

PASTOR'S THOUGHTS

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The Blood

It has been reported that Prime Minister Rishi Sunak announced his apologies to the victims and families affected by the infected blood scandal given to patients for decades.

His apology came in response to the public inquiry's report, which has seen 30,000 people infected from contaminated blood treatments. The report found that authorities covered the scandal and exposed victims to unacceptable risks.

The Inquiry went on to accuse doctors, the government, and the NHS of letting patients catch HIV and hepatitis. This has resulted in 3,000 deaths so far, and more deaths are expected to follow.

Mr Sunak told the House of Commons he was "truly sorry" for the failures. "Today's report shows a decades-long moral failure at the heart of our national life. I want to make a wholehearted and unequivocal apology."

He said the attitude of denial was hard to comprehend and was to "our eternal shame". Furthermore, he **promised to pay "whatever it costs"** in compensation payments to victims, with details to follow on Tuesday.

The apology did not stop there. Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer also apologised, describing it as one of the "gravest injustices" the country had seen and saying victims had "suffered unspeakably."

What the inquiry found

The infected blood scandal is the NHS's biggest treatment disaster. The inquiry examined over 50 years of decision-making around contaminated blood transfusions. It was found that safety had not been prioritised despite known risks since 1948.

Key issues included importing high-risk blood products from the US, licensing unsafe products, and delayed heat treatment for HIV. Warnings from experts were ignored, and hepatitis testing was insufficient.

The inquiry, led by Sir Brian Langstaff, highlighted "downright deception" and a lack of transparency. Institutional defensiveness worsened the scandal, delaying the public inquiry. The disaster caused severe harm, especially to children, and was due to authorities' neglect.

Despite this, there is a blood we can depend upon and trust: the power and purity of the blood of Jesus Christ. His blood, shed on the cross, is the ultimate atonement for humanity's sins, bringing life and transforming lives. The purity of His blood is perfect and sufficient and cures every death, not causing any death.

There are three things that the Blood of Jesus does over the contaminated blood of the NHS

1. Cleanses Sin: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin" (1 John 1:7, NIV).
2. Provides Redemption: "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace" (Ephesians 1:7, NIV).
3. Empowers Transformation: "How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!" (Hebrews 9:14, NIV).

We pray for those affected by this latest scandal, but we, more importantly, pray that the blood of Jesus reaches those victims and brings healing and life.