

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

■ UK: Churches in London see 16% growth

The Church in London has been put on a growth path. One in nine Londoners now go to church, and church attendance in the capital has grown by 16% in the past seven years. This significant turn-around is reported by the Financial Times. Anglican mega churches like Holy Trinity Brompton (home of Alpha) and St Helen's Bishopsgate account for the growth, as well as Hillsong, a mega church from Australia. This success is matched by a plethora of African Pentecostal movements, including the Nigerian Kingsway International Christian Centre and Kensington Temple. Research by academics at Cranmer Hall, a theological college in Durham, entitled 'Church Growth in Britain from 1980 to the Present' revealed that there are 500,000 Christians in black majority churches in Britain. Sixty years ago there were hardly any. At least 5,000 new churches have been started in Britain since 1980 - and this is an undercount, the true figure is probably higher.

Praise: God for this growth of His Church – long may it continue. (Ps.47:7)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-29113530>

■ Mali: Christians in Mali return to their ruined churches

While the world's attention is focused on the threat of the Islamic State in the Middle East, Christians in northern Mali have returned to their shattered communities after French forces wrested control back from Islamist groups. Churches were desecrated and looted when the region fell under radical groups in 2012. French forces were able to take control but the reconstruction is slow and costly, and peace talks between the government and mainly Tuareg armed groups are still ongoing. Dr Mohamed Ibrahim Yattara, president of the Baptist Church in northern Mali, told World Watch Monitor most Christians who fled the region had now returned to their homes but their churches are 'in ruins'. He said the church there has lost most of its buildings and valuable property, including vehicles. The damage done by the extremists has also affected the church's work in the area of community provision.

Praise: God that the Christians who fled Mali have now returned to their homes. Pray for the re-building work to continue. (Pr.24:27)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/christians.who.fled.extremist.terror.in.mali.return.to.the.churches.that.were.reduced.to.ruins/40355.htm>

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ National day of prayer for Scottish referendum

World Prayer Centre are holding a day of prayer in Birmingham 16 Sept www.worldprayer.org.uk A national day of prayer and fasting will be held on September 17, 24 hours before Scots will go to the polls to vote on September 18. There will be 48 hours of prayer on 17 -19 September in Edinburgh, all are invited to join at 7. 14pm for flash mob prayer outside Scottish Parliament on 17. Or pray where you are during these times <http://www.prayforscotland.org.uk/?cat=4> Christians in Scotland are urging First Minister Alex Salmond and Better Together leader Alistair Darling to each visit a church ahead of the referendum for a short time of prayer. 'Pray for Scotland' offer some suggestions that you/your church may find helpful to pray: https://gallery.mailchimp.com/d1a09db4e896a5789a3bb1f56/files/Referendum_Prayer_Call_letter_2_03.pdf Churches have also been encouraged to pray about independence on the previous Sunday. 'God's guidance is required for the proper functioning of society, in fact, for 300 years the Church has given spiritual guidance without taking sides,' said Fred Drummond, national director of Evangelical Alliance Scotland.

Pray: for God's guidance for everyone involved in the referendum. (2Ch.7.14)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/national.day.of.prayer.for.scottish.referendum/40202.htm>

▣ One in five child deaths in UK 'preventable'

One in five child deaths could have been prevented, according to research published in the Lancet today. Around 5,000 infants, children and adolescents die prematurely in England and Wales every year, although the number is low relative to population size. The reports – published in three parts – stress many of these deaths were preventable. Researchers also found child death rates were higher in the north than in south of the country, tending to be higher in the Midlands and the North, and were closely linked to poverty. The president of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health Dr Hilary Cass said: 'This is a serious wake-up call for both healthcare professionals and policy makers and we have to act urgently.' One study showed that between 2010 and 2011 as many as 20 per cent of deaths of children and teenagers aged 18 and under in England could have been avoided.

Pray: for all those who mourn the loss of a child and for better targetted support to prevent unnecessary child deaths. (3Jn.1:2)

More: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/one-in-five-child-deaths-in-uk-preventable-according-to-new-research-9714180.html>

▣ Dawn of new era as rigorous press regulator starts work

IPSO, the new Press regulator, begins work today with a commitment to be 'rigorous, independent, fair and transparent'. The Independent Press Standards Organisation, whose chairman is the retired Court of Appeal judge Sir Alan Moses, will oversee editorial standards for the majority of national and regional newspapers and magazines. It has far tougher rules than the previous regulator, the Press Complaints Commission. The watchdog will have the power to impose fines of up to £1million for serious and systemic wrongdoing and can require editors to publish up-front corrections. IPSO will also include a standards and compliance arm, with investigative powers to call editors to account. It will require all newspapers to have their own effective complaints-handling procedures. Sir Alan said: 'IPSO aims to help rebuild public trust in the Press through independent, fair and transparent regulation. Its role as an independent regulator is to provide support and redress for victims of Press abuse.'

Pray: that the work of IPSO will be effective in raising standards in the British press and prevent the public from abuse. (Pr.10:9)

More: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2747202/Dawn-new-era-rigorous-Press-regulator-starts-work.html>

▣ Archbishop joins multi-faith peace vigil for Iraq

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, joined faith leaders and representatives from faith-based NGOs last week for a vigil showing solidarity with the people of Iraq and affirming the message that #WeAreAllHuman. Archbishop Welby joined Imam Ibrahim Mogra, Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner and Ayatollah Dr Sayed Fazel Milani at the vigil outside Westminster Abbey by the Innocent Victims Memorial. Speaking at the vigil, Archbishop Justin said he joined the other faith leaders in 'unreservedly' condemning the way that minority faith communities are being 'wiped out' in IS-controlled areas. 'This must stop. We are all human,' he said. 'What we are seeing in Iraq violates brutally people's right to freedom of religion and belief, as set out under Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.' The vigil was jointly organised by Christian Aid, Islamic Relief and World Jewish Relief in partnership with the Church of England, the Muslim Council of Britain and the Movement for Reform Judaism.

Pray: for an end to the extremist violence perpetrated in the name of religion and for international protection for the persecuted minorities. (1Jn.4:1)

More: <http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/5402/archbishop-joins-multi-faith-peace-vigil-for-iraq>

▣ 'Neets' solution could lie in tackling bad behaviour

A softer approach to tackling bad behaviour in schools could help reduce the number of young people not in education, work or training (Neets), it has been claimed. The so-called 'restorative approach' encourages pupils to talk about why they misbehave instead of excluding them. This has resulted in a 91% drop in the number of exclusions at one Monmouth school. Teachers said it changes attitudes. The scheme, being trialled in a number of Welsh secondary schools, has also resulted in a reduction in crime in some areas. At Fitzalan High School in Cardiff the approach has resulted in a significant drop in the number of days lost to pupil exclusions - from 1,000 three years ago to 112 days this year. Teacher Jane Holland Lloyd said the initiative helped pupils feel more involved.

Pray: that the success of this new approach will gather strength as it is rolled out across other schools. (Ps.118:25)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-south-east-wales-26248169>

▣ Make mental health bigger priority

Mental health needs to be more of a priority, with targets for waiting times and more protection for funding, says England's chief medical officer. Dame Sally Davies said there were signs that funding was being cut at a time when the cost to the economy was rising. Her annual report said mental illness led to the loss of 70 million working days last year - up 24% since

2009. As well as calling for greater emphasis on mental illness in the NHS, she also said employers could play a role too. She recommended they allowed people with mental health problems the option of flexible working to keep them in employment and maintaining regular contact during sickness leave. Overall, mental illness costs the economy between £70bn and £100bn in lost productivity, benefit payments and absence from work. In terms of NHS spending, it accounts for 13% of the budget despite causing 28% of illness.

Pray: for a greater emphasis on the needs of those with mental health problems. (Pr.18:14)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-29116354>

EUROPE

■ Six EU countries join group to 'destroy' Islamic State (IS)

Six EU countries have joined a US-led coalition to 'degrade and destroy' the IS in Iraq and Syria. The 'Core Group' came together at the NATO summit in Wales last Thursday and Friday (5-6 September). On the EU side, it includes, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, and the UK. The other members are Australia, Canada, Turkey, and the US. US president Barack Obama told the press: 'We are going to degrade and ultimately destroy IS the same way we've gone after al-Qaeda, and the same way we've gone after its affiliates in Somalia'. It is considered a threat to EU countries because hundreds of European Muslims have joined it and might come home to carry out terrorist attacks. But Core Group leaders at the NATO event ruled out, sending ground troops, negotiating with IS on hostages; or forming an alliance with IS adversary, Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad.

Pray: that the coalition of nations against radical Islam will be successful in controlling those with evil desires. (Ps.34:16)

More: <http://euobserver.com/foreign/125501>

■ UK offers NATO security fence to help Calais tackle migrants

The UK is to offer France the security fences used at the NATO summit in Wales to help tackle migrants trying to get into the country illegally from Calais. James Brokenshire the Immigration Minister, said the 9ft-high steel barricade could 'replace and enlarge inadequate fencing' at the French port. Increasing numbers of migrants have flocked to Calais in recent months. Earlier this week scores of illegal migrants were able to get past security and tried to run up the main ramp of a ferry bound for the UK, but they were foiled when the crew raised the ramp and turned a fire hose on them. Mr Brokenshire said: 'We would like to establish secure parking areas where legitimate hauliers and travellers can wait without being hassled by would-be illegal immigrants.' He added that the UK was 'no soft touch' when it comes to illegal immigration and highlighted the government's efforts to tackle the issue.

Pray: that the authorities will find ways of controlling illegal immigrants and stopping them at source.

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-29098641>

WORLDWIDE

■ Sierra Leone: Ebola outbreak - British military sent to West Africa

British military engineers and medics are being sent to Sierra Leone to help fight the world's largest-ever outbreak of Ebola. They will set up and run a treatment centre near the capital Freetown. The World Health Organization says that more than 2,000 people have now died in the outbreak in West Africa. Last week the charity Medecins Sans Frontieres called for a global military intervention in the region. It said the global response to the outbreak had been 'lethally inadequate' with countries turning their back on West Africa and merely reducing the risk of Ebola arriving on their shores. The UK has announced it will build a centre with 50 beds for people in Sierra Leone and 12 beds for health-care workers who become ill. The proposed site will be surveyed this week with the facility scheduled to be running within eight weeks.

Pray: for the protection of those involved in treating this outbreak. Pray that research will bring speedy results. (Ps.5:11)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-29113530>

■ Nigeria: Boko Haram 'seize' Michika in Adamawa state

Nigeria's militant Islamist group Boko Haram has captured the key north-eastern town of Michika, residents say, gaining more territory in its efforts to create an Islamic state. People fled into bushes as gunfire rang out in the town, they added. Boko Haram has changed tactics in recent months by holding on to territory rather than launching hit-and-run attacks. The government called on Nigerians not to lose hope. The military was committed to defending Nigeria's territorial integrity, it said. Soldiers killed 50 militants during a raid on their hideout in the small north-eastern town of Kawuri at the weekend, the army said. Last month, Boko Haram said it had established an Islamic state in areas it controls in north-eastern Nigeria. Michika is a trading centre in Adamawa state not far from the Cameroon border.

Pray: against the ongoing attacks by Boko Haram as it seeks to establish an Islamic state. (Ps.140:12)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-29110663>

■ Libya: 250,000 people flee fighting as Islamist group takes over

Fighting between rival groups in Libya's main cities has displaced 100,000 people, and caused another 150,000 to flee the country, a United Nations report said today. Numerous human rights abuses, including indiscriminate killing and abductions, took place between May and August, the report issued by the United Nations Support Mission in Libya and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights said. Yesterday Islamist-allied group Fajr Libya, or Libyan Dawn, appointed a new government in Tripoli, rivaling the existing government, which was only elected in June. Libyan Dawn took control of the capital on August 24 following intense fighting between rival groups since July 13. They re-convened an assembly of the National General Congress, the interim government that controlled Libya after the toppling of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi in 2011. The elected parliament has fled to Tobruk in the east to escape the fighting.

Pray: for those who have been forced to flee the country in fear of further atrocities. (Ps.122:7)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/250000.people.flee.fighting.in.libya.as.islamist.group.takes.over/40297.htm>

■ **Somalia: Al-Shabab claims deadly bombing**

At least 12 people were killed and 27 others wounded when a suicide bomber rammed a vehicle packed with explosives into an African Union convoy near Afgoy, southwest of the Somali capital Mogadishu, a local governor said. The attack, the latest in a wave of violence, comes exactly one week after a US air strike killed the chief of the al-Qaeda-linked al-Shabab group, prompting threats of retaliation from the group. Speaking to Al Jazeera, al-Shabab's military operations, spokesman claimed responsibility for the attack that took place near the town of Afgoye, about 30km northwest from the capital Mogadishu. Governor Abdulkadir Mohamed Sidi said a car packed with explosives hit one of the armoured AU trucks. 'Twelve civilians in a minibus were killed, and 27 others were wounded,' he told the AFP news agency.

Pray: that peace would rule, not violence. (Job.22:21)

More: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2014/09/al-shabab-somalia-bombings-20149813135892361.html>

■ **Syria: IS selling Christian women as 'spoils of war'**

US airstrikes and Kurdish Peshmerga fighters helped rescue thousands of Yazidis stranded on a mountaintop in northern Iraq. But hundreds of Yazidi girls and women were captured by IS during the prolonged ordeal, and are now being sold to IS fighters in Syria, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a UK-based monitoring group aligned with the opposition in Syria. In the last several weeks, IS has sold about 300 Yazidi women and underage girls they abducted in Iraq, according to the group. Assyrian Christian women have also been sold to IS fighters. These young women are considered 'slaves of the spoils of war with the infidels,' the monitoring group reported. The terrorists sold the women for about \$1,000 each, after a forced conversion to Islam so that they are 'eligible' to marry IS fighters. An Iraqi Christian refugee named Rwaah fled the Christian city of Qaraqosh, and reported to the BBC on August 8 that IS is raping and selling Christian women.

Pray: that ways will be found to bring freedom to these women (2Pe.2:19)

More: http://www.breakingchristiannews.com/articles/display_art.html?ID=14516

■ **India and Pakistan floods: Thousands still marooned**

Hundreds of thousands of people remain stranded in India and many more have been warned to leave their homes in Pakistan amid some of the worst flooding in the region in decades. The death toll in the two countries has passed 450 with troops deployed to rescue people and provide relief. Officials say 400,000 people are stranded in Indian-administered Kashmir, where 200 people have died. In Pakistan, 254 people have died and thousands have been asked to evacuate. Pakistan's Minister for Water and Power Khwaja Mohammad Asif, was quoted by the Associated Press news agency as saying that some 700,000 people had been told to leave their homes, which could be inundated in the next four days. Hundreds of people are trying to leave Srinagar, the main city of Kashmir. Although the rains have subsided, many areas of the city are still water-logged, including neighbourhoods around the Dal Lake.

Pray: that the authorities will be able to provide the necessary relief supplies to meet the needs of those involved. (Ps.69:15)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-29137789>

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE WORLD PRAYER CENTRE, BIRMINGHAM, UK

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