

# PRAYER ALERT...

An initiative of the Prayer Forum of the British Isles & Ireland  
www.prayer-alert.net editor@prayer-alert.net

## Issue 1009

## Website

## Contact Us

## Donations

Friday 6 March 2009

### ■ British Isles & Ireland

- [FRIDAY FOCUS: 6th March 2009 - Hope for children - Deuteronomy 6:4-7](#)
- [Verdict on Brown in Washington](#)
- [Catholics warn equality and diversity rules could victimise Christian teachers](#)
- [The children who live with drugs](#)
- [Britain is vulnerable to a 'tempest of extremism' warns the Archbishop of Canterbury](#)
- [Tony Blair warns that Christians must speak out in 'aggressively secularist' age](#)
- [Exiled cleric preaches at London primary school](#)
- [Christians turn to God over state of the nation](#)
- **Europe**
- [EU ministers shirk third-world climate finance](#)

### ■ Worldwide

- [Sudan: Response to indictment](#)
- [Gaza: Emergency prayer alert](#)
- [Jerusalem: Third tractor terror attack](#)
- [Pakistan: Poses global security worry](#)
- [Madagascar: Explosion of anger](#)
- [India: Anti-conversion bill](#)

### ■ Praise Reports

- [Women's World Day of Prayer; Praying for the world one country at a time](#)
- [USA: Prayer warriors pray for un-employment at Job Fair; hundreds respond](#)

## BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

### ■ **FRIDAY FOCUS: 6th March 2009 - Hope for children - Deuteronomy 6:4-7**

2009 marks the 30th anniversary of the United Nations 'International Year of the Child'.

Pray: For the church to celebrate children and childhood and the contribution they make to the life of our churches and the wider society. For the mobilisation of praying children in our nation.

**More:** [http://worldprayer.org.uk/uploads/Friday\\_Focus\\_Mar\\_2009.doc](http://worldprayer.org.uk/uploads/Friday_Focus_Mar_2009.doc)

### ■ **Verdict on Brown in Washington**

It had to be 'the speech of his life', so said the pundits, hence Gordon Brown would have been feeling rightly apprehensive about his appearance before Congress in Washington on Wednesday. And perhaps a similar apprehension as the papers began their dissection, which is quite varied across the board. The Telegraph interpreted the 36-minute offering as Brown's attempts to establish himself as an international statesman with the vision to lead the world out of recession. While the speech won 19 standing ovations (the same number as Tony Blair's to Congress in 2003 - quite incredibly, it seems now, on the matter of the war in Iraq) the Guardian points out there were distinct periods of silence, often at crucial moments, in particular from the Republicans. The Mail is unusually complimentary, conceding that while he laid on the flattery with a trowel, he was delivering a hugely important message. The Mirror enthused that it was, 'The son of the Manse at his best, fired up with the confidence of being on his own territory: the world economy.'

**Pray:** for Gordon Brown, our government, and the 'special relationship' with the US, that God would grant them wisdom and understanding as they seek the way forward over the global economy. (Pr.3:19-21)

**More:** <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2009/mar/05/brown-sudan-war-crimes-orwell-beatles-wrap#>

### ■ **Catholics warn equality and diversity rules could victimise Christian teachers**

The Roman Catholic Church has spoken out against a proposed new code of conduct for school teachers, saying that it could force teachers who refuse to promote Islam and gay rights out of the profession. The warning was issued by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales to the General Teaching Council. It said that the code could seriously undermine the religious character of Church schools and would impose on them a hostile secular morality. Principle 4 of the code, which will be legally binding, states that teachers must 'proactively challenge discrimination' and 'promote equality and value diversity in all their professional relationships and interactions', before they can become registered teachers. Oona Stannard, head of the Catholic Education Service, said 'there was an understandable fear that the call to 'proactively challenge discrimination' could be used to oppose faith schools per se, and the rights that they have in law, for example, to select leaders who are of the faith'.

**Pray:** for an understanding that the promotion of equality and diversity draws upon the strengths of faith groups rather than by seeking to limit them. (Pr.2:6)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.co.uk/article/catholics.warn.equality.and.diversity.rules.could.victimise.christian.teachers/22662.htm>

#### ■ **The children who live with drugs**

Brandon Muir was only 23 months old when he was killed by the boyfriend of his drug-addicted mother. The statistics are shocking and bleak - they reveal the human consequences of Scotland's drugs epidemic. Glasgow University has estimated that between 40,000 and 50,000 children live with at least one drug-addicted parent. Ruth Stark, spokesperson for the British Association of Social Workers, said 'for young mothers and fathers who are already addicted to drugs, often we find ourselves having to go into a situation where this is a key issue that is interfering with their ability to look after their children. In some circumstances, we have to take drastic action.' A new inquiry, under the former chief constable of Fife, Peter Wilson, is now to be held to learn lessons from the Brandon Muir case. Perhaps the real question to be asked is how does society cope with children brought up in the midst of Scotland's drugs epidemic?

**Pray:** for effective intervention and support for children in families crippled by drug addiction. (Lev.25:35)

**More:** <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/7921655.stm>

#### ■ **Britain is vulnerable to a 'tempest of extremism' warns the Archbishop of Canterbury**

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, has warned that the recession could make Britain more vulnerable to a 'tempest of extremism' and contribute to a rise of the British National Party. Rising unemployment and falling house prices were among factors that could contribute to xenophobia and prejudice, he said. Dr Williams, speaking at a seminar of Christian and Muslim scholars in London, warned that the recent election of a BNP councillor in Kent was a 'straw in the wind'. He said that people were feeling angry because of the financial crisis. 'I think we do ignore, at our peril, a very high risk which history should have taught us if it teaches us anything: a very high risk of financial stringency leading to political extremes - anger finding its expression in xenophobia, prejudice, rivalry, all the tactics that both sociologists and psychologists remark on as the displacement of unease and fear.'

**Pray:** against extremism in any form and pray for the church as it endeavours to support people who, in times of difficulty, look for someone to help. (Ps.9:9)

**More:** <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/faith/article5838491.ece>

#### ■ **Tony Blair warns that Christians must speak out in 'aggressively secularist' age**

Christianity is at risk of being sidelined in Britain's 'aggressively secularist' society, former prime minister Tony Blair has warned. Mr Blair said he agreed with church leaders that faith is in danger of being seen as a 'personal eccentricity' rather than an important influence on the country. He also criticised the 'ludicrous decisions' that have led to worshippers being punished for expressing their beliefs. In an interview published in the Church of England Newspaper, Mr Blair said: 'Sometimes I think we as Christians are more sensitive than we should be although I say that as someone who when I was in office, although I was perfectly open about my Christianity, nonetheless kept it within certain boundaries that were restricted in terms of what I said publicly'. Since stepping down as prime minister he has converted to Roman Catholicism and set up the Tony Blair Faith Foundation to 'promote respect and understanding about the world's major religions'.

**Pray:** for Tony Blair and other men of faith and influence that they will be able to bring a faith perspective to worldly problems. (1Jn.2:16-17)

**More:** <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstoppers/religion/4938541/Tony-Blair-warns-that-Christians-must-speak-out-in-aggressively-secularist-age.html>

#### ■ **Exiled cleric preaches at London primary school**

A London primary school played host to a meeting of Muslims at which an extremist preacher called for Britain to become an Islamic state. Omar Bakri spoke by telephone from Lebanon, where he is in hiding from security forces seeking his arrest. He told the group: 'The existence of the Islamic state is a necessity for justice to be established, a necessity for the people.' He added: 'I believe the way forward is Islam. It is time to go back to basics. I believe Islam is the future.' News of the meeting comes days after Ed Husain, Co-Director of Muslim think-tank Quilliam, warned that British mosques were 'run by men who are physically in Britain, but psychologically in Pakistan'. A Quilliam Foundation survey showed that 97% of imams were from overseas, with 92% educated abroad, largely in Pakistan or Bangladesh. The research follows news last month that the Muslim population in the UK grew by 500,000 in the last four years, now standing at 2.4 million.

**Pray:** against the continued influence and teaching of radical Islam.(2Pet.2:1-2)

**More:** <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/20090304/exiled-cleric-preaches-at-london-primary-school/>

#### ■ **Christians turn to God over state of the nation**

'Your Kingdom come, Your will be done' was the prayer of hundreds of Christians who gathered at a central London church to cry out to God over the moral and spiritual crisis in the UK. The State of the Nation gathering also focused on repentance over the church's silence in the face of immoral legislation passed over the decades. All mainstream denominations were represented at Saturday's gathering at the Emmanuel Centre, near the Houses of Parliament. Prayer gatherings were also held in places such as Birmingham, Manchester and Edinburgh and in countries around the world in an expression of solidarity with the London meeting. The day of prayer and repentance was organised following a meeting at the House of Lords last December of some 80 Christians from the church, the Houses of Parliament, and the business and education sectors. The meeting focused on the moral and spiritual implications of the financial crisis and concluded with a call for a season of prayer and fasting for the UK.

**Pray:** that God would answer our prayers and that He would bring revival and transformation to our nations. (Ps.85:6)

**More:** [http://www.theway.co.uk/news/shownews.php?news\\_id=6874](http://www.theway.co.uk/news/shownews.php?news_id=6874)

## EUROPE

### ■ EU ministers shirk third-world climate finance

Poorer countries have been left hanging by EU environment ministers, who at a meeting in Brussels failed to produce any clear funding commitments to help the developing world tackle climate change. Ministers from the 27 member states were in the European capital on Monday to discuss proposals published in January by the European Commission on what stance to take at the upcoming UN conference in Copenhagen in December. There, a replacement for the Kyoto Protocol is to be negotiated. It is too early to reveal what offers will be put on the table, the ministers argued, particularly as the US has yet to make public its negotiating stance. 'It makes no sense to say now how much the EU is willing to transfer,' German environment minister Sigmar Gabriel said at a press conference after the meeting. 'We were not quite able to reach consensus on the financing mechanism. This is an issue where the European Council will need more discussion time,' said EU environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas.

**Pray:** for the governments that they will not just seek their own selfish needs but remember those who are more needy. (Ps.82:3-4)

**More:** <http://euobserver.com/9/27707>

## WORLDWIDE

### ■ Sudan: Response to indictment

At a refugee camp of 20,000 Sudanese from Darfur the reaction to Omar al-Basher's indictment is quiet contentment. Although the more educated camp leaders articulated their happiness at the verdict, there was no massive outpouring of jubilation, or much to show that today was different from any other, though one of the refugees said he was sure there would be a reaction of demonstrations in the coming days. There are 12 camps containing 250,000 refugees dotted along the Chad-Sudan border. With access to healthcare and education for their children many refugees have managed to rebuild something of their lives but it remains virtually impossible to return home to Darfur. The latest judgement is significant, as these refugees who have so little to hope for recognise that someone is finally being held accountable for their suffering, and the outside world is taking an interest, but many believe there is danger of instability in Sudan now the warrant has been issued.

**Pray:** for a leader able to bring an end to government militia groups, abolish impunity from punishment and bring peace to a country of un-reconciled tribes and communities affected by 20 years of war. (Ps.3)

**More:** <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/7925130.stm>

### ■ Gaza: Emergency prayer alert

Prayer warriors worldwide are encouraged to cry out to God for divine intervention as the volatile situation in the Gaza Strip between Israel and the Islamic militant Hamas is heating up again. Prime Minister Ehud Olmert threatened a painful response to Palestinian rocket fire menacing southern Israel, suggesting the December offensive against Hamas fell short of its goals. More than 110 rockets and mortar shells have exploded in Israel in the six weeks since official hostilities ended. So far Israel has responded to the rocket fire with airstrikes on underground tunnels from Egypt. On 1st March Olmert told Gaza's Islamic militant rulers to expect a severe response if the attacks don't stop. The rockets 'will be answered with a painful, harsh, strong and uncompromising response from the security forces,' Olmert said at the start of this week's Israel Cabinet meeting. Three thousand Christians living in Gaza have increasingly been targeted by Muslim aggression since before the end of the cease fire.

**Pray:** that the demonic forces that keep these precious people in captivity will be demolished. Pray also that Samaria and Judea - the home and burial place of Israel's founding fathers, would also have a peaceful future. (Ps.24:7)

**More:** <http://www.win1040.com/EPA/index.htm>

### ■ Jerusalem: Third tractor terror attack

A Palestinian man driving a large construction vehicle was shot dead after intentionally attacking a police car on Thursday afternoon. Before he was shot the man tried to tip over additional vehicles including a public bus full of girls dressed in Purim costumes en route to cheer patients at a Hospital in advance of the holiday. The girls in the bus were hysterical. They saw the enormous scoop heading toward them and saw death approaching but they were saved at the last minute by a post. It is a Purim miracle. Police, MDA and ZAKA forces streamed to the scene minutes after the emergency call went out. The heavy vehicle attack is the third of its kind in less than a year.

**Pray:** for God's angels to protect and inspire peace in all of Jerusalem's streets and that the city would continue to prosper as God intends it to. (Ps.122:6 & Zec.1:16-17)

**More:** <http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1236246868064&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull>

### ■ Pakistan: Poses global security worry

Diplomats in Kabul warned that Pakistan posed a bigger security challenge than Afghanistan, as Islamabad grappled with the latest terrorist attack on its soil and the escalating Taliban insurgency on its north-western border. Senior officials in the Foreign Office and the Obama administration express concern because of its nuclear weapons and its highly politicised and Islamicised secret service, the Inter-Services Intelligence agency (ISI). It was noted that every time Pakistan signed a peace deal there is an increase in the fighting on the Afghan side and peace deals fall apart quickly. The epicentre of the problem is Pakistan's Federally-Administered Tribal Areas (Fata) which have become a stronghold for jihadist groups including al-

Qaida and various splinters of the Taliban. The Guardian reported on Tuesday that three warlords in Fata had settled their differences, formed a group calling itself Shura Ittihad-ul Mujahideen, or Council of United Holy Warriors, and had agreed to focus their efforts on launching attacks in Afghanistan.

**Pray:** against the expected 'more violence this summer' that is being talked about and may the church stand and continue to stand against the Islamization of Pakistan. (Rev.3:7)

**More:** <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/mar/04/pakistan-global-security-threat>

#### ■ Madagascar: Explosion of anger

Urgent prayer is needed for church mediation and a resolution to conflict between the President of Madagascar and the ex-Mayor of Antananarivo which has resulted in 100 deaths. The Christian Churches in Madagascar began successful mediation between the two sides on Saturday but they appear to have stalled. An Anglican priest says there is 'a social explosion of great anger all over the country.' While the people remain in deep poverty, political leaders steal the wealth of the country. Meanwhile Associated Press reports, 'As the stalemate continues, food is becoming 'rare and expensive.' Hundreds of security forces blocked roads in the Madagascan capital Thursday to thwart a second day of attempts by opposition supporters to hold city protests. Mr Rajoelina, sacked last month as the Antananarivo mayor, accuses the president of running a dictatorship while his people starve. Rajoelina has become undisputed leader of Madagascar's opposition, building support on widespread popular grievances over poverty and violations of civil liberties.

**Pray:** that the mediation talks would be resumed 'allowing' God to bring an acceptance of justice and righteous conclusions to every obstacle. (Ps.10:12)

**More:** <http://www.churchtimes.co.uk/content.asp?id=71202>

#### ■ India: Anti-conversion bill

The Hindu nationalist government in Karnataka state is planning to introduce the 'anti-conversion' law that led to anti-Christian violence in other states. Karnataka recorded the second-highest number of attacks on Christians last year. One of the things this law might possibly require is for someone to stand in front of a magistrate and make the statement, 'I am changing my religion.' That would basically paint a target on that person's back and make him a potential victim of persecution and attacks. Hindu extremists say the laws are needed because Christians are forcing Hindus to convert. This law seeks to elevate a problem that does not exist and will only do more to create fear for Christians and do nothing to protect their rights as many Christians are forced to renounce their faith or are threatened with violence. One onlooker said, 'I am not aware of any case where a Hindu has been prosecuted under the anti-conversion law for forcing someone to become Hindu.'

**Pray:** for religious tolerance and against the persecution of Christians that is increasing across India, asking God for a divine strengthening of His church. (Pr.11:9)

**More:** <http://www.mnnonline.org/article/12376>

## PRAISE REPORTS

#### ■ Women's World Day of Prayer; Praying for the world one country at a time

For more than 75 years, Christians in the UK have united in prayer as part of the Women's World Day of Prayer, and this year, more than 5,000 services are being planned across England, Wales and Northern Ireland for the occasion on 6 March. 'It's an enormous chain of prayer that sweeps the world,' says Mimi Barton, Chair of the England, Wales and Northern Ireland Committee. 'The first service takes place in Tonga and the last one some 36 hours later off the coast of Samoa. It's a truly global chain.' The point, Mimi stresses, is to bring Christians together in praying for the needs of a particular country as seen through the eyes of the women there. We can be quite insular at times and this is breaking us out of our insular mode and making us look to other people. The country of focus changes each year and this time, support material is produced by Christian women in Papua New Guinea.

**Praise:** God for the women that pray, may He open His ears to their prayers. (Ps.5:1-3)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/praying.for.the.world.one.country.at.a.time/22689.htm>

#### ■ USA: Prayer warriors pray for un-employment at Job Fair; hundreds respond

An NBC news affiliate has reported that when First Baptist Church Pastor Tim Childers organized a community-wide prayer and comfort service recently to show up and pray for employment seekers at a job fair in Alabama, hundreds responded. According to the report, the prayer table was just as busy as any employer's booth represented at the fair. 'At one point in time, the line for prayer was longer than any line for jobs,' said Childers. 'You can weather a lot of storms if you know somebody cares, particularly if they know that God cares.' Sherry Bentley agreed 'Prayer changes things. We believe in the power of prayer, and so we're praying that God changes things.'

**Praise:** God for this blessing of answered prayers and pray that those who responded will have their specific needs met. (Jer.29:11)

**More:** [http://www.breakingchristiannews.com/articles/display\\_art.html?ID=6437](http://www.breakingchristiannews.com/articles/display_art.html?ID=6437)

## PRAYER FORUM 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 Forum of the British Isles and Ireland  
C/O World Prayer Centre, Cornerstone House, 5 Ethel Street, Birmingham, B2 4BG, England