

PRAYER ALERT...

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BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ **FRIDAY FOCUS: 20 March 2009 - Hope for mothers - Deuteronomy 32:10-12**

Mothering Sunday (22nd March) is a time when we bless and honour mothers and their role in the family. **Pray:** A blessing on your mum or those who have been like a mum to you. Pray for a mother you know who is struggling whether as a single parent, working parent, etc.

More: http://worldprayer.org.uk/uploads/Friday_Focus_Mar_2009.doc

■ **Minister beaten after clashing with Muslims on his TV show**

A Christian minister who has had heated arguments with Muslims on his TV Gospel show has been brutally attacked by three men who ripped off his cross and warned: 'If you go back to the studio, we'll break your legs.' The Reverend Noble Samuel was driving to the studio when a car pulled out in front of him. A man got out and came over to ask him directions in Urdu. Mr Samuel, based at Heston United Reformed Church, West London, said: 'He put his hand through the window, grabbed my hair and started punching me. The other two men from the car took my laptop and Bible.' The Metropolitan Police are treating it as a 'faith hate' assault and are hunting three Asian men. In spite of the attack, Mr Samuel went ahead with his hour-long live Asian Gospel Show on the Venus satellite channel from studios in Wembley, North London. During the show the Muslim station owner Tahir Ali came on air to condemn the attack.

Pray: for those who are persecuted because of their faith that God would fill them with His strength and power by His Spirit. (Ps.5:11)

More: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1162039/Minister-beaten-clashing-Muslims-TV-show.html>

■ **British missionary in the Gambia, fresh charges**

Thank you for your support and prayers for David and Fiona Fulton, the British church leaders charged with sedition and with inciting hatred against the President and government of the Gambia. (See also Prayer Alert 0109) As many of you are aware, David is potentially facing new charges of forgery and impersonating an officer and faces trial. However, due to uncertainties about legal representation, the trial has yet to begin in earnest. Unfortunately, in the midst of this David is deteriorating both physically and mentally. He is described as being 'in very poor condition physically; very thin with difficulty moving and in pain'. He is also reported not to be in a good state emotionally and may be being held in solitary confinement again, with all that this may entail. Fiona is said to be in better condition. David and Fiona were arrested on charges of sedition and of inciting hatred against the Gambian President and people. For full story and background details click on the 'More' link.

Pray: for the Fultons, their health and strength to withstand present difficulties and that God will build them up spiritually. Pray that authorities will be given righteous judgment. (Ps.1:6)

More: <http://www.csw.org.uk/urgentactiongambiafultons.htm?ea.url.id=4902&ea.campaigner.email=tony@prayer-alert.net&4902>

■ Teen mags blamed for sexualising girls

Teenage magazine publishers have been blamed for sexualising their young readers by the Government's consumer watchdog. Ed Mayo, chief executive of Consumer Focus, said parents would be shocked at the content of the magazines, which are read by children as young as ten or eleven. The latest edition of Sugar magazine, with an average reader age of 14, features a spread entitled 'Is it a crush or are you gay?'. Bliss magazine, whose average reader is 15 years old, has previously invited girls to send in photographs of themselves to be judged on looks in a competition called 'How Sexy Am I?'. The magazine industry is self-regulated, with the Teenage Magazine Arbitration Panel. However, critics argue that few parents are aware of the TMAP, which has ruled on just three complaints since it was launched in 1996. In the past three years it has only received one complaint.

Pray: that parents and organisations like Consumer Focus would challenge the dangers that such magazine articles are to our young. (2Tim.2:22)

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/20090316/teen-mags-blamed-for-sexualising-girls/>

■ Fathers have role in keeping children safe, says report

Fathers have a vital role in keeping children safe from abuse, according to an official report into social services commissioned after a number of children known to social service were found to have died as a result of chronic neglect or abuse. The report estimated that 200,000 children are at high risk of violence or abuse in their own home. It further estimates that 350,000 children have parents with serious drug habits and another 1.3 million had parents who suffer from serious drink problems. In 2007-08, 55 children in England were murdered by family members, or partners of family members. Lord Laming, who chaired the commission, stated: 'Particular mention should be made of the part played by fathers, not least as good role models. I believe the really important thing is that parenthood should be seen as a lifetime commitment.' Baby P's main abuser was his mother's partner. Children are proportionately most at risk when living with men to whom they are not related.

Pray: for all the children who are at risk and for the problems of marriage breakdown that effect so many. (Eph.6:4)

More: <http://www.ionainstitute.ie/>

■ New immigration rules leave Christians confused

New immigration rules mean that foreign Christian musicians and missionaries to the UK could be deported if they are not sponsored by a licensed organisation and obtain the necessary visas. At the start of March, Colorado-based Christian singer Don Francisco was refused entry into London. Francisco, who has travelled throughout the UK for 30 years without trouble, said, 'I felt like they were looking for a reason to keep me out,' reports Pentecostal publication Charisma. Just the day before, a Master's Commission team from Arkansas was refused admission to the country after immigration officials found that they would be volunteering at soup kitchens in partnership with Assemblies of God churches in Edinburgh. Daniel Webster, parliamentary officer of the Evangelical Alliance, said that the new immigration regulations had been introduced last November to counter illegal immigration and the threat of terrorism. The new rules, he said, had left many ministers and organisations confused.

Pray: for a clarification of new rules so that we can continue to welcome our Christian brothers and sisters to the UK as we have done so often in the past. (Php.2:29)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.co.uk/article/new-immigration.rules.leave.christians.confused/22785.htm>

■ Charities in downturn 'Double Whammy'

The recession is hitting charities so hard that more than half say their work is bound to suffer, a survey has found. In a report by the Charity Commission, 52% of charities say the credit crunch has affected the work they do. Almost two-thirds of charities with an annual income of £1m or more also said they were concerned the downturn would have a significant impact on their work. It is a problem that has worried charity bosses so much that a third say they have taken steps to try to combat the impact of the ailing economy. Dame Suzi Leather, chair of the Charity Commission, said: 'Clearly the impact of the financial downturn on charities is widening and deepening.' She went on to say that, 'Some charities still face that double whammy of a drop in income as well as an increased demand for services.'

Pray: for the work of charities including many Christian based organisations that, like the 'loaves and fishes', God will use the resources available to the full. (Mk.8:7-21)

More: http://news.sky.com/skynews/Home/Business/Economic-Downturn-Hits-Charities-Half-Say-Their-Work-In-The-Community-Is-Affected/Article/200903315242744?lpos=Business_Third_UK_News_Article_Teaser_Region_6&lid=ARTICLE_15242744_Economic_Downturn_Hits_Charities%3A_Half_Say_Their_Work_In_The_Community_Is_Affected

EUROPE

■ EU: Protect Sunday as a special day

A grouping of Europe's Protestant, Anglican and Orthodox churches has urged the European Union to protect Sunday as a day of rest, as the 27-nation grouping considers new regulations on working time. 'Scientific research shows that Sunday is more closely connected with the health of workers than any other day of the week,' the Church and Society Commission of the Conference of European Churches said in a statement issued on following a meeting at Nyborg in Denmark. It noted that the European Parliament and the 27 EU member states are currently negotiating a new directive to set down the hours that employees are able to work.

Pray: for more glimmers of God's agenda to be written into the EU's directives, so that countries may develop according to God's purposes. (1Ki.2:3)

More: <http://www.eni.ch/news/item.php?id=2821>

■ **Police arrest seven in Amsterdam terror threat**

The police have arrested seven suspects in connection with a threat to stores in the southeast of Amsterdam. The suspects are all Dutchmen of Moroccan descent. One of them is said to be a relative of a person involved in the 2004 Madrid terror attacks on commuter trains, in which 191 people were killed. The police say they received a phone call from Brussels that three men intended to plant explosives in the Amsterdam stores. The caller gave the names and addresses of the men in question and the stores they intended to attack. The police picked up the seven suspects after consultation with the national security service. The homes of the seven suspects, who are accused of preparing terrorist attacks, have been searched. The IKEA home furnishings store and several other stores on the Arena Boulevard were closed all day on Thursday in connection with the threats. The Heineken Music Hall was also closed, forcing the cancellation of Thursday night's concert by US band The Killers.

Pray: against terrorism in all its aspects and pray that the authorities will be given the insight necessary to deal with the problem. (Ps.28:4)

More: <http://mychristianblood.blogspot.com/archive/2009/03/15/police-arrest-seven-in-amsterdam-terror-threat.html#more>

WORLDWIDE

■ **Madagascar: Protestant leader released from detention**

Rev. Lala Rasendrasina, the head of the largest Protestant church in Madagascar (FJKM) was freed following the resignation of President Marc Ravalomanana. The FJKM is a member of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. President Ravalomanana, a senior lay official of the FJKM, announced his resignation following a campaign by opposition leader Andry Rajoelina forcing him out of office. Tensions worsen by the prominent role of Ravalomanana as lay vice-president of the FJKM, which accounts for 3.5 million of Madagascar's 20 million people, while Rajoelina has made no secret of his links to the numerically stronger Roman Catholic Church. Madagascar's violent political crisis broke out in late January over democratic reform. (See PA1009). Rajoelina had been attempting to force out Ravalomanana, who came to power in a disputed 2002 election and who Rajoelina accused of being a corrupt tyrant.

Pray: for God to take control of this situation and bring his truth and judgments to prevail within the various bodies of the church and government officials for the sake of the peace and welfare of the people. (Is.8:12,13)

More: <http://www.eni.ch/featured/article.php?id=2830>

■ **Israel: Internal friction threatens coalition**

An argument between Labour MKs over whether the party should join a coalition headed by Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu may be decided over a technicality, as the party's by-laws may not permit the Central Committee from convening before the new government is sworn in. Benjamin Netanyahu has the potential to be a great Prime Minister, a report from Jerusalem says, 'His Macro management is excellent, he has an incredible world view, but his micro management is poor. He is known as a man who panics. Ask God to touch him and give him the management skills that he needs to lead the government and the nation.' Time is running out for a coalition to be formed by Thursday next week. After that there is two weeks grace but if a government is not formed and if Mz Livini cannot form a government the country will go to new elections.

Pray: for a government of excellence to be formed, one with unity and a passion and calling to do God's will. (Ex.18:19-23)

More: <http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1237392667033&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull>

■ **Iran: Says its missiles could reach Israel's nuclear facilities**

Iran said it now has a military force capable of deterring any US or Israeli attack. 'All nuclear facilities in various parts of the lands under occupation of the Zionist regime are within the range of Iran's missiles,' the official IRNA news agency quoted official statements. Israel has warned that it could attack Iran if it does not abandon its nuclear programme, which Israel and the US suspect is a cover for weapons production. Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu is considered likely to keep open the option of a military strike. Iran's missiles have a range capable of putting Israel within striking distance and its warplanes capabilities enable flights to Israel and back without refuelling. Tehran says its atomic programme is only for generating power and other peaceful purposes. Meanwhile at a nuclear energy conference in London Gordon Brown revealed he and the United States hope to rid the world of nuclear weapons. see:-

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iran/5002140/Gordon-Brown-Iran-can-have-nuclear-power-if-it-works-with-the-West.html>

Pray: for God's restraining hand on leaders who do not hear his voice and His protection and deliverance for all nations under the shadow of rumours of war. (Da.12:1)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iran/4939326/Iran-says-it-missiles-could-reach-Israelis-nuclear-facilities.html>

■ **Canada: Call on bishops to halt abortion funding for Mexico**

Catholic international pro-life groups have called on the Canadian Conference of Bishops to cease funding for groups promoting abortion in Mexico. An investigation found that the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace (CCODP) has been donating hundreds of thousands of dollars to pro-abortion groups in Mexico. The CCODP does not deliberately fund pro-abortion groups but is also not concerned if groups receiving funding go against Church teaching. The

revelations have shocked Catholic and pro-life groups. The Church in Mexico is under great pressure on the abortion question and the Canadian Church is undercutting funds and undermining principles.

Pray: for global church unity enabling God's work amongst every people group to preach the gospel effectively in words and actions. (Jn.17:20-21)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/catholics.prolifers.call.on.canadian.bishops.to.halt.abortion.funding/22794.htm>

■ Sri Lanka: Emergency prayer alert

Urgent and intense prayer is needed for Sri Lanka after recent reports of innocent civilians being killed by the terrorist organisation Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. A Christian leader said, 'This is the destiny of the innocent Tamil civilians who tried to escape into government-controlled areas, if caught they will be burned alive. I felt a demonic presence operating in those areas, God have mercy upon Sri Lanka.' About 38,900 people have fled into government areas since January 2009, A UNICEF report estimated between 150,000 and 200,000 civilians trapped by the fighting inside a narrowing combat zone of 50 square kilometres. The International Committee of the Red Cross said attempts to evacuate sick and wounded civilians out of the combat zone by land ceased due to security fears, and now sea rescue has also been postponed through lack of security guarantees. Christians are persecuted for their faith in Sri Lanka.

Pray: for immediate release of Sri Lanka from all oppressive strongholds that would prevent mercy missions and aid agencies from ministering to the victims. (Is.25:4-5)

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

■ Cuba: Pastor's trial suspended

In December 2008, Reverend Rodriguez was accused of 'offensive behaviour'. Thankfully the trial was suspended, possibly because of the attention it received outside Cuba with the help of your intercession. (See P.A.0109) Now unexpectedly charges still stand with more suspensions of trial date. He was hospitalised last week with pan-gastritis and his family are being targeted by aggressive neighbours as local authorities do nothing. The daughter-in-law of Reverend Rodriguez, Gianelys Meneses, was attacked on the street while walking with her two-year old daughter. As a result she suffered a miscarriage at eight weeks and has been told that authorities may charge her as responsible for the attack. Her husband, Eric Gabriel Rodriguez, was sentenced to three months to one year's house arrest for 'offensive behaviour' with the possibility of imprisonment if he 're-offends'. The family requests representations be made to the Ministry of Religious Affairs; requesting charges dropped and Pastor Eric's conviction thrown out, guaranteeing safety and protection for the family.

Pray: that many would respond to the request for written support and that all charges would be dropped. Pray also for God's strength for all Christians in Cuba persecuted for their faith. (2Chr.16:9a)

More: <http://www.csw.org.uk/urgentactioncubarodriguez.htm>

PRAISE REPORTS

■ Botswana: Rejoice

Today this office received an update from a small group of passionate people who trusted God to use them for His glory. In six days they travelled 4,734 kilometres reached 2,723 people with the gospel leaving behind bibles and other material, led 1,417 people to Christ, touched the lives of 690 children (future disciples?) and plan to go back to a further 19 areas for follow up and outreach to more unreached people groups. Hallelujah!

Praise: and thank God for his faithful servants who go with their heart in God's hand and their feet shod with the Gospel of peace. (Ro.10:17)

■ Guatemala City: Poorest children given Christian education

Patricia Arzú is the wife of Guatemala City's mayor Alvaro Arzú. As reported in Mission Network News, in 1996, when her husband was president of Guatemala, she used her position as First Lady to bring Biblical education into schools - even the public municipal schools. Now, as First Lady of Guatemala City, she has teamed up with Orphan Outreach to give that city's poorest children access to a Bible-based education as well. Mrs. Arzú reportedly runs schools for the poorest of the poor in her city. Orphan Outreach works with preschool education, early intervention support and evangelism, where they become the hands and feet of Christ. Their work dovetails into the passion Arzu has shown for over a decade.

http://www.breakingchristiannews.com/articles/display_art.html?ID=6492 Last weekend Evangelist Luis Palau's first evangelistic festival in 2009 drew more than 450,000 in Guatemala City. Palau ran his latest evangelistic campaign there at the invitation of more than 3,000 Guatemalan churches.

Praise: God for the passion of Patricia Arzú and Luis Palau that their work will bring many blessings to the people of Guatemala City and beyond. (Dt.28:1-14)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/palau.fest.draws.400000.in.guatemala.city/22814.htm>

PRAYER FORUM OF BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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