

PRAYER ALERT...

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www.prayer-alert.net editor@prayer-alert.net

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BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ **FRIDAY FOCUS: 7th September - Racial Justice - Leviticus 19:33-34; Matthew 8:11**

Churches of all traditions will take part in Racial Justice Sunday (9 Sept). This year's theme 'Go to a land I will show you' focuses on the issues raised by global migration. **Give thanks:** for the incredible diversity of God's Church. **Pray:** for a deeper awareness of the inequalities faced by ethnic minorities; for God's Church to become more inclusive, outward looking and welcoming; for wisdom for the staff of the Churches' Commission for Racial Justice; for my attitudes and behaviour to bring honour to Jesus. **Consider:** how could my Church become more inclusive?

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

■ **Religion not race segregates city**

The University of East London has created a map showing that in some London areas minority religions make up 80% of the population. Encouragingly, only 3% of London's seven million residents live in areas classed as racially segregated, but 25% live in religiously-segregated neighbourhoods. The findings indicated that such communities could actually benefit some minorities, although Muslim-dominated areas get progressively worse off as they become more segregated. Concentrated Muslim communities are found in Tower Hamlets and Newham boroughs. The study's author - Professor Allan Brimicombe - said: 'Traditionally, London's residential segregation has been viewed in terms of ethnicity. Any government plan that talks about 'parallel lives' and a lack of integration being a bad thing is missing the point. A level of segregation actually seems to improve the lot of some minorities living in areas that are segregated along religious self-identity lines.' (See Prayer Alert: 2607)

Pray: that understanding London's 'religious map' will produce measures to bring harmony and welfare for all citizens. (Ps 24:3)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/london/6978116.stm>

■ **All UK 'must be on DNA database'**

The present database in England and Wales holds details of 4m people who are guilty or cleared of a crime. Lord Justice Sedley said this was indefensible and biased against ethnic minorities. It would be fairer to include everyone, guilty or innocent, including UK visitors. Gordon Brown's spokesman said to expand the database would create 'huge logistical and civil liberties issues'. The database - the largest in the world - has already been criticised because people who are found innocent cannot get their details removed whilst a great many others, whose DNA would show them guilty of crimes, go free. It includes some 24,000 samples from young people aged 10 to 17, who were arrested but never convicted. Home Office statistics show almost 40% of black men have their DNA profile on the database. That compares with 13% of Asian men and 9% of white men. Keith Jarrett, president of the Black Police Association, called the current system 'untenable' backing the call for a universal database. But Shami Chakrabarti, director of human rights organisation Liberty, condemned the suggestion.

Pray: for an overhaul of the 12 year old DNA database that would prevent injustice for ethnic minorities and protect the civil liberties of all. (Mic.6:8)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/6979138.stm>

■ **Olympics mega-mosque debate scheduled after Downing Street petition**

Following the recent huge petition against the building of a massive Olympics mega-mosque, which attracted over 250,000 signatures on the 10 Downing Street website, supporters and opponents of the proposed building at West Ham will meet for the first time to debate the key issues at a public meeting on Friday evening (September 7) in Stratford, East London. Support for the mosque will be led by Abdul Khaliq Mian, a former mega-mosque project manager and former parliamentary candidate for George Galloway's Respect party. The opposition leader is Councillor Alan Craig who's also leader of the Christian Peoples' Alliance group on Newham Council. Newham Muslim voluntary sector group, Islamic Circles, is organising the debate. Councillor Craig has repeatedly asked for discussions with mosque promoters Tablighi Jamaat. He's criticized the stance taken by Ken Livingstone that opposition to the mosque is by nature Islamophobic and BNP-inspired, saying: 'In fact many Muslims oppose the Tablighi Jamaat mega-mosque, and non-Islamic local opposition is rational and respectful of our Muslim fellow citizens.'

Pray: for Christians to be heard and God's sovereign purposes to be upheld in the September 7th debate. (2Chron.7:14)

More: <http://www.assistnews.net/>

■ **'Human-animal' embryo green light**

Regulators have agreed in principle to allow human-animal embryos to be created for research. But scientists will still need to make individual applications to use hybrids. The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) consultation showed the public were 'at ease' with the research if it advances therapies for conditions such as Alzheimer's. Most other countries forbid hybrid embryo research. It's expected applications from Kings College London and Newcastle University, to the HFEA, to use hybrid embryos will be heard in November. The HFEA decision comes as government introduces new regulations governing embryo research. The Government bill indicates ministers would allow hybrid embryos which were 99.9% human and 0.1% animal. Now HFEA has carried out its own review, ahead of parliament passing the legislation, in order to hasten research. (Also see: <http://www.christianconcernforournation.co.uk> and: <http://www.lawcf.org> urging people: 'to write to their MPs making clear that it's ethically unacceptable to create a part human/part animal embryo. This would violate the sanctity of both human and animal embryos and blur the distinctions of what it means to be human. Even if there were scientific gains to be made from such experiments - a highly questionable proposition - that would not justify legalising this type of action.') (See Prayer Alert: 2007.3107.3207)

Pray: for continued public pressure against this technique and the HFEA's usurping of the democratic process by acting ahead of parliamentary debate. (Gen.1:27-28)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/6978384.stm>

■ **Student leaders and Christian Unions produce joint guidelines to end disputes**

The National Union of Students (NUS) representing some 5 million students and the Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship (UCCF), today launched joint guidance to help students' unions and Christian unions manage good local relationships. The guidance follows tensions between these groups in 2006 and has received mediating advice from the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU). Gemma Tumelty, NUS National President described the guidelines as a 'genuine step forward for positive interfaith relations on UK campuses.' The Rev Richard Cunningham director of UCCF, which helps coordinate the activities of evangelical Christian Unions, added: 'CUs play an active and valued role within the students' union of most universities and colleges - often they're the largest society on campus. We hope these guidelines will help certain student guilds who've experienced difficulty understanding the deeply held convictions of CU members and will also help CUs play an even more productive role as members of the SU.' Rev Cunningham believes: 'Litigation and confrontation are no way forward; we need dialogue and a common commitment in spite of differences.' (See Prayer Alert: 0107.3407)

Pray: thanking God for this breakthrough in general relations at the beginning of the academic year and seeking His favour for all students who uphold the unique truth of Jesus Christ. (Eph 4:15-16)

More: <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/5641>

EUROPE

■ **Germany hunts 10 terror suspects**

German authorities are hunting for about 10 more suspects believed to have helped the three men held for allegedly plotting massive bomb attacks. The Islamist plotters were targeting US facilities in Germany, officials said. Germany announced on Wednesday that it had arrested two Germans and a Turk suspected of planning huge bombings. Federal prosecutor Monika Harms said the three had trained at camps in Pakistan and procured some 700kg (1,500lbs) of chemicals for explosives. She said the accused had sought to target facilities visited by Americans, such as nightclubs, pubs or airports. Ms Harms said the men planned to use vehicles loaded with the explosives to kill or injure large numbers of people. The arrests had prevented 'massive bomb attacks', she said. The suspects, aged 22, 28 and 29, were alleged to be members of the German cell of a group she named as Islamic Jihad Union. Two of the men were German nationals who had converted to Islam, while the third was a Turkish man.

Pray: for the continued success of the authorities everywhere on their 'war on terror'. (Rom.2:9-10)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/6981141.stm>

■ Denmark arrests 'bomb' suspects

Danish police have arrested two people with suspected links to al-Qaeda on suspicion of planning a bomb attack. Officials gave no details about the alleged plot, but said the two had already acquired explosive material. Another six people of immigrant origin were briefly detained during a series of raids in and around Copenhagen, but were released after questioning. Denmark's contribution to the US-led campaign in Iraq has prompted fears that militants may target the country. It also drew anger from Muslims worldwide after a Danish newspaper last year printed cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad. Police said they raided 11 addresses overnight on Monday in and around Copenhagen. The suspects had been under surveillance for some time and Danish investigators had liaised with 'several foreign co-operation partners' before making the arrests, police said. Later on Tuesday, two of the suspects, both 21, were remanded in custody for 27 days, with the first 13 days to be spent in solitary confinement.

Pray: that the Lord will grant continued success against the evil that controls the perpetrators. (Is.16:18)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/6977741.stm>

WORLDWIDE

■ SPECIAL FEATURE - Iraq City Profile - Mosul

Mosul (Nineveh) is one of the oldest cities in the world, yet its history is full of violence and destruction. The prophet Jonah was reluctantly sent to tell the people of Nineveh to repent of their wickedness. In the thousands of years since then, the city has been invaded and destroyed by numerous empires of the region. Today the violence continues on a weekly basis as militants inflict violence and seek to destroy the lives of others. (See also Praise items)

Pray: for an end to the violence in Mosul and that the destructive intent of the devil would be stopped.

More: <http://www.iraqprayer.org/city%20profiles.htm>

■ UN chief Ban 'shocked' by Darfur

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has said he was 'shocked and humbled' by a visit to a refugee camp in Sudan's strife-torn Darfur region. Mr Ban was cheered by refugees at the camp, but earlier he had faced a group of protesters at the UN's compound. He said plans to send a 26,000-strong peacekeeping force next year were 'on good track', but urged the government to engage rebel factions in talks. At least 200,000 people have died and more than 2m have been displaced since 2003. The Khartoum administration and pro-government Arab militias are accused of war crimes against the black African population. The South Korean diplomat told the crowds: 'We must bring peace and development. We must protect human rights. We must help all of you return to your homes and lands.' After visiting the camp, which holds 48,000 people, Mr Ban said he had wanted to use his position to give the refugees hope.

Pray: for the people of Darfur and that the continued high profile input would bring about the desired breakthrough for peace. (Eph.2:14)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/6979104.stm>

■ Zimbabwe flour shortage warning

Zimbabwe's main bread producer has warned it only has two days' supply of flour, state media have reported. The company, Lobels Bread, said a flour shortage had already forced it to scale back its operations by 80%. Reports say 36,000 tonnes of imported wheat are blocked in a Mozambican port owing to foreign exchange shortages. A foreign currency crisis caused inflation to rise to 7,638% in July. Government price controls have been blamed for worsening shortages. Lobels' operations director, Lemmy Chikomo, said stocks would run out after two days if they were to cease production. He said the firm could only guarantee 40,000 loaves of bread per day, as opposed to 200,000 previously. Critics have blamed President Mugabe's policies, especially the seizure of farms, for ordinary Zimbabweans' hardship. For his part, President Mugabe has accused foreign governments of trying to interfere in Zimbabwe's affairs - saying some businesses had raised prices without justification as part of a Western plot to oust him.

Pray: As we hear of price rises for bread in the UK let us remember the far worse situation reported in Zimbabwe. (Rev.7:16-17)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/6979824.stm>

■ Christians detained in Algeria for preaching

Five Christians have been sentenced in Algeria for preaching Christianity, with some of them receiving one year's imprisonment, Algerian media reported Tuesday. The Christians were reportedly sentenced in June under controversial religious legislation, but sketchy details of the trial, held in the city of Tizi Ouzo, were only released Tuesday, BosNewsLife monitored. Algeria's largest daily, El-Khabar, said the sentences vary 'between one year sentence with no remission' and one year 'suspended sentence' with a 5000 Algerian Dinar (\$73) fine. Names of the Christians were not revealed. One Christian, familiar with the case and speaking on condition of anonymity, said police 'trapped' the Christians. 'A police officer asked one of the accused about Christianity and requested a Bible,' the Christian was quoted as saying. News of the arrests came after Algeria's Religious Affairs Ministry launched a campaign against Christian proselytizing, reportedly calling on Middle East sheikhs, authorities and non-governmental organizations to try to influence those with a 'positive view of Christian proselytizing.'

Pray: for the five Christians who have been sentenced that the Lord will uphold those imprisoned and grant strength to those outside. (Ps.35:3-4)

More: <http://www.bosnewslife.com/africa/algeria/3154-christians-detained-in-algeria-for-preaching>

■ UN accuses Rwanda of arming Congo rebel leader

Rwanda is supplying a rebel Tutsi General in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo with ammunition and fighters as he seizes control of parts of the region and attacks government forces, according to UN security officials. General Laurent Nkunda's troops have occupied an area along the border with Rwanda and Uganda. Men and equipment have been observed crossing into Congo, which has already suffered from a decade of war during which about 4 million people have died. Gen Nkunda has also attacked the areas around three towns east of the regional capital, Goma, but the army said it had killed more than 50 of his men in a helicopter gunship assault on Tuesday. The general broke away from the national army last week; nine months after his forces were integrated into it, after accusing the government of collaborating with Hutu extremists responsible for the 1994 genocide of Tutsis in Rwanda who then fled into Congo.

Pray: for this situation that it will not lead to the genocide of previous conflicts. (Est.8:6)

More: http://article.wn.com/view/2007/09/06/UN_accuses_Rwanda_of_arming_Congo_rebel_leader/?section=TopStoriesWorldwide&

■ Disease outbreak strikes thousands in flood-hit east India

The increase of waterborne diseases after heavy rains caused by flooding and insanitary conditions in eastern India has killed up to 250 people and left thousands seriously ill. 'The death toll in the three cholera-hit districts of the state of Orissa - Rayagada, Koraput and Kalahandi - has gone up to 140,' said Dr Usha Patnaik, the state's director of health services, according to the Associated Press. On Friday, however, relief group ActionAid said it received reports from local sources that nearly 250 people had died in Koraput, Rayagada and Kalahadi, nearly double the official death toll. Orissa health secretary Chinmoy Basu said a cholera outbreak in the state was caused by local's drinking water from stagnant pools of water and eating contaminated meat. 'Diarrhoea is a seasonal problem. But in our case, the situation is severe,' the health official reported. (See also Prayer Alert 3307)

Pray: for all those effected by the floods across India and other nations.

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/disease.outbreak.strikes.thousands.in.floodhit.east.india/12846.htm>

PRAISE REPORTS

■ Baghdad Prayer Patrol reports U.S. casualties have been declining since May

According to a report from Wayne Dillard of the 'Baghdad Prayer Patrol,' the numbers of U.S. casualties in Iraq have declined since the intercessory group's inception in May. Dillard remarks, 'There are many factors that contribute to this trend, and I don't want to say it's because of the Baghdad Prayer Patrol, but I do want to say 'Good Job! Thank you for patrolling in prayer for the troops and people of Iraq.' The Baghdad Prayer Patrol delivers, to those who subscribe: a daily 1-minute prayer to pray for the people, troops, government and War on Terror, in Iraq - via email. In addition, there are maps and information about cities in Iraq where prayer is especially needed. 'We have a little over 6,000 intercessory troops on the Prayer Patrol, and we are seeing good results,' says Dillard. 'Imagine what could happen if we doubled that number.' (See also Prayer Alert 1707 and today's Special Feature.)

Praise: God for this prayer initiative and the reduction in casualties. Keep praying for ALL the forces involved.

More: http://www.breakingchristiannews.com/articles/display_art.html?ID=4399

■ Promising future for Bible ministry in Iraq

The Kurdistan Regional Government have officially permitted a Christian charity Bible Society to function legally within its borders. It is a breakthrough for the Bible Society which operates in Iraq including the Kurdistan region. The permit will allow them to open an office and go about their business of making the Bible's message easily available. Kurdistan is a self-governing region in Iraq with its own Prime Minister and Parliament. It is considered a safe haven for the Christian minority who make up only one per cent of the Iraqi population. The official permit was handed to Nabil Omeish, Programme Coordinator for the work of Bible Society in Iraq. This comes after months of visits to government offices and officials. He said the application for the permit had received a major boost from the first ever distribution of 20,000 Scripture calendars in Kurdish last December. Many of the calendars made their way to the desks of government officials – an indicator of the strong impact the Bible Society has in the region. Source: Bible Society.

Praise: God for this opening for His Word in Iraq. (Is.52:7)

More: http://www.prayerinaction.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=798&Itemid=222

PRAYER ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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C/O World Prayer Centre, Cornerstone House, 5 Ethel Street, Birmingham, B2 4BG, England