



PRAYER ALERT...



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BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Bob Geldof urged Gordon Brown to stump up £400m to help developing countries.

Appearing alongside the chancellor at the Labour conference, the ex-Boomtown Rats star said nations were falling behind on their aid pledges. He suggested the UK might need to fill the gap left when countries like Italy were unable to fulfil their promises. Mr Geldof also said President George Bush's plans to fight Aids by promoting fidelity were working in some areas. He admitted his comments would anger some of 'my lot' of aid campaigners who wanted the focus to be on using condoms. The chancellor joked that the Live Aid founder was both his 'mentor and tormentor'. Mr Geldof said, £110m had been spent on international development last year but the UK, like other nations, was 'falling behind'. The chancellor said 10 million children's lives could be saved through a new deal with the Gates Foundation on vaccinations in developing countries against diseases like tuberculosis.

Pray: for Christian values to be put in place when fighting worldly sin.

More: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/5384564.stm

■ Confront Muslim extremists

Extremist Muslim 'bullies' must be faced down, John Reid told the Labour conference in a speech which heightened speculation of a leadership bid. Mr Reid, recently heckled when he urged Muslim parents to guard against their children being radicalised, said: 'We will not be brow beaten by bullies.' The home secretary did not explicitly say he would challenge Gordon Brown for the right to succeed Tony Blair. But he made clear he was ready to take the tough decisions leaders have to. Mr Reid is seen as one of the very few heavyweight figures who might challenge the overwhelming favourite, Chancellor Gordon Brown, for the Labour leadership. He referred to that speculation by joking that he had not seen any reason to stand until ex-deputy leader Roy Hattersley said he would shoot himself if Gordon Brown became PM.

Pray: for God's mercy on our land and for Him to give us God fearing leaders who will re-establish England as a Christian country in every area.

More: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/5388112.stm

■ Clinton stresses faith, hope and clarity to Labour

President Clinton stressed values, with emphases on social hope and faith echoing Mr Brown's call for a 'soul' to politics. This point was noted by the Christian Socialist Movement, who said it was encouraging to hear senior progressive politicians acknowledge social vision as a cornerstone of governance, drawing both on religious sources as well as common values of justice and fairness shared by non-religious people. Mr Clinton said, 'You have produced prosperity and social progress for so long, it is easy for people to believe it's just part of the landscape. If you get a set of new faces in the driver's

seat, they wouldn't change what's working.' Bill Clinton is a Baptist. He was counselled by Christian minister Tony Campolo and others after the Monica Lewinsky sex scandal. Since retirement he has worked on AIDS awareness with Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and has focussed on global concerns and poverty.

Pray: for more Christian values to be implemented in government decisions. (Prov 21:1)

More: http://www.ekkleisia.co.uk/content/news_syndication/article_060928linton.shtml

■ Church agency praises government minister on climate issues

Often a tough critic of lack of government action on environment and development questions, the UK-based international relief and development charity, Christian Aid, warmly welcomed the speech by Environment Secretary David Milliband at the Labour party conference in Manchester. Christian Aid, which has recently reported that 180 million poor people could be at risk from climate-change induced diseases, said that Mr Milliband has shown a real grasp of the importance for the developing world of tackling climate change. 'It is absolutely right that Britain, which is a major emitter of dangerous greenhouse gases, has woken up to the fact that the atmosphere recognises no boundaries and that what we do in Britain can harm poor people, Mr Milliband's recognition that we all live on one planet is extremely welcome and we applaud the fact that he is now taking action on cutting UK carbon emissions as well as urging a Carbon Fund for Africa.'

Pray: for us to learn from our mistakes of bad husbandry and get back to caring for God's world. (Gen 1:27-31)

More: http://www.ekkleisia.co.uk/content/news_syndication/article_060928millib.shtml

■ Dull lessons fail to teach pupils how to be good citizens

Compulsory citizenship classes covering subjects such as the law, the electoral system, human rights and economics are unsatisfactory in a quarter of all secondary schools, often because teachers do not know what they are talking about, research suggests. A devastating report from the schools watchdog Ofsted has found that gaps in teachers' subject knowledge and an insecure grasp of what the lessons were supposed to achieve, led to dull or irrelevant classes that were counter-productive. The report called for more training of specialist teachers and gave warning that the subject citizenship often strayed into areas such as immigration or racial, religious and ethnic diversity, 'where little knowledge can be a dangerous thing'. The Department for Education said that 1,200 new citizenship teachers were being trained over the next two years.

Pray: that our children will be wisely prepared for adulthood by our education structures, and that time spent in the classroom will be in God's hands. (Ps.31:15)

More: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2-2378678,00.html>

■ Cult film linked to suicide of girl, 8

An eight-year-old girl hanged herself with a make-shift noose after watching a suicide scene in a cult film. Kyesha Freeman attached the noose to a curtain rail in her bedroom before tightening it around her neck. Her mother, who was eight months pregnant, discovered her body. Police recovered DVDs and videos in her bedroom which were rated 18. Among them was the film *Girl, Interrupted*. The 1999 movie is set in a 1960s psychiatric hospital. In a shocking sequence, one of the patients commits suicide by hanging herself. Police believe that Kyesha watched the film and may have been trying to imitate the disturbing scene. A lecturer in film studies from the University of Birmingham, said: 'Of course children should not be watching films with strong emotional content but we can't blame films for the violent behaviour of society and we certainly can't blame young children for misreading what they see.'

Pray: for our violent society that has become desensitised to obscene entertainment, and for the protection of our children's innocence. (Ps 10:12)

More: <http://www.mediawatchuk.org/newssnippets/September2006.htm>

EUROPE

■ Muslim leaders summoned to Pope's fourth 'apology'

In the most extraordinary initiative of his papacy to date, Benedict XVI yesterday called 22 ambassadors from Islamic countries to the Vatican and told them of his determination to relaunch the dialogue between Christians and Muslims. The meeting, carried live in its entirety by al-Jazeera as well as by Vatican television, was the Pope's latest attempt to draw a line under the fierce controversy that has raged since he quoted a Byzantine emperor describing Islam as 'evil and inhuman', and the Prophet Mohamed as favouring conversion by force. One Vatican expert conceded that the 'earthquake' caused by those slighting references had 'undoubtedly done damage to the Pope's image and his credibility in some parts of the Muslim world,' but said yesterday's speech 'will repair the damage and begin healing the wounds'.

Pray: that the Pope's response will lead to a cessation of the violence and pray that the radicals will not continue to dominate muslim opinion. (Ps 105: 4)

More: <http://news.independent.co.uk/europe/article1757281.ece>

■ Eight member states urge EU action on migration

The leaders of eight southern European states including France, Spain and Italy have raised the alarm over illegal immigration, sending a letter to the Finnish EU presidency pressing for 'strong mobilisation' at EU level. Paris, Rome and Madrid took the initiative for the letter, which was received by the office of Finnish prime minister Matti Vanhanen, on Monday evening (25 September). The move comes a few weeks before an informal EU leaders meeting in Lahti, Finland on 20 October, which is set to be dominated by the continuing migration crisis on the southern shores of the EU. 'The urgency

of the problem of illegal immigration in the Mediterranean and southern Europe requires a strong mobilisation from the European Union. The question must be tackled at a European level, notably in terms of financial aid and resource deployment.' The letter's signatories are likely to have a hard time convincing the rest of the EU to release more financial aid to help tackle the problem.

Pray: for the governments that they will face up to this problem with justice and wisdom. Pray for all those who are caught in the poverty trap. (Jas 1: 5)

More: <http://news.independent.co.uk/europe/article1757281.ece>

WORLDWIDE

■ Lutheran World Federation to establish an advisory group in 2007

A group of indigenous people from all over the world has urged the Lutheran World Federation to establish a programme to help uplift the lives of those often not accepted in 'mainstream' societies. A conference which ended on 24 September in Karasjok, welcomed participants from 20 different places throughout the world, including Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Namibia, Nepal, New Zealand, Philippines, Sweden and the United States. Three themes were chosen as the most important to be dealt with in the future: human rights and land rights; promoting networking among indigenous peoples; theological and ethical study and indigenous spirituality. The 27 participants called on the Lutheran World Federation to establish an advisory group in 2007, with a staff member based at its headquarters in Geneva and for the group to meet once a year.

Pray: for the freedom and recognition of the outcast minority Christian groups across the world. (Ps 133:1)

More: http://www.eklesia.co.uk/content/news_syndication/article_060928arctic.shtml

■ Middle East summit 'within days'

Israel's prime minister says he hopes to meet the Palestinian Authority president for a summit within days, but warned against expecting quick results. In a radio interview, Ehud Olmert said he was exerting great effort to start a dialogue with Mahmoud Abbas. 'The distance is long, we don't have to be hasty. How it will end, we shall see,' Mr Olmert said. It would be their first formal summit since Mr Olmert took over as Israeli leader from Ariel Sharon in January. Mr Olmert and Mr Abbas last met at an informal meeting in June. Days after the meeting, Israel launched a major military offensive in Gaza following the capture of an Israeli soldier by Palestinian militants.

Pray: for the restoration of an element of trust between these two leaders and their advisors, and for clear Godly communication without more disagreements. (Prov 17:14)

More: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/5387798.stm

■ US religious leaders meet President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

45 religious leaders from Christian and Muslim faith backgrounds met with the Iranian president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad on 20 September 2006, in an open discussion about the role religious communities can play in reversing the deepening crisis between Iran and the United States. This was the first face-to-face meeting between the Iranian leader and leaders from mainline Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox, evangelical and historic peace churches (Mennonites, Quakers and Brethren in Christ). Toward the end of the meeting, promises of further discussion and a possible visit to Iran by a religious delegation were agreed upon. 'Come in winter when the nights are long and we can spend many hours discussing things,' Ahmadinejad said. Ahmadinejad was told that in the Christian faith tradition God calls on believers to pray for all leaders and that the delegation would be praying for Ahmadinejad and US President George Bush. Ahmadinejad acknowledged the point and said he welcomed the group's prayers.

Pray: for Christian leaders to be used by God to bring about the salvation of president Ahmadinejad, and for God to use him in his purposes for Iran and the world. (Dan 6:25,26)

More: http://www.eklesia.co.uk/content/news_syndication/article_060927iranian.shtml

■ Cathedral and churches burned in Nigeria as angry Muslims riot in Dutse

Christians have again come under attack by angry Muslim mobs in Northern Nigeria. The rioting started following an allegation that a Christian woman had made insulting comments about Muhammad. On 19th September in Dutse, in the northern Nigerian state of Jigawa, a mob of Muslim youths set upon the Christian minority in the city. St. Peter's Anglican Cathedral was burnt to the ground and the Bishop's office destroyed. Initial reports speak of between 4 and 10 other churches as well as shops, vehicles and homes belonging to Christians having been set ablaze. There are believed to be 15 churches locally, so 10 amounts to two-thirds of all churches in the area. Several people were injured. Some reports say the state governor was attacked when he tried to calm the mob. The mob was only quelled when hundreds of heavily armed police belatedly began to patrol the city.

Pray: for God to protect His vulnerable church in these days of repetitive global persecution.

More: http://www.barnabasfund.org/archivenews/article.php?ID_news_items=225

■ Gunman kills girl in Colorado school siege

A gunman took six girls hostage at a high school in Colorado. After using them as human shields for hours he shot one of them and himself dead when the police SWAT team moved in. Hundreds of children were evacuated after the siege started. The girls were held in a second-floor classroom at Platte Canyon High School yesterday and four were released one by one. Authorities decided to enter the school to save the two remaining hostages after the man cut off negotiations.

and set a deadline. Authorities used explosives as they entered the classroom, but the man then shot at officers, before shooting one of the girls and then himself.

Pray: for protection of students and staff in American schools, and for the tightening up of the gun laws.

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2006/09/28/ucolorado.xml>

■ Eritrea Government orders protestant assets confiscated

physical assets to the government. The written confiscation order targets possessions of the Protestant church's relief department, which has for more than 20 years functioned as a legally recognized non-governmental organization (NGO) under the Eritrean Relief and Rehabilitation Commission. The demand was issued by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, which has been closing down NGO operations in Eritrea steadily for the past two years. But according to local Christians, this government ministry has no legal authority to issue and enforce such an order. The sweeping property confiscation would include all church buildings, schools, vehicles and other assets. They arrested all the church's administrators and staff, together with a few visitors present at the time. Officers also confiscated the church's computers, office equipment and files. Keys to the church offices have remained in the hands of the police ever since.

Pray: for the protection of all those involved, especially those mentioned on the computer files.

More: <http://www.compassdirect.org/en/display.php?page=news&lang=en&length=long&idelement=4547&backpage=summaries>

■ Convert from Islam to Christianity killed in Somalia

Manabolyo quarter of Mogadishu on 7 September 2006. Ali (22) was a cloth merchant and college student. It seems that under the new Islamist rulers, who include hard-line jihadi elements, the tragic history of persecution and martyrdom for Somalia's tiny Christian community is set to continue and most likely to worsen. The leader of the ICU, Hassan Dahir Aweys, promised to implement shari'a in all areas he controls. According to shari'a, apostates (those who leave Islam for another religion), must be killed. ICU leaders have even threatened to kill as apostates Muslims who are lax in their prayers, claiming this is commanded by shari'a. Over 99.5% of Somalis are Muslims and regard Christianity as a foreign religion. There is a long history of conflict between Muslim Somalis and Christian Ethiopians.

Pray: For the plans of men to be thwarted, and Gods purposes for Somalia to be implemented (Prov 19:21)

More: http://www.barnabasfund.org/archivenews/article.php?ID_news_items=218

PRAISE REPORTS

■ Care for the Family helps married couples get the most out of their union

Everyone dreams of the perfect wedding and the perfect marriage just like in the movies. But who really has these fairytale marriages? Care for the Family is answering just that question with a new course that will help not just long-time married couples but also newly weds get the most out of their matrimony. 'Most couples begin married life with a rose-tinted view that they'll live happily ever after, but making that dream a reality takes time, effort and commitment,' says Dianne Parsons, who will host Care for the Family's special evening for married couples. The 'It Takes Two' course will run in four cities across the UK this autumn and is intended for all married couples, whether they are just starting out or have celebrated several decades together. Dianne will share some of her insights into marriage which, despite being married to a 'relationships expert', is, she says, no easier for her than for anyone else. (See also Prayer Alert 3406)

Praise: God for this new resource and pray that it will help encourage couples in their relationships.

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/care.for.the.family.helps.married.couples.get.the.most.out.of.their.union/7793.htm>

■ Anti-gay leaflets charge dropped

A Christian campaigner has been cleared of using threatening words and behaviour when handing out leaflets at a gay and lesbian event in Cardiff. Stephen Green, 55, said he may take legal action after a court case against him was dropped for lack of evidence. Mr Green, from Carmarthen, is the national director of the evangelical lobby group Christian Voice. South Wales Police have insisted they were right to arrest Mr Green. Supporters of Mr Green shouted 'Hallelujah!' and clapped at Cardiff Magistrates Court as a legal adviser announced the Crown Prosecution Service's decision not to proceed with the case. (See Prayer Alert 3406)

Praise: God for answered prayers!

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/5388626.stm>

PRAYER ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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