

PRAYER ALERT...

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PRaise REPORTS

■ Young Christians have fun and develop their faith

The summer has seen a rash of events for new generations - here is an insight from some participants around the Diocese of Lichfield. While students of all ages enjoy the long break over the summer, many from churches and youth clubs around the diocese have spent a little of that time having fun and developing their faith. Over four and a half thousand young people from around the country gathered at Stafford Showground for the annual Soul Survivor event at the end of July; five days of exuberant worship, teaching, sport, food and culture. In contrast, the diocesan youth retreat centre, Dovedale House on the Staffordshire Moorlands is playing host to a much smaller and deliberately quieter event. Called Breathe, it promises quietude, time to meditate and escape from hectic term-times as well as a wide choice of activities. And no leaky tents!

Praise: God for Soul Survivor and all the other events throughout the summer that are designed to stimulate faith. (Ps.89:19)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/young.christians.have.fun.and.develop.their.faith/33734.htm>

■ Russian hotels to have a Bible in every room

With so much bad news coming out of Russia these days, it is surprising (and encouraging) to learn that this month, Russian hotels are to have Bibles in every room. According to Teresa Neumann of Breaking Christian News (<http://breakingchristiannews.com>), the first 6,000 copies of the New Testament and Psalms were installed this month in rooms of Izmailovo, one of the largest hotels in Moscow. 'The move is supported by the government's Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management Department of the Moscow Government and the Commission with the Diocesan Missionary Council of the capital', reports The Christian Telegraph. Dimitriy Pershin, the chairman of the Commission said, 'Actually, in every European hotel, guests can find Bibles in the rooms. The Gospel is a book that has become the foundation of European culture. It is an essential feature of the respectful and hospitable attitude towards the guests, as well as an indicator of the cultural level of the owners of hotels.'

Praise: God for this initiative and pray that it will lead to more opportunities. (Ac.6:7)

More: <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/2013/s13080097.htm>

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Church 'like drunken man nearing a precipice'

The Archbishop of Canterbury has warned that the Anglican Church is moving towards the 'edge of a precipice' amid disputes between liberals and traditionalists. Justin Welby said the church was in danger of abandoning its core beliefs while also falling into a 'ravine of intolerance' in the way its deals with divisive issues such as gay marriage and female

bishops. Speaking during a visit to Mexico, he likened the behaviour of the Church to a 'drunk man' staggering close to the edge of a cliff and drew parallels between the crisis afflicting the 77-million-strong Anglican community and the atmosphere in the Civil War. 'I sometimes worry that as Anglicans we are drifting back in that direction. Not consciously, of course, but in an unconscious way that is more dangerous,' he said. 'It is a dangerous place, a narrow path we walk as Anglicans at present.'

Pray: for the church as it seeks direction and less confusion. Pray that the Holy Spirit will guide our leaders with clarity and true vision. (Ps.48:14)

More: <http://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/main-topics/general-news/church-like-drunken-man-nearing-a-precipice-1-5978385>

■ Church of Scotland spearhead justice campaign for garment workers

A former Church of Scotland Moderator is leading the charge for better rights and safer working conditions for Bangladeshi garment workers in the run up to Christmas and the winter sales. The Church of Scotland and an alliance of British churches and other agencies have united to help end the many injustices faced by the garment workers. The Very Rev John Christie in his year as Moderator of the General Assembly of The Church of Scotland was deeply affected by the plight of garment workers and the injustices they face daily during a visit to Bangladesh. Mr Christie has put his weight behind the campaign, the aim of which is to mobilise church members and others in the United Kingdom, America and Canada to lobby retailers and politicians to improve wages, safety and working conditions for Bangladeshi garment workers.

Pray: for the success of this campaign and that it will help to bring better working conditions for Bangladeshi garment workers. (Pro.29:4)

More: http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news_and_events/news/2013/former_moderator_in_justice_campaign_for_bangladeshi_garment_workers

■ Britain: Muslim TV hate preachers 'inciting murder'

An Islamic television channel has been hit with a hefty fine after a Muslim hate preacher told viewers, live on air, that it was the duty of all Muslims to murder anyone who shows disrespect for the Prophet Mohammed. Noor TV, a British-based Satellite Television Channel that broadcasts programmes about Islam throughout Europe, was fined \$115,000 by the British broadcasting regulator known as Ofcom for inciting people to commit murder. Ofcom said the fine imposed on August 21 was so large due to 'the serious nature of the breaches of the Broadcasting Code.' It said young Muslims watching Noor TV could become 'radicalized' and take 'violent and criminal action as a result of watching videos of Muslims with extreme views.' The programme in question, Paigham-e-Mustafa, is a talk show aimed at young British Muslims with questions about a wide range of issues and personal conduct relating to Islam and Islamic teachings.

Pray: against this trend to radicalize Muslims and incite murder. (Mt.5:21)

More: <http://europenews.dk/en/node/70934>

■ Methodist Church promotes human rights with new investment policy

Methodist Church investment decisions are now being guided by a new policy on human rights which focuses on companies operating in areas of conflict around the world. While governments are ultimately responsible for upholding human rights, the policy recognises that companies have obligations too. The policy has been adopted by the Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church, which manages £1 billion of Methodist Church investments. The Church is urging companies to extend their engagement with human rights issues beyond their own operations by entering into dialogue with major suppliers and business partners. Bill Seddon, Chief Executive, said: 'This new policy will help us engage with companies operating in areas where human rights are being ignored, often due to armed conflict. It will help us structure our on-going human rights engagement with companies.' The Church said companies have responsibilities, not only to shareholders but also to their employees and people in the societies in which they operate.

Pray: for other groups and companies to follow the lead from the Methodist church and that their new policy will have a real and practical impact for good. (Pr.31:8-9)

More: <http://www.methodist.org.uk/news-and-events/news-releases/methodist-church-promotes-humans-rights-with-new-investment-policy>

■ UK children need more exercise

Only half of all seven-year-olds in the UK are getting enough exercise each day to stay healthy, a new study has found. The research, published in BMJ Open, found that half of UK 7-year-olds are sedentary for six to seven hours a day, with girls, children of Indian ethnic origin, and those living in Northern Ireland being the least physically active. UK guidelines on daily physical activity recommend that children spend at least an hour a day in moderate to vigorous activity and spend less time sitting down. Girls were far less active than boys, with only 38% satisfying the guidelines, compared to 63% of boys. The study's authors warn that more investment and 'wide interventions' are needed. 'The results of our study provide a useful baseline and strongly suggest that contemporary UK children are insufficiently active, implying that effort is needed to boost physical activity among young people to the level appropriate for good health,' they wrote.

Pray: for a concerted response to this report that restates clearly an issue for children that has been suggested for many years. (1Co.6:19-20)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/uk.children.need.more.exercise/33675.htm>

■ Half of teenagers sleep deprived, say experts

A combination of natural hormone changes and greater use of screen-based technology means many teenagers are not getting enough sleep. Research has suggested teenagers need nine hours' sleep to function properly. "Sleep is fundamentally important but despite this it's been largely ignored as part of our biology," said Russell Foster, Professor of Circadian Neuroscience at Oxford University. "Within the context of teenagers, here we have a classic example where sleep could enhance enormously the quality of life and, indeed, the educational performance of our young people. Yet they're given no instruction about the importance of sleep and sleep is a victim to the many other demands that are being made of

them. The great problem with teenagers is that you're not only biologically programmed to go to bed late and get up late, but there are also many attractions like gaming and social media and many teenagers are doing this into the early hours of the morning and delaying sleep even further."

Pray: for a greater appreciation by teenagers of the need for quality sleep. Pray also for better information to be given to them about sleep. (Pr.3:24)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-23811690>

EUROPE

Germany's Lower Saxony seeks help over 'modern slavery'

Crowded dormitories, excessive work schedules and low pay. These are the conditions faced by some migrant workers in Germany – the economic powerhouse of the EU. Many of the foreigners were promised much more before they left their own countries. The government in the north-western region of Lower Saxony is asking for federal help to tackle these abuses. 'This has to stop. These are people who work in German companies and must be treated humanely and they also need to be represented by working councils,' said Prime Minister of Lower Saxony, Stephan Weil. There is no minimum wage in Germany. This can even mean pay of between three and six euros an hour or a monthly salary of between 300-500 euros. These types of low wages are prevalent in certain sectors, such as the meat industry. There are around two million of what are called 'working poor' in the country.

Pray: that the government will seek ways of establishing fair and just pay for all workers. (Ps.112:5)

More: <http://www.euronews.com/2013/08/27/lower-saxony-seeks-help-from-germany-s-federal-government-over-modern-slavery/>

Czech Republic detains 100 in massive anti-Roma protests

A tense calm has returned to the Czech Republic where officials say some 100 far-right activists have been detained in violent demonstrations against gypsies, also known as Roma. Officials said arrests were made in at least eight cities, which resembled a warzone on Saturday. Riot police used teargas to prevent hundreds of far-right activists from entering a district mainly inhabited by Roma. There were violent clashes between stone-throwing protesters and police in what rights activists viewed as a show of hatred towards the already discriminated and largely impoverished Roma minority. Advocacy group Amnesty International had urged the Czech government to 'ensure that these protests do not lead to violence against Roma communities, and that those at risk get the protection they need'. Rights activists held counter demonstrations in several cities, including in the capital Prague. Government officials said the anti-Roma protests were fuelled by what they called 'a list of lies' distributed through the Internet. (See Prayer Alert 32-2013)

Pray: that the activists that instigated these protests and hate moves against the Roma will be stopped.

More: <http://www.bosnewslife.com/30084-news-watch-czech-republic-detains-100-in-massive-anti-roma-protests>

WORLDWIDE

NIGERIA: Education under threat

Boko Haram's name means 'Western education is sacrilege.' They recently kidnapped three teachers at a school in Benin City, the fifth school attack since June. They killed 48 students and 7 teachers in Adamawa, Yobe and Borno. In Yobe a school was set on fire while students aged 10-15 slept. Anyone trying to escape was shot. At Mamudo terrorists killed 22 students and a teacher. At Adanu students were lined up, stripped, made to lie face down and shot. Then the bodies were burnt. Boko Haram wants to reinstate a 19th century caliphate - believing secular schooling has brainwashed Nigerians to accept post-colonial Western order and forget Islamic ways. Consequently, Yobe schools are now closed in response to the bloodshed, teachers and students across Nigeria have withdrawn from schools remaining open and one teacher (who possibly represents many) said she was not prepared to die for teaching and is looking for a new job.

Pray: for the Lord to demolish the demonic forces that are using Boko Haram to harm innocent children, teachers and the education system throughout Nigeria. (Dan.10:13)

More: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/07/08/nigeria-state-closes-all-schools_n_3559417.html

Syria: Treating war casualties

Three hospitals in that area are supported by the international medical organisation 'Doctors Without Borders' (MSF) reported receiving approximately 3,600 patients displaying neurotoxic symptoms in less than three hours on Wednesday. Three hundred and fifty-five died. MSF has a strong and reliable collaboration with medical networks, hospitals and medical points in the Damascus governorate - providing them with drugs, medical equipment and technical support. Medical staff provided detailed information regarding large numbers of patients with convulsions, excess saliva, pinpoint pupils, blurred vision and respiratory distress. They were treated with a drug used to treat neurotoxic symptoms. MSF is now trying to replenish empty stocks and provide additional medical supplies and guidance. 1,600 vials of atropine were supplied over recent months to hospitals and a further 7,000 vials more recently to facilities in the area treating neurotoxic patients. MSF is now including neurotoxic treatment strategies in all its Syrian programmes.

Pray: for medical needs to be met in war zones. Pray against extreme violence, displacement and deliberate destruction of medical facilities. Pray that the use of chemical and biological weapons would never be repeated. (Ps.35:17-20)

More: <http://www.msf.org.uk/article/syria-thousands-suffering-neurotoxic-symptoms-treated-hospitals-supported-msf>

Syria: Technological consequences of conflict

Media companies including the New York Times, Twitter and the Huffington Post lost control of their websites after hackers supporting the Syrian government breached the internet company managing major site addresses. The Syrian Electronic Army, a hacker group that has previously attacked media organisations that it considers hostile to the government of Syrian

president Bashar al-Assad, claimed credit for the Twitter and Huffington Post hacks in a series of Twitter messages on Tuesday. They also simultaneously targeted CNN, Time and the Washington Post see:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/americas/2013/08/20138281421074547.html> Meanwhile an elite Israeli intelligence unit intercepted conversations among high ranking Syrian government officials discussing last week's chemical attack. U.S. officials said intercepted conversations would be included in a U.S. intelligence assessment that the White House will release to the public. - Israel has superior intelligence coverage of Syria and technical ability on a par with much larger nations as they collect intelligence on the countries that border them.

Pray: for international repercussions of the Syria conflict to be contained. (Ps.35:17)

More: <http://www.latimes.com/world/worldnow/la-fg-wn-syria-israel-intelligence-chemical-attack-20130827,0,1940412.story>

■ Iraq: Shia Sunni conflict

On Wednesday a series of co-ordinated bombings during the rush hour in mainly Shia neighbourhoods of Baghdad killed more than 50 people and wounded dozens more. Violence has increased in recent months amid heightened tensions between Sunni and Shia Muslims. More than 4,000 civilians have been killed and 10,000 more have been wounded so far this year, with Baghdad province worst hit. In July 1,057 civilians were killed - making it the deadliest month in Iraq for years. The authorities have stepped up security operations in Baghdad but they seem unable to stop the growing intensity of violence now back to a level not seen for five years. No group has admitted carrying out the bombings, but many believe they have been carried out by Sunni militants. Correspondents say deep-rooted sectarian tensions have been aggravated by the civil war in neighbouring Syria.

Pray: the international response to Syria's crisis in the coming days will not fuel further Sunni Shia hostility in Iraq. Pray for their hostilities to be harnessed. (Gen.16:12)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-23861541>

■ Egypt: Christians targeted

This report follows last week's Prayer-Alert Egypt update when you were asked to pray into the situations where Imams across Egypt were calling for Christians to be attacked - particularly Christian shops churches and Christian homes - the Coptic Orthodox Church in the United Kingdom reported on Friday that over 100 Christian churches, homes, properties, businesses and individuals had been attacked in Egypt from 14th August to 22nd August 2013. His Grace Bishop Angaelos, General Bishop of The Coptic Orthodox Church in the United Kingdom informed the Christian community in the United Kingdom of the nature of attacks currently facing Christians in Egypt and asked for us to pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ. Click here to view the full list of recent attacks, <http://copticcentre.blogspot.co.uk/p/blog-page.html>

Pray: for all the victims of violence on the streets of Egypt over the past weeks. Pray for God to protect Christian families and communities, comfort all those who mourn, or have lost loved ones, been injured or feel powerless. (Ps.32:6-7)

More: <http://www.copticcentre.blogspot.co.uk/2013/08/christian-churches-homes-properties.html>

■ Japan: Radioactive leak 'serious'

On Wednesday Japan's nuclear regulator upgraded the rating of a leak of radiation-contaminated water from a tank at its tsunami-wrecked nuclear plant to a 'serious incident' on an international scale and castigated the plant operator for failing to catch the problem earlier. The 300-ton (300,000-litre, 80,000-gallon) leak probably began a month and a half before it was discovered - exposure levels among patrolling staff started to increase in early July. The regulator said there is a much larger on-going problem of massive amounts of contaminated ground water reaching the sea that cannot be rated under the IAEA's International Nuclear and Radiological Event Scale because it is unknown exactly how much ground water is escaping, how contaminated it is and what effect it is having on the sea and marine products.

Pray: for honest and honourable appraisals of this latest challenge to the containing contaminated of waste from land and sea. Pray for wise and effective measures to be implemented. (Pr.4:13-14)

More: <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/japanese-regulator-raises-alert-nuclear-leaks-20089403>

■ South Africa: Family Policy Institute calls for clampdown

The Family Policy Institute (FPI) stated, 'Research shows the wide availability of pornography in society is destructive and harmful especially to women and children. This is evidenced by the fact that South Africa is currently regarded as the rape capital of the world. More than 64 000 women are raped annually in SA. In addition, reports indicate that more than 25,000 children are sexually abused every year in SA.' The FPI called on the Government to take urgent action to stop the free flow and distribution of pornography following the arrest this week of a school principal, teachers, a doctor, an attorney and a businessman for the manufacture and dissemination of child pornography. The FPI statement continues, 'Children as young as 10 are downloading sexually explicit images to their cell phones. Some are also producing pornographic videos of themselves and sharing it with friends.'

Pray: for an end to the Government's liberal attitude to the unrestricted availability of pornography. (Lk.18:16 & Ps.12:5)

More: <http://gatewaynews.co.za/family-policy-institute-calls-for-adult-porn-clampdown/>

PRAYER FORUM OF THE BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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