

PRAYER ALERT...

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BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ **FRIDAY FOCUS: 19th September - Hope for those caught in addiction - Isaiah 61:1-3; Ephesians 2:1-10**

The pervasiveness of addiction (alcohol, drugs, food, sex, gambling, etc) is affecting every area of our society, for example some 350,000 children have drug addicted parents and one million children have alcohol addicted parents.

Give thanks: for Christian agencies, like Betel UK, who see people being set free from their addictions through prayer and witness.

Pray: for more recognition of the work done by Christian organisations on the part of national and local government; for the provision of resources to help Christian ministries continue their work; for anyone I know who might be caught up in an addiction.

Consider: donating to a Christian agency dealing with addictions.

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

■ **Investors cautious amid turmoil**

Markets regained some poise in Thursday trading, cheered by news that six of the world's top central banks have taken steps to calm credit markets. European stocks edged higher as Lloyds TSB's takeover of UK lender HBOS also dispelled some of the gloom hanging over financial markets. London's FTSE 100 index rose along with German and French markets. But trade is expected to stay volatile as fears linger that more firms could succumb to the financial crisis. The past few days have seen a number of dramatic developments on financial markets. Thursday's key events included: Central banks in the UK, US, Europe and several other countries pumping billions of dollars of extra funds into money markets to lift the amount of credit available. The move is the fourth such concerted effort since the onset of the credit crisis last year.

Pray: for the situation in the World's financial markets that those seeking unjust gain be confounded and stability return to the market. (Pr.29:4)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/7622318.stm>

■ **Christian groups seen as 'tainted' by Government, warns Archbishop**

Christian groups are being denied funding for important charitable work because the Government believes they are 'tainted', the Archbishop of York has warned. Dr John Sentamu accused ministers and councils of being intolerant of faith groups and faith schools, who he said are inspired by their beliefs to provide vital work for their communities. In a speech at Westminster Central Hall organised by the Youth for Christ organisation, Dr Sentamu said: 'We must resist any trend in national or local Government where the decision as to whether a solution works is not based on results, but upon the intolerance that sees a project motivated by faith as being tainted and unsuitable for receipt of funding'. The Most Rev Peter Akinola, Primate of Nigeria, said: 'We see England as a Christian nation, but somehow, for political reasons, for economic reasons, you let Christ go. You have created a huge religious vacuum in this country, in the name of multiculturalism - and now it is being filled by Islam.'

Pray: that Christian groups would keep challenging this situation promoting a strong Christian ethos. (2Th.1:11-12)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/majornews/2799500/Christian-groups-seen-as-tainted-by-Government-warns-Archbishop.html>

■ UK Muslims have 'victim mentality'

British Muslims are guilty of a 'victim mentality' and should take greater responsibility for their lives, a Muslim Labour MP has argued. Sadiq Khan also said more British Muslims must tackle sexism, learn English and condemn forced marriages. The representative for Tooting, south London, made his comments in a report for the Fabian Society think tank. In his report, entitled Fairness, Not Favours, Mr Khan said: 'We need to take more responsibility for our own families, ignore those who propagate conspiracy theories, and above all we need to leave behind our victim mentality. We must all agree that honour killings are murder and forced marriages are kidnapping. These traditions have no place here or anywhere.' He also claimed that Muslims in Britain are pre-occupied by foreign policy and not concerned enough about day-to-day political issues. Mohammed Shafiq, chief executive of the Ramadan Foundation, said 'the real issues holding Muslims back were poverty, crime, racism and Islamophobia'.

Pray: for our Muslim brothers and sisters during Ramadan that the Lord would convict them of the truth and break the hold of extremism. (Joel.2:28)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7619642.stm>

■ Stormont set to stay deadlocked

Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs Micheál Martin has urged political parties in the North to ensure a resolution to avoid a possible crisis in the power-sharing executive. Mr Martin is meeting Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness of Sinn Féin, the DUP's Jeffrey Donaldson and SDLP leader Mark Durkan today (Thursday) ahead of a planned meeting of the North's Executive. However, there are doubts on whether that meeting will take place. Sinn Féin is refusing to take part because of alleged slippage in plans to devolve security powers to a local minister. The DUP, whose leader Peter Robinson is First Minister, has said if the Executive doesn't take place the party will deliberately trigger a crisis. The DUP and Sinn Féin have been negotiating for weeks over a solution to the apparent impasse. The Executive has not met for three months because of the disagreement and other Sinn Féin grievances over inaction on an Irish language act and education reform.

Pray: that the politicians would put aside their differences and seek agreement and a solution to the impasse. (Col.3:13)

More: <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/breaking/2008/0918/breaking25.htm>

■ Christian leaders fast ahead of UN Poverty Summit

The Bishop of London launched a new ten-day prayer and fasting initiative on Sunday to bring more attention to the Millennium Development Goals and efforts to halve extreme global poverty. The prayer and fasting initiative 'Think:Fast' is a joint collaboration with Micah Challenge (www.micahchallenge.org.uk/), a global movement of Christians lobbying their governments to tackle poverty. It provides educational materials designed to help Christians pray, reflect and increase their understanding of poverty over the ten days. The initiative culminates with Bishop Richard Chartres fasting for a full day on Sept. 24, the day before world leaders meet for the UN summit on global poverty. Other religious leaders and politicians taking part include the head of the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales, Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, and Micah Challenge's International Director-designate Joel Edwards.

Pray: for the success of the Micah Challenge and the lobbying of leaders ahead of the Poverty Summit. (Mic.6:8)

More: <http://www.christianpost.com/article/20080917/christian-leaders-fast-ahead-of-un-poverty-summit.htm>

■ Crackdown on 'suicide websites'

The law on 'suicide websites' is to be rewritten to ensure people know they are illegal, the government has said. It follows concerns that people searching for information on suicide are more likely to find sites encouraging the act than offering support. It is illegal under the 1961 Suicide Act to promote suicide, but no website operator has been prosecuted. The law will be amended to make clear it applies online and to help service providers police the sites they host. Justice Minister Maria Eagle said there was no 'magic solution' to protecting vulnerable people online. She said: 'Updating the language of the Suicide Act, however, should help to reassure people that the internet is not a lawless environment and that we can meet the challenges of the digital world'.

Pray: that this move would alleviate the problem especially amongst the young.

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7620676.stm>

EUROPE

■ Europeans keep faith out of politics

Europeans remain strongly religious but like to keep faith out of politics while cultivating an open mind to various forms of spirituality, according to a new survey by the Bertelsmann Foundation. Seventy four percent of people in Germany, France, the UK, Italy, Austria, Poland and Switzerland said they were 'religious.' Italy (89%) and Poland (87%) topped the German NGO's 'Religion Monitor' chart, with France at the lower end on 54 percent. More than half of Europeans regularly practice their faith and 61 percent pray, with church attendance higher in Poland than in Italy and with Roman Catholics describing themselves as more highly religious than Protestants. 'The Christian faith still has a strong influence in Europe,' the survey said. 'The role which religion plays in tying together the countries of the European Union should not be underestimated.' The survey also found that religion plays a small role in Europeans' political outlook and the most intimate aspects of their personal lives, however.

Pray: that the influence of Christians throughout Europe would increase in all areas including politics. (Dt.7:9)

More: <http://euobserver.com/9/26769>

■ **France rethinks secularism with Pope's visit**

The Pope's first visit to France since his election has fuelled debate on church-state relations in a country which prides itself in keeping faith and politics strictly separate. Last Friday, President Nicolas Sarkozy and his wife Carla Bruni broke with tradition by greeting the Pope at the airport. Bucking decades of staunchly secularist presidents, lapsed Catholic Mr Sarkozy said that religious 'values' should play a greater role in public life. Mr Sarkozy previously stirred up controversy when he called for a 'positive secularism' that would make more space for religion in the public realm during a visit to the Vatican last year. The separation of church and state has been enshrined in French law since 1905. The Pope sought to quell the row during an open-air mass at Lourdes on Sunday. 'The church does not claim the state's place, however France should 'bring to the fore' its Christian roots to enable each inhabitant to better understand his country.'

Pray: that the Christian roots and values would continue to be recognised and play a greater role in Europe. (Is.58:12)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/france.rethinks.secularism.with.pope.visit/21423.htm>

WORLDWIDE

■ **India: Violence spreads to five more states**

Christians and churches were targeted in Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand following violence in Orissa (see previous three weeks PA). On Wednesday a mob of around 500 rioters killed a policeman and burned down a police station in Orissa's Kandhamal district. To date more than half the 100,000 Christians in Kandhamal are reported to have been made homeless as a result of Hindu extremists roaming. On Sunday night at least 14 houses were burned, a church was set alight and several houses burned the previous day. Orissa Christians say they are helpless, the following is just one incident from an article online at <http://www.eni.ch/featured/article.php?id=2282> Three men, two of whom are soldiers in the Indian army say they were able to do little to save their 35-year-old disabled youngest brother whom a Hindu mob burnt alive while they could only watch helplessly from a distance.

Pray: and cry out for the Christians to be delivered and for God to restore justice where it was withdrawn. (Ps.59:1-4)

More: <http://intercessors.wordpress.com/>

■ **Canada: Elections need prayer**

With Canada being called to the polls on October 15th much needs to be mobilised, including prayer. The media has incredible influence and prayer is need for all reporting to be truthful and for candidates who stand for righteousness to be featured in a favourable light. Political advertising should be respectful and honest. Pray for Christian volunteers to be placed in strategic positions with God giving divine connections. Prayer is needed for an end to the hostility towards the church from the media, and all personal biases that motivate this need to be removed. This is the season for everyone to participate in prayer for Canada to be turned around spiritually so she can take a giant step towards righteousness and the Kingdom of God.

Pray: for a massive mobilisation of the Church of Canada to vote, participate in the national discourse over issues, to volunteer to serve, and stand on guard and pray like never before. (Ps.68:28)

More: http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/20080917/election2008_votes_080917/20080917?s_name=election2008

■ **Zimbabwe: Mugabe intends to remain dominant**

On Monday Robert Mugabe signed an agreement with Morgan Tsvangirai (Praise God!) relinquishing some powers for the first time in nearly three decades of rule. The state run Herald newspaper reported on Wednesday that Mugabe told a meeting of his ZANU-PF party the agreement was 'a humiliation'. 'Anyhow here we are still in a dominant position which will enable us to gather more strength as we move into the future. We remain in the driving seat,' Mr Mugabe said. Meanwhile the Catholic Archbishop of Harare has called for 'a lot of courage and a lot of humility' from its leaders to turn the crisis-hit country around, adding 'I am cautiously optimistic'. The differences have been very deep and it will take courage and humility on the part of the political leaders to really turn the situation around, it is never too late to change such situations.

Pray: for the healing of Zimbabwe, for fear to be removed from the hearts of its people and for God's future blessing for the land. (Mic.7:8)

More: <http://www.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSLH37203120080918>

■ **Israel: Livni wins leadership by 431 votes**

Tzipi Livni, Israel's foreign minister has been declared the winner in an election to replace Ehud Olmert, as the leader of the ruling Kadima party. On Thursday Livni said she would now begin efforts to form a coalition government putting her on track for the premiership. She has 42 days to form a new government if she hopes to avert snap elections that polls say would bring the right-wing Likud party to power. On Friday she will begin to form a coalition that can deal with challenges and create stability. Olmert will continue as caretaker prime minister until a new government is formed. Livni has been leading US-backed negotiations with the Palestinians, advocating an Israeli withdrawal from most of the occupied West Bank and east Jerusalem in order to reach a two-state solution. 'I want to hold peace negotiations as long as the Palestinians want the same. But any agreement must provide security to Israel,' she told supporters recently.

Pray: for God's authority to cover and direct those chosen to rule Israel. (Is.60:1-2)

More: <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2008/09/20089181259447775.html>

■ Indonesia: Christians refugees again

Hundreds of Christian students and staff forced to flee their college by violent protesters now have nowhere to go after being asked to leave the campsite where they took refuge. Staff and 600 female students from the Arastamar Evangelical School of Theology in East Jakarta have been living in tents since a Muslim mob raided their college in July (see PA3508). Now the campsite manager has asked the group to leave and presented them with a bill for more than £16,000. College principal Matheus Mangentang is refusing to leave, saying that the governor of Jakarta had ordered them to stay at the campsite. The police have still not carried out an investigation into the original raid that caused this refugee status for the female students and staff, and five hundred male students who were sent to a 'transmigrant accommodation facility' in Bekasi.

Pray: that God would provide a safe haven for the refugees and bring the perpetrators to justice. (Ps.5:11)

More: <http://www.releaseinternational.org/pages/posts/news-and-prayer-alert-from-release-international424.php>

■ Sri Lanka: Sea battle

Sri Lanka's navy has fought a sea battle with Tamil rebels, a day after the heaviest day of fighting in weeks. Seven Tamil Tiger small boats and three larger craft were destroyed in north-western Sri Lanka and between 25-30 rebels were killed. The army says 79 rebels and 11 soldiers died on Wednesday. In a separate development, medical authorities told the BBC that three civilians were killed in a mine attack near the town of Kilinochchi. Government forces are continuing with offensives to crush the Tigers and end their fight for a separate state for the ethnic Tamil minority. Tamils in Colombo have been ordered to register, amid concerns about security. The government has barred journalists from the war zone. The UN and other aid groups pulled out of rebel-held territory on Tuesday as the government could not guarantee their safety. This war has killed 70,000 people.

Pray: for God to protect the innocent and bring stability to blameless communities. (Ps.12:5)

More: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/7622783.stm

PRAISE REPORTS

■ Saudi Arabia: Muslim cleric kills his sister for being a Christian - Christian Martyrs Poem

A believer in Christ from Saudi Arabia was brutally martyred by her brother after she proclaimed the gospel to her family. Her testimony, which is now spreading throughout the Arabic world via the internet, is marked by an amazing love, boldness, power, wisdom and grace. Her story is now on display on many Arabic internet sites but it has not yet surfaced in the West, apart from a few summary references. She composed a poem before her martyrdom, which has been translated to English and can be found by clicking the more button. **DON'T MISS THIS!**

Praise: God for the way he is using the powerful words of a martyr. (Rev.6:9-11)

More: http://www.persecution.com/topStory_saudiBrotherKilling.html

■ Council backs down over Christian leaflets

St Edmundsbury Borough Council has backed down over its attempt to stop a Christian from handing out evangelistic leaflets to members of the public. Brian Dee, a member of The Open Air Mission (OAM), had been preaching in the Bury St Edmunds Market Place on Wednesday afternoons for more than ten years, and handing out Christian tracts. But in January this year, Council officials told Mr Dee that distributing the leaflets was prohibited under a local byelaw aimed at reducing litter. Mr Dee contacted The Christian Institute which was able to support his case. The Council has now admitted that there were no complaints or evidence that Mr Dee's leaflets were causing a littering problem and has told Mr Dee that he can continue distributing them. They have also offered to review the byelaw to see if it is inconsistent with human rights legislation.

Praise: God for this change of heart by the Council and pray that the Good News will now be uninterrupted. (Is.56:1)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.co.uk/article/council.backs.down.over.christian.leaflets/21425.htm>

■ Dramatic healing leads to salvation of Hindu family

Eleven year-old Riya lives in Delhi, India. After she had a fever for more than 15 days, her right leg went numb and she had trouble walking. Her mother, Mamta, didn't know what to do. 'I took Riya to several doctors and neurologists but they told me that they could not do anything to help.' Riya and Mamta were Hindu, but when Riya went to her aunt's house, she started watching a CBN programme that showed people being healed by Jesus Christ. When Mamta came to pick her up Riya said, 'I told my mother that I didn't want to go to the doctor. I wanted to go to Jesus'. Mamta said, 'When I brought her to church, I prayed to Jesus and asked him to heal my daughter within 15 days, because if he didn't, she would have to have a muscle biopsy.' Five days later Riya was walking normally, climbing up stairs, and didn't need any help.

Praise: God for this miracle and the powerful testimony it gives to believers and unbelievers alike. (Ps.69:30)

More: http://www.openheaven.com/forums/forum_posts.asp?TID=23810&PN=1&TPN=1

PRAYER FORUM OF BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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