

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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PRaise REPORTS

■ China: Receiving and rejoicing with God's Word

Picture this: you arrive at a venue, and people are lined up on both sides of the street, cheering, waving, smiling, taking pictures, and reaching out to shake your hand as you pass. If you are with a Bibles For China (BFC) team, this is what greets you when you arrive at a local church in rural China. Chief Operating Officer Barry Werner is quick to note that the hoopla is less about the team and more about what's coming. 'It's a spontaneous celebration the moment you arrive with a Bible. It's God's Word: the most precious thing they're ever going to receive. They don't want to miss one moment. Let the celebration and the praise begin!' When word gets out that a team is on its way, people will walk all day to a church and wait for hours for the team to arrive and give them their own copy.

Praise: God for BFC and all mission agencies researching, translating, printing and distributing God's Word. (Ps.119:105)

More: <https://www.mnnonline.org/news/bibles-china-challenge/>

■ Discovering Jesus through Asian eyes

The Evangelical Alliance has launched a new outreach programme specifically targeted at the UK's growing Asian population. 'Discovering Jesus through Asian eyes' is aimed at presenting the Gospel in a way that addresses many of the issues and questions that Asian people may have about Christianity. It was trialed in churches last year before being officially launched this week in London. Sanjay Rajo of Naujavan, a Christian organisation dedicated to serving 16 to 30-year-old Asians, said that until now there has been a real gap in the market for outreach designed for young British Asians. 'In the last forty years Asians came to the UK from overseas but now we are seeing more young people, who are born here are confused about their identity and hungry for something spiritual,' he explained. 'This course will attract a younger generation such as university students and young professionals in their 20s and 30s.'

Praise: God for this programme and pray that many will come to know Jesus through its use. (2Tim.4:1-2)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/discovering.jesus.through.asian.eyes/37467.htm>

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Thousands of domestic workers are slaves in UK

2,255 potential victims of human trafficking were encountered in 2012 in the U.K. Recent statistics from the Human Trafficking Foundation released on 22 April 2014 stated that '14,000 visas are issued each year to migrant domestic workers accompanying employers to the UK. There is little evidence as to what happens to the majority. Research since the

2012 visa changes warns that tying Migrant Domestic Workers (MDWs) to employers facilitates their abuse. Most recently the Report of the Joint Committee on the Draft Modern Slavery Bill recommended that the 2012 changes be reversed. Many victims come from countries in Southeast Asia and indebted themselves to an agent in order to secure a job in the Middle East. MDWs then accompany the employer to the UK, live in their employer's house and depend on them for all information about the UK as well as their immigration status. They are vulnerable to abuses of forced labour and servitude.

Pray: for governments and NGOs to eradicate modern-day slavery in the UK. (Ps.82:3)

More: <http://www.humantraffickingfoundation.org/blog/2014/4/hidden-migrant-domestic-workers-what-happens-them-uk>

▣ Tilbury Docks container stowaways

A man has died. He was one of 35 adults and children found in a shipping container at Tilbury Docks. The former head of UK Border Force said those inside the container were victims of international organised criminals. They want to migrate to the UK or to Europe but they're being exploited by criminal gangs who are probably taking their entire life savings away on the promise of a passage to the West. We really need to get a message out to migrants that if they want to come to this country there are legal routes that they need to explore and they need to apply for visas and permits. The chairman of the Human Trafficking Foundation said people are desperate to improve their economic situation, leaving their own homes and countries, hoping to arrive somewhere that's more accommodating, more kinder and offering them a better quality of life. Usually, they're sadly wrong.

Pray: for government and NGOs to equip people and communities to understand what trafficking is and what they can do to avoid being caught in its deception. (Ps.10:12)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-28827133>

▣ Future of the British Isles: Referendum

The debates surrounding the future of the UK and Scotland are increasing and heating up. At last weekend's festival of politics academics explored the theme of 'What next for Scotland?' The latest Oxford Review of Economic Policy featured the work of Professor David Bell and his University of Stirling research team who focused on the economic dimension of the independence debate, 'Taxing and Independent Scotland.' Also last week The Commission on Strengthening Local Democracy published its proposals on rebuilding Scottish democracy, regardless of the outcome of the referendum. Although there is considerable public interest in the referendum campaign, almost seventy per cent (69.5%) of voters do not believe that either the Yes or No campaigns can predict the consequences of independence. Many voters are relying on their own research and reaching their decision based on what they consider to be certain key risks. See:

<http://www.futureukandscotland.ac.uk/news/risks-currency-eu-membership-and-public-spending-key-referendum-vote-choice>

Pray: that Leaders and Members of Parliament will speak the truth, bringing clarity to the many issues voters need to understand to be able to vote from an informed position. (Pr.19:21)

More: <http://www.futureukandscotland.ac.uk/news>

▣ Travelodge removes Bibles from its rooms

The nationwide hotel chain Travelodge has removed Bibles from all of its rooms, in a move criticised by the Church of England. Bibles provided free by the Gideons have been taken away for 'diversity' reasons. The removals took place after refurbishment work across the hotel chain, which replaced the drawers where Bibles were being kept. In response, a spokesman for the Church of England said: 'It seems both tragic and bizarre that hotels would remove the word of God for the sake of ergonomic design, economic incentive or a spurious definition of the word 'diversity''. Writing on the Telegraph website, commentator Tim Stanley described Travelodge's decision as 'an act of cultural vandalism upon a tradition that goes back 126 years'. Travelodge is the only hotel chain in the country to have removed the Bibles, despite having never received a complaint from a guest.

Pray: that the management of Travelodge will have a change of mind and reverse the decision. (Ps.55:19)

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/travelodge-removes-bibles-from-its-rooms/>

▣ David Cameron says policies must pass 'family test'

All government policies will have to pass a 'family test', David Cameron has announced. He argued that parents and children were too often overlooked and could be left worse off by reforms. He said online music videos could be given age ratings and more money would be put towards relationship counselling services. Labour said he did not understand families' needs, as more households were now dependent on food banks. From October, every new domestic policy 'will be examined for its impact on the family', the prime minister said. Mr Cameron told BBC Breakfast that no politician wanted to be 'accused of being judgemental' over people's personal relationships, but added that government would 'help people who come together to stay together'. In his speech he said: 'I want every government department to be held to account for the impact of their policies on the family.'

Pray: that Cameron's policies will make a real difference and an impact on family relations. (Pr.12:15)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-28831242>

▣ Pensioner families to suffer social security cuts

Pensioner families across the UK will suffer social security cuts worth £6.38 billion a year by the time the government's welfare reforms have taken full effect, the Trades Union Congress (TUC) warned yesterday (18 August) ahead of a new report on the impact of social security cuts to be published later this week. In the run-up to the last general election, David Cameron pledged to protect pensioner benefits. However, the TUC-commissioned analysis of welfare cuts, undertaken by Howard Reed of Landman Economics, shows that this pledge has been broken as a result of changes announced by the government over the course of this parliament. The analysis looks at annual cash losses to a number of benefits. It shows that a quarter of all social security cuts implemented between 2010 and 2016/17 will fall on pensioner families.

Pray: for pensioners that they will not have to suffer deprivation caused by governmental welfare reforms. (Ph.2:20)

More: <http://www.ekkleisia.co.uk/node/20743>

▣ Tackle 'national pandemic' of alcohol abuse, say MPs

Minimum pricing and tough new rules for drink-driving were amongst a host of recommendations unveiled by a group of MPs and peers this week, in response to a 'national pandemic' of alcohol abuse. The All Party Parliamentary Committee on Alcohol Misuse revealed its manifesto for 2015, which demonstrates the cost of alcohol-related incidents, and calls for new measures to minimise alcohol-related harm. Incidents ranging from drink-related crime to hospital admissions are thought to cost the UK economy as much as £21 billion annually. In the foreword to the manifesto, Tracey Crouch, who chairs the group, said: 'The facts and figures of the scale of alcohol misuse in the UK speak for themselves'. She believes that there 'must be a more thorough and full package of measures which tackles the problem more effectively and reduces the cost to people's health of alcohol-related crime and treatment'.

Pray: against any abuse, whether it is ill-health or crime, caused by the over use of alcohol. (Eph.5:18)

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/tackle-national-pandemic-of-alcohol-abuse-say-mps/>

EUROPE

▣ Russia says no progress on Ukraine ceasefire

Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov says no progress has been made in Berlin talks on establishing a ceasefire between government and rebel forces in the east of Ukraine. Following the talks between Russia, Germany, France and Ukraine on Sunday, Lavrov said all issues related to sending a humanitarian convoy to Ukraine have been resolved. 'One place where we cannot report positive results is in, first and foremost, establishing a ceasefire and [starting] a political process,' Lavrov told a Berlin press conference that was carried live by Russian state television. Talks concluded with an agreement for the sides to meet again and continue trying to de-escalate the worst East-West crisis since the Cold War. Lavrov accused Kiev's new pro-European leaders of continually changing demands over what it would take to establish a truce after more than four months of fighting with pro-Russia separatists that has claimed more than 2,000 lives.

Pray: for the ongoing talks to establish a ceasefire and ultimately to bring peace. (Pr.12.20)

More: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2014/08/russia-says-no-progress-ukraine-ceasefire-201481884454489100.html>

▣ Another Ukrainian church seized by militants

Militants of the self-proclaimed 'People's Republic of Donetsk' (PRD) seized the building of the church, 'Word of Life', where Leonid Padun, Bishop of the Ukrainian Christian Evangelical Church is a pastor, reports The Christian Telegraph. 'PRD representatives seized the building of our church on Wednesday, August 13 at 10pm. Despite the fact that there are lots of vacant buildings in the city, they decided to take the house of God, which is in use every single day, and providing assistance to people in need,' wrote Leonid Padun on his Facebook page. 'For over twenty years we have invested our hearts and finances to that church building and now we are deprived of the opportunity to gather for prayer and worship of God. With a heavy heart, I have to inform you that this Sunday the doors of our church for the first time will not be opened.'

Pray: for the church in Ukraine that it will be protected from the ravages of war and use its members to bring reconciliation. (2Cor.5:18)

More: <http://www.christiantelegraph.com/issue24436.html>

WORLDWIDE

▣ Israel: Day 44 of violence

A five-day truce expired on 19 August, the 43rd day of Operation Protective Edge, and the sides agreed a 24-hour extension amid conflicting reports on the progress of talks on a long-term Israel-Hamas deal. But rockets from Gaza broke the truce on Tuesday afternoon, Israel quit the talks and the conflict resumed. By comparison, on 19 August 1947 the local newspaper reported, 'After a week of Arab-Jewish clashes during which 35 persons were killed and 80 wounded, it seemed probable today that both sides had brought the situation under control, and that at least for the time being, there would be no large-scale rioting in Palestine. Once outside the Tel Aviv-Jaffa trouble area Jewish settlements reported without exception that relations with their Arab neighbours were completely normal. Leaders of the Arab villages showed no signs either of tension or hostility'. At that time conflicts were blamed on outside influences. See:

<http://www.jta.org/1947/08/20/archive/j-t-a-correspondent-touring-palestine-danger-spots-finds-arabs-want-no-trouble>

Pray: that God's purposes for the land will be fulfilled and that He will be glorified in all decisions made at this time. (Ps.33:10)

More: <http://www.timesofisrael.com/>

▣ USA: Ferguson, Missouri - 'This has to stop'

On 9 August a white police officer fatally shot an unarmed black teenager. Police and witnesses' accounts varied. The confusion fuelled protests by locals which invited outside agitators bring in gunplay and further violence. Community religious leaders failed in their attempts to dissuade the angry from violent protests. The national president of Black Lawyers for Justice blamed unspecified outside provocateurs for further trouble. Then demonstrators were urged to make their voices heard during the daylight where they can be seen and not be the cover for violent agitators who hide in the crowd and then create chaos. But that idea failed. Because of inconsistencies in reported facts, and the ethnic balance in the background to this incident there will now be a civil rights investigation. Meanwhile, schools in the area are cancelled this week and businesses are being looted or burned. Proprietors stand guard over their businesses with guns and the National Guard have been called in.

Pray: for the teenagers family. Peace and order to be restored quickly and for racism and any proven police brutality to

be addressed. (Lev.19:15

More: <http://edition.cnn.com/2014/08/19/us/missouri-teen-shooting/index.html>

▣ **Iraq: Britain's involvement**

On Monday Prime Minister David Cameron said, 'This is not simply a humanitarian mission. We are determined to do what we can to help Iraq combat this new and very extreme form of terrorism.' He spoke amid a series of dramatic developments on the ground that will fuel concerns about mission creep. British military planes are flying deeper into Iraq to capture surveillance footage of jihadist fighters which is being used to help Kurdish and Iraqi forces on the ground. Regular soldiers from the Yorkshire Regiment were in the Kurdish region last week – despite Downing Street's assurances that there would be no 'boots on the ground'. At least 1,000 Royal Marines are being deployed to Jordan in a long-planned joint military exercise with the US. The Defence Secretary said the mission has escalated beyond a humanitarian one. Read more: http://voiceofrussia.com/uk/news/2014_08_18/Britains-increasing-involvement-in-Iraq-could-lead-to-direct-intervention-7753/

Pray: that all humanitarian, intelligence gathering and support missions will deliver eventual stability in Iraq. (Is.1:17 & 19)

More: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2727439/Britain-dragged-deeper-Iraq-conflict-150-special-forces-way-minister-says-mission-months.html>

▣ **Syria: ISIS kill kidnapped journalist James Foley**

Dozens of journalists - many freelancers without news organisation backing - disappeared in 2012/13 in Syria. On Tuesday ISIS posted a video claiming to show kidnapped American journalist James Foley's death. He was kidnapped in Syria nearly two years ago. The authenticity of the video, which was also posted on YouTube, could not be verified. YouTube later took down the 4 minute, 40-second video titled, 'A Message to America,' showing the journalist kneeling in a desert landscape, clad in an orange jumpsuit - a reference to the uniforms worn by prisoners at Guantánamo Bay. Standing to his left is a masked ISIS fighter speaking in English with what sounds like an East London accent. Pulling out a knife, he says that Mr. Foley's execution is in retaliation for the recent American airstrikes ordered by President Obama against the extremist group in Iraq.

Pray: for Mr Foley's mother, Diane and the family. Pray for the remaining innocent hostages held in Syria. Pray for journalists everywhere dedicated to exposing to the world the suffering of people in dangerous places and situations. (Ps.23:4)

More: http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/20/world/middleeast/isis-james-foley-syria-execution.html?ref=world&_r=0

▣ **Nigeria: Latest Islamist outrage**

Witnesses who fled the sandy fishing village of Doron Baga near the shores of Lake Chad said militants clothed in military and police uniforms loaded 97 men and boys on to trucks and drove them away, leaving no men or boys in the place - only young children, girls and women. They said six older men were also killed in Sunday's raid while another five people were wounded. Terrorists also burned several houses. Boko Haram has dramatically increased attacks on civilians recently and the once-grassroots movement has lost popular support as it becomes more bloodthirsty. Young men are not now willingly volunteering as soldiers. So Boko Haram's solution is kidnapping boys and forcing them to fight and abducting girls as sex slaves. This is a chilling echo of Ugandan rebel Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army, which operated in the same way in Uganda, South Sudan and central Africa for decades.

Pray: for missing and abducted Nigerians and their families. (Ps.17:7-9) Ask God to halt the increasing mobility of Boko Haram across vast swathes of north-eastern Nigeria without being intercepted by the military. (Ps.44:23-24)

More: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2725964/Boko-Haram-kidnap-dozens-men-boys-attack-Nigeria-village-latest-Islamist-outrage.html>

▣ **World: Natural disasters this week**

*Japan: After a month's rain fell in 24 hours, more than 32 died in 10 landslides of mud and rocks which buried homes in Hiroshima city outskirts. * Iran: Two Earthquakes. A 6.1 magnitude earthquake struck Abdanan on Monday. Water, electricity and telephone lines were cut and houses, buildings and cars were destroyed. Aftershocks could be felt in three provinces. On Wednesday in Dezful, near the Iraq border, a 5.7 magnitude earthquake occurred. There are expected to be further aftershocks. Fire is the most common hazard after an earthquake. Along with traffic confusion after traffic light outages. *USA: Phoenix, Arizona has suffered torrential storms causing severe flooding across the desert region. A resident living there for 20 years said it has never flooded this badly. *India: 160+ died in floods and landslides following days of torrential rain in Nepal and northern India. See also: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/08/18/iran-earthquake-2014_n_5686799.html *Iceland: 300 earthquakes were detected since Tuesday midnight near a volcano showing 'escalating unrest with increased potential of eruption'. Authorities have evacuated the area.

Pray: for all who have lost loved ones, homes, businesses and possessions in recent floods earthquakes, fires, and landslides. Pray for the rescue and relief services who are helping survivors. (Ps.18:4-6)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-28832474>

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE WORLD PRAYER CENTRE, BIRMINGHAM, UK

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