



PRAYER ALERT...



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BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ **FRIDAY FOCUS: 26th September - Hope for prodigals - Jeremiah 31:16-17; 1 John 3:1-2**

God identifies with our tears over our prodigals. He loves them, and longs for His church to welcome them back.

Confess: when we have set standards as churches, which have caused people to reject Jesus.

Pray: that my church will be filled with Father's love for prodigals; that many prodigals will come 'home' through Back to Church Sunday (28th Sept) and Alpha courses this month; for opportunities to spend time with any prodigals I know.

Consider: What can I do in my local church to make prodigals welcome?

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

■ **Back to Church Sunday**

Churches across the UK are pulling out all the stops to welcome lapsed Christians back to church this Sunday. The Back to Church Sunday initiative has grown year on year since its 2004 launch in the Diocese of Manchester. Churches have come up with novel new ways of making the welcome back for this year's newcomers and 'returners' extra special. Eg: The Bishop of Sherwood, the Rt Rev Tony Porter, headed down to Welbeck Colliery on Tuesday to hand out special Back to Church invitations to miners coming off their shifts. Members of St Wilfrid's church in Cowplain, near Waterlooville in Hampshire, rolled out a red carpet from the front entrance last week to raise awareness of Back to Church Sunday. Organisers are encouraged by recent research by Tearfund which found that around three million people would come back to church if invited.

Pray: for many to hear God's still small voice as the prodigals are invited home. (Mt.18:14)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/red.carpets.and.motorbikes.help.spread.word.about.back.to.church.sunday/21484.htm>

■ **Pro-life minister leaves Cabinet**

Cabinet Minister Ruth Kelly is resigning amid speculation that she could not reconcile her conscience with the Government's controversial embryology Bill. According to The Daily Telegraph, Downing Street is linking Miss Kelly's departure to her religious objections to the contents of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill, which has been strongly opposed by pro-life groups. When the Bill was due for its final vote in July, Miss Kelly was criticised for telling Labour whips that she would be attending a meeting in Brussels instead. Many observers have attributed Miss Kelly's decision to leave the Cabinet at least in part to her objections to the Bill, although the explanation offered to reporters was that she wanted to spend more time with her family. Miss Kelly was also understood to have clashed with the Government over the Sexual Orientation Regulations by siding with then Prime Minister Tony Blair in calling for exemptions for Roman Catholic adoption agencies.

Pray: for Miss Kelly and others like her that they will stand by their Christian principles when challenged. (Eph.6:10-12)

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/20080924/ruth-kelly-to-resign-over-embryology-bill/>

■ HFE Bill - Report stage

In the final month before the return of Parliament, there is now an urgent need for Christians across the UK to prepare for the culmination of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill activity - Report Stage and Third Reading - which could happen any time after October 6th. This final round of votes is in some ways the most significant because over 10 new amendments have been tabled that seek to change the abortion law. In July a group of MPs tabled an amendment that seeks to extend the 1967 Abortion Act to Northern Ireland. None of the MPs represent a constituency in Northern Ireland and their amendment goes against the stated position of the Government that the Northern Ireland Assembly is the most appropriate venue for decisions to be made about Northern Ireland's abortion legislation.

Pray: for MPs and Peers as they prepare to come back to Parliament after the summer recess that they will be guided by the Holy Spirit to make righteous decisions. (Ps.1:6)

More: <http://www.care.org.uk/Group/Group.aspx?id=19242>

■ Archbishop hits out at City 'bank robbers'

City traders who made millions of pounds in profit by cashing in on the falling share prices of leading banks are 'bank robbers' and 'asset strippers', the Archbishop of York has said. In an address to the Worshipful Company of International Bankers' annual dinner on Wednesday, Dr John Sentamu said that the financial world appeared to be governed by 'Alice in Wonderland' rules. Dr Sentamu hit out in particular at a practice known as short-selling, in which traders deliberately undersell shares of troubled banks and financial institutions, gambling that a further fall in prices will enable them to make profit by buying the shares back at a cheaper price. Dr Sentamu went on to criticise the way in which huge sums of money were being put forward to bail out troubled banks whilst governments remain reluctant to come up with the funding necessary to eradicate poverty.

Pray: for those in the financial market that they will not succumb to greed and dishonest practices. (Pr.11:1)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/archbishop.hits.out.at.city.bank.robbers/21502.htm>

■ And lead us not into liquidation – Church's prayer to beat crunch

The Church of England's 'rapid response prayer unit' issued a new spiritual invocation to shed light in the darkness that threatens to overwhelm the nation during the 'disturbing days' of financial crisis. Bishops are urging Anglicans and others affected by the credit crunch not to keep debt burdens to themselves but to confess them to family, friends or advisers who can help. The Church posted the 'prayer for the current financial situation' on the official Church of England website. It tells believers to focus on the certainty of God's eternal promises to mankind, as 'prices rise, debts increase, banks collapse, jobs are taken away', and urges people to turn to God to 'be a tower of strength amid the shifting sands'. Church leaders believe that as many as seven million people are in danger becoming overwhelmed by debt.

Pray: that God would meet those in fear and hear their prayers: be a tower of strength amidst the shifting sands and a light in the darkness. (Mt.6:28)

More: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/faith/article4790856.ece?print=yes&randnum=1221894978343>

■ Carry Jesus', Archbishop tells believers

The Archbishop of Canterbury told believers on Tuesday to carry Jesus with them wherever they go so that those they encounter will taste the joy that comes through meeting the Lord. Dr Rowan Williams made the comments in a sermon delivered at Lourdes as part of the Roman Catholic Church's celebrations marking 150 years since a peasant girl, Bernadette Soubirous, said she saw apparitions of the Virgin Mary there. He said in his sermon that true mission was marked by a readiness 'to be surprised by God'. 'Bernadette's neighbours, teachers and parish clergy knew all they thought they needed to know about the Mother of God – and they needed to be surprised by this inarticulate, powerless, marginal teenager,' he said. Dr Williams told believers that the story of Mary's encounter with Elizabeth demonstrated the way in which Jesus is always constantly and silently at work in his followers.'

Pray: that believers would remain so close to Jesus that others would see Him in us. (2Pe.3:14)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/carry.jesus.archbishop.tells.believers/21494.htm>

EUROPE

■ Terrorism: Al-Qaeda leader threatens France and Spain

A leader of the Al-Qaeda Organisation in the Islamic Maghreb has threatened France and Spain in an audio message broadcast on jihadist Internet forums on Monday. 'To those that are involved in the war against Islam and have betrayed the Islamic nation, we say to them: Repent before God punishes you with his hands and with ours because judgement day is close and punishment is imminent,' said Abdel Malik Droukedel, who uses the name Abu Musab Abdel Wudud. In the audio message, entitled 'Message to our nation in the Islamic Maghreb', Droukedel reminds his listeners about Spain and Morocco's territorial dispute over the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla. 'And whoever among the treacherous apostates thinks that France is in a position to ensure its safety, we tell them they are wrong, because France will not be in a position to do it, and will be worried for its safety.'

Pray: that the message given by Droukedel will fall on deaf ears. (Is.35:5)

More: <http://mychristianblood.blogspot.com/archive/2008/09/22/terrorism-al-qaeda-leader-threatens-france-and-spain.html#more>

■ India: Orissa government may disband

The India Christian Council is endorsing the Union Government's decision to warn state leaders about anti-Christian violence in the states of Orissa and Karnataka. The Union Government has warned the administrators that it will intervene if they don't take action. Founder and President of Gospel for Asia says, 'The Central Government proclaimed that unless you stop doing this we are going to take action, which means they will simply dismiss the local government.' Three more major incidents were reported over the weekend. Tribal Christians are the most at risk, especially those still hiding from previous attacks. 'These radical fundamentalists are not allowing Christians to go in and bring relief of food, and other basic necessities to these people.' '80-percent of the people live in remote communities where there are no roads. These are remote, primitive, rural communities far away from cities or towns, and this is where most of these attacks took place.'

Pray: and cry out to God for our brothers and sisters in India to be powerfully equipped with His outpouring of faith and strength and for His authority to break the rod of oppression. (Ro.8:35; Mk.10:31,38-39)

More: <http://www.mnnonline.org/article/11694>

■ Laos: Christians held in stocks for their faith

In Boukham village, Savannakhet, officials have kept pastor Sompong Supatto, 32, Boot Chanthaleuxay, 18, and Khamvan Chanthaleuxay, 18, in handcuffs and foot stocks since their arrest on Aug. 3, causing considerable pain. Released from the stocks only for toilet breaks, both Boot Chanthaleuxay and Khamvan Chanthaleuxay were suffering from loss of feeling and infection in their legs and feet due to lack of blood circulation. Supatto, had been nursing a sick family member before he was detained, learned the family member had died. Authorities have said they will release the men only if they renounce their faith. Despite hardships Supatto and his wife will not forsake Christianity. Also sources confirm authorities are targeting Tah Oih tribal Christians in Saravan province, but in response to international inquiries about religious freedom abuses in the village officials talked to leaders and residents and asked all parties to respect the religious laws of the nation.

Pray: for a supernatural intimacy with God lifting them above present suffering and for authorities ruling for immediate release. (Ac.12:5)

More: <http://www.compassdirect.org/en/display.php?page=breaking&lang=en&length=long&idelement=5596>

■ Bangladesh: Prayer requests from mission field

A confidential prayer letter has been received asking for our intercessions for multi lingual translations so that lives and communities in Bangladesh will be transformed by contact with believers and Christian Scriptures. Pray for unity within partnerships between believers and believing movements already committed to outreach in the face of much opposition. Pray also for the success of a U.S. conference in mid September focusing on the Bengali people. Praise God that multiple churches, agencies and ministries are forming a coalition to serve the people in this region. Pray that all attending will see and share the vision for Kingdom impact within the communities of Bangladesh. There is a need for an emerging Missions Mobilization movement of believers and churches in Bangladesh to reach out cross-culturally. They are asking for people to pray into the above and for government applications and registrations so that the work God has called them to do will prosper.

Pray: for more workers to facilitate scripture partnerships so the gospel will quickly reach every people group in Bangladesh and pray for God's fire to fall on the US conference. (1Cor.1:23-24)

■ Australia: Drought claims more of NSW

Expectations for this year's harvest in NSW now vary widely as drought grips a wider area of the State. Minister for Primary Industries Ian Macdonald says that some good rain has fallen in parts of central and northern NSW in recent days, (Praise God) and farmers in the south continue to pray for the same good fortune. Even so, the northern and central falls have done little to impact the latest drought figures, which have seen the area of NSW in drought increase from 66.2pc to 71.6pc. 'The reality is that many of our southern NSW croppers face the dire prospect of total crop failure unless decent rain comes in the next week, Mr Macdonald said. 'Already some producers have experienced significant crop losses in parts of the Riverina and south west of the State - which is just devastating considering their expectations were running so high just a short time ago.

Pray: for God in his mercy to open the heavens and rain down his nourishment on Australia's farming areas. (Dt.8:6-9)

More: <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/news/national/national/general/drought-claims-more-of-nsw/1280167.aspx>

■ Myanmar: Blast rocks central Yangon

At least three people have been injured in an explosion in central Yangon, just outside Yangon's City Hall building. The suspected bomb blast occurred on Thursday morning outside Yangon's City Hall and comes on the eve of the first anniversary of last year's bloody crackdown on anti-government protests. 'It seems to have been a small bomb, but we are still carrying out investigations,' a police official told Reuters. None of the injured is thought to have been seriously hurt, and the scene was quickly sealed off by armed police and soldiers. The same area became a focal point of last year's protests that saw tens of thousands of Buddhist monks and their supporters take to the streets against decades of military oppression. Hundreds were arrested or remain unaccounted for.

Pray: that this latest incident will do something towards reminding the world of a continued repressive regime in Myanmar and not be used by Satan for an escalation of futile violence. (Ps.9:8)

More: <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/asia-pacific/2008/09/20089256547327532.html>

■ Vietnam: Christians seeking justice

Further to Prayer Alert's report on 5 September we have been informed that Catholics and Protestants are still protesting about the return of properties seized by the Communist regime. Massive spontaneous prayer vigils are occurring in Hanoi, the largest public demonstrations since the Communists came to power. Tensions are escalating and the authorities have warned that a crackdown is imminent. On Friday 19 September, the government broke its promise to the Catholic Church and started demolishing property they promised to return to the church. On Sunday 21 September up to 10,000 Catholics braved the rain to pray at the site amidst heavy police presence complete with dogs. The government has ordered school teachers to publically humiliate students who attend the prayer vigils. Two 11-year-olds had their teachers force them to stand in front of their classmates to be mocked in a 'humiliation session' dragging on for hours until they promised not to go to the church again. They have asked for prayer. For BBC coverage press 'More' button. (See also Prayer Alert 3608)

Pray: against the spiritual oppression over this country. (Ps.11)

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/7632095.stm>

PRAISE REPORTS

■ Pakistan: Partial victory in ruling on kidnapped girls

Two girls, both minors, saying they had converted to Islam, lawyers feared worse. Christian human rights lawyers in Pakistan saw a partial legal victory in a judge's ruling that one of two kidnapped girls be returned to her Christian parents. He further ruled her sister be free to choose whether to go with the Muslim man who allegedly forced her to convert and marry him. 10-year-old Aneela Masih's return to her parents it is an unprecedented legal victory for Christian parents of a girl who supposedly converted to Islam. 13-year-old Saba Masih, is free to choose whether to go with Amjad Ali a Muslim man she married after the kidnapping. Saba Masih, whose birth certificate indicates that she is now 13 but who testified that she is 17, said she did not want to return to her parents and tried to keep her little sister from returning to them. Their Muslim captors have repeatedly threatened the two girls that their parents would harm them if they returned.

Praise: God for hearing our prayers and continue to knock on heaven's door for the older sister. (Mt.7:8)

More: <http://www.compassdirect.org/en/display.php?page=news&lang=en&length=short&idelement=5579&backpage=summaries>

■ Iran: Farsi Christian TV from America

The TV studio hums just a few feet from his church office in northern California, but pastor Hormoz Shariat is still a last-minute arrival to his own show. Behind the scenes are teams of phone counsellors and hip young producers. Waiting behind an Islamic veil 7,000 miles away is an exploding house-church movement in Iran, whose compatriots eavesdrop on the illegal satellite programmes produced daily by Pastor Shariat's Iranian Christian Church (ICC). If there is a budding missional community of Muslim-background believers in America, it is the Iranians. These believers' passion is to reach Muslims worldwide, and they are being energized not by the now-grown children of the Islamic Revolution, but by their bicultural kids longing to discover their Persian roots. On Sundays the church worship with traditional tambourines in Farsi language; a rhythmic Persian beat fades into rock lyrics through a door marked English Worship Center.

Praise: God for his blessings on the Iranian people and the way His Holy Fire falls to deliver, heal and save from erroneous roots. (Da.6:26)

More: <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2008/september/34.70.html>

■ Philippines: World Vision supports more than 120,000 children

World Vision Philippines is really impacting the lives of thousands of Filipino children through its child sponsorship programme. This fact was made known by the country's Director, Publics in Ministry, Boris Joaquin in a recent release. According to Joaquin since the inception of World Vision in the Philippines in 1957, it has sent over 250,000 Filipino children to school from mostly remote communities nationwide and that at present the organization is supporting over 120,000 children. He said that the organization has for the past 30 years maintained its outreach in a city like Cebu in the South, through its Area Development Projects (ADP), in places like Sogod, Alcantara, Consolacion, Santander etc and is caring for about 9,000 children there.

The organization strives to increase educational opportunities for the poorest of the poor children in the Philippines by addressing the causes of poverty and injustice and it believes that the only ticket out of poverty for these children and their families is education.

Praise: God for the work of World Vision and agencies like them who reach out in the love of God to the disadvantaged.

More: <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/2008/s08090141.htm>

PRAYER FORUM OF BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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