

PRAYER ALERT...

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PRaise REPORTS

■ Youth lead the way in Manado, Indonesia for a Citywide Evangelistic Campaign

In Manado, the Christian community is thriving. Yet, like so many other places around the world, young people are turning away from their faith in record numbers. Distracted by secular culture and worldly influences, they have come to be known as the lost generation. Andrew Palau knows the story all too well. As the son of renowned evangelist Luis Palau he lived a life of rebellion until the age of 27 when he finally embraced the truth of the Gospel. Taking the message of Jesus and his own story of redemption to Manado, Andrew had the privilege of joining with hundreds of local believers to accomplish the massive evangelistic festival, August 26-31. This youth-led campaign took months of planning and prayer. It included the partnership of hundreds of local churches, city officials and thousands of Indonesian believers. By the end of the festival and week of outreach events, more than 3,500 decision cards were received and 7,000 copies of the Gospel of John had been distributed.

Praise: God for the move of His Holy Spirit in bringing so many young people into His kingdom. (Ps.68:32)

More: http://www.openheaven.com/forums/forum_posts.asp?TID=44179&PN=1

■ Egypt: Thousands of Christian children pray to become change-makers

In a country rocked by change and division, some 1,400 eight to fourteen-year-old Egyptian children gathered to worship and ask God to change them to be the salt and light for Jesus in their communities. The first ever One Thing Kids festival was held at the desert oasis of Wadi El Natroun and televised live by Christian broadcaster SAT-7. 'Our vision is to have this generation praying and worshipping God, and to be filled with the Holy Spirit to be able to change the world,' say festival organisers Kasr El Doubara Evangelical Church (KDEC) and the children's prayer ministry of the Synod of the Nile of the Presbyterian Church. The Wadi el Natroun area was long an historic centre for Christian prayer by monks and pilgrims. Many of the children took a prominent role – some as part of the worship choir, others helping to lead prayers for themselves and their nation.

Praise: God for the faith of the Christian children, for their prayers, that will lead to change. (Ps.127:3)

More: <http://www.inspiremagazine.org.uk/Stories/International?storyaction=view&storyid=413>

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Christian street preacher arrested in Scotland

A Christian street preacher was arrested in Perth on Wednesday for 'breach of the peace'. The Reverend Josh Williamson, pastor of Craigie Reformed Baptist Church, is the third Christian street preacher to be arrested in the UK since July. The Christian Legal Centre, which reported his arrest, said the trend pointed to 'an increasing hostility towards Christianity'. Mr Williamson, who regularly takes to the streets to hand out Christian flyers and engage in open air preaching, was arrested whilst addressing a crowd on one of the main streets in Perth. The arresting police officer told him he was breaking the law

by being in 'breach of the peace'. When asked to explain further, the officer contended that the MP3 recorder Mr Williamson was using was too loud. A second man, who spoke up in defence of Mr Williamson's right to preach was also arrested at the scene. (See Prayer Alert 28-2013, 31-2013, 37-2023)

Pray: that the authorities will issue clear guidance over freedom of speech. (Ps.58:1)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/christian.street.preacher.arrested.in.scotland/34071.htm>

■ Banks to block internet porn sites

Websites which fail to stop children accessing pornography will have payments to them blocked by banks and credit card companies as part of a government plan to help clean up the internet. Purveyors of explicit images will be starved of paying customers under the proposals, even if the material itself is not illegal. It is thought to be the first time banks have been asked effectively to police the internet in such a way. A 'summit' between financial organisations and the video services regulator will be held next month in an effort to finalise the agreement. The move is intended to address the growing exposure of under-aged children to legal but highly explicit internet pornography, which David Cameron has said is 'corroding childhood'. Restricting such exposure is a priority for Downing Street. (See Prayer Alert 30-2013)

Pray: that this move will lead to a blocking of this form of pornography. (Col.3:23)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/banksandfinance/10322072/Banks-to-block-internet-porn-sites.html>

■ Number of families living in B&Bs at 10-year high in England

The number of homeless families living in emergency bed and breakfast accommodation is at its highest in nearly ten years, says the housing and homelessness charity Shelter. The charity says 2,090 homeless families across England have been placed in B&Bs after losing their homes, an eight per cent rise on the same period last year, and the highest since September 2003. Overall homeless figures also rose by more than five per cent in the last year. This includes 8,790 families with children – the equivalent of one family losing their home every 15 minutes. A Shelter poll found that six in every ten working families paying mortgage or rent are struggling with their payments. Campbell Robb, Shelter's chief executive, said: 'These figures are a wake-up call. Ordinary families are falling through the net and risk losing everything.' The charity reports that it sees many families placed in unsuitable B&B-style accommodation, often for weeks at a time.

Pray: that accommodation may be found for homeless families that will bring stability. (Ps.113:9)

More: <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/19086>

■ Rowan Williams pledges support for arms trade activists

Former archbishop condemns treatment of campaigners who are due to stand trial for blocking entrance of London arms fair. Justin Welby's predecessor as the archbishop of Canterbury has sent a message of support to five Christian activists who will appear in court this week after blocking one of the entrances to the London arms fair earlier this month. Telling them that he wished them well, Rowan Williams added: 'I am very grateful for those who have courageously drawn attention to the scandal of this situation, and to the wider question of the way governments support and subsidise the arms trade. Outrage about one kind of horrific and illegal weaponry will not be taken seriously unless it is part of a comprehensive willingness to tackle all forms of collusion with technologically advanced violence against human beings.' (See Prayer Alert 37-2013)

Pray: for those who have been arrested and are taking a stand against the arms trade. (Is 2:4)

More: <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2013/sep/22/rowan-williams-arms-trade-activists>

■ Bedroom tax has pushed one in three council tenants into arrears

Nearly one in three council housing tenants affected by the bedroom tax have fallen behind on their rent since its introduction earlier this year, according to new figures released on 17 September. Figures provided by 114 local authorities across Britain in response to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests by False Economy show that since the bedroom tax was introduced this April, over 50,000 council housing tenants - 31 per cent of all tenants affected by the tax in these areas - have been pushed into arrears. However in some areas the proportion of tenants that have been pushed into arrears is far higher. In Barrow, three-quarters of all council house tenants affected by the bedroom tax have been pushed into arrears since April. With emergency funding from councils rapidly drying up, the situation is likely to get far worse over the coming months, warns False Economy. (See Prayer Alert 37-2013)

Pray: that the government will take notice of the serious problems that are being caused. (Lk. 20:22)

More: <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/19083>

■ B&B Christians suffer hate in name of tolerance, says writer

The Christian owners of a Cornish B&B have suffered a 'campaign of hatred, vilification and intimidation' under the guise of tolerance, a national newspaper columnist has said. Peter and Hazemary Bull have been hit by crushing equality laws and a court case over their married couples only policy for double rooms. Following the legal case the couple have received death threats and vandalism, and have now decided to sell the business – which is also their home. Writing in the Daily Mail, Richard Littlejohn said some who preach tolerance are actually the 'most vile, intolerant bigots imaginable'. He added that the idea of 'celebrating diversity' never extends to those with devout Christian beliefs. And while the columnist said he didn't agree with the Bulls' policy, Mr Littlejohn strongly criticised the ordeal they have been subjected to. He wrote that when the case first hit the headlines he had said the couple are 'in the wrong line of work'.

Pray: that God will bless the Bulls and protect them from further intolerance. (Mk.13:13)

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/bb-christians-suffer-hate-in-name-of-tolerance-says-writer/>

■ Marriage tax break at £150 'not enough' say faith leaders

Current marriage tax break proposals could be seen as an 'empty gesture' and should be paid at a much higher rate, a group of faith leaders and political activists have warned. In a letter to the Sunday Telegraph, politicians have been urged to

back the transferable tax allowance as 'a sensible first step' to counter the 'devastating trend of family breakdown'. But the leaders, Bishop Nazir-Ali, Lord Singh, director of the network of Sikh organisations, Robert Woollard, chairman of Conservative Grassroots and others, called for all political parties to ensure the tax break is 'meaningful' by making it worth more than the 'low level' of £150. The letter said the introduction of the marriage tax break is 'long overdue'. The Conservatives promised to bring in a transferable tax allowance, which would save married couples £150 when one spouse stays at home, in their election manifesto in 2010.

Pray: that the government will look closer at the decisions to bring in a transferable tax allowance. (Pr.2:9)

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/marriage-tax-break-at-150-not-enough-say-faith-leaders/>

EUROPE

■ MEPs unite in fight against organised crime, corruption and money laundering

Parliament's organised crime, corruption and money laundering special committee (CRIM) has adopted a report which calls for a comprehensive action plan on tackling organised crime. According to Europol there are 3600 international criminal organisations active in the EU, of which most have members from more than one country. The new report, adopted on Tuesday, calls for the creation of a European public prosecutor, for corrupt politicians to be banned from office and for a common definition of organised crime which includes the involvement with mafia-type organisations. Tanja Fajon, S&D spokesperson on organised crime and corruption, said, 'EU countries are not immune to political corruption and we need to introduce stronger and more efficient measures to tackle it, including enhanced transparency for political parties' budgets and a five-year ban for corrupt politicians.'

Pray: for the authorities to be granted success against criminals. (Ecc.8:13)

More: <http://www.theparliament.com/latest-news/article/newsarticle/meps-unite-in-fight-against-organised-crime-corruption-and-money-laundering/#.Uj8Oun9kln4>

■ France bans children's beauty contests to curb sexualisation

France has banned child beauty pageants in a bid to curb the 'hyper-sexualisation' of children. The new law decrees it illegal for anyone to organise a beauty pageant for under 16-year-olds, with a penalty of up to two years in prison and a fine equivalent to £25,000. French Senator Chantal Jouanno, who authored the report 'Against Hyper-Sexualisation: A New Fight For Equality', proposed an amendment to an equality bill introduced by women's minister Najat Vallaud-Belkacem. Senator Jouanno said: 'Let's not let our daughters think from such a young age that they will be judged according to their appearance. Let's not let commercial interest impact on social interest'. The amendment received 196 votes for and 146 against. But an amendment pushing for better regulation of child models was rejected. Senator Jouanno was said to be particularly concerned about a Vogue magazine shoot in 2010 which featured provocative pictures of a ten-year-old girl.

Pray: that this move will lead to children being freed from sexualisation. (1Pet.3:3-4)

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/france-bans-childrens-beauty-contests-to-curb-sexualisation/>

WORLDWIDE

■ NIGERIA: At least 160 dead this week in terrorist related violence

At least 160 people have died in terrorist related violence this week in Nigeria's Yobe and Borno States. According to a news release from Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), on the evening of 18 Sept, Boko Haram members armed with Kalashnikovs, rocket launchers and homemade bombs are reported to have stormed Yadi Buni Town in Yobe State. They set fire to the local government headquarters and the home of the divisional police head, whose wife was burned to death inside the building. The son of the Yobe Peoples Democratic Party's (PDP) youth leader is also said to have been killed, while one soldier and nine sect members died in an ensuing shootout. On 17 Sept, 143 commuters were killed and several abducted when well armed Boko Haram gunmen ambushed vehicles along the busy Maiduguri to Damaturu Express Way in the early evening. Travellers were reportedly asked to produce their ID cards, then lined up and shot.

Pray: that ways will be found to bring about an end to the hostilities and peace to this troubled nation. (Ps.7:9)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/at.least.160.dead.in.nigeria.this.week.in.terrorist.related.violence/34076.htm>

■ Pakistan: Church blast kills dozens

A twin-suicide bombing outside a church in Peshawar in Pakistan has killed at least 80 people, in one of the worst attacks on Christians in the country. Two bombers blew themselves up as worshippers were coming out of the city's historic All Saints church after attending Sunday Mass, police say. Relatives of the victims gathered at the scene to protest against the government's failure to protect them. Militants linked to Pakistani Taliban have said they carried out the bombing. The group, Jandullah, said it was in retaliation for US drone strikes in Pakistan's tribal northwest. Sunday's twin attacks targeted Peshawar's historic All Saints Church as hundreds of worshippers were attending Mass. Witnesses said they heard two blasts, the second more powerful than the first. More than 120 people were wounded in the bombings. It is the latest in a series of attacks on Pakistani Christians, who represent about 1.6% of the country's largely Muslim population.

Pray: against the evil that controls the minds of those who carry out these bombings. (Pr.14:32)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-24193734>

■ Kenya: Al-Shabab: A war of vengeance?

A gun battle inside a shopping centre in the Kenyan capital Nairobi has left at least 68 people dead and more than 150 wounded. Twenty-four hours later, an operation to secure the Westgate centre, one of the city's most exclusive shopping malls, was ongoing. The Somali group al-Shabab claimed responsibility for the attack, demanding that Kenya pull troops back from its neighbouring country, where al-Shabab is fighting against the government. Its full name is Harakat al-Shabab

al-Mujahideen - or the Movement of Jihadi Youth. It was formed in 2006 as an off-shoot of the Islamic Courts Union, a religious alliance which controlled large parts of Somalia, before being driven out. With as many as 9,000 fighters, al-Shabab has since fought a succession of foreign forces in Somalia from Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda. The attack in Nairobi is one of the biggest al-Shabab has carried out outside Somalia.

Pray: for all those who have lost loved ones and friends in this atrocious incident. (Pr.28:5)

More: <http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/insidestory/2013/09/20139236528364142.html>

■ Philippines: The nightmare continues

A humanitarian crisis has been officially declared by the Philippine government in Zamboanga City, Mindanao, in the south of the country, after displaced civilians caught in the crossfire ballooned to 115,000 who are now housed in temporary evacuation centres in the city. Around 300 rebels, part of a faction of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), arrived by boat in the city early in the morning of September 9th, and had wanted to raise their flag above Zamboanga's city hall, military officials said. They then took siege of the city and held more than 170 hostages, most of whom have since been released. The Philippine soldiers and rebels, who are engaged in this standoff, have seen that the violent crossfire has already killed more than 70 rebels and 15 government troops in the ongoing battle. (See Prayer Alert 37-2013)

Pray: for a breakthrough that will bring a resolution to this conflict. (Ps.55:9)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-24222760>

■ Syria: 'No military solution' to conflict, say church leaders

Church leaders from Syria, Russia, the United States and Europe have said that a political solution is the only way to secure peace in Syria. They are urging 'public outcry' against the ongoing civil war that has killed at least 100,000 people and forced two million to flee from their homes. The comments follow a meeting at the Ecumenical Institute in Geneva, Switzerland with Kofi Annan, the former United Nations general secretary, and Lakhdar Brahimi, UN-Arab League joint representative for Syria. The meeting was organised by the World Council of Churches to discuss the role of churches in moving Syria towards a peace agreement. Rev Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, WCC general secretary, said peace efforts 'must not fail now when thousands of people have already died'. He said the international community and all parties to the conflict in Syria had to take responsibility to make peace talks successful and that churches must support the process.

Pray: that the current moves to bring peace to this horrific conflict will be successful. (Ps.37:37)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/there.can.be.no.military.solution.to.syria.conflict.say.church.leaders/34057.htm>

■ Egypt: Army storms Islamist-held town

Troops last week stormed a central Egyptian town held for over a month by hardline supporters of ousted Islamist president Mohamed Morsi who had launched a campaign against Christian residents, officials said. Soldiers and police entered the town of Delga in the central Minya province just after dawn, searching homes and arresting several Islamists, a security official said. All 32 entrances to the village were shut and a daytime curfew imposed as authorities recaptured the town of 120,000 people, held for 31 days by Morsi loyalists, according to the official MENA news agency. Officials said Islamists controlling the town were behind several attacks on churches around the Minya province. The raid on the town comes amid a massive crackdown on Islamists following the military's ouster of president Morsi on July 3, which plunged the country deeper into turmoil. In mid-August police and soldiers broke up two pro-Morsi protest camps in Cairo in an operation that killed hundreds.

Pray: for the ongoing situation in Egypt and that the authorities will find ways of bringing a meaningful peace. (Ps.122:7)

More: <http://www.alarabonline.org/english/display.asp?fname=\2013\09\09-16\zsubz\908.htm&dismode=x&ts=9/16/2013%2012:55:58%20PM>

■ Pakistan earthquake: Hundreds dead in Balochistan

A powerful earthquake has killed at least 250 people in Pakistan's remote south-west province of Balochistan. The 7.7-magnitude quake struck on Tuesday afternoon at a depth of 20km (13 miles) north-east of Awaran. Many houses were flattened and thousands of people have spent the night in the open. After the quake, a small island appeared off the coast near the port of Gwadar. The new island is reported to be about 200m (656ft) long, 100m (328ft) wide and 20m (65m) high. The region is prone to earthquakes. The latest quake was so powerful it was felt as far away as Karachi, Hyderabad, and India's capital, Delhi. Entire villages are reported to have been flattened in the impoverished and sparsely-populated district of Awaran. Balochistan government spokesman Jan Buledi said most of the fatalities were in Awaran town and the surrounding villages, and he warned that the death toll could rise. At least 340 people have been injured.

Pray: for all those who have been affected by this earthquake and that relief will reach them quickly.

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-24222760>

PRAYER FORUM OF THE BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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