

PRAYER ALERT...

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PRAISE REPORTS

■ Honduras: Kidnapped - then thousands pray

On August 12th missionary Trish and her son Ben were accosted by two young men with handguns and taken to a remote area. Then Trish was released and the kidnappers began ransom demands via the mission sending agency supporting the family. The kidnappers had no way of knowing that through social media within 12 hours there were over 100,000 people praying for Ben, after 20 hours there were over a quarter million praying. At the end, 300,000 people had logged in and were praying around the globe for his release. The negotiation - or lack of negotiation - was tense because the family could not pay a ransom. In response to prayer, God moved and the two young men had a change of heart. Ben was released unharmed on August 13th and taken to a local hospital for observation. He was dizzy and confused when released, and slightly bruised from his travel through the bush.

Praise: God for social media activating global prayer within a matter of minutes. (Ps.66:19-20)

More: <http://crossmap.christianpost.com/news/honduras-son-of-missionaries-12-kidnapped-at-gunpoint-gods-warriors-over-100000-people-pray-4692>

■ Togo: Taking the Gospel to the Tem

An indigenous ministry in Togo works with members of the Tem people. They are an under-reached Muslim tribe of more than 400,000 people. Despite threats and harassment the ministry continues to preach the Gospel on a radio programme that is broadcast in the local language. Its School of Missions graduates some 40 students annually who are trained to evangelize and provide for the practical needs of the Tem people and other ethnic groups in the region. The ministry has also started over 200 house churches in Togo and has seen spiritual breakthroughs in some of the tribal villages.

Praise: God for these humble dedicated brothers and sisters who are successfully reaching the lost with the Good News of Jesus Christ. (Mk.13:10)

More: <http://www.godreports.com/ministry-updateview/1566>

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Poor grades cause young people to give up on ambitions

One in three school leavers with poor grades believe they'll end up on benefits. That's according to a survey for The Prince's Trust, which also found around one in five have 'abandoned their ambitions' due to a lack of success in the classroom. The charity claims that children who fail to make the grade at school are giving up on their dreams and expect to live off state handouts. More than 2,000 young people aged 16 to 25 were questioned as part of the online survey, which also found that those with fewer than five GCSEs are almost twice as likely as their peers to believe that they will 'never amount to anything'. The poll also showed one in 10 young people believe their exam results will 'always' hold them back.

This increases to a quarter (26%) among those who left school with poor grades. The Trust says 'It is now more important than ever to invest in vocational support and training for young people who are not academically successful.'

Pray: for all those who feel they have failed academically and that they will be given hope, purpose and direction in life. (Heb.12:1)

More: <http://www.premier.org.uk/news/current/Poor%20grades%20cause%20young%20people%20to%20give%20up%20on%20ambitions%20says%20report.aspx>

■ Problems of Forces personnel switching to civilian life

The shock of leaving the Armed Forces took its toll with alcohol and mental health problems, unemployment and family break-ups according to the Forces in Mind Trust. Veterans' alcohol problems had the biggest effect, costing an estimated £35 million in 2012, followed by mental health problems costing £26 million. The costs are predicted to rise this year because of the loss of thousands of jobs in recent months from defence cuts. The Trust, which campaigns to make it easier for veterans to settle back into civilian life, said the great majority made the jump successfully, but it was still surprised by the scale of the costs. The report found the culture shock for those leaving the Forces has been underestimated. Andrew Curry, author of the report, said: 'Even those who have gone through a good transition said they found their experience of civilian life and the workplace to be a shock.'

Pray: for members of the Armed Forces as they make the transition to civilian life and that they will receive appropriate support. (Ps.55:22)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/journalists/ben-farmer/10243464/Problems-of-Forces-personnel-switching-to-civilian-life-cost-114m.html>

■ Fracking could alleviate suffering of poor people, says Church

The Church of England has criticised 'blanket opposition' to fracking and called for a debate that takes the poor and less costly energy sources into consideration. In a statement on the issue, the Church said it did not have an official policy on hydraulic fracturing but suggested the pros and cons needed to be viewed through a wider lens. In particular, the Church suggested fracking could alleviate fuel poverty and the suffering of the poor. The Chair of the Church of England's group on Mission and Public Affairs, Philip Fletcher said, 'Fuel poverty is an increasingly urgent issue for many in society - the impact on energy bills is felt most by the least well off. Blanket opposition to further exploration for new sources of fuel fails to take into account those who suffer most when resources are scarce.' However, the Church said that fracking should be properly regulated and steps taken to minimise the risks.

Pray: for a fair and balanced debate on the pros and cons of fracking that avoids melodramatic misinformation so that the nation can make an informed judgement. (Job 28:12)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/fracking.could.alleviate.suffering.of.poor.people.says.church/33614.htm>

■ Chief rabbi Lord Sacks accuses David Cameron of failing to promote marriage

Britain's chief rabbi, Lord Sacks, has accused David Cameron of failing to do enough to encourage marriage and says multiculturalism in Britain has 'had its day'. Lord Sacks said the Prime Minister should recognise marriage in the tax system and do more to support mothers who stay at home to look after their children. 'I think the Government has not done enough [to encourage marriage],' he said in an interview with The Times. 'Although I don't take a political stance, I don't think the government has done enough at all.' Lord Sacks said the estimated £9bn-a-year cost of family breakdown and 'non-marriage' meant the state had a direct interest in promoting marriage. 'The Government should certainly recognise marriage in the tax system, it should certainly give more support to mothers who stay at home or for childcare provision,' he said. 'I don't believe in getting involved in the details but the principle is pretty clear.'

Pray: for a renewed Government support for marriage after years of policies that have undermined it.

More: <http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2013/aug/19/rabbi-lord-sacks-david-cameron-failing-marriage>

■ BBC under fire for misleading public

Pentecostal church leaders are concerned the BBC has purposely misled the public with its story about pastors advising sick patients to give up their medicine and rely on faith alone to be healed. The story went out across BBC TV, radio and online platforms over the weekend, and was based on anecdotal evidence from 19 doctors and health professionals. Ten doctors said they had encountered HIV patients over the last five years who had felt under pressure by their pastors to stop taking their anti-retroviral drugs. But the story has been labelled 'biased and unfounded' by Rev John Glass – a member of the Alliance's One People Commission and general superintendent of Elim Pentecostal Churches, and Rev John Partington, general superintendent of the Assemblies of God. Together, the men lead the UK's two largest and longest established Pentecostal denominations.

Pray: that the truth will be exposed and any misleading reports be ignored. (Pr.12:7)

More: <http://www.eauk.org/current-affairs/news/bbc-under-fire-for-misleading-public.cfm>

■ Young people lack skills for workplace

Nick Hurd, the Minister for Civil Society, believes young people are not getting jobs because they lack the confidence, self control and 'grit' needed in the workplace. His comments come as the number of 16-24-year-olds not working has risen to more than one million also revealing, almost half have never worked at all. Mr Hurd, son of former Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd, said a number of young people are out of work because schools are concentrating solely on education and ignoring the social skills employers look for. He said something was going wrong at schools that meant pupils were not being stretched and challenged to give them self confidence at a 'critical time in their lives' to prepare them for work. Latest figures show the number of young people not in education, employment or training (Neets) has risen to 1.09 million – with more than 600,000 having never had a job.

Pray: for young people who are without work that ways will be found to encourage them. (Rom.12:8)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/10256115/Nick-Hurd-says-young-people-lack-skills-for-workplace.html>

■ Heathrow: High alert for bombs hidden in breast implants

The UK's busiest airport, Heathrow, has been put on high terror alert after 'credible' intelligence emerged that al-Qaeda is plotting attacks on airlines flying out of London with the help of women suicide bombers with explosives concealed in breast implants. 'There are genuine fears over this. We have been told to pay particular attention to females who may have concealed hidden explosives in their breasts. This is particularly difficult for us to pick up but we are on a very high state of alert,' said an official with airport security, as quoted by the Daily Mail. 'It's led to long queues here at Heathrow, much longer than usual at this time of the year. But because it's the summer holiday season, no one has complained,' the official said.

Pray: against attempts to cause acts of terror and pray that the authorities will be given wisdom. (Pr.2:2)

More: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2395532/Al-Qaida-Heathrow-terror-experts-fear-women-suicide-bombers-hide-explosives-BREAST-IMPLANTS.html>

EUROPE

■ European rail network now on al-Qaeda hit-list

Al-Qaeda is plotting attacks on Europe's high-speed rail network, a German newspaper reported, citing intelligence sources. The extremist group could plant explosives on trains and tunnels or sabotage tracks and electrical cabling, said Bild, Europe's most widely read daily. While Germany said its threat level had not changed and Austria said no additional security measures had been taken, a Czech rail official said authorities there had implemented new, unspecified security measures. Bild said the information came from the National Security Agency (NSA) in the United States, which had listened in to a conference call involving top al-Qaeda operatives. The attacks on Europe's rail network were a 'central topic' of this call, Bild said. German authorities had responded to the threat with discreet measures such as deploying plain-clothed police officers at key stations and on main routes.

Pray: against terrorist attacks and pray that those involved in such acts will be captured. (Is.8:15)

More: <http://freepressjournal.in/european-rail-network-now-on-qaeda-hit-list/>

■ Caritas aiding Spain's 'new poor'

Thousands of Spanish families have been forced to turn to aid agency Caritas for help in the midst of Spain's economic crisis. The annual report for the Almeria Branch of Caritas revealed that Spanish families receiving food aid in 2012 outnumbered immigrant families - 4,652 compared to 3,844. Details of the 38-page report were published by the Fides news agency and showed that together, Spanish and immigrant families received more than a million kilos in food aid in 2012. Spain's fortunes could be about to turn a corner after the Bank of Spain estimated recently that the economy contracted by just 0.1% in the second quarter, the slowest rate of decline in nearly two years. But the financial crisis triggered record levels of unemployment and although the number of registered jobless has fallen in the last five months, the unemployment rate is expected to remain above 25% for the next five years.

Pray: for the Spanish government that they will master their financial situation. Thank God for Caritas and the support they have provided for those in need. (Ps.132:15)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/caritas.aiding.spains.new.poor/33657.htm>

WORLDWIDE

■ NIGERIA: Weekend attacks in North-East

At least 50 civilians were killed and dozens more injured in a series of weekend attacks in north-eastern Nigeria by Boko Haram. CSW reported 12 killed when Boko Haram members dressed in military and police uniforms attacked Ngom village in Borno State last Saturday. An unconfirmed report said 19 people from surrounding villages were also murdered on Sunday. Also on Sunday 46 worshippers in a mosque were killed and 30 injured. At the same time, other members of the group petrol bombed and destroyed 50 homes. This was Boko Haram's first large scale attack inside a mosque; the group had previously targeted individuals on their way to or from prayer. Meanwhile, due to a breach in communications there are now doubts over the widely reported Nigerian military's claim that Boko Haram's chief was killed earlier this week. See http://zeenews.india.com/news/world/doubts-over-claims-of-boko-haram-chief-s-death-in-nigeria_870460.html

Pray: for the state of emergency in Borno and Hobe States to successfully remove all who violently attempt to establish their interpretations of religion. Pray for good communications between military and government bodies. (Ps.34:14)

More: http://www.openheaven.com/forums/forum_posts.asp?TID=43876&PN=1

■ Israel: Citizens protesting Palestinian release

Recent protests by hundreds of Israelis in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv reflect indignation over the decision to release 104 Palestinian prisoners - many of them convicted terrorists guilty of murder. Polls show 85% of the Israeli public is opposed to their release. Terror victims' organizations have been vocal in opposition to the government's decision and are supported by Israelis across the political spectrum. Prisoners' crimes range from cold-blooded murder of people by placing bags over their heads and then shooting them, to Molotov cocktails killing women and children travelling in busses. Protests are also stirring on social media. A Facebook circulated info-graphic compared Israel's releasing terrorists for the sake of peace, to the United States releasing all the terrorists of Guantanamo Bay in exchange for peace talks with al-Qaeda and the Taliban. A protestor whose brother was murdered by one of the terrorists to be freed said the government are giving the wrong message to Israeli youth 'that their blood has no worth'.

Pray: for those in authority, that God would reveal his way forward for all negotiations and agreements. (Deut.29:29)

More: http://unitedwithisrael.org/israeli-citizens-protest-against-releasing-terrorists/?inf_contact_key=a1a0fdf347d6630254d7e1abc3b0a1cd3ebec7d0ad5a35487aa80469c4a887a2

■ Egypt: Update

Many in Egypt's Christian ministry are appalled at the misinterpretations of the situation in Egypt being reported by normally balanced international media like the BBC. They are portraying Muslim Brotherhood as the victims of injustice. Prior to the attack on the camp leaders in the Muslim Brotherhood warned, 'if it's broken up Christians would be attacked.' Immediately before and after Morsi's removal his supporters repeatedly blamed Christians for the protests that led to his removal. In sermons across the country imams called for Christians to be attacked. Since Mr Morsi's removal Islamists have painted black X's on Christian shops to mark them for arson and angry mobs have attacked churches and Christians in their homes. Leaflets have been left at Christian homes and businesses demanding them to leave or else face reprisals. Church services have been cancelled either through fear or because the buildings are too damaged. see also:

<http://www.christiantoday.com/article/egypt.churches.cancelling.services.for.fear.of.attack/33642.htm>

Pray: for God to protect and encourage all those living in fear and uncertainty. Ask Him to comfort all who have lost loved ones. (Is.61:2-3)

More: <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2013/august-web-only/egypt-christians-support-military-eviction-morsi-protesters.html>

■ Sri Lanka: Buddhist nationalism threat

Minorities in Sri Lanka are being threatened by aggressive Sinhalese Buddhist movements asserting supremacy over and leading hate campaigns against 'Christian and Muslim extremist groups.' They claim minority groups pose a threat to the Sinhalese Buddhist majority. The nationalists are inciting violence - almost every week a church, mosque or Muslim business is attacked by extremists. Attacks on Muslims (10% of the population) have attracted some international media coverage but the persecution of Christians (7% of the population) has received little attention. The campaign is becoming increasingly violent. 20+ mosques and 30+ churches have been attacked and 18 churches have been forced to close. Nationalists vowed to shut down the rest. (Traditional ethical and moral Buddhist teachings are governed by avoiding any actions which are likely to be harmful to self or others). Pray that Sri Lankan Christians will powerfully demonstrate the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the wisdom of Biblical teaching at this time.

Pray: for the government to take a stand against violent incidents towards minority groups. (1Tim2:1-2)

More: <http://www.barnabasfund.org/Editorial-Buddhist-nationalism-posing-major-threat-to-Christians-in-Sri-Lanka.html>

■ Indonesia: Victims of volcanoes

Three villages lie in the path of a tsunami should Mount Hobalt experience a major eruption after rumbling into life on Tuesday. Officials said the area has frequently been hit by tsunamis and the warning level for the volcano was at two on the scale of four. Tuesday's eruption is the latest in a string of increased volcanic activity in the region following eruptions from Mount Rokatenda that killed five on August 10th. Volcanic earthquakes were also recorded from Mount Werong on Tuesday with 81 shallow tremors in the space of an hour and a half. More than 800 people have been forced to flee their homes since August 7th. They join 2,750 living in temporary shelters in three camps since an eruption last year. Many in the camps are suffering from illnesses and complain, 'the government has not provided enough assistance'

Pray: for the homeless, the frail and elderly to receive appropriate government attention to their plight, and for God to cause agencies to send appropriate aid.

More: <http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/news/volcanoes-rumble-to-life-in-ntt/#more-%27>

■ USA: San Antonio may ban Christians from Government

The San Antonio City Council is setting the stage for an unprecedented attack on religious liberty, particularly for Christians. The City Council is considering an ordinance to add 'sexual orientation' and 'gender identity' to the discrimination ordinances in the city code. The proposal would ban anyone that has ever opposed (demonstrated bias, by word or deed) homosexuality from being involved in city government and/or performing a city contract/subcontract. The proposed ordinance provides no exemptions for religious beliefs on homosexuality, even beliefs expressed in Church. Christianity has been clear on its teaching that homosexuality is a sin, a deviation from God's unique design of men and women, for over two thousand years. Both the Old and New Testaments attest to this viewpoint. This makes the likely consequences of this proposed ordinance clear to see - a complete ban of Bible-believing Christians and faith-based businesses from participating in the city government. See also: <http://txvalues.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/SA-Ordinance.pdf>

Pray: for religious freedom to be upheld in San Antonio and across the United States of America.

More: <http://www.citizenlink.com/2013/07/31/commentary-san-antonio-looks-to-ban-christians-from-city-government/>

■ Global: Anti-corruption campaign

'EXPOSED' is aiming to collect at least a million signatures against corruption that will then be presented at the G20 meeting taking place in November 2014. The World Council of Churches is encouraging its member churches to get involved with this global campaign that highlights a trillion US dollars going missing from the global economy through bribes, dishonest deals and tax evasion - money that could be spent on lifting millions of people out of poverty

Pray: that this campaign will grow over the coming months – pray for many to respond to the issue of corruption being propagated by economic structures, value systems and greed. (Ps.45:3-4)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/world.council.of.churches.gets.behind.anti.corruption.campaign/33641.htm>

PRAYER FORUM OF THE BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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