

PRAYER ALERT...

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PRaise REPORTS

■ Iran: Amazing dream brings girl to Christ

Ten years ago a young Muslim girl dreamt she saw Jesus coming towards her with a necklace. He hung it around her neck. She looked down and saw a cross with the number 10 in the heart. She didn't know what it meant but from that moment on she knew that Jesus existed. She explored Christianity through a psychology course in university and found a church in her city where she got to know Christ. She now has a Christian husband, but it's too dangerous for them to go to normal church because they converted from Islam. So today, 10 years after the dream, they are teaching other secret Believers in their house group. She says, 'It isn't easy being a Christian in Iran, but I think this is what Jesus wanted to say to me with the '10' - that in 10 years I would be here, knowing Him and being together with others who also know Him'

Praise: God for the many stories we are hearing of Muslims meeting Jesus through dreams and visions across the nations where evangelism is forbidden. (Joel 2:28)

More: http://www.breakingchristiannews.com/articles/display_art.html?ID=12583

■ India: The Lazarus factor

A few years ago journalist Lee Grady interviewed two people who had seen biblical-style resurrection during an evangelistic meeting in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh. Jyothi Pothabathula was two years old when she collapsed on the bus. The little girl had no history of illness, but she suddenly stopped breathing. The girl's mother, Nagamani, began desperately praying for God to save her baby. The girl's father, Suribabu, carried Jyothi's lifeless body to Harry Gomes, an evangelist on campaign in the city. Immediately after he prayed for her, they said, Jyothi sat up and then began walking. 'I know Jesus is a great God because he raised my daughter to life,' Suribabu said, wiping away tears. His brother and two more of his Hindu family members converted to Jesus after they heard the story and saw the revived girl.

Praise: God for His healing power and living testimony. (Jn.16:2)

More: <http://brendanwitton.wordpress.com/2008/02/15/j-lee-grady-the-lazarus-factor/>

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ There's a mountain to climb in Bible translation

Members of the UK's biggest Bible translation organisation, Wycliffe Bible Translators, hiked Mount Kilimanjaro last month on a 'Prayer Climb' for the 800 African languages still awaiting the Bible. Nearly 2,000 language groups in the world are without a single verse of the Bible in their heart language - meaning over 200 million people cannot access Scripture in their own tongue. Karen Floor, Wycliffe South Africa Director, started the hike up Mount Kilimanjaro on 14 September alongside two Wycliffe supporters. During the hike, they carried a prayer banner with the collective prayers of God's people for the Lord to bless the spreading of his word through Bible translation. After completing the hike, Karen explained how the physical challenge of the Kilimanjaro climb acted as a metaphor for the wider challenge of Bible translation. She explained:

'It was through grappling with the difficulty of communicating the immense challenge of bringing God's Word to millions of people through Bible translation that we began to use the mountain metaphor.'

Pray: that the prayers of the Wycliffe supporters and the work of the translators will be blessed. (Ps.88:2)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/theres.a.mountain.to.climb.in.bible.translation/34318.htm>

■ Number of young people with gambling problems increases

The number of 18 to 35-year-olds contacting the UK's leading gambling advice service has risen for a third consecutive year. GamCare's figures show more than 60% of their calls in the past 12 months were from that age group. It says smartphone and online betting are playing a big part in the rise of young people developing gambling problems. In total, 8,813 people contacted GamCare for help over the last year. That's a rise of 8.1% compared to the overall number getting in touch in 2011. Although the total number of callers stayed the same for 2012, there has been a rise each year in the 18 to 35-year-old category. Adam Brown, 24, from Long Eaton in Derbyshire, says he first gambled when he was 19 starting with occasional visits to a betting shop. Adam says using his smartphone to gamble was 'disastrous' and it became an addiction.

Pray: against the spread of gambling amongst the young and that the use of smartphones may be controlled. (Tit.2:12)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsbeat/24455559>

■ Belfast cathedral to host Day of Prayer for Syria

The ongoing conflict in Syria has prompted a number of prayer and worship events around the globe, with Belfast next to have a special Day of Prayer for the country locked in civil war. St Anne's Cathedral in Belfast will be hosting a Day of Prayer for Syria on Wednesday 23 October. An estimated quarter of Syrians have left their country in huge numbers for neighbouring countries. According to the Lebanese government, it has received nearly a million as refugees. St Anne's Cathedral is inviting people from across Belfast and beyond to visit the cathedral at any hour of the day to pray and hear readings from a number of guest speakers. To end the day, a Service of Reflection will take place with Psalms-based prayers for those affected by conflict and persecution.

Pray: that the call to pray will lead many to seek the Lord for Syria and the refugees in neighbouring countries. (Eph.6:18)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/belfast.cathedral.to.host.day.of.prayer.for.syria/34341.htm>

■ Christian groups defend school work against proselytisation accusations

Christians have defended their work in schools following strong criticism and accusations of proselytisation from the National Secular Society. The NSS claims in its new report, 'Evangelism in state schools', that publicly funded schools are being 'targeted and exploited' by evangelical Christian groups with the aim of converting young people to the faith. 'We do not doubt that pupils' education can be enhanced by the input made by external contributors, but it appears clear from the evidence that many external school visitors are primarily concerned with evangelisation rather than education,' the report states. The NSS says parents and schools should be 'deeply concerned' by evangelical Christian groups providing religious education, school worship, pastoral work, prayer spaces and Bible-based clubs in state schools 'without parents' knowledge and with little, if any, opportunity for withdrawal'.

Pray: that the work of Christians will not be stopped because of the NSS claims but that God will continue to bless them. (Ps.67:7)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/christian.contribution.to.schools.defended/34345.htm>

■ Christian campaigners still in danger from Lobbying Bill

Fears about restrictions for Christian campaigning have not been eased by Government changes to the controversial Lobbying Bill, critics have warned. The Electoral Commission, the body that will have to enforce the new rules, said that a key Government amendment 'does not materially reduce the scope of what is covered by the Bill'. Ros Baston, a solicitor specialising in election law, said the Bill still catches issues-based campaigning and some of the amendments actually result in 'new uncertainties'. Several faith groups, including the Evangelical Alliance, World Jewish Relief, Muslim Council of Britain and others, have raised fears that the Bill could have 'unintended consequences'. An open letter to David Cameron and Nick Clegg warns that the Bill will 'curtail' legitimate campaigns. It said: 'We are concerned that this Bill does not adequately safeguard the activities of religious organisations and that there is a very real risk that non-biased political activity will be captured by the resultant Act.'

Pray: that the concerns shared following the changes to the Bill will be listened to and safeguards accepted. (Pr.12:15)

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/christian-campaigners-still-in-danger-from-lobbying-bill/>

■ Shining a light on corruption as bells ring out

The bells of St Paul's Cathedral rang out across the city of London on Monday, October 14, 2013, as people gathered in the portico and on the steps of the ancient place of worship to 'Shine a light on Corruption'. According to a news release, the Vigil marked the start of the global EXPOSED Week of Action highlighting the effect of corruption on the world's poorest people. Lord Leslie Griffiths, leading churchman and member of the House of Lords, laid down the challenge facing not just government and church but all people of faith and conscience. 'Our job is to see that we overcome evil with good. We expose the evil for what it is and then set our targets for overcoming that evil. I believe that this campaign is part of an orchestrated effort on behalf of good-willed people around the world to see that we have the kind of world that God wants us to live in.'

Pray: that the hundreds of EXPOSED vigils globally will focus God's light on corruption. (Mt.5:16)

More: <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/2013/s13100068.htm>

■ Charlotte Church attacks 'sexist' music industry

The music industry has a 'culture of demeaning women' that forces stars to sell themselves as sex objects, according to singer Charlotte Church. Church said she was 'pressured' into wearing revealing outfits in videos by male executives when she was 19 or 20. Now 27, the star said young female artists were routinely 'coerced into sexually demonstrative

behaviour in order to hold on to their careers.' She made her comments during BBC 6 Music's annual John Peel Lecture. Her stinging attack on sexism in the music industry comes amid a heated debate over the sexual imagery used by pop stars like Miley Cyrus and Rihanna. The music business is 'a male dominated industry with a juvenile perspective on gender and sexuality' and increasingly wants 'sex objects that appear child-like', Church claimed. The star accused record labels of encouraging young singers 'to present themselves as hypersexualised, unrealistic, cartoonish, as objects, reducing female sexuality to a prize you can win'.

Pray: against the sexualising of young women and for the protection of those at risk. (1Th.4:3)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-24528022>

EUROPE

Italy steps up migrant boat patrols after tragedies

Italy is stepping up sea and air patrols following the deaths of hundreds of migrants sailing in overcrowded boats from North Africa. Prime Minister Enrico Letta said an 'air and naval package' would start on Monday south of Sicily. On Friday at least 33 people died when their boat capsized between Malta and the Italian island of Lampedusa. Earlier on Friday, at least 500 other migrants travelling in separate boats were rescued in coastguard operations near the Italian island of Sicily. A week earlier, more than 350 migrants died in another shipwreck off Lampedusa. Italy has previously called for EU help in dealing with the thousands of desperate migrants who wash up on its beaches every year. Many are families fleeing war and poverty in Africa and the Middle East who hope for a better life in Europe. But the recent loss of life has led to further calls for EU action.

Pray: that the authorities will take action to safeguard the needs of migrants on unsafe boats.

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-24515906>

European Parliament condemns violence against Christians

The European Parliament passed a resolution last week condemning violence and persecution against Christians in Syria, Pakistan and Iran. MEPs voiced particular concern over the attacks on Christians in Maaloula, Syria, and the suicide attack on All Saints Church, Peshawar, Pakistan, which killed at least 80 people. The MEPs called for 'immediate support and humanitarian assistance' to a group of around 40 nuns and orphans still trapped in the Convent of St Tekla. They also spoke of their 'deep concern' about the general situation of religious minorities in Pakistan and the Christian churches in particular. They urged the Pakistani authorities to overhaul the blasphemy laws and their current application 'thoroughly', noting that the laws were open to misuse against people of faith. Concerning Iran, they said the fate of imprisoned Pastor Saeed Abedini was also a matter of 'deep concern'.

Pray: for God's protection over His people. (Ps.5:11)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/european.parliament.condemns.violence.against.christians.in.syria.pakistan.and.iran/3434>

WORLDWIDE

Middle East: A work of reconciliation

'Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.' (Mat.5:23, 24) A young Israeli Messianic participant in a recent reconciliation initiative for young Israeli and Palestinian adults, writes in response to these verses, 'The Lord showed us that it is very important for us to restore our relationship with our Palestinian brothers before we attempt to be reconciled with God.' She adds, 'We don't always want to relate to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, feeling somehow disconnected from it, or powerless to do anything about it. Also we are in a more secure position (relative to the Palestinians) and so we tend to be apathetic and lack motivation to seek reconciliation with our Palestinian Brothers in Christ.'

Pray: for God to continue to bless and encourage those working for reconciliation and building relationships between Christians, Jews and others in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. (Ro.12:9-13 & Mat.7:4- 5)

More: <http://www.musalaha.org/>

Global: Child brides

Ten million girls a year are married before the age of 18 across the world. Child marriages are illegal in India and punishable with a large fine and two years in prison for anyone performing, conducting or failing to prevent a child marriage. The grandfather of a 6-year-old child bride said, 'I hate the government for trying to stop us. This is the way we've always done things. The government bans this but we don't care and we do these weddings anyway.' There are at least 50 million married child couples around the world and this will double by the end of the decade. The countries with the highest proportion of child brides are Niger, Chad, Mali, Bangladesh and India. 14 million aged between 15 and 19 give birth each year and are twice as likely to die during pregnancy or childbirth as women in their 20s.

Pray: against this practice that robs millions of girls of their childhood, their education, their rights and their dignity. Pray for the laws banning child marriage to be properly enforced and for protection of young vulnerable girls. (Ps.33:10-11)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-15082550>

Syria: The continual danger of kidnappings

Kidnappings have become a common feature of the ongoing conflict in northern Syria, where fighting between government and rebel soldiers is still fierce. Aid workers and foreign journalists are at particular risk of abduction. On Monday seven members of the Red Cross were kidnapped by gunmen as they travelled in a four vehicle convoy delivering medical supplies and helping the people of Syria in an area largely under rebel control. The team had been in the field since 10 October assessing the medical situation and devising ways to provide medical aid in a difficult area to access. BBC's Jim Muir in Beirut said, 'Hardline Islamist rebels are known to operate in the area and Kidnappings of aid workers and journalists have become increasingly common in rebel held areas. See: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east->

24513793 Recently the Press Gazette stated, 'fear of kidnapping is stopping journalists from entering Syria' The exact number of kidnap cases is unknown. Families and victims' employers avoid publicity believing it will hamper negotiations with the kidnappers. See: <http://www.pressgazette.co.uk/how-fear-kidnapping-stopping-journalists-entering-syria>

Pray: against the lucrative employment of Syrian fixers (negotiators) and activists making fortunes out of kidnapping and killing. (Ps.140:4-5)

More: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2457951/7-Red-Cross-workers-kidnapped-gunmen-Syria.html#ixzz2hhV6zlrH>

▣ **India: Major disaster as cyclone strikes - severe damage**

Cyclone Phailin hit India last week as a category 4 storm with 130 mph winds. Loss of life was minimal due to large-scale evacuations but flooding has inundated homes and destroyed 1.2 million acres of crops. The local government has set up rescue and relief operations on the campus of a Bible training facility. It will take more than two weeks to restore power, the national highway is still covered by three feet of water, and some areas experienced levels above five feet. 873,000 people in Odisha and 100,000 in Andhra Pradesh sought safety in evacuation centres and will be returning to their communities as soon as flood waters recede. They will find little to salvage, particularly in poor farming villages along the coast where the storm wreaked the most havoc. The government will do what it can, but it doesn't have all the systems in place to offer much help.

Pray: for Christian Aid and other agencies already in the area who are able to respond immediately, pray for uncluttered communication between NGO's and government bodies, pray also for adequate funds to be released to meet immediate and long term needs.

More: <http://www.mnnonline.org/article/19104>

▣ **Saudi Arabia: Another call for destruction of all churches**

In May this year the Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia called for the destruction of all Churches on the Arabian Peninsula. Again this week the Grand Mufti (who is also the head of the Muslim community) repeated this statement after a presentation by a Kuwaiti parliamentarian of a bill banning construction of new non-Muslim religious buildings in Kuwait. Not long ago, owing to the consecration of a Catholic Church in United Arab Emirates, the local Christians expected the opening of negotiations concerning the construction of the first church in Saudi Arabia. At the present time 3 - 4 million immigrant Christians work in Saudi Arabia but there are no church buildings allowed to exist. So was the Grand Mufti trying to export his ideology of destroying all Churches in Saudi Arabia to the surrounding countries while making a stand against church building in United Arab Emirates? He stated that 'there cannot be two religions on the Arabian peninsula.'

Pray: for God's protection to be over churches in Kuwait, Oman, Yemen, Bahrain, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates. May the UN Human Rights Council take a stand for freedom of religion in the area. (Ps.3:7-8)

More: http://www.theway.co.uk/feature.php?id=9354&this=Arabian_Mufti_Calls_for_Destruction_of_All_Christian_Churches

▣ **Canada: Releasing prayer**

Two of Canada's national prayer ministries are touring Canada throughout October and November to release a culture of prayer in the nation. Already in Victoria and Vancouver strong prayer released a fresh motivation for more people to become involved in the powerful ministry of prayer. We can join the Canadian call to prayer in the coming weeks asking God for a great harvest! Ask the Lord to send out labourers, to soften hearts, to draw the hungry. Pray for the new churches plants springing up everywhere and other planned missions in the land. God desires to change the spiritual climate of whole cities, and wants to use the Church as his primary change agent. Pray for the city church to unite around the unique strategy he grants to each city for advancing the Kingdom and being salt and light. Pray also for Businesses to be dedicated to Kingdom purposes.

Pray: for many instances of breakthrough across the nation at such a time as this. Pray for the Church to awaken to her first love for the Lord and be renewed in love for one another and the lost. (2Ch.7:14)

More: <http://www.redleafprayer.org/index.php/events/culture-of-prayer-tour>

▣ **Vietnam: Detention of dozens of pastors and Church leaders**

Sixty three Christian pastors and church leaders remain locked in deplorable conditions in four prison camps around Vietnam just days after religious leaders accused authorities of attempting to destroy religions in the nation. Nearly all of the 63 prisoners are members of ethnic minority communities in the Central Highlands of Vietnam. An advocacy group said that due to their status as a member of an ethnic minority and their adherence to a faith (still seen as an American import) Christians face a level of oppression far higher than most Vietnamese. Living far from major urban areas and the reach of most international news agencies, they also have little hope of assistance. Even official churches in some areas are facing persecution, house groups face regular harassment and in Binh Phuoc province local authorities are dismantling 116 chapels of the Stieng minority group belonging to the legally-registered Evangelical Church of Vietnam (South).

Pray: for the immediate release of the leaders, protection for all practicing Christians in Vietnam and an end to unjust persecution. (Ps.14:6)

More: <http://www.bosnewslife.com/30891-vietnam-detains-dozens-of-pastors-church-leaders>

PRAYER FORUM OF THE BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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