

# PRAYER ALERT...

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

## Issue 3107

## Website

## Contact Us

## Donations

Friday 03 August 2007

### ■ British Isles & Ireland

- [FRIDAY FOCUS: Neighbours - Galatians 5:14 Philippians 2: 1-5](#)
- [Faith in the police - clergy on patrol](#)
- [Archbishop wants donations for flood victims](#)
- [Christian leaders praise Brown's commitment to poverty goals](#)
- [Concern is expressed about overstretch in the Army.](#)
- ['Use IVF to create more saviour siblings'](#)

### ■ Europe

- [Prague 'tourist trouble hotspot'](#)
- [Serbia sees hope for Kosovo deal](#)

### ■ Worldwide

- [Fifty nine on school bus survive Mississippi bridge plunge](#)
  - [Taliban threaten to kill more hostages](#)
  - [UN sends unprecedented Darfur peace force](#)
  - [World Food Programme issues urgent \\$118 Million appeal for Zimbabwe](#)
  - [Japan groups condemn 'attempted murder' of Okinawa protester](#)
  - [Nuns arrested for allegedly forcing non-Christian students to sing hymns](#)
  - [Saudi Arabia to attend Middle East conference](#)
  - [South Asia floods strand millions](#)
- ### ■ Praise Reports
- [British Army ends support operation in NI](#)
  - [Egyptian students' declaration of faith in Christ gets global attention](#)

## BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

### ■ **FRIDAY FOCUS: Neighbours - Galatians 5:14 Philippians 2: 1-5**

We can live next to someone, and work alongside others, but never really connect with them. **CONFESS:** the times when I don't take time to notice the needs of others. **PRAY:** for a deeper awareness of how God is at work in those around me; for a BLESSing for those who live/work near me; for specific opportunities to help in practical ways this week; for my flat/room/house/office space to become a 'place of hope' for my neighbours. **CONSIDER:** prayer-walking my street/workplace asking God to show me who to pray for.

**More:** <http://www.worldprayer.org.uk/pagesys.cfm?pid=123>

### ■ **Faith in the police - clergy on patrol**

Catholic and Protestant clergy are set to patrol the streets of Strabane in County Tyrone on Friday and Saturday nights with police officers to see the risks and difficulties they encounter. Faith in Policing, the first project of its kind in NI, hopes to develop an ongoing relationship working on community and policing concerns. Inspector Graham Dodd who developed the project said: 'We are hoping to make use of the existing good relations with the churches in Strabane, following a successful forum between the PSNI and churches in the Castlederg area, where there's been a dramatic drop in sectarian violence since Christmas, attributable in part to the tremendous effort between the police and the churches' The aim is to reduce crime on the streets of Strabane. The project will involve regular open meetings, the publication of e-newsletters sent for distribution to local congregations and the appointment of local clergy as volunteer police chaplains to their local stations.

**Pray:** for clergy and police patrolling their neighbourhood streets in Strabane and remember those affected by the violent flare up in Bangor on August 1st. (Jer.29:7)

**More:** [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern\\_ireland/6923873.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/6923873.stm)

### ■ **Archbishop wants donations for flood victims**

Dr John Sentamu, Archbishop of York, has launched a Disaster Relief Fund as a part of the (CUF) Church Urban Fund, to urgently help those devastated by the recent floods. He said: 'The fund will act through local churches, which are already operating as relief centres and help the neediest as they struggle with the basics before insurance and government monies kick in. Essentially this is about local people helping local people.' Reflecting on the need for both the CUF Fund and the ARC-Addington Fund, established two weeks ago, Dr Sentamu continued: 'Those hit hardest by these floods in town and country are those who had very little to begin with and are now left uninsured, washed out and wiped out.' The Church Urban Fund's chief executive, Fran Beckett, said: 'CUF has a strong 20 year track record of getting money to our poorest

communities. This is a fund operated through the Church but for people of all faiths and none.' (See Prayer Alert: 3007; 2907)

**Pray:** that many will know God's love through these neighbourly practical interventions by the Churches. (Lk.10: 27&36-37)

**More:** [http://www.theway.co.uk/news/shownews.php?news\\_id=3902](http://www.theway.co.uk/news/shownews.php?news_id=3902)

#### ■ **Christian leaders praise Brown's commitment to poverty goals**

Christian leaders reacted positively to Prime Minister Gordon Brown's United Nations address calling for renewed determination to meet the U N's Millennium Development Goals. Mr Brown spoke of a 'development emergency' in the face of sluggish progress in many countries towards fulfilling the MDGs to halve extreme poverty. He called for governments, big business, scientists, faith groups and NGOs to unite in a 'force for justice' to drive the MDGs to completion by the target date of 2015. Micah Challenge UK, a Christian coalition, applauded the Prime Minister's UN speech. Laura Webster, Senior Policy Advisor at Micah partner Tearfund, said it was inspiring to see Brown acknowledging the role of churches and faith based organisations. 'Churches fighting HIV and Aids and working tirelessly to reduce poverty at community level will welcome this leadership, but action at an international level is urgent because - Brown is right - lives, quite literally, hang in the balance.' (See Prayer Alert 22007)

**Pray:** giving thanks for Gordon Brown's challenge to the international community but pray for everyone's increased awareness of our global neighbours' needs. (Deut.15:3-6)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/christian.leaders.praise.browns.commitment.to.poverty.goals/11994.htm>

#### ■ **Concern is expressed about overstretch in the Army.**

The Armed Forces Christian Union has expressed concern about overstretch in the Army, and its ability to respond to unexpected operational demands. The Army is currently under-strength by 3,500 troops and with many disillusioned with being constantly on dangerous operations away from their families, there is difficulty filling the gaps on the front line. They request prayer that the Government is granted great wisdom in dealing with current military commitments in Iraq and Afghanistan and that our Armed Forces and other organisations will be effective in securing stable and free societies in these countries. To seek God that He would thwart the ways of the men of violence in these lands.

**Pray:** for troops' safety and continued strength, courage and professionalism. Remember also the families of those deployed. Uphold those who've lost loved ones in these conflicts and those who have endured life-changing injuries. (Ps.118:6-16)

#### ■ **'Use IVF to create more saviour siblings'**

A joint House of Commons and Lords committee this week called for 'sweeping changes' to the Government's draft Human Tissues and Embryos Bill, designed to replace existing laws on fertility treatment and embryo research. It proposed that parents be allowed to create 'saviour siblings' specifically to help treat family members suffering the kind of serious but non-fatal ailments like sickle cell anaemia and kidney disorders that affect millions. It could eventually lead to treating conditions such as autism. Currently the law only allows parents to use IVF procedures to select embryos providing a genetic match to older siblings with life-threatening diseases. Josephine Quintavalle, of Comment on Reproductive Ethics, said: 'This process is wrong because choosing one embryo means discarding the others, and creating that child is not for its own sake but for its cord blood stem cells.' Committee members also want the provision of IVF doctors to take into account a child's need to have a father, but in such a way that this refers to the need for two parents. (See Prayer Alert 2007)

**Pray:** for Christians to publicly defend God's design for humans as unique individuals in His image, when the Dept. of Health conducts its autumn review of these proposals. (Gen.1:27&28)

**More:** <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml;jsessionid=WKH5G4FDQMZKZQFIQMGCFFGAVCBQUIV0?xml=/news/2007/08/01/nivf101.xml>

## EUROPE

#### ■ **Prague 'tourist trouble hotspot'**

The 'massive influx of UK stag and hen parties to Prague has made the Czech Republic a hotspot for British travellers in trouble, figures suggest. A Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) report says Britons visiting the Czech Republic need a 'disproportionate' amount of consular assistance. More Britons get arrested, lose their passports or are taken to hospital in the country than some more popular places. More British tourists are taken to hospital in the Czech Republic than in Germany, which receives more than three times the number of Britons. The number of Britons who lose their passports in the Czech Republic is also higher than in Greece, even though Greece has three times as many British visitors, the British Behaviour Abroad Report says. Mike Johnson, an American who runs Patricia Tourist Office in Riga, told BBC Radio Five Live local people were not keen on some of the visitors and bad behaviour by some was affecting tourism.

**Pray:** that the excesses shown by some British visitors would cease and respect for the Czech people would prevail.

**More:** <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/6926569.stm>

#### ■ **Serbia sees hope for Kosovo deal**

Serbia's foreign minister has said he is convinced a compromise solution can be found to decide the future of the disputed province of Kosovo. In an exclusive BBC interview, Vuk Jeremic said Serbia was even ready to give up certain sovereign prerogatives. The province of Kosovo, currently part of Serbia, has been governed by the UN since the war ended in 1999. Mr Jeremic said it could be given 'the widest possible autonomy in the world' to meet Albanian independence demands. Kosovo's majority Albanian population wants independence from Serbia. A new round of talks is due to take place between

Belgrade and the Kosovo Albanian leadership after moves to introduce independence were blocked at the UN Security Council. Mr Jeremic acknowledged that there was still a large gap between the negotiating positions of Belgrade and of the Kosovo Albanian leadership but he said compromise was possible. A new round of talks is expected to begin soon, with representatives of the United States, Russia and the European Union presiding.

**Pray:** for the expected talks and that a resolution to the problems will be found. (Ps.133;1)

**More:** <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/6927080.stm>

## WORLDWIDE

### ■ Fifty nine on school bus survive Mississippi bridge plunge

Four people are confirmed dead and at least eight people are missing. Police had earlier said up to 30 were missing. Some 50 vehicles were hurled into the water when part of the I-35W bridge in Minneapolis, Minnesota, gave way during the rush hour on Wednesday evening. Local hospitals said they treated 79 people, mainly suffering from broken bones and head and spinal injuries. Janet Stately, of Minneapolis, was driving southbound on the bridge and says, 'It's like it went in slow motion. I heard the crack and I saw the cars going straight in. There was not a space between the cars.' Stately broke into tears thinking about a school bus with children. 'I kept screaming, There's kids on that bus!' she said. 'That bus is going to go in. I hope those kids are OK' According to officials, at least 50 children were led to safety with only minor injuries as the school bus clung to the side of a collapsed section over the river. Traffic had been 'bumper to bumper' at the time of the incident as only one lane was open in either direction on the eight-lane road owing to construction work on the arched bridge.

**Pray:** for the people and their families who did not survive this tragedy but thanks that the traffic had been restricted to one lane each way. (Ps.127:3)

**More:** <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/6927725.stm>

### ■ Taliban threaten to kill more hostages

The extremist group repeated that it was ready to kill more Korean members of the aid mission seized two weeks ago. Meanwhile, military helicopters dropped leaflets in the province, including the Qarabagh district where the South Koreans were captured, asking residents to leave ahead of a planned operation but officials denied this would be a bid to free the captives, saying it was a routine exercise. A top US official, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Christopher Hill, and Egypt's largest opposition group, the Muslim Brotherhood, joined international calls for the release of the Christians.

**Pray:** for appropriate pressure to be put on the Taliban to release the hostages. (Ps.25:19-21)

**More:** <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/2007/s07080008.htm>

### ■ UN sends unprecedented Darfur peace force

The UN Security Council agreed to send a hybrid force of 19,000 UN and African Union peacekeeping troops to stop four years of bloodshed that have claimed the lives of more than 200,000 people in Sudan, and driven millions from their homes. Ban Ki-Moon, the UN secretary-general, said the 'historic and unprecedented' Anglo-French resolution, the result of months of negotiation, would send 'a clear and powerful signal' of the UN's commitment to help the people of Darfur end 'a tragic chapter in Sudan's history'. The agreement came as the Prime Minister said he wanted the world to evoke the 'same spirit' that saw John F Kennedy call for the creation of a peace corps in the Sixties in order to forge a 'new coalition for justice'.

**Pray:** that all the countries involved in this move will continue to agree as theory is put into practice.(Ps.133:1)

**More:** [http://www.theway.co.uk/news/shownews.php?news\\_id=3909](http://www.theway.co.uk/news/shownews.php?news_id=3909)

### ■ World Food Programme issues urgent \$118 Million appeal for Zimbabwe

The United Nations World Food Programme on Wednesday issued an urgent appeal to international donors to come up with \$118 million so it can expand food assistance to Zimbabwe by more than tenfold to feed some 3.3 million people through early 2008. So far this year the WFP has raised US\$70 million from countries including the United States, Canada, the European Union, Japan and Ireland. WFP Southern African spokesman said that donations from countries and multilateral organizations are needed 'immediately' to stave off widespread hunger.

**Pray:** for a global response to this immediate need and for the Zimbabwe government to facilitate it. (Ps.126:5)

**More:** <http://www.voanews.com/english/Africa/Zimbabwe/2007-08-01-voa60.cfm>

### ■ Japan groups condemn 'attempted murder' of Okinawa protester

Two citizens' associations have condemned as a 'deliberate murder attempt' action taken by contract workers for a Japanese government agency against the co-leader of one of the groups. Apparently workers tampered with the underwater diving equipment of the Rev. Natsume Taira, a pastor of the United Church of Christ in Japan, who is also a member of the Citizens Coalition for Peace. The incident happened while he was engaged in a protest against work being carried out in connection with developments at a military base. 'One of the workers pinned me to the seabed, and then another worker closed the valve of my oxygen cylinder,' said Taira, who asserted that he choked and had difficulty breathing due to the alleged attack.

**Pray:** for God to protect this minority group of Christians in Japan. 1.56% of the population is Christian and growth rate is less than 0.1% pa. (Ps.36:10,11)

**More:** <http://eni.ch/featured/article.php?id=1082>

### ■ Nuns arrested for allegedly forcing non-Christian students to sing hymns

Two nuns in India's Mayurbhanj district were arrested on Saturday for allegedly making two non-Christian girls sing hymns in praise of Christ. The arrests were made after complaints from the students of a Catholic residential school who reported that they were compelled to sing hymns and participate in prayers against their will. The nuns were booked under Sections 323 (causing hurt) and 506 (criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code and Section 4 (forcibly attempting conversion) of the Orissa Freedom of Religion Act. After the arrests, Fr. Isaac of the Catholic Diocese in Balasore said the charges were 'cooked up'. The issue came to light after the students ran away from the school hostel.

**Pray:** for any ungodly hidden agendas to be revealed. (Ps.4:2,3)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/nuns.arrested.for.allegedly.forcing.nonchristian.students.to.sing.hymns/12017.htm>

### ■ Saudi Arabia to attend Middle East conference

Saudi Arabia said it would attend a Middle East peace conference called for September, which would see the regional Arab powerhouse sit at the same table as Israel. 'Should we get an invitation to attend the conference we will look at it very closely and very hard', Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal said at a joint news conference with US counterpart Condoleezza Rice, who will chair the planned international forum. Saudi Arabia welcomed US President George W Bush's call for the conference when it was made last month, saying the meeting should tackle the core issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

**Pray:** that many Arab countries will be present and agree a Godly way forward. (Is.30:18)

**More:** [http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=20070802\story\\_2-8-2007\\_pg4\\_2](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=20070802\story_2-8-2007_pg4_2)

### ■ South Asia floods strand millions

Millions of people across South Asia have spent another night stranded in flood waters. Almost 150 people have died and almost 20 million people have been displaced or marooned in severe flooding across India, Bangladesh and Nepal, the worst in living memory. It has been raining heavily in the region for 20 days and more rain is forecast.

**Pray:** for all those affected by the floods, remembering those in our own country too.

**More:** [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south\\_asia/6927389.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/6927389.stm)

## PRAISE REPORTS

### ■ British Army ends support operation in NI

The British army's operation in Northern Ireland came to an end at midnight Tuesday after 38 years. Operation Banner - the Army's support role for the police - had been its longest continuous campaign, with more than 300,000 personnel taking part. A garrison of 5,000 troops will remain but security will be entirely the responsibility of the police. British troops were sent to Northern Ireland in 1969 after violent clashes between Catholics and Protestants. When the first soldiers were deployed in August 1969, commanders believed they would be in Northern Ireland for just a few weeks. But the Army quickly became involved in what came to be known as Operation Banner. A total of 763 military personnel were killed during the campaign. At the height of the Troubles, there were about 27,000 soldiers in Northern Ireland. In future, soldiers based in Northern Ireland will be involved in training and will be available for deployment in foreign trouble spots, not on local streets.

**Praise:** God for this historical moment and pray that the people of NI will learn to forget the pain of this period. (Dan.9:9-10)

**More:** [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern\\_ireland/6925263.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/6925263.stm)

### ■ Egyptian students' declaration of faith in Christ gets global attention

Egyptian schoolboys, Mario Medhat Ramses and Andrew Medhat Ramses, face a future without educational opportunities even though they had been classified as 'brilliant' students at the French Lycee school of Alexandria. Why? Because when they were ordered to take a school test that would result in their conversion to Islam, they wrote, 'I am Christian.' Sam Grace, a spokesman for Coptic News said 'what brought the case to the public's attention was the youngsters stating, they will not deny their Christianity and convert to Islam no matter what it would cost them,' The boys are serving as deacons in their Christian church, and have gone on Egyptian talk programmes to express their dedication to Christianity. 'Egyptian Coptic Christian people are praying and pleading with the conscience of all the human rights organizations, governments and public opinions of all the civilized world to contact the Egyptian embassies and demand that the Egyptian government stop torturing this family for their faith,' he added.

**Praise:** God for the testimony and faith of these youngsters and join those praying that the Egyptian government would recognise human rights conventions. (Pr.2:7-8)

**More:** [http://www.breakingchristiannews.com/articles/display\\_art.html?ID=4267](http://www.breakingchristiannews.com/articles/display_art.html?ID=4267)

## 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