

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

■ Imprisoned pastor's mother escapes Iran

The mother of Imprisoned American pastor Saeed Abedini went to Iran to support her son and try to secure his release. However, while in Iran she has been facing increasing violent threats against her, and although she did not want to leave Iran and did not want to say goodbye to her son, she had to leave to guarantee her safety. Fox news reported on Wednesday, 'Saeed's mom is now safely out of the country, we look forward to seeing her soon here in the United States. It has been a difficult time for everyone

Praise: God that pastor Saeed's mother no longer lives in fear of being arrested, please continue to pray for her son's release. (Ps.5:3)

More: <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2014/11/04/escape-from-iran-mother-imprisoned-pastor-flees-after-repeated-threats/>

■ When the medicine failed

One Chadian man's violent fits were healed by the ceaseless prayers of the Guinebor II Hospital staff. Bousanna Barnabus probably did not expect to be healed with prayer when he came to the BMS World Mission hospital, located outside N'Djamena, Chad. After four days of continuous epileptic fits, Bousanna's family brought him semi-conscious to the hospital for treatment. The attacks left him mentally and physically exhausted and very afraid. Bousanna had one moment of clarity and he used it to ask for prayer. When he did this it felt as if something amazing was happening. And it was. As Christians, we know that prayer is a powerful thing. We ask for safety, healing, wisdom and more, knowing that God will provide what we need at precisely the right time. In Bousanna's case this is exactly what happened, and we give thanks.

Praise: God for His healing hand on those in need. (Lk.5:31)

More: http://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/418700/Chad_when_the.aspx

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Prayer movement launched for climate agreement

Christian charities from across the UK are joining forces to launch a year of prayer and fasting for the climate. A number of church services are taking place around the country where believers will be encouraged to pray on the first day of every month during 2015. In December 2015 a new international climate agreement will be signed in Paris. Charities like Operation Noah, A Rocha, Christian Aid, Christian Concern for One World, Christian Ecology Link, OurVoices, Hope for the

Future and Shrinking the Footprint are all involved. The campaign is aiming to highlight the political and spiritual significance of prayer and fasting as a powerful platform for change. Canon Giles Goddard, board member of Operation Noah said: 'The need for change is urgent and everyone can help bring it about. Praying and fasting for the climate will inspire action and encourage people to think about what needs to happen.'

Pray: for people across the country to support the initiative and tell others about it. (Num.35:34)

More: <http://www.premierchristianradio.com/News/UK/Prayer-movement-launched-for-climate-agreement>

■ Poll shows voters 'concerned' over religious liberty threats

Only eleven per cent of voters in marginal constituencies think religious liberty has improved since David Cameron became Prime Minister, according to a new survey. The ComRes poll, commissioned by The Christian Institute, found that over four in ten (44 per cent) of those surveyed support legal protections for people with 'sincere, profoundly-held beliefs'. ComRes surveyed 1,000 British adults living in the 40 most marginal Conservative/Labour constituencies last month. Only 21 per cent disagreed that the 'tide of equality legislation has gone too far in elevating equality over religious freedom'. Colin Hart, Director of The Christian Institute, said the results should act as a 'wake up call' to party leaders, as voters in key marginal seats are 'very concerned about threats to religious liberty and free speech. Those surveyed rightly believe that religious freedom in this country has not improved under Mr Cameron's leadership.'

Pray: for political parties and their leaders to recognise that religious liberty remains important and should not be ignored. (Ps.33:12)

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/poll-shows-voters-concerned-over-religious-liberty-threats/>

■ Paedophiles grooming women to bear children

Paedophiles are grooming women to bear their children, giving them easy access to victims, according to a child abuse charity. MOSAC - a charity which supports the non-abusing parents and carers of abused children - says a third of all calls to its helpline are from women who believe they have been groomed into conceiving a child. Director Nigel Newton Sawyerr said: 'Paedophiles who are very devious will go to any lengths to access children. Who's more vulnerable than their own children?' Barrister Sophia Cannon says the law under the Children's Act will always take into consideration the wellbeing of a child. But she adds that it is 'skewed towards the idea that all mothers and fathers who want to be involved in a child's life can be involved. What it doesn't look at are the parents to whom responsibility has certainly fallen short,' she said. MOSAC is now lobbying the Government for change.

Pray: for the law to be amended to remove access rights from repeat sexual offenders. (Heb.13:4)

More: <http://news.sky.com/story/1365552/paedophiles-grooming-women-to-bear-children>

■ Child sex abuse inquiry: They must get the appointment right this time

Fiona Woolf is a person of great integrity, as indeed is Elizabeth Butler-Sloss, but the task of heading an inquiry into allegations of historical child sex abuse is a special one. The two candidates for the post fell by the wayside not because of their personal qualities but because of their family and social connections. That the Home Office failed to spot the problem in both cases and then took so long to accept that it was a problem reflects badly on her department and ultimately on Theresa May, the Home Secretary, herself. That, however, is the past. Ms May's sincerity should not be doubted, even if her department's competence and her judgement might have been found wanting. What matters now is to learn the lesson and get it right the third time. This is an important inquiry and it will be hard to find the right person to lead it.

Pray: for a suitable person to lead the enquiry, acceptable to all parties, to be found soon to lead the inquiry. (Pr.2:9-11)

More: <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/child-sex-abuse-inquiry-they-must-get-the-appointment-right-this-time-9833492.html>

■ Red Cross axes volunteer for opposing same-sex marriage

A grandfather who spent almost 20 years volunteering for the Red Cross has been dropped by the organisation for opposing same-sex marriage. Bryan Barkley held a sign which read 'No Same Sex Marriage' and 'No Redefinition of Marriage' on the first day same-sex marriages took place in England. In August, Mr Barkley was told of the decision to withdraw his 'opportunity to volunteer with the British Red Cross permanently and with immediate effect'. The letter also referred to the incompatibility between Mr Barkley's views on marriage and the Red Cross' 'fundamental principles and values'. Coalition for Marriage (C4M), an umbrella group of supporters of traditional marriage, is backing Mr Barkley and described the actions of the Red Cross as 'shocking'. At the Red Cross he volunteered in the international family tracing service, working on 84 cases, irrespective of sexual orientation.

Pray: that the Red Cross will be able to extend its founding principles, of impartiality and neutrality to Mr Barkley. (Jas.3:17)

More: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/red-cross-axes-volunteer-for-opposing-same-sex-marriage/>

■ Tower Hamlets: damning report lays bare cronyism and misuse of public money

Tower Hamlets, the east London council, sold off public buildings to associates of the Mayor and handed out grants to ineligible bodies, a damning Government report has found. The winning bidder to buy Poplar Town Hall offered a lower price than other bidders and 'had an association' with the controversial Mayor Lutfur Rahman, according to an audit by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC). The Mayor personally intervened in the awarding of council contracts, which lacked signed paperwork or audit trails, the report found. Hundreds of thousands of pounds in public money were awarded to local bodies that were not eligible for the money after the intervention of elected councillors, the report found. The audit was commissioned by Eric Pickles, the Communities Secretary, following allegations of cronyism, fraud and waste at Mr Rahman's council.

Pray: for the government and the council that they will make wise decisions to the benefit of all. (Ex.20:7)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/local-elections/11207299/Tower-Hamlets-damning-report-lays-bare-cronyism-and-misuse-of-public-money.html>

■ 'Stronger warnings needed' over pregnant women drinking

Campaigners and doctors are calling for stronger warnings about drinking during pregnancy, ahead of a legal test case on foetal alcohol syndrome. The case will decide if a child born with serious disabilities caused by her mother's alcohol consumption should be eligible for compensation as a victim of crime. Some estimates suggest that thousands are born every year in the UK with serious health defects caused by alcohol. Senior health officials have said there are mixed messages on the issue. NHS guidance states 'women who are pregnant or trying to conceive should avoid alcohol altogether'. But it continues: 'If they do choose to drink, to minimise the risk to the baby, we recommend they should not drink more than one or two units once or twice a week, and should not get drunk.'

Pray: that all the warnings against the excesses of alcohol during pregnancy will be understood. (Eph.5:18)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-29614413>

EUROPE

■ ISIL jihadists 'offered teenager \$25,000 to carry out bombings in Vienna'

A 14-year-old boy suspected of planning a series of bombings in Vienna was reported on Thursday to have been offered \$25,000 (£16,000) by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) to carry out the attacks amid claims that two other youths recruited in the same way remain at large. The arrested youth has not been named by authorities, but has been identified by the Austrian media as Mertkan G, the son of Turkish immigrants who has lived in the country for eight years. He was arrested on Tuesday but details are only now emerging about his case. Among the sites in which he has admitted planning to plant explosives is Vienna's Westbahnhof station, used by 40,000 travellers each day. He had confessed to planning to plant a series of bombs in crowded areas around Vienna, said Michaela Obenaus, a spokesman for the prosecutors' office in the boy's home city of St Pölten.

Pray: against the evils that have trapped many young people into such radical movements.

More: <http://europenews.dk/en/node/86164>

■ Ukraine to send reinforcements to key cities in case of rebel attacks

Kiev will send reinforcements to key Ukrainian cities to prevent potential attacks from Russia-backed separatists, President Petro Poroshenko said on Monday. He also called on Ukraine's parliament to rescind a law giving special status to the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in the east of the country, much of which is under the control of separatists. Kiev essentially has no control over rebel authorities in the east, who held their own elections over the weekend and have suggested they may attempt to capture other cities in the region, such as the port city of Mariupol. At a meeting of the country's security council, Poroshenko said the reinforcements would be for the 'construction of fortifications' against a 'possible offensive in the direction of Mariupol, Berdyansk, Kharkiv and Luhansk north'. Speaking earlier he said he would ask the council and parliament to end the 'special status' law for rebellious eastern regions, agreed as part of a ceasefire deal in September.

Pray: for the Kiev government and the eastern regions that they will seek peace and reconciliation instead of conflict. (Job.22:21)

More: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/nov/04/ukraine-reinforcements-cities-rebel-attacks>

WORLDWIDE

■ Middle East: Displaced people

As unrest tears through the land over one million people, many of them Christians in predominantly Muslim lands, have been displaced. Most have fled with nothing but the clothes on their backs. Winter is approaching. Refugees face temperatures of 35 to 55 degrees F. 'It is already cold at nights and they have nowhere to go' said the president of the Iraqi Christian Relief Council. Meanwhile a representative of The Catholic Relief Services said, 'Just weeks or months ago, they were middle-class with homes and careers. they were corporate professionals or barbers or teachers or college students. Now they're in perilous conditions.' The refugee camps already have fever and disease. International humanitarian organisations are working together to bring relief to thousands of Iraqi in Turkey; 850,000 Iraqi in Kurdistan, including 150,000 Christians; 200,000 Syrians in the Kurdish Region of Iraq. Thousands more arrive daily. See also <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/as.winter.approaches.christian.and.yazidi.refugees.who.fled.is.could.freeze.to.death/41028.htm>

Pray: for the mission agencies attempting to meet the changing needs of populations as they move from crisis to rehabilitation, reconstruction and eventually sustainable living. (Lev.19:18)

More: <http://www.breakingisraelnews.com/23423/israaid-offers-humanitarian-relief-christian-yazidi-refugees-iraq/#7HCFJ3gbfOF7BHUS.97>

■ Nigeria: Boko Haram denies ceasefire and release of schoolgirls deal

Boko Haram laughed at the announcement of a ceasefire and release of abducted school girls. Two weeks ago Nigeria's Foreign Minister said the schoolgirls would be released 'in the very near future.' However, a recent Boko Haram video showed Abubakar Shekau saying, 'Don't you know the Chibok schoolgirls have converted to Islam? They have memorised two chapters of the Quran. We married them off.' He also denied knowing the negotiator with whom the government claimed it had worked out a ceasefire deal. In the video, Shekau talked not of peace but of more violence - promising more 'war, striking and killing with gun.' On Saturday Boko Haram sent messages to Christians in hideouts in the hills telling them that non-Muslims would be killed. Many tried to escape to Cameroon in the night but were stopped. Boko Haram later attacked the area and killed many remaining in the hills. See: <http://www.releaseinternational.org/nigeria-boko-haram-targets-christian-hideouts/>

Pray: for the Nigerian government as it steps up its military campaign against militants and criminals. Pray for God to comfort the many living in fear in Nigeria's countryside communities. (Ps.10:2,17-8)

More: <http://edition.cnn.com/2014/11/01/world/africa/nigeria-boko-haram-denies-deal/>

■ Global: Climate change report

A UN report issued on 2 November warned that unchecked climate change will increase the likelihood of severe, pervasive and irreversible impacts for people and ecosystems. Ban Ki-moon said that if we maintain a 'business as usual' attitude about climate change the opportunity to keep temperature rise below the 2 degrees Celsius target 'will slip away within the next decade.' A recent assessment of climate change report confirms actual climate change being registered around the world and warming of climate systems that is unequivocal. The atmosphere and oceans have warmed, snow and ice has diminished, sea levels have risen and the concentration of carbon dioxide has increased to an unprecedented level. The report found the world very ill-prepared for the risks of a changing climate, especially the poor and most vulnerable who have contributed least to this problem. See also last week's Prayer Alert 'EU reaches deal on CO2 emissions cut'.

Pray: for the voices of scientists to be heard in the political arena and appropriate actions taken to build a more sustainable world. (Ps.24:1)

More: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=49232#.VFkCIPmsW3M>

■ Pakistan: Persecution of Christians

On Tuesday an enraged Muslim mob beat a Christian couple to death near Lahore and burnt their bodies in the brick kiln where they worked for allegedly desecrating the Holy Quran. This is the latest example of mob violence against minorities accused of blasphemy. Pakistan's brick-kiln workers are often subject to harsh practices, with an estimated 4.5 million being indentured labourers (Indian indenture system is a form of debt bondage). Punjab Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif has constituted a three-member committee to fast track investigation of the killings and ordered police to beef up security in Christian neighbourhoods. Blasphemy is a sensitive issue in Pakistan, with allegations often prompting mob violence. A Christian woman has been on death row since November 2010 after she was found guilty of making derogatory remarks about the Prophet Mohammed during an argument with a Muslim woman. Continue to pray for the repeal of the blasphemy laws which are often misused to persecute Christians and those of other minority faiths.

Pray: that officials will ensure that justice is done for all citizens, particularly Christians who are treated as second-class citizens and denied justice. (Pr.21:15)

More: <http://tribune.com.pk/story/786012/christian-couple-killed-for-desecrating-quran-in-pakistan-police/>

■ USA: Midterm elections – what the results mean

Republicans need only six seats to have a majority in the Senate; this week they gained that majority. While the Republican Party is far from perfect, it is currently the political party that most closely matches the core policy beliefs of evangelical, 'born again' Christians and Catholics. According to pollster George Barna, there are 77 million 'born again' evangelical and Catholic voters in the United States. The Midterm election results means Republicans will have new powers to challenge Obama's agenda in the final two years of his term, able to launch investigations and hold hearings from both chambers. They can hold up key appointments and pass GOP (Grand Old Party) favoured legislation. The division of power also could yield areas of agreement on subjects ranging from immigration to energy. See also <http://www.christianpost.com/news/2014-evangelicals-and-the-midterm-elections-128970/>

Pray: that lawmakers and the White House will no longer be in perpetual conflict, but will work together to make wise decisions for the future of the country. (Ps.112:4-5)

More: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/2014-evangelicals-and-the-midterm-elections-128970/>

■ Australia: Private medical firm contracted to fight Ebola

Australia has been criticised recently for the way it has responded to the Ebola crisis. (Australia suspended entry visas for visitors from Ebola-affected countries and wouldn't send health workers to fight the epidemic.) Now, this week, Prime Minister Tony Abbott has contracted a private company to staff and operate an Ebola treatment centre in Sierra Leone. Mr Abbott said, 'We are not sending people over but we are ensuring there is a 100-bed treatment centre staffed and run in Sierra Leone by Aspen Medical, an Australian health provider.' The Australian government has also committed A\$2m to provide logistical support for Ebola teams in West Africa, and A\$2m to help ensure that East Timor and Papua New Guinea can treat Ebola if any cases are reported there. Aspen will have some staff in Sierra Leone within days and the centre will be operational by the end of November. Australia's UK partners have been building the centre.

Pray: for Australia and other countries who are ramping up domestic preparations for possible cases of Ebola, and considering what part they should play in this international threat. (Pr.11:25)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-australia-29909960>

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE WORLD PRAYER CENTRE, BIRMINGHAM, UK

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