

PRAYER ALERT...



'If my people....will humble themselves and pray' 2 Chr 7:14

Informing and equipping Christians - Online and to Inbox

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Donations

Thursday 14 Aug 2014

■ Praise Reports

- [Jesus film statistics continue to climb](#)

■ British Isles & Ireland

- [Bishop calls for 'spiritual reflection' in schools](#)
- ['Extremist' nurseries to lose funding - Nicky Morgan](#)
- [Advert mocking Jesus is banned](#)
- [Strategic Development Funding announced](#)
- [Carey is wrong on assisted dying, says Archbishop](#)
- [Divorce concerns soar in kids' ChildLine calls](#)
- [Number of young people self-harming is on the rise](#)

■ Europe

- [Christian asylum seekers mobbed by Muslim asylum seekers](#)
- [Putin visiting Crimea as aid convoy heads for Ukraine border](#)

■ Worldwide

- [Iraq: Please pray](#)
- [Iraq: Who are the Yazidis?](#)
- [Iraq: How do the Kurds fit in?](#)
- [Israel: Hamas' political interests overlook people's needs](#)
- [West Africa: Ebola - cultural practices and weak health systems](#)
- [Pakistan: Protest marches and Christian persecution](#)
- [Cuba: First new church since 1959](#)

PRAISE REPORTS

■ Jesus film statistics continue to climb

Every eight seconds, somewhere in the world another person indicates a decision to follow Christ after watching the JESUS film. That's 10,800 people per day, 324,000 per month, and more than 3.8 million per year! That's like the population of the entire city of Coventry coming to Christ every 28-25 days. And yet, if you are like many people, you may have never even heard of it. Called by some 'one of the best-kept secrets in Christian missions', a number of mission experts have acclaimed the film as one of the greatest evangelistic tools of all time. Since 1979, more than 200 million men, women, and children worldwide have indicated decisions to follow Jesus after viewing the film. In addition, through hundreds of partners, an estimated 10+ million decisions have been made as the film JESUS is used extensively by the Body of Christ worldwide.

Praise: [God for the growth of the JESUS film and the response of those who have viewed it. \(Rom.8:31\)](#)

More: http://www.openheaven.com/forums/forum_posts.asp?TID=47943&PN=1

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Bishop calls for 'spiritual reflection' in schools

In an interview for BBC Radio 4, the Bishop of Oxford, the Rt Rev John Pritchard, responded to recent calls from the National Governors' Association (NGA) for the practice of daily Christian worship in school assemblies to be abolished, reports Christian Concern for our Nation. Last week, the NGA, which represents school governors and trustees in England, called for the 70-year-old requirement, introduced by the 1944 Education Act to be scrapped since 'schools are not places of worship, but places of education.' Responding to the comments, Bishop Pritchard highlighted the 'unique' role played by school assemblies in both 'building community' and allowing children to 'reflect on the deeper values that underpin the school community' and shape society at large. He acknowledged that these values are drawn 'very largely' from the Christian faith, and that 'so much of what has made us what we are, has come from a Christian source'. (See also Prayer Alert 25-2014)

Pray: [that the NGA will reconsider its stance on school assemblies and recognise the unique role the Christian faith offers within education. \(Deut.4:9-10\)](#)

More: <http://www.christiantelegraph.com/issue24106.html>

■ 'Extremist' nurseries to lose funding - Nicky Morgan

Councils are to be given powers to stop funding early-years providers with links to extremism, Education Secretary Nicky Morgan has announced. The move, in England, follows a letter-writing campaign by the British Humanist Association.

Members wrote to MPs and responded to a nursery funding consultation, raising concerns about extremist links and creationist teaching in some nurseries. The Department for Education said the change closes 'a technical loophole'. Mrs Morgan said that toddlers must learn 'fundamental British values' and that schools and nurseries that do not 'support this aim' should not receive public money. The move comes after allegations that hardline Islamists tried to take over some Birmingham schools in what was dubbed the Trojan Horse plot. Announcing the measures, Mrs Morgan, who replaced Michael Gove as education secretary in last month's Cabinet reshuffle, said there is no place for extremism 'anywhere in the education system'.

Pray: that these new powers will stop early-years providers using links to extremists. (Eph.6:12)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-28700449>

■ Advert mocking Jesus is banned

The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) has banned an offensive advert featuring a digitally altered image of the Christ the Redeemer statue in Brazil. The image depicted Jesus with his arm around a bikini-clad woman, holding a champagne bottle and celebrating a gambling win. The advert was placed by Sporting Index Ltd in the City AM newspaper. The ASA received 25 complaints - including one from the Evangelical Alliance - and found the advert 'was likely to cause offence to a significant number of Christians, regardless of this humorous intention... because it depicted the person of Jesus in a context at odds with commonly held beliefs about the nature of Christ'. The ASA ordered Sporting Index Ltd not to use the image again and not to use ads in future which link gambling to sex.

Pray: that all attempts to distort imagery causing offence will be dealt with before being used. (Pr.19:11)

More: <http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/advert-mocking-jesus-is-banned>

■ Strategic Development Funding announced

The Spending Plans Task Group of the Church Commissioners and Archbishops' Council has awarded £4.6m to projects from five dioceses from the new stream of Strategic Development Funding. Birmingham, Chelmsford, Leicester, Liverpool and Sheffield have all received grants for growth and change projects in their diocese. The funding is being awarded in several stages: the first applications for a pot of £7.5m were restricted to the poorest dioceses in the Church of England. The aim of the funding is to sit alongside existing funding distributed to dioceses each year, so they can benefit from a one-off injection of money to make a significant difference to their long-term mission and financial strength, by supporting major projects. The funding was awarded after a competitive process, in which dioceses were invited to put forward initial applications to the Task Group. Those proposals which met the criteria most strongly were then invited to submit detailed project plans.

Pray: that these funds will be wisely used in building His kingdom and bring glory to God. (Ps.72:19)

More: <https://churchofengland.org/media-centre/news/2014/08/strategic-development-funding-announced.aspx>

■ Carey is wrong on assisted dying, says Archbishop

The most senior figure in the Church of Ireland has strongly rejected a former Archbishop of Canterbury's arguments in favour of 'assisted dying'. Archbishop of Armagh Richard Clarke said that he found Lord Carey's comments in support of allowing the terminally ill to have help to end their own lives 'perplexing'. Writing in a News Letter on Friday, the Primate of All Ireland, whose wife died from cancer five years ago, said that support for helping the terminally ill to end their lives was neither in keeping with Christian teaching nor even some secular understandings of the sanctity of life. Last month the generally conservative Lord Carey stunned Anglicanism when he said that he had changed his mind on the issue and would support a bill brought forward by former Lord Chancellor Lord Falconer which would allow mentally-capable adults with less than six months to live to get help to end their lives. (See also Prayer Alert 27-2014)

Pray: for church leaders to make wise decisions when guiding in difficult situations. (Pr.1:5)

More: <http://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/health/carey-is-wrong-on-assisted-dying-says-archbishop-1-6227072>

■ Divorce concerns soar in kids' ChildLine calls

The number of Children worrying about their parents' divorce or separation dramatically increased last year, according to ChildLine in Scotland. NSPCC Scotland, which runs the ChildLine service, reported that they gave almost 600 counselling sessions to children about the issue in 2012-13, - a rise of 171 per cent. A child affected said she felt 'stuck in the middle' and as if she had to 'make everyone else happy all the time'. NSPCC Scotland said the figures revealed the 'huge impact' of difficult family relationships. ChildLine Service Manager, Susan Dobson, said there were many family issues raised by children: 'Some of these children need somewhere to vent, but for many they're facing a really difficult time at home and are desperate for reassurance and a safe space to share their fears.'

Pray: that children will find reassurance and support when families face relationship difficulties. (Ps.122:8)

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/divorce-concerns-soar-in-kids-childline-calls/>

■ Number of young people self-harming is on the rise

Growing numbers of young people are admitting to self-harming behaviour, according to a leading charity in the field. Rachel Welch, director of Selfharm.co.uk, a project dedicated to supporting young people impacted by self-harm, said: 'It's fair to say we are seeing a trend of increased self-harm. More and more young people - from all walks of life - are coming forward and making disclosures. It may be that we are on the edge of a horrific epidemic, but it's important we look at things more objectively. The recent increase of media reporting means that we are getting better at talking and more familiar with finding terminology to describe what's happening.' She was speaking as new NHS figures released to The Times showed self-harming among children as young as 10 has surged by 70 per cent in the past two years.

Pray: for all young people who fall into the trap of self-harming that God will protect them from this danger. (Pr.27:12)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/number.of.young.people.self.harming.is.on.the.rise/39503.htm>

EUROPE

■ Christian asylum seekers mobbed by Muslim asylum seekers

August 2014: Christians seeking asylum in Germany are reported to suffer anti-Christian attacks in homes for asylum seekers. Victims claim to have been verbally abused and beaten by Muslim asylum seekers. Syrian Christian Toni said: 'It started with the children. They told them: You are Christians, non-believers. You eat pigs, we won't play with you.' Christian fellow countryman Farid adds: 'We were watching our children day and night. Several times they were beating them. We were afraid to lose our temper and react to the provocations and cause even more problems.' An Iraqi-Christian family was mobbed until they decided to return home. Other cases are reported in German media.

Pray: for all involved in these attacks that they will learn to live together in peace. (Ps.140:4)

More: <http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/christian-asylum-seekers-mobbed-by-muslim-asylum-seekers.html>

■ Putin visiting Crimea as aid convoy heads for Ukraine border

Russian President Vladimir Putin visited Crimea on Thursday with senior politicians of his government. They are expected to discuss Russia's development plans for the Crimea. This is more than just a meeting of the security council, he has effectively taken a large chunk of the Russian government to Crimea with what many believe is his intention to integrate Crimea into Russian structures. For instance Mobile phone operators' in the Crimea currently are routed through the Ukraine, but he proposes to invest millions of dollars to have the systems routed through Russia. His aims appear to have Crimea part of the Russian federation, which is something the world does not accept. Meanwhile, 260 lorries carrying 2,000 tonnes of humanitarian aid for Eastern Ukraine are heading towards the Ukraine border, but they may not be able to enter Ukraine territory. At the time of writing, the International Red Cross have not sanctioned the convoy. Ukraine politicians describe the convoy as a provocation, Russia is determined to push the aid through, while Donetsk continues to come under heavy fire. More at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-28785803>

Pray: and ask God to hold back the tide of forceful selfish ambition in leaders of the region. Pray for the aid to be graciously received by the border authorities. (Phil.2:3)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-28789283>

WORLDWIDE

■ Iraq: Please pray

The situation for Christians in Iraq has deteriorated badly. Sinjar, (Northwest of Mosul) is a city of mixed minorities; 30,000+ of these are scattered around and on the mountains. Telkeif, Batnai, Tel Esquff, (Bishops Hill) Bartella, Qara-quash, Al Gure, Ba'ashiq and Bahzani cities are mainly populated by Christians. The IS has attacked their churches – raising IS flags on them and calling upon their god inside them. Pastor Farouk, (Senior Minister/ Baghdad) called for fasting and prayers. John Robb, (International Prayer Council) said, 'I believe it's a spiritual warfare more than a ground battle. During my personal prayer and the intercessory group's prayers, I found it's the old days monster, the old serpent, filled with hate and poison. I trust the Almighty for a Divine intervention, we need an urgent move of the Holy Spirit to turn the scales and balance of the situation on the ground. Your prayers and intercessors will make a big difference'. See urgent aid appeal at <http://www.ipcprayer.org/news/898>

Pray: boldly and unceasingly for God to rule and reign in the region. (Lk.10:19)

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

■ Iraq: Who are the Yazidis?

The name Yazidis means 'worshippers of god', which is how Yazidis describe themselves. They call themselves Daasin, the name originates from the Ancient Church of the East. Many Daasin beliefs are rooted in Christianity. They revere the Bible (and the Koran). Their tradition is oral. Children are baptised with consecrated water by a priest. At weddings he breaks bread and gives one half to the bride and the other to the groom. The bride then visits Christian churches. They practise sacrifice of animals and circumcision as the ancients did. Their supreme being is Yasdan, the Creator of the world. A great spirit emanates from Yasdan to execute divine will. Yazidism is monotheistic. Over the centuries they have never abandoned their faith or their sense of identity. They are a reserved people with deep roots in their communities. If they are driven from Iraq and Syria they will probably settle in southeast Turkey.

Pray: for God to provide and protect the Yazidis and for them to come into contact with the true living God as they migrate across unfamiliar territories. (Jn.14:6)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/blogs-magazine-monitor-28686607>

■ Iraq: How do the Kurds fit in?

The total number of Kurdish Christians is probably in the tens of thousands. There are large numbers in the Syrian Catholic, Orthodox, Assyrian, Armenian Catholic, and Chaldean Catholic churches. Thousands of Christian families have fled violence and threats in other parts of Iraq and found refuge in the Kurdistan Region. Since the ISIS campaign Kurdish forces (Peshmerga) have been the most effective at battling them. (Iraq's security forces discarded their weapons, uniforms and command posts then fled ISIS advances). The Peshmerga helped regain control of key cities and have put up a strong fight. The Kurds are outgunned by ISIS militants, who possess heavy artillery and armoured vehicles amassed by purchasing weapons with extortion-racket money, seizing from Iraqi forces fleeing their posts, and collected during years of fighting in Syria. The CIA is now shipping weapons directly to the Peshmerga fighters. Australia, France and Britain are providing aid but not military action.

Pray: for God to strengthen and protect the Kurds. (Ps.12:7) Pray for clear communication between international partners providing aid and sanctuary for refugees fleeing torture and death. (Job 4:3-4)

More: <http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/iraq-turmoil/iraq-explained-what-you-need-know-about-current-crisis-n177751>

■ **Israel: Hamas' political interests overlook people's needs**

Bassem Eid, a senior Palestinian human rights activist and political commentator, writes on the website of i24 News, 'The majority of Palestinians oppose firing rockets into Israel. The Palestinians have understood that these rockets will achieve nothing. Palestinians have called on Hamas to stop firing on Israel and to try to negotiate with the Israeli occupation. But Hamas has never considered Palestinian needs - only its own political interests. Since Israel began its attack in Gaza on July 8 following an increase in cross-border rocket strikes by Hamas nearly 1,900 Palestinians have died. Hamas continued firing rockets at Israel knowing full well what the result would be. Hamas paved the road for the death of our people. We knew Hamas was digging the tunnels that would lead to our destruction. Hamas was never interested in 'liberating the Palestinian people from the occupation and Israel could never destroy the infrastructure set up by Hamas. Only we, the Palestinian people, could dismantle it.' See also:

<http://www.christiantoday.com/article/gazas.tiny.christian.community.under.siege/39494.htm>

Pray: for Hamas control to be broken, for the despairing to receive healing. Pray for the tiny Christian community in Gaza to continue to be a vibrant powerful witness amongst its neighbours. (Ps.46:2)

More: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/hamas-political-interests-overlook-peoples-needs-palestinian-activist-says-124598/>

■ **West Africa: Ebola - cultural practices and weak health systems**

Ebola is spread through close physical contact with infected people in West African countries practices around religion and death involve close physical contact. All previous outbreaks of Ebola occurred in places where the disease was already known. In Uganda and the DR Congo for example the education message about avoiding contact has had years to enter the collective consciousness. In West Africa there has not been time for the necessary cultural shift where hugging is part of religious worship. Also The Wellbeing Foundation Africa said the outbreak in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone is no surprise. They have the worst doctor-patient ratios in West Africa. (Liberia at 86,275-to-1 and Sierra Leone 45,588-to-1) This deadly pandemic should serve as a wake-up call to all in global health and the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention and national governments and aid agencies. 'Weak health systems threaten the global community, including the developed world.' See: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/08/ebola-wbfa-stresses-importance-stronger-health-systems/>

Pray: for endurance and protection for those struggling to increase awareness of good health practice amongst remote communities. (Pr.16:24) Pray that the 'weak health-system wakeup call' will be heard by those who are able to initiate change.(Ps.84:5-6)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-26835233>

■ **Pakistan: Protest marches and Christian persecution**

A Believer in Pakistan writes, 'He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning. He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him. Daniel 2:21-22. Al Qaeda is lashing out hard in Pakistan. Many are being killed, particularly minority groups like Christians. We never hear about it in the news because the Pakistani government does not want it broadcast (they're supposed to have everything 'under control.'). The army is still trying to take out the Taliban in the northwest part of the country. Please pray for two huge separate marches on Thursday. Two major political parties want to overthrow the government. One is led by Imran Khan, the second is led by Tahir ul Qadri. These are not peaceful marches. Lives could be lost and property damaged, but people are getting fed up with the present government.' For more information about these marches planned for Pakistan's Independence Day click the more button.

Pray: Qadri's planned revolution would not be bloody. Pray for the protection of the Christian community living in Pakistan. (Job 5:21)

More: <http://news.oneindia.in/international/pakistan-pm-to-speak-ahead-of-protest-marches-1501192.html>

■ **Cuba: First new church since 1959**

Twenty-five tonnes of scrap metal are at the heart of a major religious recycling project - the plan is to transform them into the first Catholic church built in Communist Cuba since the 1959 revolution. The beams were once part of the stage built for Pope Benedict XVI's historic visit to the city in 2012. The building team need one final permit of five to get started. The days when believers would baptise their children in secret or attend mass surreptitiously in distant neighbourhoods have passed, and even Communist Party members now practise their religion openly. However, since Fidel Castro took power five decades ago the Catholic Church has only renovated existing properties or rebuilt where old ones collapsed. New churches were never sanctioned. Nowadays, local Catholics meet to pray in private houses and are struggling with gradually increasing numbers. Across Cuba, the Catholic Church says around 60% of the population are baptised, though only a small fraction regularly practise their faith.

Pray: for the Church in Cuba to grow spiritually and numerically. (Gen.28:3)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-28738730>

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE WORLD PRAYER CENTRE, BIRMINGHAM, UK

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