



PRAYER ALERT...



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BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ **FRIDAY FOCUS - UN International Youth Day - Psalm 144:12,15; Joel 2:28-29**

By UN definitions youth are between the ages of 15 and 24.

Give thanks: for all Christian ministries and organisations serving this generation, particularly those hosting Christian events this summer.

Pray: that many will put their trust in Jesus; that those who are Christian would be empowered to stand up for Christian values in their schools, universities and workplaces; that God's intention for this generation will come into being; for the Hope 2008 Youth Revolution to grow.

Consider: how could I get involved in serving this generation?

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

■ **Churches offer support to foot-and-mouth farming communities**

Local clergy and rural chaplains, working with the Farm Crisis Network, are providing pastoral care and support to farmers directly affected by the Protection and Surveillance Zones set up in Surrey following the local outbreak of foot and mouth disease. The Arthur Rank Centre, a partnership between the Royal Agricultural Society of England, the national churches and the Rank Foundation, the churches rural resources unit is providing back up and help as needed. The Rt Rev Christopher Hill, the Anglican Bishop of Guildford, in whose diocese the outbreak was reported, commented: 'My thoughts and prayers are with the farmers and all involved in investigating and containing this outbreak both locally and at a wider level.' The restrictions were lifted at midnight for farmers outside the county's surveillance zone. Farmers welcomed the 'first step' on the way to restoring normality. Meanwhile, test results on animal carcasses culled on a third farm, next to the second farm already affected, may not be available until today.

Pray: for all those caught up in this outbreak. For the farmers, the authorities and the helpers, that their work will result in a speedy resolution.

More: <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/5541>

■ **Call for black role models scheme**

Black boys need positive role models from within their own communities to tackle underachievement, a report says. The Reach panel of experts, from fields including education and business, says too often role models for young black men include rappers who glamorise guns. The report says the problem could cost the UK £24bn over the next 50 years, in terms of lost taxes, criminal justice and healthcare costs. It was commissioned by the Department for Communities and Local Government. The group wants a national programme to encourage lawyers, doctors, teachers and others to become mentors. The report also calls for stronger relationships between schools and the parents of black boys and urges inspection body Ofsted to make sure all schools strive to close the academic gap between black and white pupils. And it

recommends the formation of a national umbrella organisation to bring together relevant voluntary groups which face 'significant barriers' to getting funding from the government.

Pray: that the Church and Christian parents will take a lead as role models and mentors to the young. (Eph.5:1)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/6938012.stm>

■ Children told to copy from Muslim Call to Prayer - to practise their handwriting

The Call to Prayer copied by ten-year-olds at Newlands Primary School in Wakefield, West Yorkshire, included the lines 'Allah is the greatest' and 'there is no god but Allah'. Angry parent Hayley Clayton said: 'The explanation was that the children were learning about Islam in RE'. She added 'This was like taking an oath. A Muslim child would never be asked to write a Bible passage so why didn't they choose a passage from a normal story book to teach handwriting?' Mrs Green, the Deputy Head acknowledged that it was a 'sensitive issue'. 'If it's sensitive, why choose that prayer?' Mrs Clayton asked. The child's father Martin said 'There were no Muslims in the class. I'm not religious but it offended me. It must have been worse for children whose parents do have different beliefs.' Wakefield Council officials said they believed the prayer had been written for a Religious Education lesson. Source: The Daily Mail.

Pray: for wisdom and sensitivity for our teachers and pray against any religious kickbacks that may occur. (Ex.20:3-7)

More: <http://mychristianblood.blogspot.com/archive/2007/08/06/children-told-to-copy-lines-from-muslim-call-to-prayer-to-pr.html#more>

■ Human Tissue and Embryo Bill plans attacked

Lord Alton of Liverpool has condemned the Joint Committee's report on the controversial Draft Human Tissue and Embryos Bill as 'missing the point'. The draft bill, which was published this week, is currently being scrutinised in Parliament but is expected to feature in the Queen's Speech come November. Although Lord Alton agreed that the Committee had made 'some important recommendations', particularly in relation to fatherless IVF children, he said the crux of the issue had not been addressed. 'The Committee has dodged the central issue,' he said. 'In failing to consider fully the status of the human embryo, they have ignored what remains the most potent reason for opposing the continued destruction and manipulation of vast numbers of embryos'. He added: 'To plunder it, manipulate it, destroy and discard it and for the Government now to propose to infuse it with animal cells illustrates a total disregard for the special status and respect which should be accorded to the human embryo.'

Pray: even now as the parliament scrutinises this bill that our government will reconsider. (Ps.139:13-16)

More: <http://www.religiousintelligence.co.uk/news/?NewsID=919>

■ Irish GAA player quitting over 'abuse'

A County Fermanagh Gaelic Athletic Association player has said he is leaving the sport over persistent sectarian abuse from rival club teams. Darren Graham, 25, has represented the county in Gaelic football and hurling. He was a baby when his father, who was in the UDR, was killed by the IRA. Mr Graham, a Protestant, said while his Lisnaskea team-mates were not involved, the GAA must look at the problem. A spokesperson for the Fermanagh county board said harassment would not be tolerated, but it must be reported. Mr Graham said: 'I couldn't take any more. Something has to be done to get it out of the sport.' The GAA spokesperson said: 'Abuse of any players, officials or referees is not acceptable and all official reports of it will be dealt with seriously.' See link to video interview with Daren:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/player/nol/newsid_6920000/newsid_6926800/6926823.stm?bw=bb&mp=rm&news=1

Pray: for all signs of sectarianism to be eliminated from sport and all sectors of society. (Rom.15:5)

More: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/6925977.stm

EUROPE

■ Huge cross marks Stalin purges

A giant cross commemorating the victims of Stalinist purges in the 1930s has been erected at a ceremony near Moscow. The wooden cross was placed in Butovo, at the site of a former execution ground. At least 20,000 people were killed there by Stalin's secret police, the NKVD. The first killings occurred exactly 70 years ago. Hundreds of people attended the ceremony south of the capital. Events marking the 70th anniversary of Stalin's drive to purge opponents of his regime have been held throughout Russia. The relatively small-scale ceremonies have been organised by religious or human rights groups rather than the government. The cross was constructed at the Solovetsky Monastery in northern Russia, which was itself turned into a notorious prison camp during the purges. Seventy years after what is known as 'the great purge', only a few thousand survivors remain. Human rights groups say they have never been properly compensated and most struggle to get by on a small state pension.

Pray: that as this cross is raised it will be a continuing reminder that such acts (such as those of Stalin) do not bring success.

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/6936478.stm>

■ Bishop of London to lead major ecumenical gathering

The Bishop of London will lead the Church of England delegation for the Third European Ecumenical Assembly. Sibiu, Romania, will host some 2000 delegates from churches across Europe to share their vision and hopes for renewal and unity in Europe. Bishop Richard Chartres said: 'The Assembly, which embraces every strand of Europe's Christian community, met first in Basle at the end of the 80s when the Berlin Wall was breached. At the end of the 90s, with armed conflict in the

Balkans, the Assembly met for a second time in Graz, Austria. Now, for the first time, the venue is in a predominantly Orthodox country and one that has recently joined the EU. The theme will inevitably be the moral and spiritual direction of travel for Europe and the role which Europe's Christian Churches intend to play in the future.' European identity, other faiths, migration, creation, justice and peace will be on the agenda, alongside questions of unity, spirituality and witness.

Pray: for all those attending that they will listen to what the Lord is saying to the Church. (Rev.2:7)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/bishop.of.london.to.lead.major.ecumenical.gathering/12141.htm>

WORLDWIDE

■ Koreans announce historic summit

Leaders from North and South Korea are to hold their second ever summit, officials have announced. President Roh Moo-hyun will meet North Korea's Kim Jong-il in the North's capital, Pyongyang, from 28-30 August. The summit comes amid an improvement in North Korea's ties with the outside world, and has been warmly welcomed by the international community. But South Korea's main opposition party rejected the move as an election stunt ahead of December's presidential polls. The new summit comes seven years after the first one, when Mr Kim met with the then South Korean President Kim Dae-jung. That meeting ushered in improved ties and reconciliation between the two sides, which remain technically at war. The new summit was finally agreed after senior South Korean intelligence personnel made two trips to the North, officials said. The two Koreas have agreed to formalise an agenda at preparatory meetings in the border city of Kaesong, where they jointly run an industrial park.

Pray: that this proposed meeting will bring about a meeting of minds that will lead to reconciliation and peace. (Ps.133:1)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/6936158.stm>

■ Afghanistan peace jirga under way

A three-day 'peace jirga' or tribal council on combating the Taliban has begun in the Afghan capital, Kabul. Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, who was to attend, has pulled out citing other commitments. But Afghan leader Hamid Karzai was upbeat as he opened the jirga, saying it brought together 'brother nations'. Up to 700 tribal elders, clerics and leaders of both countries have been invited - but not the Taliban, who have called for a boycott. Tribal elders from Pakistan's North and South Waziristan also refused to come. Pakistani and Afghan tribal leaders gathered in the huge tent where the meeting is taking place. Mr Karzai told them: 'We are very proud today that this peace jirga has brought two countries, two brothers, two close neighbours together. There is no doubt this jirga will be successful,' he said. Gen Musharraf has sent Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz in his place and assured Mr Karzai his 'full support' towards making the jirga a success, according to Pakistan's foreign ministry.

Pray: for this peace jirga that God will move in the hearts of those attending that will bring about the hoped for success.(Ps.133:1)

More: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/6938033.stm

■ Christian vote may be decisive in Australian election

For Jim Wallace, a former Special Air Service soldier who has seen action in Southern Lebanon and Rwanda, the problem with Australian politics is its lack of faith. 'We've heard about climate change, the economy and work laws. It's time to get religion back on the agenda,' said Wallace, managing director of the Australian Christian Lobby. Liberal Prime Minister John Howard and main opposition Labour leader Kevin Rudd are listening. At a Christian rally in Canberra today (Thursday) they outlined their religious views and policies, with their comments broadcast live over the Internet to 1,400 churches around the country. Wallace's group, which organized the event, estimated an audience of 200,000. 'I don't know of any lobby that could gather these two leaders in the same place,' said John Warhurst, a professor specializing in political interest groups at Australian National University in Canberra. 'It's a sign religion is back in the political arena, and the Christian vote could be a deciding factor.'

Pray: for Christians across Australia that they will use their votes wisely.

More: <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601081&sid=aQSVFVAVfI&refer=australia>

■ Laos: Hmong Christians killed, imprisoned in crackdown

Soldiers, police and others have killed at least 13 Christians in Laos in the past month in a crackdown on Hmong villagers falsely accused of stirring rebel dissent. In the sweep, encouraged by communist village leaders and others who have falsely accused the Christians of being separatist rebels, authorities have arrested and imprisoned about 200 members of a 1,900-strong Laos Evangelical Church in Ban Sai Jarern village, Bokeo province in north-western Laos. The hunted Christians are largely Hmong refugees who had fled persecution in Vietnam. Those killed include Hmong who went into hiding when joint forces of Vietnamese and Lao police began rounding up Christians falsely accused of supporting Gen. Vang Pao in August 2006. Police have searched intensively for Christians in rice fields and mountains and are shooting them on sight, said the source, who requested anonymity. 'Many Christians were killed and badly injured,' he said. 'Women and children were arrested and sent to prison.'

Pray: for peace for Christians in Laos in the midst of this violence and that believers will be able to stand firm in their faith, despite the difficulties they face. (1Pet.5:9)

More: <http://www.legram.blogspot.com/>

■ Plea for Lebanese Christian unity

Amin Gemayel, Lebanon's former president, has called for unity among the country's Christian population, after his narrow defeat in a parliamentary by-election by another Christian candidate. Sunday's vote was seen as an indicator as to which way the country's divided Christian community will vote in September's presidential election. Gemayel said: 'These elections have shown that the solution to the Lebanese crisis is found in respect for institutions. This is why I am calling for reconciliation between Christians - so that presidential commitments can be respected.' Official results showed Camille Khoury, who represented Christian opposition leader Michel Aoun, defeated Gemayel, who was backed by the ruling Western-backed coalition by, 418 votes. Gemayel is expected to stand in next month's presidential election against Aoun, who has already declared his candidacy. Gemayel said: 'The elections are over. It is time to lick our wounds and strengthen the Christian participation in the power and destiny of the country. Without this, Lebanon cannot survive'.

Pray: for the believers in Lebanon that they will work together in unity. (Eph.4:16)

More: <http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/260EDC61-A49F-4459-B921-077C8BC61301.htm>

■ Health a 'silent catastrophe' in the Pacific

Pacific nations face huge health issues, according to a new report from the Churches' Agency on International Issues. Endemic diseases like malaria are getting worse rather than better, with tuberculosis still killing 2,700 people in Papua New Guinea in one year alone. Now HIV and AIDS, already of epidemic proportions in Papua New Guinea, are threatening to spread through the rest of the Pacific. Non-communicable diseases, such as diabetes, cancer, cardio-vascular disease and obesity will soon pose as much problem as communicable ones. A consultation in Nadi, Fiji, brought together 36 church representatives to work out a Pacific response to HIV and AIDS. At the end of their consultation, the participants put together a statement, the Nadi Declaration. The declaration promoted the urgent establishment of a network of resource people around the Pacific; information and education through churches, schools, media and other gatherings; a call for church budgets to accommodate social and development issues; congregations actively engaging with HIV positive people.

Pray: that the joint declaration will bring about the necessary responses from the Church and governments.

More: <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/2007/s07080063.htm>

PRaise REPORTS

■ Woman survives over 60 foot drop in bridge collapse

'When I said 'Jesus' I felt like He took over and took care of me. All I can say is 'praise God' because He spared me to walk away from that. I can't even believe it happened, but I actually walked away.' Lois Welman, a Minnesota resident, was one of those commuters driving over the bridge, last Wednesday, when it suddenly collapsed without warning, tossing cars into the Mississippi River, crushing and pinning others. (See Prayer Alert 3107) Lois not only survived the horrific ordeal of falling over 60 feet in her car, but when she called on Jesus she experienced peace in the midst of the turmoil. She added: And later my daughter-in-law told me her friend was driving through there the day before, and felt compelled to pray for that area. She was just impressed to be praying over that place. And then my friend from Ohio told me, in the last few weeks she'd been praying for me a lot. I thought, 'Wow, praise God for all the prayers.'

Praise: God that He does answer our prayers.

More: <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/2007/s07080063.htm>

■ Chinese House Churches praying for Beijing Olympics

One year before China hosts the Olympics in Beijing, Chinese persecution watchdog China Aid Association (CAA) has launched a prayer campaign to minimise the blow of a predicted increase in persecution against Christians around the time of the Games. CAA President the Rev Bob Fu has sent out a call to Chinese Christians and supporters around the world to pray for the success of the event. 'Knowing there will be the unavoidable persecution by Chinese officials, the Chinese house church believers felt led to render intercessory prayers for more global love and peace, via launching continual mass media prayer networks for the Olympics event, as a cornerstone of reinforcing a united and true patriotic spirit,' he said. One consultant working for Beijing's Olympics organising committee, who requested anonymity, told Associated Press news agency last month that 'demonstrations of all kinds are a concern' and that the Chinese Government is 'trying to find out what kinds of NGOs will come and what are there plans?'

Praise: God for this initiative and that persecution will be minimised in answer to their prayers. (Mt.5:44)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/chinese.house.churches.praying.for.beijing.olympics/12135.htm>

PRAYER ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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