

# 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

### ■ Philippines: Missionaries attacked, prayed and survived

A gunman shot a Filipino pastor in the foot, pointed a handgun at his head, and demanded to be taken to the American missionaries' complex. Missionaries Daniel and Colleen Jaquith were woken by gunshots, then the gunman burst into their room, with the pastor as hostage, demanding money. In response the Jaquiths dropped to their knees and began to pray. 'Stop praying! Stop praying!' the intruder yelled. They paid no attention and continued to pray. Then the pastor started a scuffle, Dan was shot in the arm, Colleen bound the bleeding arm with a pillow case while the pastor wrested the firearm from the gunman who then fled into the night. Later police arrested the gunman, who had a long history of drug use and law breaking. Their brush with death was terrifying but Dan is filled with gratitude for God's protection and His answer to their prayers. Dan said he gives the Lord praise for His mighty deliverance during desperate times of trouble.

**Praise:** [God for the bravery of his people, and answers to their prayers when they are in unsafe locations. \(Ps.18:6\)](#)

**More:** <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/2014/s14120037.htm>

### ■ China: The paradox of the rapid spread of Christianity

In China there are more Christians today than there are members of the 87 million-strong Communist Party. They grow by an average of 10% a year, which means there will be 250 million Christians by around 2030, making China's Christian population the largest in the world. While in the 1980s the faith grew most quickly in the countryside, in recent years it has been burgeoning in cities. A new breed of educated, urban and socially and economically active Christians has emerged. This rapid growth of the Church is forcing an official rethink on religion. In fact, the Party is even asking Christians for their help. But there's also a downside to this growth. See an assessment of the Church in China at Joel News International.

**Praise:** [God for the increase of believers across China. \(Ps.148:1-6\)](#)

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

## BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

### ■ West Midlands Police warned over threat to kill officer

A threat to kidnap and murder a serving West Midlands police officer led to a security alert being issued to staff, the BBC understands. The force has confirmed counter-terror officers are investigating an 'anonymous but credible' tip-off. Staff were first told on Monday night after the force received the call. Assistant Chief Constable Garry Forsyth said the force was taking the threat 'extremely seriously', but there was no increased risk to the public. Officers have been urged to take extra precautions, including not wearing uniform during journeys to and from work. West Midlands Police said it had 'implemented

additional security measures' after obtaining the information but the force declined to confirm the exact nature of the threat. A spokeswoman said counter-terror officers were continuing to assess the anonymous information the force had received. Officers were held on duty while they were given the security reminder as they started their shifts.

**Pray:** against the extremist threats to our police and security forces. (Ps.5:11)

**More:** <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-30390392>

#### ■ Champagne wars in the Lords

On the same day that a parliamentary report on hunger revealed that the number of people using food banks has risen to unprecedented levels, the House of Lords refused to share catering expenses with the Commons because they were worried about the quality of champagne! Apparently the peers rejected a plan to merge contracts over fears about the quality of their bubbly. While the Lords and MPs share IT, cleaning and archive services, reaching agreement on champagne purchasing was seen as a step too far. The House of Lords has a £1.3m annual catering budget and has bought in more than 17,000 bottles of champagne since 2010 the last election (that's 5 bottles per peer at a cost of £265,770). Meanwhile thousands of working families are forced to depend on charity hand-outs this Christmas and organisers of festive hampers for low-income households say the numbers receiving help are higher than ever.

**Pray:** for a more equal distribution of wealth in the British Isles and for the privileged classes to comprehend ordinary life. (Ps.34:19)

**More:** <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2864233/House-Lords-refused-share-catering-Commons-worried-Job>

#### ■ Christian rape survivor: Give jury more guidance

A Christian rape survivor is calling for jurors in sexual assault trials to be given more guidance about what constitutes rape. Jill Saward, who was attacked in 1986 at Ealing Vicarage, has started a petition urging the government to change the law so that a judge can outline that rape can happen to anyone and be committed by anyone. She said this should happen before a trial actually begins so that the jury is able to make an 'informed decision'. 'Many people believe that they actually understand what rape is but a lot of that understanding comes from assumptions,' she said. The petition, to the Justice Secretary, says: 'Several recent high profile cases have evidenced how the general public has fixed preconceived ideas of what constitutes rape, a victim and a perpetrator of sexual violence. Given that juries are constituted of members of the public, these views are highly prejudicial.'

**Pray:** for the success of the petition and that jurors will be properly informed when sitting on rape trials. (Lk.6:37)

**More:** <http://www.premierchristianradio.com/News/UK/Christian-rape-survivor-Give-jury-more-guidance>

#### ■ High street failing disabled

One in five high street stores has no disabled access, according to a government-backed audit of more than 30,000 businesses. A study by DisabledGo has shown that a third of department stores did not have an accessible toilet and only 15% of retailers had hearing loops for the partially deaf. Researchers visited and assessed 27,000 high street shops and 3,716 restaurants in an audit backed by the Department for Work and Pensions. Among other findings were that two in five food outlets had no accessible toilet, only 23% had menus in large print for the visually impaired and only 9% hearing loops. Just 57 eateries, 14% of the total, listed information on accessibility on their website. Lack of training for staff to help cater for disabled people was another shortcoming. Chairman Barry Stevenson said: 'It's entirely unacceptable for disabled people, their family, friends and carers not to be able to access all high street shops and facilities.'

**Pray:** for a significant improvement of provision for disabled people in shopping centres and high street shops. (Eph.2:10)

**More:** <http://news.sky.com/story/1386929/high-street-failing-disabled-report-says>

#### ■ Church version of John Lewis advert says Jesus is 'real love'

An alternative version of the popular 'Monty the penguin' advert by John Lewis has gone viral. St Thomas' church in Norwich filmed their own version of the Monty story, which involves a penguin searching for 'real love'. In the church production, a little boy dreams of real friendship with his toy tiger but his longing is only satisfied in the shadow of the cross. The video has already received over 20,000 views on YouTube and featured on the ITV news website. Beej Harris, who produced the church's video, said its inspiration came from the misplaced Christmas message in the John Lewis advert. He said: 'There was a lot of satisfaction in presents and toys, but we actually wanted to kind of take it back and say that Christmas is about so much more than that, the real meaning is about Christ'. Watch the video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fK9GsOGVXBI#t=35>

**Pray:** for this video to be viewed by many more people and for its message to be received by thousands of people. (Matt.6:33)

**More:** <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/church-version-of-john-lewis-advert-says-jesus-is-real-love/>

#### ■ Grand Theft Auto 5 banned by retailer over graphic violence against women

One of Australia's largest retailers has banned controversial video game Grand Theft Auto 5 from its stores because of its graphic scenes of violence against women. GTA5, which was released a year ago and is the latest title in the smash-hit series, will no longer be sold in Target Australia's shops following customer anger over the levels of violence in the game. Players are given options to kill women by punching them unconscious, for killing with a machete, bat or guns. The game, which has been released on Playstation 3 and 4, and Xbox 360 and One, allows players to control a criminal in a fictional US city. Players can beat up or kill any other character they encounter in a variety of ways. Carrying an '18' certificate in the UK, the game has come under fire for its depictions of torture and portrayal of strippers and prostitutes.

**Pray:** that all the many games available showing graphic violence will be banned rather than getting an '18' certificate. (Ps.140:1)

**More:** <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/mediatechnologyandtelecoms/digital-media/11270982/Grand-Theft-Auto-5-banned-by-retailer-over-graphic-violence-against-women.html>

## EUROPE

### ■ Denmark: Muslim gangs enforcing Sharia in residential areas

Islamic supremacists are becoming increasingly violent in Europe. If we do not stop them effectively, where will it end? 'Immigrant gangs' is Danish media's euphemism for Muslim gangs. Islamic extremists use immigrant gangs to enforce religious Sharia laws in residential areas throughout Denmark. There is an unholy alliance between religious extremists and hardcore criminals in residential areas where especially younger people are to behave in certain ways and women are to dress in particular ways. Gang members typically support individual extremist imams and mosques with a strict interpretation of Islam. People are more afraid of the extremists when they are backed by gang members. This can be seen for example in Tingbjerg. The consequence is that people do not dare to stand up against the extremists, because they know that they will get beaten up by hardened criminals. National Police Research Centre (NEC), which monitors gang activity at home, confirms that the gangs are flirting with religious environments.

**Pray:** that ways will be found to enforce the law effectively against Islamic extremists and immigrant gangs. (Is.10:1)

**More:** <http://www.islamist-watch.org/18226/denmark-muslim-gangs-enforcing-sharia-in>

### ■ Germany: Protests against growing 'Islamisation'

A new type of anti-immigration appears to be taking hold in Germany with protests against what's been called the 'growing Islamisation' of the country. In Dresden members of PEGIDA or 'Patriotic Europeans against the Islamisation of the West' held a rally against extremism and perceived abuses of Germany's asylum system. 'Political refugees are very welcome, but look at our asylum seekers' homes here. There are only men living there. Where are their families? They are criminals who left their families behind in the war,' said one PEGIDA demonstrator. Critics of PEGIDA who held their own counter demonstration accused the group of drawing support from the far-right Neo-Nazis. PEGIDA says it is not against Muslims in general but wants to preserve the country's Judeo-Christian culture. Germany is now the second most popular destination for migrants after the US and is struggling to cope with an unprecedented influx of asylum seekers.

**Pray:** that the growing protests against radical Islam will lead to a cessation of extremist activities.

**More:** <http://www.euronews.com/2014/12/09/germans-protest-against-growing-islamisation/>

## WORLDWIDE

### ■ Congo: Victims need justice and support

DRC has stunning landscapes and is rich in natural resources (literal goldmines are beneath the ground). It's extremely hot at certain times of year and rainy at others. But life is brutal. During recent weeks the town of Beni has been repeatedly attacked by militia. Photos of 100+ raped and mutilated corpses of women and children were too awful for the media to print. On Saturday night 37 people were massacred by militants in Oicha village in what the French call 'arme blanche', no guns – only machetes and knives. These attacks are becoming crueler and more frequent. In June an 'Ending Sexual Violence in Conflict' summit in London devised an international protocol, describing ways to bring rapists and their commanders to justice and commitments to help sexual violence survivors to report crimes and get the support they need. Prayer is needed for international funding for this initiative. See also:

<http://www.christiantoday.com/article/drc.family.burned.alive.and.children.beheaded.in.brutal.attack/44084.htm>

**Pray:** for God to supernaturally intervene with a military solution and appropriate care for the vulnerable. (Ps.35:1-2)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/rape.capital.of.the.world.is.in.desperate.need.of.help/44161.htm>

### ■ Australia: Attorney-general heckled

On Wednesday Dec.10th, the day after the CIA released a report on an American torture programme in Guantanamo Bay, the Australian Federal Attorney-General George Brandis was heckled by a former Guantanamo Bay detainee, David Hicks, at an awards ceremony in Sydney. 'Hey, my name is David Hicks!' he shouted, 'I was tortured for five-and-a-half years in Guantanamo Bay in the full knowledge of your party! What do you have to say?' As Senator Brandis walked off the stage at the Museum of Contemporary Arts, Mr Hicks told reporters Mr Brandis was a coward for not answering his question.

**Pray:** for Mr Hicks and all innocent detainees who were tortured to receive redress. (Ps.140:11-12)

**More:** <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/latest-news/attorney-general-heckled-by-david-hicks/story-fn3dxiwe-1227151706783>

### ■ Israel: Jerusalem must remain undivided

Israel is under fire from the international community for building in eastern Jerusalem, but Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat says 'I don't think they really know the plan. There's a conception that we're waking up in the morning and building for Jews and discriminating against Arabs, which is untrue.' Barkat says city officials build according to a master plan that's been in effect for 15 years, aiming to add 50,000 apartments to both Jewish and Arab neighbourhoods of Jerusalem. 'The second thing is they have a theoretical model, of maybe if you split the city somehow, peace and quiet will come to our region. It doesn't fly,' he said. Jerusalem is the most contested issue in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Israel says the united city is its capital forever. Palestinians want it divided for the capital of a future state.

**Pray:** for both sides to reshape their differences and objectives; and for national security. (Ps.51:17-18)

**More:** <http://www.cbn.com/cbnnews/insideisrael/2014/December/Mayor-Jerusalem-Must-Remain-United-and-Undivided/>

### ■ Iraq/Syria: ISIS trains ten year olds

ISIS has released photographs showing children around ten years of age in soldier uniforms being trained to use assault rifles such as AK47s to kill people in Iraq and Syria. The children are also seen performing military drills, and marching

before ISIS' black flag. The terror group has also been accused multiple times of carrying out extreme violence against children. Earlier this month, the vicar of Baghdad revealed that four Iraqi Christian children were beheaded by the terror group for refusing to convert to Islam. A CNN report in September shared the story of a 13-year-old boy who escaped a training camp and said that he witnessed militants carry out beheadings, stoning and a crucifixion. Chaldean-American businessman Mark Arabo said this week, 'They are systematically beheading children, and mothers and fathers. The world hasn't seen an evil like this for a generation.'

**Pray:** for God to assist agencies as they generate protection and rescue plans for vulnerable families. (Ps.72:3,4)

**More:** <http://www.christianpost.com/news/isis-trains-10-year-olds-to-use-assault-rifles-to-kill-sends-them-to-iraq-and-syria-battles-130888/>

#### ■ **Pakistan: More justice needed for persecution victims**

A week after the burning to death of Christian couple Shama and Shahzad in the Punjab, police accused Qaiser Ayub, 40, from Lahore of an alleged act of blasphemy. Mr Ayub is a Christian with a masters degree in computer sciences and a well-known blogger. He was accused of using derogatory language against the Holy Prophet in his blogs and of making threats. He went into hiding. He was found and arrested on 14 November. According to the chairman of Sharing Life Ministry Pakistan, his wife Amina Bibi and three children are in safe custody and will be taken care of while legal assistance for his case is organised. Qaiser Ayub remains in jail during the judicial investigation. Sources claim police are hiding the case and keeping the investigation secret while requesting the media to keep it in low profile. See also

<http://www.britishpakistanichristians.co.uk/blog/qaiser-ayub-held-over-blasphemy-allegation-sent-to-jail>

**Pray:** for this and similar unjust persecution stories to receive more media cover and just international intervention and for Pakistan to work more positively towards changing their appalling human rights record. (Ps.9:16,18,19)

**More:** <http://www.britishpakistanichristians.co.uk/>

#### ■ **Egypt: Lawyer convert still in jail**

The first Egyptian citizen to attempt to change his legal religious identity from Muslim to Christian, Mohammed Hegazy, has been in jail for twelve months awaiting a verdict on separate misdemeanour charges, (due on 28 December). He faces five years in jail if an appeal court upholds his June conviction of 'illegally filming anti-Christian demonstrations.' His lawyer, Karam Ghobrial, said he is optimistic that the appeal court judge will overturn the conviction because no evidence was produced to prove the allegations against his client. Mr. Ghobrial contends that the real reason for the arrest and custody was because he is publicly known for a case he tried to open in 2007 to legalize his conversion to Christianity.

**Pray:** that the Judge's verdict will completely clear Mohammed of all charges and allow him to join his wife and children claiming asylum in Europe. (Ps.105:20)

**More:** [https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2014/12/article\\_3524586.html/](https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2014/12/article_3524586.html/)

#### ■ **Nigeria: Preparations for 2015 Elections**

Nigeria will hold a presidential election on 14 February and many are beginning to speculate on President Goodluck Jonathan's second term bid and how political parties will address issues affecting Nigeria's economy, terrorist and political challenges. In the coming weeks there will be quarrels over who is to be a delegate as well as many issues that may arise through primaries. Although a President can never solve all the problems in his country we can pray that the candidates for the next presidency will be men or women who have a heart to make positive differences to Nigeria's future.

**Pray:** for God fearing politicians to be elected and positive future growth in Nigeria's economy, education, healthcare, urban infrastructure and security. (Ps.33:8-11)

**More:** <http://www.punchng.com/politics/insecurity-shouldnt-be-used-against-jonathans-re-election-alkali/>

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE WORLD PRAYER CENTRE, BIRMINGHAM, UK

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