



# PRAYER ALERT...



An initiative of the Prayer Association of the British Isles & Ireland  
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## BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

### ■ Church in England must rediscover itself, warns Archbishop of York

The Archbishop of York has called on the church in England to rediscover its self-confidence as he warned that the future of Britain could be one in which God is completely excluded from the public realm. 'What we are in danger of developing is a culture that excludes God from public consciousness,' Sentamu said. He also recalled his appeal at his inauguration sermon to 'once again be a beacon' for the people of England. He appealed for the church in England to regain its position as a leading light, urging that, 'The church in England must rediscover her self-confidence and self-esteem'. In the speech, the Archbishop of York urged British Christians to see Muslims as allies in the struggle against secularism, adding that British Muslims were not offended by Christianity and preferred it to a secular state. He went on to stress the important position of the family as the 'primary social unit', saying that children should be, so far as possible, 'brought up by their parents as members of one family' to ensure the well-being of the whole community.

**Pray:** that the Church in England would rediscover its confidence and speak out with boldness in our nation. (Acts 4: 29)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/church.in.england.must.rediscover.itself.warns.archbishop.of.york/7597.htm>

### ■ Britain withholds £50m in World Bank row

The Government said today that it would withhold a £50 million contribution to the World Bank in protest at some of the controversial economic conditions it attaches to its aid for developing countries. The decision reflects concerns long expressed by anti-poverty campaigners and non-governmental organisations, and now shared by UK policy-makers, that the world's richest nations should not be telling poor countries how to run their economic affairs. Hilary Benn, the International Development Secretary, said that conditions should be attached in areas such as tackling corruption and good governance. The decision comes ahead of a protest march later today timed to coincide with the annual meetings of the World Bank and IMF meetings in Singapore, which started on Monday. The campaigners are trying to force the Government to follow through on a decision by Tony Blair after last year's Make Poverty History campaign to end economic conditionality.

**Pray:** for the meeting of the World Bank and IMF on Monday and for Gordon Brown as he speaks to them, that they will remember the promises of Make Poverty History. (Prov 14: 23)

**More:** <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,3-2357572,00.html>

### ■ Drug 'speedballing' on the rise

A charity has voiced fears at the rising number of drug users taking heroin and crack cocaine together. DrugScope looked at 20 UK locations and found many users were 'speedballing' for a stimulant-sedative effect. It warned the practice could lead to rising crime, saying, on average; speedballers have three times as many convictions as heroin-only users. It found they spent an average £500 a week on drugs compared with £110 for heroin users. In presenting its study, DrugScope

highlighted a survey of 100 drug addicts by Dr Russell Newcombe at Manchester drugs charity Lifeline. His research revealed speedballing was the main way to take drugs for 80% of those interviewed - the figure was 25% a decade ago.

**Pray:** As another report highlights the problems of our growing drug culture pray that the Lord will give wisdom to those who seek ways to help those in need. (Prov 3: 13)

**More:** <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/5340514.stm>

#### ■ Paisley 'cannot see deadline met' for Northern Ireland

DUP leader Ian Paisley has said he cannot see a deal being reached for restoring devolution by the government's 24 November deadline. He was speaking after meeting Prime Minister Tony Blair at Downing Street. Mr Paisley also said he had made it clear that any political talks should take place in Northern Ireland rather than at any other location, St Andrews in Scotland had been selected by the governments for next month's intensive talks. Northern Ireland Secretary Peter Hain warned attempts to restore devolution would probably be put back until 2009 if the deadline is not met, because of general elections in Britain and the Irish Republic. And with Mr Blair due to step down as prime minister in the next 12 months, it could be his last chance to revive the assembly before he leaves office. Mr Paisley said they could still 'do business' but added: 'We have to be realistic that Mr Blair has a lot on his plate at the present time.'

**Pray:** Continue praying for a real breakthrough in NI that would bring a lasting peace. (Ps 133: 1)

**More:** [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern\\_ireland/5343662.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/5343662.stm)

#### ■ Disabled 'suffer healthcare gap'

An investigation into healthcare given to people with mental health problems and learning disabilities shows they often get worse treatment than others. The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) - which examined eight million health records - says the government could face legal action unless things change. The study concentrated on primary care in England and Wales, which will soon fall under new equality laws. The government says it has already started acting on the report. The 18-month investigation shows that people with learning disabilities and mental health problems are more likely to have a major illness, to develop a serious health condition younger and to die sooner than the rest of the population. Such people were less likely to have routine tests and screening to pick up signs of a problem in its early stages. The DRC also found that people with learning disabilities and mental health problems face 'real barriers' when accessing services.

**Pray:** that the authorities will face the challenge of those with disabilities and meet their whole health needs.

**More:** <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/5335722.stm>

#### ■ Alcohol education 'not working'

Tougher methods of teaching children about alcohol and tobacco are needed to combat the rise in consumption, a government advisory panel says. The Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) calls for measures such as raising duty on alcohol and increasing the legal smoking age from 16 to 18. But a radical proposal for a new lower drink-drive limit for young adults was immediately ruled out by ministers. Among the measures it recommends are to ban alcohol advertising on TV and to prevent brewers sponsoring sports and music events. The council's chairman, Dr Laurence Gruer, said urgent action was needed to deal with alcohol use. 'We've seen over the last 10 to 12 years, particularly among young women, our consumption of alcohol has virtually doubled. We are also seeing across the whole of the UK a dramatic rise in the amount of cirrhosis of the liver that's caused by chronic drinking and we are now the fastest growing country in Europe in terms of alcoholic cirrhosis'.

**Pray:** for our government that it would learn from such reports and see that many of its policies on drink and drugs are not working and need revising.

**More:** <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/5344310.stm>

## EUROPE

#### ■ Bishops refuel Christianisation debate of the EU constitution

Catholic bishops met on Monday to discuss 'ethical values for European unification', refuelling the debate over the 'Christianisation' of the EU constitution. German Chancellor Angela Merkel indicated that any EU constitution 'should refer to our Christian values'. Merkel will attempt to resurrect the terminating constitutional treaty when Berlin takes over the EU presidency in January 2007, and has made no secret of her wish to include a reference to Christian values in the text. (See Prayer Alert 3306) The church leaders hope their report 'will give a new impulse to developing a civic sense of Europe as a community of values', according to a statement. Germany is not the only country keen to see some reference to a Christian God in the EU's constitution, Italy, Poland, Lithuania, Malta, Portugal, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Ireland all pushed hard for its inclusion during the first round of negotiations in 2004. Opposition from the UK, France and Sweden has kept religious statements out of the constitutional treaty text so far.

**Pray:** that our government will reconsider looking to our Christian roots and join those in bringing Christian values to the heart of the EU constitution. (Ps 77: 11-12)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/news/europe/bishops.refuel.christianisation.debate.of.the.eu.constitution/629.htm>

#### ■ Al-Qaeda 'issues France threat'

Al-Qaeda's deputy leader has claimed that a radical Algerian Islamist group had joined al-Qaeda and is being urged to punish France, it has emerged. Ayman al-Zawahiri appeared in a video on a website on the fifth anniversary of the 11 September attacks. In the tape, he issued a warning of new attacks targeting Israel and the Gulf. Although France's government opposed the US-led war in Iraq, French officials believe the country is still a target for Islamist militants. In the video, Zawahiri says: 'Osama Bin Laden has told me to announce to Muslims that the GSPC [the Salafist Group for

Preaching and Combat] has joined al-Qaeda,' according to quotes given by the AFP news agency. On Thursday, France's interior ministry said Zawahiri's comments 'confirmed the high level of threat against our country', officials told AFP. Ministry officials add that al-Qaeda had announced in a statement on 11 September 2003 that the GSPC was one of its components and there have since been other threats issued against France.

**Pray:** Keep praying against the threat of Al-Qaeda and protection for all those who live under the threat of terrorism. (Luke 10:19)

**More:** <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/5345202.stm>

## WORLDWIDE

### ■ Sudan violence escalates as global prayer for Sudan continues

10 Days of Prayer and Action for Sudan started on Friday, September 8, and will culminate with a Day of Prayer and Fasting for Sudan on Sunday, September 17. The prayer effort will focus on the needs of Christians who primarily live in southern Sudan. The Muslim-led government of Khartoum has denied full freedom of religion to the Christian minority in Sudan. During September 8-17, millions of people worldwide are expected to hold services and vigils calling attention to the crisis in Darfur and in Sudan and the need for immediate action. Meanwhile on Wednesday this week security forces fired tear gas and beat demonstrators protesting against price increases for basic goods, and a journalist was found beheaded in a further sign of rising tensions. The government has imposed strict Sharia law in northern Sudan but has been opposed by some Islamist groups.

**Pray:** for God's spirit to break through the violence, and His comfort and strength for the Christians in Sudan (Ps.44:4)

**More:** <http://www.windowinternationalnetwork1040.com/EPA/EPA%20090906.pdf>

### ■ Shooting victims found in Baghdad

Iraqi police say they have found in the space of one day 60 bodies of people bound, tortured and shot in the capital Baghdad. They were found all over the city, from Sunni areas in the west to Shia districts in the east; but most were found in largely Sunni west Baghdad. Sectarian killings are not unusual in the city but this is a large number for one day, meanwhile, car bombs killed at least 22 people in Baghdad. One device near the national sports stadium in the eastern Shaab district exploded in a parked car during the morning rush hour, killing 14 people including two policemen and wounding at least 57. A bomb later went off near a police patrol in the Zayona district, also in the east, killing eight people and injuring at least 17. The Shaab bomb went off as police were passing.

**Pray:** for the troubled land of Iraq and ask God to raise up peacemakers to work between the ethnic groups with His authority. (Matthew 5:9)

**More:** [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle\\_east/5340954.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/5340954.stm)

### ■ Millions face hunger in Afghanistan warns Christian Aid

Christian Aid has warned that millions of people are facing severe hunger in Afghanistan after parts of the country witnessed complete harvest failure. A field survey in 66 villages in the west and northwest of the country has revealed that in the worst affected areas, farmers have lost 100 per cent of their crops after a failure of the main rains last winter and spring. The assessment reported that children, pregnant women, landless families and the elderly are the groups most exposed to the threat of health problems in the face of the current food shortages. 'People are not dying of starvation yet, but it is very obvious that a great deal of help is needed or the situation will become very serious within a few months,' said Christian Aid's advocacy officer in Afghanistan.

**Pray:** for the voice of Christian Aid to be heard and acted upon, and for God to bring His lasting end to the war and degradation, so that His blessings can be poured out on Afghanistan. (aps.65)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/news/middle-east/millions.face.hunger.in.afghanistan.warns.christian.aid/496.htm>

### ■ Indonesia angry mob attacks church in Aceh

September 8 - A pastor and his wife living in Aceh province, Indonesia, have gone into hiding after a Muslim mob set fire to a church building following a revival service on September 1. Pastor Luther Saragih of an Indonesia Evangelical Mission Church, distributed letters to several villages in Aceh Singkil inviting Christians to a revival service. A Muslim resident somehow received a copy of the letter and edited it, making it appear that Muslims were invited to the service. He then distributed his own version of the letter to 3,000 Muslims. Consequently the church was burnt down and the Muslim leaders are still searching for the pastor and his family. It is uncertain when or if they will be free to return home. 'After this, we're afraid they might set fire to other churches' a local source said. 'We plead with Christians around the world to keep us in their prayers.'

**Pray:** for justice to replace injustice and for God's future for Indonesia to be established through those who hold power. (Jeremiah 29:11)

**More:** <http://www.compassdirect.org/en/display.php?page=breaking&lang=en&length=long&idelement=4530>

### ■ India - attacks against Christians rise in Karnataka

Hindu extremists have levied charges of 'forced' conversion and launched several attacks on Christians in the southern state of Karnataka. Two pastors in the coastal town of Akkiallur in Haveri district were arrested on September 3rd after a mob of about 150 people allegedly led by extremists of the Hindu Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) stormed a house church meeting. Superintendent of Police and his deputy said that the pastors were detained for their safety, despite there being no concrete evidence that they were forcibly converting either adults or minors. A hearing is scheduled for September

16. A local Christian requesting anonymity said there was an atmosphere of fear in the area after the incident, and that Christians in the state had noticed a recent increase in false accusations and violent attacks.

**Pray:** that all which is hidden will be revealed on Friday, and for Gods truth and justice to win through in this period of false accusations and violent attacks. (Ps.45:4)

**More:** <http://www.compassdirect.org/en/display.php?page=news&lang=en&length=long&idelement=4532&backpage=summaries>

#### ■ Eritrea - religious prisoner count tops 1,900

On September 8th newly compiled statistics smuggled out of Eritrea indicate that at least 1,918 Eritrean citizens are imprisoned and subjected to torture and forced labour because of their religious beliefs; 95 percent of these known religious prisoners of conscience are Christians. None of those imprisoned for their religious beliefs in the government crackdown, which began more than four years ago, have been brought before a court of law to be charged or tried.

**Pray:** for more resources to be available worldwide to inform and inspire the church to intercede about the global injustices. (2 Chronicles 7:14,15)

**More:** <http://www.compassdirect.org/en/display.php?page=news&lang=en&length=long&idelement=4529&backpage=summaries>

#### ■ Media controls for Chinese courts

China has announced tighter controls governing communication between court officials and the media. Special spokesmen would now release all information to journalists, and leaks from court officials would be punished. Officials would decide on releasing details of 'sensitive cases', including ones involving foreigners. Correspondents say the move comes as China tightens its already rigid control over the country's media. All important information will be released through 65 official spokesmen. But cases involving foreigners, national security, ethnic groups, religion and 'sensitive issues' would be examined before being released to the media. Those giving 'improper' news to the media would be punished, he said. According to Reporters without Borders 129 journalists are imprisoned around the world.

**Pray:** that the Lord would reveal all that is hidden in China's society, and He would open up China for His Spirit of Truth and Wisdom to flood in. Pray for an openness to reporting both good and bad news. Pray for the journalists who face many dangers worldwide. (Ps.24:7)

**More:** <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/5341268.stm>

## PRAISE REPORTS

#### ■ Massive call to prayer for London planned

Christian leaders are hoping to revive and transform the city of London into a city of God at a massive prayer event planned for next May. The plans for the Global Day of Prayer 2007 follow the success of a previous prayer initiative earlier in the summer which saw 1000 Christians gather at Westminster Chapel. And this time the vision is bigger as the leaders agreed yesterday to run towards the goal of filling up the entire West Ham Football Stadium with 35,000 prayer enthusiasts. A special day of planning drew leaders from across the denominational spectrum on Monday included representatives of Premier Radio, the African Caribbean Evangelical Alliance (ACEA), Faithworks, Glory House, and Youth With a Mission, to name a few; also significantly John Armitage, the Roman Catholic Vicar General of Brentwood Diocese. Pastor Jonathan Oloyede of Glory House, and one of the driving motors behind the 2007 initiative, said it was a 'very prophetic step' to see the different denominations and various ethnicities all coming together.

**Praise:** God for these plans and pray that many will answer the call here and across the nations and seek God for revival. (Heb 2:14)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/news/ministries/christians.to.revive.london.in.massive.prayer.effort/781.htm>

#### ■ Six Christians released from prison in Uzbekistan

Prayers have been answered for six Christian men who were arrested last month in Termez, Uzbekistan. (See Prayer Alert 3406) The men had been arrested around 24th August. Other Christians arrested at the same time had been beaten before they were released. Some of the women had been sexually abused. The six detained men were not told the reason for their arrest. Barnabas Fund received a report that they had been released after paying a fine of \$400 each. Church leaders were forced to borrow money in order to pay the fines and also to cover the cost of necessary medical treatment for their Christian brothers. It is believed that they were held longer in order to give the bruises and wounds they sustained from being beaten time to heal before they could have a medical examination. On their release two of the men were taken to hospital; one man had had his hands and feet held in buckets of quicklime, causing injury to his skin.

**Praise:** God for this answer to prayer. Continue to pray that Christians in Uzbekistan will be able to turn to the Lord in this time of trial and see it as an opportunity to grow in patience, endurance and deeper faith.

**More:** [http://www.barnabasfund.org/archivenews/article.php?ID\\_news\\_items=215](http://www.barnabasfund.org/archivenews/article.php?ID_news_items=215)

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