

PRAYER ALERT...

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Contact Us

Donations

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■ Praise Reports

- [Churches welcome Scout promise decision](#)
- [London's significant Church growth](#)

■ British Isles & Ireland

- [Praying for HOPE 2014](#)
- [Cabinet reshuffle: Government and Labour make changes](#)
- [Church of England attacks Michael Gove over state of religious education](#)
- [David Cameron 'privately regrets' redefining marriage](#)
- [Payday lenders face tougher rules](#)
- [Magistrates Association to discuss scrapping Bible from court oath](#)
- [Deployed members of the Armed Forces with sick relatives at home.](#)

■ Europe

- [Hungary: Rapping parish priest hopes to modernise church](#)
- [France: Mayor of Antibes, says 'no' to Muslim demands for sharia compliance in schools](#)

■ Worldwide

- [Global: Child labour/slaves](#)
- [USA: Human cost of shutdown](#)
- [Syria: The new road to Damascus](#)
- [Japan: 'Don't give up on Japan'](#)
- [India: Violence against Christians rises](#)
- [Egypt: Resilience of Egypt's Brotherhood](#)
- [Pakistan: Making a stand against terrorism](#)

PRaise REPORTS

■ Churches welcome Scout promise decision

The Church of England has welcomed the Scout Association's decision to retain the original 'duty to God' pledge alongside the introduction of a new alternative promise for atheists and others without a faith. The core scout promise 'to do my duty to God' has been in existence for 106 years and this is the first time in the Scout movement's history that an alternative pledge has been offered for people without a faith, although alternatives have existed for Hindus, Muslims and Buddhists for several decades. From January, new scouts with no religion will be able to promise to 'uphold our scout values'. The announcement comes after a 10-month consultation that included faith groups. The Bishop of Southwell and Nottingham, and the Church of England's lead bishop on work with young people, the Right Reverend Paul Butler, welcomed the outcome. He said: 'I very much welcome this announcement by the Scout movement that God stays in the promise.'

Praise: [God for this change of mind by the Scout Association. \(Ps.100:1-2\)](#)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/churches.welcome.scout.promise.decision/34293.htm>

■ London's significant Church growth

Church attendance in Greater London grew by 16% between 2005 and 2012, from 620,000 to 720,000, representing 9% of the capital's population at the latter date, and thereby bucking the downward trend in most national religious indicators. The number of places of worship in London also rose during these seven years, by 17% from 4,100 to 4,800. Growth was especially to be found among black majority and immigrant churches, which together accounted for 27% of all Christian places of worship in London in 2012 and 24% of churchgoers. Black people were far more likely to attend services than whites (19% against 8%), and in Inner London 48% of worshippers were black. 14% of all churches use a language other than English and 52% of attendees are in evangelical churches. By contrast, many traditional, smaller places of worship are still contracting. These are among the initial findings from the London Church Census, undertaken by Brierley Consultancy and sponsored by the London City Mission.

Praise: [God for the growth of His church and long may it continue. \(Ps.145:1-2\)](#)

More: <http://revivalmedia.org/2013/10/01/londons-significant-church-growth-320-report-2/>

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Praying for HOPE 2014

We are praying that 2014 would be a consolidation year where churches will work together around the Christian calendar, festivals and new mission initiatives to bring good news to our lost and broken nations starting on 18 October 2013 to 31 January 2014. To launch this year of mission, World Prayer Centre and all the partners of HOPE 2014 are encouraging us to pray together with Christians around the country using the Prayer for Today Hope Daily Prayers (published by UCB). Using the prayers and themes when praying alone, in home groups, as a church, as groups of churches or in Christian organisations. Every Sunday there is a written prayer which can be used in worship services. This Season of Prayer starts

on 18th October 2013 at the Excel Centre, London at the Festival of Life night of prayer hosted by Redeemed Christian Church of God where it is expected that 40,000 people will meet to pray.

Pray: that the Church would take up the challenge to pray and make this a consolidation year of mission. (Lk.2:10)

More: <http://www.worldprayer.org.uk/prayer/hope-prayer>

▣ Cabinet reshuffle: Government and Labour make changes

All three main Westminster parties have been reshuffling their teams. David Cameron has promoted three women, though none of them have been given a cabinet post. Across the board, women are taking more prominent roles - a net increase of four in government, and 44% of Labour's shadow cabinet are female. The only change in the coalition cabinet comes with the Liberal Democrat Alistair Carmichael as the new Scottish Secretary. There have also been changes to the Labour team. Shadow education secretary Stephen Twigg has been replaced by Tristram Hunt while Jim Murphy, another senior figure, is moved from defence to international development. Andy Burnham is to stay as shadow health secretary. Mr Moore was the only cabinet minister to lose his job in Monday's coalition reshuffle, which has largely focused on middle-ranking and junior ministerial positions. Has the political territory shifted, or is it just the personalities that have been moved?

Pray: for the members of our government and those involved in the reshuffle that God will give them insight and guidance in their role. (Pr.1:5)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-19475248>

▣ Church of England attacks Michael Gove over state of religious education

The Church of England has launched a fierce attack on the government, describing limited resources devoted to training religious education teachers as a scandal that is affecting "an essential part" of every child's studies. In an outburst that reflects the church's deepening unease at the government's perceived lack of support for the teaching of RE, it singled out the education secretary, Michael Gove, for implicit criticism, calling on him to work with religious leaders to improve the level of teaching in what is a core subject in the national curriculum. The criticism comes as a damning Ofsted report, published today, finds that more than half of all schools have been failing pupils in their religious education, a subject that the watchdog claims is increasingly important "in an ever more globalised and multicultural 21st century" because of the way it promotes respect and empathy.

Pray: for a positive response to the Ofsted report to make a significant improvement in Religious Education in schools and to recognise its importance in modern society. (Pr.4:13)

More: <http://www.theguardian.com/education/2013/oct/05/church-attacks-gove-religious-education-schools>

▣ David Cameron 'privately regrets' redefining marriage

David Cameron said he wouldn't have pushed through gay marriage had he known beforehand how alienated grassroots members would feel, it has been revealed. In quotes disclosed in a book by a newspaper columnist, the Prime Minister told one ally: 'If I'd known what it was going to be like, I wouldn't have done it.' But he now denies regretting the legislation, saying in an interview: 'I don't think I expected quite the furore that there was. It's clearly been very difficult for some people to take on, and I completely understand and respect that. I am passionate about marriage. I think it's a great institution, and I think it should be available to people who are gay as well as those of us who aren't.' Matthew d'Ancona's book 'In It Together' gives a series of insights into the Prime Minister and his dealings with the cabinet.

Pray: that the comments made by the PM will lead to a deeper understanding and sensitivity. (Job.32:8)

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/david-cameron-privately-regrets-redefining-marriage/?e041013>

▣ Payday lenders face tougher rules

The UK's payday lenders have been warned that tougher regulation is on its way, to protect consumers. The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) has proposed that all borrowers should have an 'affordability' check before being given a loan. Among other new rules, the FCA wants to put risk warnings on adverts and marketing material. The payday industry gave the plans a guarded welcome, saying irresponsible lenders would struggle to comply. Martin Wheatley, the FCA's chief executive, said: 'Today I'm putting payday lenders on notice: tougher regulation is coming and I expect them all to make changes so that consumers get a fair outcome. The clock is ticking.' The proposals mean that anyone taking out a loan would need to prove that they could afford to repay it. In a separate government survey, one in five customers said they were not even asked about their finances when they applied for a payday loan.

Pray: for all those who fall victims of unscrupulous loan sharks and that these moves by the FCA will bring an end to such usury. (Eze.18:17)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-24372134>

▣ Magistrates Association to discuss scrapping Bible from court oath

The Magistrates Association will put forward a motion to scrap the Bible from the court oath in October. The motion has been met with wide criticism especially as the last census revealed that an overwhelming 60% of people in British were of Christian faith and that such a move would undermine Britain's Christian heritage in favour of secularism. Many critics have argued that parts of British law itself were founded on the Bible, a standard which has infiltrated and determined our morality, lifestyle and tradition for many centuries. If this is taken away, one only has to question what secular standard will take its place. The Magistrates Association which represents 23,000 lay magistrates will this month discuss concerns that many people do not take the oath seriously. Rt Rev Michael Nazir-Ali, former Bishop of Rochester said: 'This could be the slippery slope towards the increasing secularisation of society. Where will it end - with the Coronation Oath?'

Pray: for the Association as it considers this decision that they will not reject the basics of law based upon the Bible. (Is.54:17b)

More: http://www.theway.co.uk/feature.php?id=9348&this=Magistrates_Association_to_discuss_scrapping_Bible_from_court_oath

▣ Deployed members of the Armed Forces with sick relatives at home.

Many of our service personnel serving in various areas around the world, but especially those in Afghanistan, are having to cope with the knowledge that loved ones are seriously ill back home. Elderly parents, grandparents and sick children can cause real concern but unless they are dangerously ill the soldier cannot get compassionate leave to be with them. This can cause extra stress on top of the deployment duties and a sense of helplessness and isolation at the time of the families needs.

Pray: that those soldiers affected will have peace about their loved ones while on active duty so they are not distracted and remain vigilant. Pray that those caring for the sick will be are strengthened and receive the support they need. (Is.54:13)

More: <http://www.afcu.org.uk/>

EUROPE

▣ Hungary: Rapping parish priest hopes to modernise church

What is the best way to reach out to youngsters, to encourage them to go to church and to live a Catholic life? Parish priest Zsolt Kovesdy from Kunszentmárton, Hungary, has an idea. He is planning to start a radio show playing rap and hip-hop music. The station would, obviously, avoid music containing swearing and inappropriate topics, but his plan is to offer honest words and thoughts about life and the world. Kovesdy believes that the Catholic Church can only reach young people if it modernises its methods and he believes a social radio with modern music and interactive talk-shows could be a good solution. He is already very popular in his parish having organised a range of activities including horse and cart rides and climbing. According to a Hungarian newspaper he even made a skateboard track and let the children use their boards in the church's courtyard.

Pray: that Kovesdy will see a growth in the church through these initiatives.

More: <http://www.euronews.com/2013/10/07/rapping-parish-priest-would-modernise-church-in-hungary/>

▣ France: Mayor of Antibes, says 'no' to Muslim demands for sharia compliance in schools

Jean Leonetti, Mayor of Antibes, says 'NO' to Muslim demands for sharia compliance in schools. He firmly rejected Muslim parents' demand for the abolition of all pork products in Antibes school cafeterias, adding that Muslims must adapt to France, its customs, its traditions, and way of life, not the other way around. Muslims must understand that it is for them to change their lifestyle, not the French who so generously allowed them into their country. The French are not racist or xenophobic, they accepted many immigrants before Muslims (while the reverse is not true as Muslims do not readily accept non-Muslim foreigners on their soil.)

Pray: that Muslims would learn to live in France adopting the nations ways..

More: <http://europenews.dk/en/node/72566>

WORLDWIDE

▣ Global: Child labour/slaves

Although international Labour Organisation data shows a fall in child labour since 2000 critics say the number of working children remains unacceptable. Protecting children from hazardous work and long hours remains a major challenge, with families in poor countries such as Bangladesh heavily reliant on the income they get from sending children to work. There are 168 million children working in situations that fit the ILO definition of child labour. That is "work undertaken by children below the appropriate legal minimum working age", based on its minimum age convention. In Nigeria Child labour is rampant in the gold and mineral mines. More than ten years after Nigeria passed a law banning child labour the International Labour Organisation says there are still fifteen million children working in the country. The plight of children working in Nigeria's mines is especially harsh but for many the paycheck is worth the pain. The children work for a dollar a day to support their families. See also http://www.win1040.com/video.php?clip=Child_Slavery

Pray: for the continued development of successful initiatives to put an end to child 'recruits' in terrorist armies, children forced into brothels, child labour in factories, farming and mining. (Ps.10:12)

More: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2013/10/child-labour-rampant-nigerian-mines-20131086554982259.html>

▣ USA: Human cost of shutdown

800,000 government employees are out of work without pay, while those still working do not know when they will be paid. Some agencies are critical to the needs of people across America such as the military, food programmes and medical services. Wendy Dwyer speaking for the working homeless shelters said that if shelters have to shut meals wouldn't be served and children would not have the same day-to-day contact that gives them stability. Meanwhile the debate over the debt ceiling is evolving as the House threatens to refuse to let the US borrow any more money. If the debt-ceiling is not raised the country enters default territory and that could impact the world.

Pray: for the President and leaders in America - for God to direct them through grace filled negotiations. (2Ch.7:14) Pray also for those who are at risk of financial, physical and emotional suffering through no fault of their own. Pray for God to heal the land. (Is.61:8)

More: <http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/countingthecost/2013/10/human-cost-us-shutdown-201310412213940608.html>

▣ Syria: The new road to Damascus

In the midst of this crisis persecuted Christians in Syria and neighbouring countries are boldly reaching out to refugees. And the reactions of Muslims have been astonishing. 'When you hear about one Muslim coming to Christ it's a great thing and everybody rejoices.' said a Voice Of the Martyrs Syrian contact. 'Today in Syria I'm not talking about one person. We're talking about hundreds and even thousands of Muslims coming to know Christ.' Teams of believers are working in the refugee camps providing Christ's love while sharing material aid, medical supplies and Bibles. Christians who are widely

considered 'infidels' in Syria are now often and affectionately referred to as 'the Bible People.' 'This war is like a knife in the heart of the church. No human can stand that suffering. Nevertheless, there is God's presence. I can see Christ in the midst of darkness. God is doing miracles - even if he allows us to die, it will be an honour for us to die for his name.'

Pray: for continued spiritual and material aid to those facing the horrific effects of war. Pray for an increase of favour over those who bravely use every opportunity to advance the kingdom of God. (Pr.22:1)

More: http://www.persecution.com/public/newsroom.aspx?story_ID=NjEy&featuredstory_ID=Mzk2&clickfrom=ZmVhdHVyZWZrdG9yaWVz

▣ Japan: 'Don't give up on Japan'

Earlier this year post-disaster Tokyo pastor Jonathan Wilson urged 'outward-looking' missions to reach Japanese for Christ. Christian leaders call Japan 'a hard soil to plant the Gospel.' We can pray for Japan to become good soil that will eagerly receive the Good News of Jesus Christ (Mat.13:23). The Japanese continue to see Christianity as a Western religion. We can pray for the Church in Japan to add more Japanese culture and hymns to its worship services (Ps.117:1-2). This week Japan's prime minister appealed to the international community to help fix the on-going crisis at its damaged Fukushima nuclear power plant. We can pray for the Christian Believers who are still engaged in relief efforts and ministry more than two years after the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear accident. (1 Cor.15:58) The following link will lead you to some of the many Churches ministering in Japan's hard spiritual ground:- <http://across.co.nz/churches.Japan.html> and <http://win1040.com/page.php?id=558> will aid informed intercession.

Pray: for God to pour out his anointing for evangelism on Christians working in Japan. Pray also for agencies to know God's strategies on how to reach the nation. (Pr.24:3-4)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/japan/10359894/Japan-asks-international-community-to-help-solve-Fukushima-crisis.html>

▣ India: Violence against Christians rises

Incidents of violence against Christians in Karnataka state have spiked since June, including hospitalisation of Sannamma a 50 year old Christian school helper who was attacked by about 40 extremists when she visited a village to invite students back to school. Hindu nationalists stopped her and demanded she give money for a Hindu festival. She agreed to give money later, as she did not carry any cash. They called her 'pagan,' accused her of forceful conversion, punched and kicked her then dragged her to a Hindu temple to attempt to forcefully convert her back to Hinduism by pouring water on her (as a symbol of religious cleansing from Christianity) and applying a red dot on her forehead to symbolise Hindu reconversion. They then forced Sannamma to sign a paper stating that she and her husband, Shidda Naik, (he was not with her at the time of the attack) would not spread word of Christianity.

Pray: God's protection and provision for all of India's Christian residents who bravely share their faith amid hostile communities. Pray for a harvest of Christian believers to grow in the dark places. (Lk.10:2)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/india.violence.against.christians.on.the.rise.in.karnataka/34265.htm>

▣ Egypt: Resilience of Egypt's Brotherhood

Last Sunday, dozens of Muslim Brotherhood supporters were killed in clashes with Egyptian security forces. The Brotherhood is, for the moment, beaten. Their leaders are locked up and their members are accused of being terrorists. Historically generations have been helped by the Brotherhood's charities and schools. Support in the community runs deep, but currently staff at a Cairo hospital say it is dangerous to advertise their links with the Brotherhood. The crackdown is more than just tackling violence – it's about eradicating dissent. Most Brotherhood leaders who have not been imprisoned have fled the country. The use of force against them betrays insecurity at the heart of Egypt's latest revolution. Despite extraordinary efforts to destroy the Brotherhood, its supporters are still willing to risk taking to the streets. Criminalised, imprisoned and killed, their message is still clear, 'the Brotherhood will not go quietly'.

Pray: for all those in that nation who have seen their lives destroyed by violence, prejudice and hatred to receive protection, healing and restoration. (Ps.18:6) Ask God to assist the current political and Church leaders to rule and minister with wisdom, justice and right authority. (Ps.21:1)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-24434574>

▣ Pakistan: Making a stand against terrorism

Muslims in Pakistan formed a human shield Sunday at a church in Lahore to protect Christians from terrorist attacks. It was the second such demonstration in a week following a similar display of Muslim-Christian unity in Karachi. Christians are 3% of the Muslim-dominated 180 million. Recently suicide bombers blew themselves up at a church killing 80 and injuring 130. A group called Jundullah claimed responsibility saying it would continue to target non-Muslims in Pakistan until drone strikes ceased. 'The terrorists showed us what they do on Sundays' said Mohammed Jibrán Nasir, organizer of the human-chain protest. 'Here we are showing them what we do on Sundays. We unite. I see no reason why our politicians and our leaders should not come out of their houses, leave the luxury of their secure homes and stand in solidarity with the common man.'

Pray: that Christians in Pakistan will show a bold testimony to those around them. Pray for protection for Christians facing intimidation and threats.

More: <http://www.persecution.org/2013/10/08/muslims-and-christians-in-pakistan-protect-churches-with-human-chain/>

PRAYER FORUM OF THE BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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