

# PRAYER ALERT...

An initiative of the Prayer Forum of the British Isles & Ireland  
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## PRaise REPORTS

### ■ Free resources for The Bible TV series

The Emmy Award-winning TV series 'The Bible' premiered last Saturday on Channel 5 and two of the largest UK Christian charities have created an online guide for those who will tune in to watch. The five-part series has had phenomenal success in the US with more than 100 million viewers. It covers Genesis to Revelation in one grand narrative, with each two hour episode focussing on two or three Biblical stories. The executive producers, husband and wife team Mark Burnett and Roma Downey, have said they conceived the idea for the series with the hope that it would 'affect a new generation of viewers and draw them back to the Bible'. Following the announcement that the series would be shown on British television, the Damaris Trust and the Evangelical Alliance teamed up to provide resources that will give viewers background Biblical information and will explore the major themes of the series, such as forgiveness and transformation.

**Praise:** [God for the Bible series and pray that the message reaches an even wider audience.](#)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/free.resources.for.the.bible.tv.series/34865.htm>

### ■ Evangelist Andrew Palau joins with 500 Churches in Ethiopia

In the heart of one of Africa's most influential cities, world evangelist Andrew Palau and 500 Ethiopian churches joined together in a significant effort to foster unity and love, and reach out with the Good News through Love Ethiopia, October 26 through November 17, 2013. The campaign visited the nation's seven largest cities with the clear message of Jesus Christ. It included more than 17 partner evangelists, 120 short-term missionaries, more than 70 para-church organizations, and thousands of local volunteers in 175 events. From outreach events in local prisons to a private meeting with the newly-appointed president of the nation, the campaign reached every level of society and touched more than 250,000 people, with many thousands responding to the clear Gospel message presented by Andrew Palau and dozens of others. Andrew's biblical messages of hope rang out to tens of thousands of people on the closing weekend of the festival, forming a potent capstone to the three-week-long campaign.

**Praise:** [God for Andrew Palau's campaign and for the many thousands who heard and believed.](#)

**More:** [http://www.openheaven.com/forums/forum\\_posts.asp?TID=45009&PN=1](http://www.openheaven.com/forums/forum_posts.asp?TID=45009&PN=1)

## BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

### ■ Sexism is daily reality for girls, says Girlguiding

Sexism is so widespread in the UK that it affects 'most aspects' of the lives of girls and young women, a report from Girlguiding says. 'Sexual harassment is commonplace, girls' appearance is intensively scrutinised and their abilities are undermined,' says the report. The report Equality for Girls is based on a survey of more than 1,200 girls and young women aged 7 to 21. Girlguiding chief executive Julie Bentley called it a 'wake-up call'. She said: 'This cannot be dismissed as something that girls and young women just have to deal with as they grow up. Girls needed to live in an equal society if they were to flourish and fulfil their potential to be leaders in all walks of life', added Ms Bentley. Girls identified sexism as a priority issue for their generation, with three-quarters saying sexism affected most areas of their lives, says the report.

**Pray:** for greater awareness of this problem and a serious commitment to overcoming such sexism. (Gal.3:28)

**More:** <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-25138455>

#### ▣ Miliband urges Christians to engage with politics

Labour leader Ed Miliband has released a video thanking churches and Christian agencies for their efforts in social justice, and emphasising the importance of Christians being involved in politics. 'You do incredibly important work here at home: helping people who go to food banks, helping the homeless and helping all those at risk of disadvantage and those who are vulnerable in our communities,' he says. He also commends the action Christians undertake in different countries across the globe 'for development, against climate change, on all the important issues that matter'. The video encourages Christians to engage with politics and Miliband spoke of his support for Christians on the Left - formerly the Christian Socialist Movement - which works in partnership with the Labour Party to put Christian values and ideas around social justice into political action. The society, which counts forty MPs among its members, believes that to make lasting change, Christians must be a real voice from within the political world, not just from outside it.

**Pray:** for a greater recognition of the significant and crucial role played by Christians in both public and political life. (Mk.16:15)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/miliband.urges.christians.to.engage.with.politics/34861.htm>

#### ▣ Rape prevention work needed

Police in England and Wales are being urged to be more proactive in their efforts to prevent rapes. Metropolitan Police Deputy Assistant Commissioner Martin Hewitt said forces have been too 'reactive' up until now. He wants police to focus on people who are vulnerable to abuse and institutions where intelligence suggests abuse is taking place. His comments come at the start of a week-long campaign to encourage rape victims to come forward. Mr Hewitt said debate on the issue was 'far too often' restricted to investigation and prosecution and called for a 'challenging debate about prevention as well. Most rape involves the coming together of some form of power and some type of vulnerability; either permanent or temporary,' he said. 'We need to be utilising all our powers and tactics to understand how this happens, to mitigate the vulnerability and reduce the opportunities for that power to be abused.'

**Pray:** for all victims of rape but pray that this fresh approach will make a real difference. (Ps.9:9)

**More:** <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-25176554>

#### ▣ New ASBO law could catch carol singers

The Christian Institute and other civil liberty organisations have launched a campaign to reform clause 1 of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Bill that could catch street preachers and carol singers. Under the clause, a court can grant an Injunction to Prevent Nuisance and Annoyance (IPNA) if someone 'has engaged or threatens to engage in conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance' to any person. IPNAs are easier to grant, and require a lower threshold of evidence than Anti-Social Behaviour Orders, known as ASBOs. In a piece for The Daily Telegraph, Philip Johnston said the new IPNAs would be deployed against 'easy targets' while others 'get away with terrorising their neighbourhoods'. Lord Macdonald also said: 'Of course political demonstrations, street performers and corner preachers may be 'annoying' to some' but he added, 'The danger in this Bill is that it potentially empowers State interference against such activities in the face of shockingly low safeguards'.

**Pray:** for the concerns raised to be heeded and for Clause 1 to be amended to allow preaching, carol singing, etc. (Gal.5:1)

**More:** <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/new-asbo-law-could-catch-carol-singers/>

#### ▣ Top judge to step down over lack of 'support' on marriage

A senior High Court judge is set to retire early, partly because of the lack of support from some of his colleagues for his pro-marriage beliefs. Sir Paul Coleridge says there are 'hundreds' in the judiciary who agree with him in private, but are too frightened to say so publicly. The judge set up the Marriage Foundation in 2012 to combat the culture of broken families. He was attacked for his involvement, with critics saying a sitting judge should not be so overtly 'political'. Now, in an interview for Roman Catholic paper The Tablet, he says he will take early retirement so that he will have more freedom to speak his mind. He said he 'could have struggled on' if he had got 'more solid support'. Sir Paul announced in October that he will retire from the bench next year in order to focus on his work with the Marriage Foundation.

**Pray:** that Sir Paul's decision to resign and focus on the Marriage Foundation will bring stronger leadership. (Heb.13:4)

**More:** <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/top-judge-to-step-down-over-lack-of-support-on-marriage/>

#### ▣ Minister warns parents to install filters on tablets and phones bought for Christmas

Parents who buy their children tablet computers at Christmas should ensure anti-porn filters are applied, Culture Secretary Maria Miller says. Tablets such as iPads and Kindles are expected to be one of the top presents this year - with Tesco and Argos coming on the market with cheaper versions. But the Culture Secretary warned last night that unless parents switch on family filters, their children could stumble across porn and other inappropriate material. The top four internet service providers have agreed to ask all households whether they want to install a filter over the next year, thanks to the intervention of David Cameron and pressure from the Daily Mail. But until that happens, Mrs Miller said parents had to take the initiative and install filters themselves. TalkTalk and Sky have already made network filters available, meaning parents do not have to install filters on every separate device. BT and Virgin will follow within the next two months.

**Pray:** that anti-porn filters will be readily available and fitted; pray also that other providers such as BT and Virgin will speed up their availability. (Ps.73:7)

**More:** <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2515354/Porn-risk-children-iPad-presents.html#ixzz2mJUMGnrt>

#### ▣ Ministers will order ISPs to block terrorist and extremist websites

James Brokenshire, the UK's crime and security minister, said an update on the government's plans to tackle terror content online was imminent. The government is to order broadband companies to block extremist websites and empower a

specialist unit to identify and report content deemed too dangerous for online publication. The crime and security minister, James Brokenshire, said on Wednesday that measures for censoring extremist content would be announced shortly. The initiative is likely to be controversial, with broadband companies already warning that freedom of speech could be compromised. Ministers are understood to want to follow the model used to crack down on online child abuse. The Internet Watch Foundation, which is partly industry-funded, investigates reports of illegal child abuse images online; it can then ask service providers to block or take down websites.

**Pray:** for the success of the government's plans to tackle terrorist and extremist websites. (Pr.21:15)

**More:** <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2013/nov/27/ministers-order-isps-block-terrorist-websites>

## EUROPE

### ■ Bosnia: Bishop demands end to discrimination against Catholics

'Politicians from the West must put pressure on Bosnian politicians so that Catholic war refugees can also return to Bosnia at long last,' said Bishop Franjo Komarica of Banja Luka Diocese, Bosnia-Herzegovina. Talking to the Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need, Bishop Komarica, chair of the Bishop's Conference of Bosnia-Herzegovina, called on politicians to make sure refugees' basic rights are respected. According to the bishop, Catholics, who are ethnically Croats, have not received the same rights as Bosniaks and Serbs in the country. Bishop Komarica said: 'Croatian Catholics must finally be put on an equal footing with the other two ethnic groups. They must be allowed to return from abroad and possibilities must be created for them to build up a life in their hometowns.'

**Pray:** that the politicians would learn to get on together and live together in peace. (Ps.37:37)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/bishop.demands.end.to.discrimination.against.catholics.in.bosnia/34868.htm>

### ■ Ukraine: Unrest and 'escalating tensions'

Ukraine's Prime Minister has called on the opposition to stop escalating political tensions, warning, 'anybody found guilty of violating the constitution and laws will be punished.' Mass street protests (the largest since the pro-democracy Orange Revolution in 2004) began over a week ago, sparked by the government's decision not to sign an association deal with the EU. The EU wants to forge closer ties with Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus and three states in the Caucasus - Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. All these former Soviet states have remained to some extent in Russia's sphere of influence since the Cold War ended. Years of negotiations culminated in a summit in Lithuania on 28-29 November. Ukraine and Armenia pulled out of an association agreement. Once on the path towards EU membership, countries (Turkey for example) receive millions of euros in EU funding for development projects. Ukraine has a population of 45 million and is one of Europe's biggest countries, dwarfing the other five partner states.

**Pray:** for peaceful resolutions towards EU membership and against Russian strong-arm tactics to steer neighbouring states away from the EU and towards its own rival customs union. (Ps.122:7)

**More:** <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-25213671>

## WORLDWIDE

### ■ Cameroon: Nigeria's Boko Haram strikes again in Cameroon

In November Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan called for Cameroon's support in combating Boko Haram. The two countries share a 1600 km border, stretching from the Atlantic Ocean in the South to Lake Chad in the North. Then on November 15-17, a number of incidents took place along the border. Local sources contacted by World Watch Monitor say dozens of properties, including Ewy church in Tourou (in Cameroon) were attacked while at least one church was set ablaze and destroyed on the Nigerian side of Ashigashia. At least four people were killed and many others wounded and transferred to health centres. Despite the reinforcement of security forces in the area, villagers fear continued attacks from Islamist militants from Nigeria who now consider Cameroon their second home. Northern Cameroon is a vast semi-desert area composed of three provinces (Adamawa, North and Far North), bordered by Nigeria to the West, Chad to the Northeast and Central African Republic to the West.

**Pray:** for governments to strategically contain the spread of terrorism. Jer.8:15)

**More:** <http://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/>

### ■ Nigeria: Dozens killed in fresh attacks

About 40 people were killed in coordinated attacks on four Christian-dominated villages in the central Nigerian State of Plateau. Local sources contacted by World Watch Monitor report that the assailants, believed to be members of the Fulani tribe, came at around 2am on Tuesday morning, attacking the Berom communities in the villages of Katu Kapang, Daron, Tul and Rawuru. In a statement, Captain Salisu Mustapha, Media Officer of the government's Special Task Force (STF) in Jos, said the 'attackers killed 13 persons in Katu Kapang, eight in Daron, nine in Tul and seven others in Rawuru. About five others were also reported to have sustained injuries'. Those killed included a one-year-old boy shot at close range, a four-year old and several women and other children, villagers told local media. The Chairman of the State chapter of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Rev Soja Bewarang, condemned in 'strong terms' the 'barbarous act' in which pregnant women and children were killed.

**Pray:** that solutions will be found to stop the attacks of terrorists in Nigeria. (Dt.22:26)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/dozens.killed.in.fresh.attacks.in.central.nigeria/34862.htm>

### ■ Iran: US to open joint chamber of commerce

'Iran-US chamber of commerce will be launched in less than one month,' Abolfazl Hejazi, a member of Iran's Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, told the English-language Iran Daily. In the wake of the recent historic accord between Tehran and major powers on Iran's controversial nuclear programme, Hejazi also said his country was ready to start direct flights to the United States. After the 1979 revolution in Iran, Washington severed diplomatic relations with Tehran following the seizure of its embassy in Tehran, during which Islamist students held 52 US diplomats hostage for 444

days. According to Hejazi, the project which he said had already been registered in the United States would allow the two countries to work towards restoring ties, Iran's government has authorized the private sector to launch joint activities for Iran to establish direct flights to the United States.

**Pray:** these negotiations and arrangements would enable mission agencies and the hundreds of thousands of Iranians living in the US to freely travel in and out of Iran. (2Ch.15:5)

**More:** <http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/2013/11/29/6376>

#### ■ **USA: Frustration - Obamacare site keeps failing**

President Barack Obama has begun a new push to reshape public perception regarding his health care law while working behind the scenes to fix its problems. At a White House event Tuesday he reminded Americans that he designed the Affordable Care Act to prevent insurance discrimination against people with pre-existing conditions and to allow young people to stay on their parents' coverage until age 26. But for many Americans, the HealthCare.gov's online Obamacare website is failing many consumers attempting to sign up. It was updated last weekend but still many are still running into failures and crashes. To combat continuing concerns about HealthCare.gov, President Obama hopes to refocus the public's attention on potential benefits with the health care law in an effort to encourage more to sign up despite deep flaws with enrolment data. Insurers now say that much data they're receiving is incomplete or incorrect and could be useless. Ultimately, it may mean consumers cannot access benefits on January 1, 2014 - the date the coverage begins.

**Pray:** that Government administration officials, insurance company representatives and technology specialists will solve the problem. (Pr.15:22)

**More:** <http://www.cbn.com/cbnnews/us/2013/December/Frustration-Continues-as-Obamacare-Site-Keeps-Failing/>

#### ■ **Syria: 12 nuns abducted as rebels recapture Maaloula**

The Vatican has reported that 12 nuns were abducted as opposition rebels captured Syria's historically Christian town of Maaloula on Monday. The majority of the town's Christian population is thought to have fled during clashes between government forces and rebels in September, leaving a mainly Muslim population behind. The 40 nuns of the Orthodox Mar Takla convent had been the major exception, until 12 were abducted on Monday. They were reportedly taken to the nearby rebel-held town of Yabroud. Febronia Nabhan, Mother Superior at the Saidnaya Convent told the Associated Press today that the nuns who left were accompanied by three other women. Nabhan said that the Maaloula convent's Mother Superior, Pelagia Sayaf, called her later on Monday and said they were all 'fine and safe'. Maaloula, 60 kilometres (40 miles) northeast of the capital, Damascus, is a symbol of Syria's ancient Christian roots, where Aramaic – the language spoken by Jesus – is still spoken.

**Pray:** for the safe return of those abducted. (Is.42:7)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/12.nuns.abducted.as.rebels.recapture.maaloula/34910.htm>

#### ■ **Egypt: Kidnapping of Christians seen rising**

Egypt's Coptic minority has become increasingly concerned by the growing number of Christians who have been kidnapped, across the country say Christian activists. More than 30 Christians were reportedly abducted in the southern province of Minya last month alone. Local observers say the situation is especially serious in Minya, a provincial capital, which has been dubbed the 'kidnapping capital of Egypt'. Most Christians are kidnapped for ransom, but there have also been reports that believers were abducted by Islamic hardliners, including girls who were forced to marry Muslim men. International Christian Concern (ICC), a major advocacy group, cited friends and families of some of those who were abducted as saying that even children have been targeted. 'The kidnapping of Christians is an urgent issue that must be addressed by the political leadership.' Christians comprise roughly 10 percent of Egypt's mainly Muslim population of 85 million.

**Pray:** against the kidnapping trend among Christians and pray for their safety and protection. (Ps.5:11)

**More:** <http://www.bosnewslife.com/31255-kidnapping-of-egypt-christians-seen-rising>

#### ■ **Zimbabwe: 100 die from hunger in Zimbabwe's prisons**

MDC-T legislator Jessie Majome has called on the government to take concrete and urgent steps to avert a "brewing humanitarian crisis" in the country's prisons. Majome made the call on Tuesday after justice ministry and prison officials revealed that at least 100 inmates have died this year at the country's 55 facilities. The deaths were poor nutrition-related, according to Virginia Mabhiza and Agrey Machingauta, from the justice ministry and prisons services. The two officials told the parliamentary portfolio committee that the country's prisons were experiencing serious food shortages because they were not receiving enough money to source food for the 18,460 prisoners. They told parliamentarians that although \$1.2 million was required monthly for food for the prisoners, only \$300,000 was being allocated. As a result, prisoners were no longer receiving the required three meals a day, a situation which had led to nutrition-related illnesses and deaths.

**Pray:** that the authorities will have compassion on the prisoners and provide necessary food. (Ps.116:5)

**More:** <http://allafrica.com/stories/201312040149.html>

## PRAYER FORUM OF THE BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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