

London Riots Spark Prayer Unity Movement

Roiling balls of angry flames throb from gutted buildings and shops in north London. Rioting young people with faces masked by dark cloth wrappings clash with London riot police. Charred frames of metal that were once cars litter the streets.

Violent London riots have been raging since the police shooting of 29-year-old Mark Duggan on Aug. 4. Police were attempting to arrest him in Tottenham, a city with a familiar history of riots.

Following Duggan's death, his friends and family gathered for a peaceful protest at the Tottenham police station. But things did not stay peaceful after 300 people joined the protest and violence quickly erupted.

International Mission Board missionaries in London are currently working to reach out amidst the chaos and rioting. One missionary couple with IMB is leading a prayer unity movement in north London.

The couple says the violence "has been a frightening experience for people, especially within the immigrant community. Christians in these communities are trying to give hope, but that hope needs to be coupled with tangible help, whether that is working to clean up areas or walking alongside these kids who have become so hardened."

Since the start of the riots, it has spread from the capital to areas of Birmingham, Nottingham, Liverpool and Bristol. People have conflicting opinions on the issue starting the riots.

Whether it's class or racial issues, anger from the impoverished of London or simply young upstarts taking

advantage of the chaos, the peace of Christ is what the bleeding streets of London are crying out for.

“People in London—especially immigrants—might become more open to the Gospel because of their constant state of fear,” says London IMB worker. “This event has opened up a powder keg of pent-up frustration. There is a very real sense of hopelessness about the future among the young people of Britain.”

According to the *Washington Post*, some businesses have started to reopen in some of the areas affected by violence, but citizens are still terrified of the streets after dark.

Police are setting out to reclaim the streets of London, raiding the homes of looters, and using face-recognition technology to arrest dissenters.

Pray that northern London would return to a state of calm and that the riots would disintegrate. Pray that the issues behind the violence would be addressed and that the people of London will come to see that Christ is the only true satisfaction in our distress.

An IMB London worker summed it up well: “This is a time when people could turn to the Lord and seek something that man and the government cannot provide.”