30 districts; authorities have failed to reach around one million people who remain stranded without shelter, food and medicines, say charities. Officials warn of an epidemic in flooded areas and say they are sending medical teams to flood-hit villages, but charities say there are areas where no government agencies are present. 'Our medical team is providing healthcare support and free medicine to at least 2,000 people every day, whom the government system has failed to reach,' said Abhaya Pati, the secretary of Utkal Bipanna Sahayata Samiti, a leading volunteer group.

Pray: Let us remember all those who are suffering because of this disaster. Pray that the necessary food, medical supplies and shelter would soon reach them.

More: <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/DEL81191.htm>

■ Despair over Darfur

Western policy is in near despair over Darfur and governments are turning to Russia and China to see if they can put pressure on the Sudanese government to accept a UN peacekeeping force. A British official said 'We have few levers but Russia and China have more in that they buy raw materials there. So the issue is how we can persuade them to get the government of Sudan to agree to the force while also allaying the government's own fears.' The government fears that such a UN force would violate its sovereignty and suggested that it was a bridgehead for the removal of an Islamic-oriented government. Instead, the government says it intends to send its own troops to fight against the rebel forces that did not accept the recent peace deal agreed in Nigeria, especially the National Redemption Front. The UN fears an increase in fighting, making the provision of aid difficult or impossible.

Pray: against any further outbreak in fighting that aid will be able to get through to those who have already suffered much. Pray that those in authority would seek and find solutions that succeed. (Prov 28: 5)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/5317796.stm>

■ 'Virtually untreatable' TB found

A 'virtually untreatable' form of TB has emerged, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). Extreme drug resistant TB (XDR TB) has been seen worldwide, including in the US, Eastern Europe and Africa, although Western Europe has had no cases. Dr Paul Nunn, from the WHO, said a failure to correctly implement treatment strategies was to blame. Drug resistance is caused by poor TB control, through taking the wrong types of drugs for the incorrect duration. Multi-drug resistant TB (MDR TB), which describes strains of TB that are resistant to at least two of the main first-line TB drugs, is already a growing concern. Globally, the WHO estimates there are about 425,000 cases of MDR TB a year, mostly occurring in the former Soviet Union, China and India. Treatment requires the use of second-line drugs, which are more toxic, take longer to work and costly. But now, according to researchers, an even more deadly form of the bacteria has emerged.

Pray: for our doctors, nurses, hospitals and medical researchers as they face such difficult challenges. Pray that they will not just seek human answers but also seek the wisdom of the Lord.

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/5317624.stm>

■ **Malaysian Prime Minister calls for restrictions on evangelising Muslims**

Most of Malaysia's 16 states have laws which prohibit the propagation of other religions amongst Muslims. Recently Malaysia's Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has called for the remaining four states which do not have these laws to introduce them. The debate about the supremacy of Islamic and Secular law and religious freedom has come to the fore given the publicity for the Lina Joy case, (see Prayer Alert 3306) and some Muslims are trying to force Malaysia closer to becoming an Islamic state. Badawi is regarded as a moderate and believes that clamping down on the rights of members of the minority religions will prevent ethnic and religious conflict. However, empowering Islamists by accepting their demands will lead to much greater conflict in the future. The real threat comes from the Islamists, not from religious minorities who merely wish to be able to freely worship as they choose. Malaysia is at a crossroads and Badawi must do everything in his power to ensure that Malaysia takes the path towards becoming a country where human rights are protected.

Pray: that Malaysia would keep Article 11(1) of its constitution allowing freedom to profess and practice ones religion and not go down the road of Islamists who wish to clamp down.

More: http://www.barnabasfund.org/archivenews/article.php?ID_news_items=211

PRAISE REPORTS

■ **Scotland now has its first full-time Christian radio station.**

Due to limitations of broadcasting legislation in Scotland and the United Kingdom, Christian organizations were not able to obtain broadcasting licenses until recently. Revival FM has been broadcasting on a part-time license for ten years in Scotland, but that temporary license was good for up to only two months every year.

But as of Sunday (September 3), the station is broadcasting full time on a five-year community license in the central Scotland areas of North Lanarkshire and East Dunbartonshire. Listeners can also tap into the broadcasts online at Revival.FM using MP3, Windows Media, or Real Media. Station chairman Ian Dunlop says Revival FM caters to all age groups. The motto of Revival FM is 'Where Hearing Is Believing.'

Praise: God for this new initiative as we pray for its success. (Acts 12: 24)

More: <http://headlines.agapepress.org/archive/9/52006g.asp>

■ **Methodists celebrate 'enthusiastic' year of non-stop prayer**

As September begins, the Methodist Church bids farewell to 'Pray Without Ceasing' - a marathon 14 months of non-stop prayer. An initiative of the young people of Methodism, this 'year of prayer' encouraged churches and individuals to focus on prayer, affirm that already taking place and encourage fresh thinking about prayer. The response was overwhelming, and Methodists are determined that the spirit and creativity of 'Pray Without Ceasing' should be carried forward into daily church and personal life. Despite a number of national events, such as a multi-faith prayer conference, the real work has taken place in the local churches. The year of prayer has been supported by a website, offering resources, ideas, chat forum, details of events and even an online prayer space. Though the year has ended, www.praywithoutceasing.org.uk will continue to offer ideas and inspiration to individuals and churches seeking a new dimension to prayer.

Praise: As the Methodists finish their year of prayer may all Christians continue to prayer without ceasing (Ps 32:6a)

More: <http://www.ucb.co.uk/index.cfm?itemid=226#1135>

■ **Church leader released as Vietnam amnesty sees 5,300 prisoners freed**

A Vietnamese church leader from the Hmong ethnic minority has been released as part of Vietnam's National Day amnesty of over 5,300 prisoners on 2 September. Ma Van Bay's case has been the subject of widespread international pressure, particularly during recent months. His release, which closely follows the visit to Vietnam of John Hanford, US Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, comes at a crucial juncture in Vietnamese relations with the USA. Vietnam is seeking both its removal from the American list of 'Countries of Particular Concern' for religious freedom violations, and the establishment of Permanent Normal Trade Relations with the US, one of the final obstacles before its highly sought-after ascendancy to the World Trade Organisation. Ma Van Bay's scheduled release coincides with that of well-known 'cyber-dissident' Pham Hong Son. Some Vietnam commentators have suggested that the freeing of so few prisoners of conscience out of a total amnesty list of over 5,300 shows insufficient progress in the area of human rights.

Praise: God for the release of these prisoners and let us continue to pray for those still incarcerated.

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/news/asia-pacific/church.leader.released.as.vietnam.amnesty.sees.5300.prisoners.freed/433.htm>

PRAYER ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

Please feel free to distribute Prayer Alert to anyone you feel will benefit from its ministry. All we ask is that you do not edit or change it in any way or charge for its use without contacting us for written permission.

Prayer Alert is a partnership project of the Prayer Association of the British Isles and Ireland
C/O World Prayer Centre, Cornerstone House, 5 Ethel Street, Birmingham, B2 4BG, England

