



PRAYER ALERT...



An initiative of the Prayer Association of the British Isles & Ireland

www.prayer-alert.net

editor@prayer-alert.net

Issue 3407

Website

Contact Us

Donations

Friday 24 August 2007

■ British Isles & Ireland

- [**FRIDAY FOCUS: 24th August – Friends.**](#)
[John 15:12-17; Matthew 7:7-8](#)
- [Archbishop spends Sunday night with clubbers](#)
- [Smith plan to 'nip crime in bud'](#)
- [Greater help and awareness needed for pensioners](#)
- [Christians take stand against university](#)
- [London Stock Exchange companies complicit in Sudan genocide say campaigners](#)
- [Foreign policy link to extremism](#)

■ Europe

- [Iraq rejects France's forum offer](#)

■ Worldwide

- [Traffickers in Nepal exploit underage girls](#)
- [Indefinite curfew in Bangladesh after student riots](#)
- [Sudan floods](#)
- [Power shortages in Gaza threaten sewage treatment](#)
- [North American leaders dismiss fears of 'superhighway'](#)
- [Protest march in Argentina south](#)
- [Junta breaks up rare Burma rally](#)

■ Praise Reports

- [Tens of thousands convert to Christ in Algeria](#)
- [First-ever interactive online video courses in Chinese](#)

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ **FRIDAY FOCUS: 24th August – Friends. John 15:12-17; Matthew 7:7-8**

A friend is a person you know well and regard with affection and trust. Amazingly, Jesus calls us 'His friends'.

Give thanks: for Jesus' friendship and for friends who have helped me on my Christian journey.

Pray: for the time to care for and respect the friends God has given me; for more opportunities to spend time sharing about faith issues; for Jesus to reveal Himself to those I know who are searching for faith.

Consider: starting a prayer triplet, by meeting with 2 friends, to pray for all your not-yet-Christian friends.

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

■ **Archbishop spends Sunday night with clubbers**

The Archbishop of Wales, Dr Barry Morgan, spent his Sunday night debating religion with young people in a Cardiff nightclub. The nightclub discussion is held every month in either Dempsey's or Clwb Ifor Bach as a modern response to Christianity. Dr Morgan was invited to join the debate by Solace the 'church in a bar' to talk to clubbers at Dempsey's. Some 50 people attended the question and answer session called 'Is Religion Bad?' Dr Morgan commented that some of the best debates young people have are at nightclubs. He saw Solace offering a great alternative for those looking to combine a fun night out with stimulating chat in a responsible but relaxing atmosphere. 'It's very good if the church can reach out to people who've been untouched by ordinary outreach.' Dr Morgan said that the debaters included confirmed believers, some people from the church fringes, some professed atheists and some people from the pub downstairs.

Pray: for young Christians to reach out in friendship to their own generation which is thirsty for God. (Rom.10:14-16)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/archbishop.spends.sunday.night.with.clubbers/12540.htm>

■ **Smith plan to 'nip crime in bud'**

Home Secretary Jacqui Smith has unveiled plans to combat low-level anti-social behaviour before it turns into more serious crime. The number of 'acceptable behaviour contracts' (ABCs) would be increased to up to four times the 25,000 currently in place. ABCs are pledges made by individuals to the police and local services to stop misbehaving. Ms Smith also said government was investigating the link between cheap alcohol and anti-social behaviour. The home secretary added: 'We need to stop young people from getting hold of drink.' Ms Smith would encourage local authorities to use more ABC's, in which individuals acknowledge that their behaviour is negatively impacting a community and may pledge to complete positive activities such as attending school or drug misuse support groups. Chief Constable Mike Goodwin - the Association of Chief Police Officers' lead member on anti-social behaviour - said: 'In many cases where ABCs have been issued, offending will stop without recourse to legal remedies. This is great news for communities blighted by inconsiderate behaviour.' (See Prayer Alert: 3307. 2907)

Pray: for the success of these measures to curb anti-social behaviour and under-age drinking, and for Churches to raise their commitment to youth programmes in their communities. (Ps.144:12)

More: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/6959695.stm

■ Greater help and awareness needed for pensioners

One in five pensioners are becoming prisoners in their own homes, according to Help The Aged. It claims that more than a quarter of elderly people are unable to do everyday jobs. The government is being urged to finance a network of handymen to help pensioners stay independent. Joe Oldman from Help the Aged said what's needed is help with things like putting up shelves; moving furniture; fitting smoke alarms or security measures. The North East are leading the way, with Derwentside Council launching a free handy man scheme this week. Linda Blackburn from Consett looks after her elderly mother who has senile dementia, and welcomes the scheme: 'The handyman comes round and does little jobs for you for nothing. You just supply the material.' But not every council offers such a scheme, and Help the Aged wants to see similar initiatives developed nation wide, believing that such schemes will avert a potential housing crisis for future generations. (See Prayer Alert:2407)

Pray: that UK churches support this handyman scheme and also bring their own practical and Christ-like friendship to elderly 'shut-ins'. (Lk.19:29-37)

More: <http://www.premier.org.uk/engine.cfm?i=13&pwn=1&pnid=3356>

■ Christians take stand against university

Exeter Christian Union is appealing to the High Court to overturn a ruling requiring it to admit non-Christians. Former Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Carey, said: 'This ruling opens the way for a Muslim to head up an Anglican Society or a member of the BNP to chair the Labour club.' His successor, Dr Rowan Williams, has criticised the 'suppression' of Christian groups on campuses. In 2006 the 350-strong Union was told it could lose its status unless it drops its requirement for members to declare their faith in Jesus because this meant the society excluded many students. The University appointed Mark Shaw QC to produce an independent adjudication which earlier this month criticised the union for restricting its membership to Christians, even though its meetings are open to all. The Christian Union will now instruct Paul Diamond, the lawyer who represented Nadia Eweida in her dispute with British Airways over her right to wear a cross. (See Prayer Alert: 0107)

Pray: that this erosion of Christian students' freedom to practice their religion because of discriminatory equal opportunities policies would be reversed. (Jas.4:4)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2007/08/20/nchrist120.xml>

■ London Stock Exchange companies complicit in Sudan genocide say campaigners

Sudan Divestment UK has revealed a significant number of companies listed on the London Stock Exchange (LSE) with close financial links to the Government of Sudan, despite widespread condemnation of Khartoum's role in the Darfur genocide of an estimated 400,000 people since 2003. Hamish Falconer, Director of Sudan Divestment UK (SDUK), said: 'Companies must not serve as insulation for Khartoum against the will of the international community.' World Bank reports from within Sudan indicate that as much as 60% of the country's oil revenue (substantially supported by LSE companies) has been funnelled into military expenditure and expanding the air force which has targeted Darfur. Many British investors, particularly those with tracker funds, are unaware of how specifically their funds are invested. By identifying companies helping to fund the genocide SDUK believes it's enabling investors to make informed choices. Such companies listed on the London Stock Exchange include: Petrochina, Sinopec Corporation, Reliance Industries, Petrofac Alstom and Weir Group.

Pray: for investors to ethically rechannel their monies and companies to renounce their ungodly profits (1Tim.6:9-10)

More: <http://www.ekkleisia.co.uk/node/5588>

■ Foreign policy link to extremism

Researchers questioned 31 mosque leaders and found that almost half of them thought extremist behaviour existed in Scotland. Many cited the UK Government's foreign policy as the reason. Lack of parental guidance and the misinterpretation of Islam were also given as factors. The study, by the Council of British Pakistanis (CBP) in Scotland, was compiled as part of a Scottish Executive project. It aims to combat radicalisation, extremism and terrorism within the Muslim community. Encouragingly, the survey of head imams and their representatives found two thirds believed the relationship between Islam and the West would get better over the next 10 years. Two thirds also said they felt the executive's work with Muslim communities was 'adequate' but all those questioned said it and the Westminster government should do more to support them in combating terrorism. They called for help to set up an Islamic training college in Scotland, which most felt would prevent extremist behaviour. (See Prayer Alert: 1407 & 2707)

Pray: for wisdom in all groups seeking to combat extremism and for transparency in the ideals of any proposed Islamic training college. (Heb. 4:12-13)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/6956699.stm>

EUROPE

■ Iraq rejects France's forum offer

During a three-day visit to Baghdad that ended Tuesday, the French foreign minister, Bernard Kouchner, said it's time for France, and Europe, to play a greater role in Iraq. His suggestion of holding an international conference on Iraq was 'one among many'. However Iraqi President Jalal Talabani has rejected the proposal to hold a conference to try to reconcile the country's rival factions. Mr Talabani said 'In Iraq, we speak to each other and we meet each other every day. Each community participates in the dialogue. We will find a way out without a conference,' he said. Mr Talabani also insisted that 'there is no Sunni-Shia war in Iraq', despite daily attacks in the country. His comments come as the Iraqi coalition government is facing a growing crisis after the walk-outs by a number of political blocs, including the main Sunni group.

Pray: for President Talabani as he tries to lead this troubled nation back to peace that this apparent denial will not harm the peace process.(Ps.34:14-16)

More: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/6958850.stm

WORLDWIDE

■ Traffickers in Nepal exploit underage girls

In the last week alone around 15 girls, underage with fake passports, and not knowing where they were travelling to were intercepted. NGOs are raising awareness of the dangers of trafficking but hundreds of girls still get trafficked to India every year where they are forced into prostitution. Young Nepalese girls are sold at a high price to brothel owners. One of the most notorious brothel owners was released a few years ago due to her political connections, which proved that traffickers get political protection. Girls are being warned not to be taken in by false promises of a job abroad, but many are not heeding the warning. Anti girl-trafficking activists have asked local police to be on the lookout for young underage girls leaving the country.

Pray: that trafficking will stop here and around the world.(Ex.6:6)

More: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=73852>

■ Indefinite curfew in Bangladesh after student riots

The army-backed interim government clamped an indefinite curfew on Dhaka and five other divisional headquarters with effect from 8 p.m. Wednesday night amid escalating student rioting across Bangladesh, and a breakdown of the law and order in the country. The interim regime also shut down all the universities and colleges amid a fast spreading violent student protest across the country that started when students objected to police presence at a soccer match. All eight television channels stopped showing footage of the violence because it might instigate further violence, and mobile telephone networks went down after the curfew came into effect. There was no official comment concerning the disruption of the six cell phone operators serving around 20 million users.

Pray: that the interim military regime will find a way forward without further violence.(Ps.140:12,13)

More: <http://www.arabnews.com/?page=4§ion=0&article=100309&d=23&m=8&y=2007>

■ Sudan floods

About 89 people are already dead in Sudan flooding and the spread of waterborne disease. A cholera outbreak in eastern Sudan, which has spread due to devastating floods, has killed 49 people and affected some 710 others. Last year, a cholera outbreak throughout Sudan killed 700 people and affected 25,000. It was the first time in many years the water-borne disease had been reported in Africa's largest country. Sudanese officials say this year's floods are the worst in living memory with unexpectedly early rains destroying more than 70,000 homes. The floods have affected hundreds of thousands of people across a dozen states in Africa's largest country and many do not have adequate access to food aid.

Pray: for God to end the disease outbreak and transform devastated homes and lands

More: <http://www.smh.com.au/news/World/Sudan-floods-death-toll-reaches-89/2007/08/22/1187462356246.html>

■ Power shortages in Gaza threaten sewage treatment

If power and fuel shortages continue, a major sewage treatment plant in the Gaza Strip will be unable to operate, causing public health risks, an official said. 'Without electricity, we will face an environmental and humanitarian disaster with sewage flowing onto the streets. There is only a few days fuel for generators that power sewage treatment. Power shortages worsened on August 16th when security concerns caused Israel to close Nahal Oz crossing for fuel supplies. In addition the European Commission announced a decision to stop funding fuel for the city's power plant on 19 August, even though Israel had agreed to reopen the crossing. Also, medical trade unions have called for partial strikes this week, protesting against personnel changes made by Hamas, and the use of force against protesters some weeks ago.

Pray: that hospitals, drinking water and sanitation will not be affected by the latest crisis in Gaza.(Ps.25:22)

More: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=73840>

■ North American leaders dismiss fears of 'superhighway'

Two years ago, President Bush and the Canadian and Mexican leaders agreed to establish the Security and Prosperity Partnership, a framework for cooperation on economic matters and shared security concerns. Talks this week between Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, Mexican President Felipe Calderon, and President Bush firmed up this partnership. The talks covered border security, economic competitiveness, product safety, environment, energy, sovereignty claims over the Arctic, peacekeeping in Afghanistan, and global health issues. The meetings have drawn increasing concern from critics, fuelled by speculation that it is masking plans to open U.S. borders and create an entity similar to the

European Union at the cost of U.S. sovereignty; fearing the creation of a North American Free Trade Agreement 'superhighway' from Mexico to Canada as a gateway into the U.S. market. President Bush said the complaints were speculation.

Pray: that this trade agreement will not work against Gods purposes for these countries.(Ps.24:1,2)

More: <http://www1.pressdemocrat.com/article/20070822/NEWS/708220354/1033/NEWS01>

■ Protest march in Argentina south

Thousands of people have marched against the government in the southern Argentinian city of Rio Gallegos, representing several different sectors of society and led by a local Roman Catholic bishop Juan Carlos Romanin, who is emerging as their new leader. Thousands of striking teachers, trade unionists, opposition parties and ordinary citizens marched in the provincial capital, Rio Gallegos, calling for higher wages the demilitarisation of the province and withdrawal of state police. They also want a former aide to president to be prosecuted after he crashed his car into demonstrators at the weekend. Five people are still in hospital after that incident. The local police chief, appointed by President Kirchner while he was state governor, has resigned.

Pray: for peaceful campaigning in the lead up to an honest election.(Prov.21:1)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/6957926.stm>

■ Junta breaks up rare Burma rally

Supporters of Burma's military junta have broken protests against the doubling of fuel prices. About 200 people marched in Rangoon, but dispersed after a number were bundled into cars and driven away. A similar protest was held on Sunday, the largest such rally in a decade. The junta arrested at least 13 activists before Wednesday's protest, including some of the nation's most prominent dissidents. The demonstrators, most of them women, were cheered by onlookers as they marched in defiance of the junta. Their path was blocked by supporters of the junta and plain-clothed officers and the rally dispersed as up to 10 demonstrators were bundled into cars and driven off. Last week's fuel price rises left many people struggling to find the money to travel to work.

Pray: for an end to the economic hardship that Myanmar (Burma) people are facing.(109:31)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/6958069.stm>

PRAISE REPORTS

■ Tens of thousands convert to Christ in Algeria

For the last 10 years Christian broadcaster Arab Vision has seen many viewers respond to their television programs, but none more so than the Kabyle Berbers in the North-Eastern coastal region of Algeria. The number of Christians among the Kabyle is reportedly growing, with a minimum estimate of 10,000 converts representing both large mainstream and secret 'house group' churches. 'The figure could well be four times that and many tell us about dreams and visions they've had' says Arab Vision's North Africa Director. Source: Inspire Magazine. (See also last weeks Praise items.)

Praise: God for the way His Holy Spirit speaks with visions and dreams. (Ac.2:17)

More: http://www.openheaven.com/forums/forum_posts.asp?TID=17732&PN=1&TPN=1

■ First-ever interactive online video courses in Chinese

Chinese pastors and leaders all over the world will now have access to top-quality theological training due to a first-of-its-kind online video program formally launched by Dallas Theological Seminary. The program, which according to a news release, has been in the development stages for the past two years, initially included 24 students as part of a 'beta test' model. 'We have been afforded an unprecedented opportunity to impact people for Christ,' said Dallas Seminary President Dr. Mark Bailey 'Chinese is the most spoken language in the world and the second most common language on the Internet. We can reach developing leaders in one of the largest countries in the world and one with a rapidly growing Christian community.' Source www.dts.edu

Praise: God for this new tool to benefit the Church in China.(Pr.9:9)

More: <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/2007/s07080129.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