



PRAYER ALERT...



An initiative of the Prayer Forum of the British Isles & Ireland
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Issue 3508

Website

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Donations

Friday 29 August 2008

■ British Isles & Ireland

- [**FRIDAY FOCUS: 29th August - Hope for the Islamic community - 1 John 4:18-19; Colossians 4:5-6**](#)
- [Lambeth more successful than expected, says Archbishop](#)
- [Enforce sex lessons for four-year-olds, say MPs](#)
- [Teenage health 'time bomb' threatens NHS](#)
- [Man convicted of gun factory charges](#)
- [Immigrants exploit loophole to gain British citizenship in Church of England marriages](#)

■ Europe

- [Russia faces fresh condemnation - and support](#)
- [EU should save Ukraine from Russia, NGO says](#)

■ Worldwide

- [30 Days of Prayer for the Muslim World](#)
- [India: Deaths mount as violence spreads in Orissa](#)
- [India: Religious tensions simmering in another Indian state](#)
- [China: Churches facing leader shortages](#)
- [Egypt: Urges end to Israel threats](#)
- [Indonesia: Christian college will relocate after violent attacks](#)
- [Philippines: Manila steps up separatist hunt](#)

■ Praise Reports

- ['Basic Instinct' author writes book about faith](#)
- [Church puts vows at heart of new marriage prep](#)

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ **FRIDAY FOCUS: 29th August - Hope for the Islamic community - 1 John 4:18-19; Colossians 4:5-6**

Millions of Muslims all around the world are unaware that Jesus died for their sins. Every Muslim needs to hear the truth of what Jesus did for us.

Give thanks: for all the Christian workers witnessing to Muslims both in the UK and overseas and for the remarkable number of Muslims coming to Christ.

Pray: for opportunities to witness to Muslims; that God would continue to reveal himself to them in dreams and visions; for Christians in Muslim countries who are suffering for their faith.

Consider: contacting and building friendships with a Muslim family.

More: <http://www.worldprayer.org.uk/pagesys.cfm?plD=144>

■ **Lambeth more successful than expected, says Archbishop**

Despite protests and divisions at the recent Lambeth Conference, Anglican leaders have succeeded in rebuilding trust and relationships, says the Archbishop of Canterbury. 'At the end of our time together, many people, especially some of the newer bishops, said that they had been surprised by the amount of convergence they had seen,' Dr Rowan Williams stated in a letter sent on Tuesday to the bishops of the Anglican Communion. 'And there can be no doubt that practically all who were present sincerely wanted the Communion to stay together,' he stressed. Some 200 conservative Anglican bishops boycotted the meeting partly over the attendance of pro-gay clergy. With divisions over Scripture and homosexuality wracking the Communion, organisers of the 2008 Lambeth Conference chose not to draft resolutions this time and instead to focus on conversation and rebuilding relationships. The Archbishop acknowledged the challenge that still lies ahead for unity within the Communion and even the possibility of further division. (See also Prayer Alert 3208)

Pray: that what was achieved in building relationships will lead to a breakthrough bringing unity within the Anglican Communion. (Ps.133)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/lambeth.more.successful.than.expected.says.archbishop/21298.htm>

■ **Enforce sex lessons for four-year-olds, say MPs**

Primary school children aged as young as four should be forced to undergo sex education regardless of parents' wishes, a group of ten MPs has said. A cross-party group of ten MPs has written a letter to The Daily Telegraph calling for sex lessons to be made compulsory in primary and secondary schools. At present, the law requires that schools teach the biological facts about sex in science lessons to secondary school pupils. Anything more than this is not currently compulsory. While many schools choose to offer extra sex education programmes, parents can ask for their children not to be included. Despite the widespread use of such programmes – and some critics say because of them – levels of sexually transmitted infections have risen sharply amongst teenagers. However, the group of ten MPs says the answer is more sex

education. They have called on the Government to make sex education compulsory, even for primary school children. (See also Prayer Alert 2808)

Pray: that those responsible for making decisions in this area, with those so young, will be given divine wisdom. (Pr.22:6)

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/20080827/enforce-sex-lessons-for-four-year-olds-say-mps/>

■ Teenage health 'time bomb' threatens NHS

A 'forgotten generation' of teenagers is suffering the catastrophic health effects of obesity, drugs, drink and casual sex, according to research released this week. Too much food, too much alcohol, too many drugs and too much sex has created a 'time bomb' of health problems that will place mounting pressure on the National Health Service, the Conservatives say. The number of teenagers admitted to hospital for alcohol-related treatment in 2006-07 was up 51 per cent since 2000-01; Admissions relating to smoking tobacco rose 41 per cent; From 2003 to 2007, teenagers treated for sexual infections rose 21 per cent; Teenage abortions rose 15 per cent from 2003; In 2006-07, a third of children turning 13 were obese or overweight; Drug-related hospital admissions among 11-15 year olds rose 33 per cent from 2000; Smoking-related admissions were up 63 per cent. Treating teenagers for the effects of drink, drugs, sexual infections and abortion costs the NHS an estimated £130 million per year – up from around £100 million in 2000.

Pray: for this teenage generation as they face the challenges to their health that they will make the right choices. (Pr.8:1-5)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/2621623/Teenage-health-timebomb-threatens-NHS.html>

■ Man convicted of gun factory charges

A man was convicted on Wednesday of running a gun factory that converted replica guns into live weapons which have been linked to criminal networks in a series of fatal shootings. Grant Wilkinson, 34, was convicted at Reading Crown Court of a string of offences, including conspiracy to sell or transfer firearms and ammunition. Some of the Mac-10 guns were linked to 52 shootings including nine murders - eight of which were in London, police said. Detective Chief Superintendent George Turner, who led the Thames Valley Police investigation, said in a statement after the case: 'There can be no underestimating the impact of Wilkinson's actions - his conversion of imitation weapons allowed criminals to arm themselves with guns capable of killing and maiming people.' Police later offered a reward of up to 10,000 pounds for any information leading to the recovery of 40 Mac-10s or the arrest of those involved in offences where the weapons have been used.

Pray: that the authorities will be able to recover the missing guns before they are used.

More: <http://uk.reuters.com/article/domesticNews/idUKLR13229720080827>

■ Immigrants exploit loophole to gain British citizenship in Church of England marriages

Confidential guidelines have been issued by bishops to warn clergy of the scam, which has exploded since a Government crackdown on sham marriages was introduced in 2004. Official figures show that the number of bogus weddings performed by Anglican priests has risen by as much as 400 per cent in some dioceses over the last four years. Foreign nationals have turned to the Church because it is exempt from rules that require all foreign nationals from outside the European Union to obtain a Home Office certificate of approval to marry in a register office. The Tories expressed concern that immigration controls are being bypassed so easily and called on the Government to set up more rigorous arrangements. Senior clergy believe that many of their colleagues are being duped by immigrants who claim that their marriages are genuine, despite advice from their bishops stressing the need for them to be vigilant.

Pray: that clergy will be granted wisdom when approached to perform marriage ceremonies and not be used in deceptive acts. (Pr.18:15)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newsttopics/religion/2608603/Immigrants-exploit-loophole-to-gain-British-citizenship-in-Church-of-England-marriages.html>

EUROPE

■ Russia faces fresh condemnation - and support

Seven of the world's leading industrialised nations have jointly condemned Russia's decision to recognise Georgia's breakaway regions. Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the US and UK said Moscow's recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia violated Georgia's integrity and sovereignty. Earlier, the UK's foreign secretary said Western countries should re-examine their relations with Russia. David Miliband also warned Russia not to start a new Cold War. However Dmitry Medvedev, Russia's president, has welcomed 'united' support from China and Central Asian allies for Moscow's actions in Georgia, saying it should send a 'serious signal' to the West. His statement on Thursday in Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan, came at the start of a summit of leaders of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (SCO), formed to counter the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), consists of Russia, China and four ex-Soviet Central Asian states: Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. 'I am sure that the united position of the SCO member states will have international resonance,' he said. <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/asia/2008/08/200882883643290586.html> (See also Prayer Alert 3308, 3208)

Pray: for the governments that they seek out a peaceful and diplomatic solution and do not return to 'cold war' rhetoric. (Pr.17:13-14)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/7585182.stm>

■ EU should save Ukraine from Russia, NGO says

The European Union should formally recognise Ukraine's right to join the EU and offer it a 'solidarity clause' to help prevent Russia from undermining Kiev's pro-democratic government in the wake of the Georgia conflict. 'The next focal point for

security tensions - although not for war - might be Ukraine,' the European Foreign Policy Council (ECFR) warned in a flash report on Monday, urging Brussels to make a strong show of friendship with Ukraine at an EU foreign ministers' meeting on 5 September and the EU-Ukraine summit on 9 September. In the 'mid-term,' the ECFR advised the EU to make a political declaration endorsing Ukraine's EU perspective and help Ukraine to ready itself for NATO membership and the ejection of Russia's Black Sea fleet from its old home in Crimea. A new bilateral EU-Ukraine treaty - currently under negotiation - should also legally oblige the EU to 'consult and assist Ukraine in case of challenges to the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine.'

Pray: against further escalation of tensions in former Soviet countries and grant wisdom to those in authority. (Pr.29:2)

More: <http://euobserver.com/9/26638>

WORLDWIDE

■ 30 Days of Prayer for the Muslim World

September 1st is the start of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan. This is a perfect time for us to focus our prayers upon the Muslim world when Muslims are seeking a deeper relationship with God. Across the world Christians will be taking part in 30 Days of Prayer for the Muslim World. Let us pray that millions of Muslims will find that truth represented only in Jesus Christ and that many will come to faith through an encounter with Him during Ramadan. Each year a new prayer guide booklet is published. This year's motto is 'Loving Muslims through Prayer. Order your copy by clicking on the 'More' link.

Pray: that the Good News will spread powerfully throughout the Muslim world and that Jesus would be honoured wherever His name is spoken. (Is.59:1)

More: <http://www.30-days.net/>

■ India: Deaths mount as violence spreads in Orissa,

At least 18 people are confirmed dead in 92 incidents of violence against Christians since suspected Maoists murdered Hindu leader Swamiji Laxmanananda Saraswati and four others on Saturday (Aug. 23) in Orissa state, says Compass News Direct (CND). With Hindu extremists inciting hatred by heated accusations that Christians killed Saraswati, the national newspaper Hindu reported yesterday that nine people had been killed in Orissa violence, and a CND source near the state capital of Bhubaneswar confirmed an additional nine people slain. The death count by the Hindu included four people killed in the Barakhama area. News agencies had earlier confirmed three dead in Raikia and two others, including a woman, killed in Bargarh, where a missionary-run orphanage was set on fire. The figure of 92 incidents thus far comes from the Global Council of Indian Christians.

Pray: for our brothers and sisters in Christ as they face up to this persecution and suffering. (1Co.16:19)

More: <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/2008/s08080181.htm>

■ India: Religious tensions simmering in another Indian state

Even as the eastern state of Orissa has become tense after the killing of a Hindu nationalist leader, the southern state of Karnataka has been witnessing increasing number of attacks on Christians. Assailants disrupted worship services in three churches in Devangere district alleging the conversion of Hindus. The Jesus Prayer Hall church, the Divine Healing Ministry church and the Eternal Life Church was disrupted by a mob on Sunday morning in Nitualli area in Devangere. The same mob, allegedly from the Hindu Jagran Vedika (a local Hindu nationalist group), had interrupted the worship services the previous Sunday (August 17). The mob that was led by two local Hindu sages alleged that the churches were converting Hindus to Christianity. The mob also beat up a youth and forced him to bow down before the idol of a Hindu god in a temple, said the local source. The source added that a police complaint concerning conversions had been lodged against at least 13 pastors of different churches in the district.

Pray: that God would strengthen His believers to stand firm in the face of persecution. (Ep.6:10-18)

More: <http://www.religiousintelligence.co.uk/news/?NewsID=2570>

■ China: Churches facing leader shortages

The dramatic rise of Christianity in the People's Republic of China is severely straining the resources of Chinese churches in order to meet the spiritual needs of the people. Some Chinese Christian leaders believe that theological training and education have not kept up with the pace of the church's rapid growth. A few blocks from Tiananmen Square, in the backroom of a popular store, a small group of new Christian believers are learning to thrive economically in the new China. They are listening and taking notes on how to manage their finances from a Biblical perspective. But this group is fortunate. Across the country, Chinese Christians are facing a dire shortage of trained pastors, elders and lay leaders. In his first television interview as the leader of one of the most influential religious organizations in China, the president of the China Christian Council worries that Christianity is growing too fast in his country. 'We cannot catch up with the growth of the quantity of the believers,' Gao Fend told CBN News.

Pray: for the Chinese Church that the Lord will raise up the necessary gifted leaders. (1Ti.3:1-7)

More: <http://www.cbn.com/cbnnews/433657.aspx>

■ Egypt: Urges end to Israel threats

Egypt has urged Israel to stop making threats against Lebanon, its foreign minister said on a visit to Beirut. Ahmed Abul Gheit has been holding talks with Lebanese leaders about the rising tensions with Israel. Israel's prime minister warned last week that his country would hit all of Lebanon harder than in the 2006 war if Hezbollah guerrillas attacked again. The Lebanese Shia movement recently joined a national union government in Lebanon ending months of civil strife. Israeli

Environment Minister Gideon Ezra said the entire Lebanese state would be a target if the government 'conferred legitimacy on Hezbollah'. He was echoing similar remarks made by Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert on Tuesday. 'We reject any threat to the unity and sovereignty of Lebanon especially from Israel,' Mr Abul Gheit told a news conference. 'Yesterday, we spoke with the Israelis during Defence Minister Ehud Barak's visit to Egypt, and asked them to stop thinking about threatening this friendly Arab country,' Mr Abul Gheit said.

Pray: for the relationships between Israel and Lebanon that the Lord will stay the hand of those who threaten conflict and bless the peacemakers. (Mt.5:9)

More: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/7584156.stm

■ Indonesia: Christian college will relocate after violent attacks

Attacks on their campus have forced students at a Christian college in Indonesia's capital to take refuge in tents and in the lobby of the parliament building for nearly a month, while the theology school has agreed to relocate out of a predominantly Muslim neighbourhood, the Associated Press reported. The first assaults on the Arastamar Evangelical School of Theology, which is also known as Seta College, took place on July 25, when residents of the neighbourhood in Jakarta entered the campus with machetes and Molotov cocktails. Eighteen students were injured in the clashes, and administrators evacuated the five dormitories after a second night of attacks. But some observers suspect that local property developers, who have been trying to buy the 20-year-old campus, are behind the attacks.

Pray: that the move to new premises will mean a peaceful solution and that the work of the school would increase. (1Ti.2:1-2)

More: <http://mychristianblood.blogspot.com/archive/2008/08/25/christian-college-in-indonesia-will-relocate-after-violent-a.html#more>

■ Philippines: Manila steps up separatist hunt

The Philippine military is continuing with a massive air and ground assault to capture two Muslim separatist leaders in the southern province of Mindanao. Government troops say they are winning and claim they have over-run at least 15 MILF camps and that the fighters are on the run. (See also Prayer Alert 3408)

Pray: for the innocent who have been caught up in this conflict and for a speedy and lasting solution. (Ps.34:14-15)

More: <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/asia-pacific/2008/08/20088265132190105.html>

PRAISE REPORTS

■ 'Basic Instinct' author writes book about faith

Joe Eszterhas' latest book is a shocker, but not the kind that made him rich and famous. The man who penned dark thrillers such as Basic Instinct and Jagged Edge tells the story of his spiritual conversion and his newfound devotion to God and family. In Crossbearer: A Memoir of Faith, he describes how his life got turned around during the summer of 2001. Following surgery for throat cancer doctors had told him he must quit drinking and smoking. After a lifetime of wild living, Mr. Eszterhas knew it would be a struggle to change his ways. One hot summer day after his surgery, walking through his neighbourhood, Mr. Eszterhas reached a breaking point. 'I was going crazy. every single nerve ending was demanding a drink and a cigarette,' he wrote. He plopped down on a curb and cried. Sobbed even! And for the first time since he was a child, he prayed: 'Please God, help me.' (Press the 'More' link to read on.)

Praise: God for His Grace and always answering that prayer: 'Please God, help me'. (2Cor.12:9)

More: <http://toledoblade.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080823/NEWS10/808230343>

■ Church puts vows at heart of new marriage prep

The Church of England is undertaking a major overhaul of the marriage preparation it offers to engaged couples in a bid to better reflect their number one priority on the big day - the vows. New research from the Archbishops' Council's Weddings Project, published in this week's Church Times, found that engaged couples regard their vows as more central to their wedding planning than any other aspect, with 43 per cent welcoming the 'opportunity to think about our wedding service and the vows we would make'. Thirty per cent said, meanwhile, that they would like a single-session course about marriage, and 44 per cent of respondents agreed that the Church should offer marriage support after the wedding as well as before. 'The Church is in a unique position. In its marriage preparation, it offers something couples cannot get in a hotel or stately home,' writes Church of England marriage adviser Sue Burridge in the Church Times.

Praise: God for the gift of marriage and pray that the Church will take up the challenge to those wishing to marry in Church. (Gen.2:15-24)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/church.puts.vows.at.heart.of.new.marriage.prep/21308.htm>

PRAYER FORUM OF BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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Prayer Alert is a partnership project of the Prayer Forum of the British Isles and Ireland
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