

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

■ Healings and visions in the Arabian Peninsula

One evening, Hammad went to bed as usual. However, he woke up feeling that someone was watching him. Thinking someone was in his room near his bed, he looked towards his window. There, in the window, he saw Jesus. Hammad looked at Jesus, and Jesus looked at him. He cannot tell you what he looked like: all he could remember were the eyes. The next day Hammad appeared at a Christian friend's house and said, 'I'm ready to make the decision,' Although Hammad had already been convinced according to the Bible and the Qur'an, he couldn't quite make the decision to accept Jesus as his Lord and Saviour. When the Lord showed up, that convinced him. This is just one story of many where the Lord is revealing himself, not just in the Arabian Peninsula but across the nations where Muslims are searching for the Living God.

Praise: God for the many Muslims who face persecution but still allow God to change their hearts. (Mat.10:19)

More: http://www.breakingchristiannews.com/articles/display_art.html?ID=16275

■ BBC will broadcast in North Korea

The BBC's decision to broadcast a daily news bulletin into North Korea has been welcomed by the World Watch Monitor (they report on Christians under pressure for their faith), who said it was the 'best possible thing' for people who wanted to see an improvement in North Korea. The BBC proposes 'significant future investment in the World Service to areas with a democratic deficit in impartial news'. The broadcaster's director general said a daily radio news programme in North Korea was a key part of the plans and the organisation is going to 'take risks, push boundaries', and 'not be afraid of controversy'. The executive editor of the World Watch List said that North Korea, of all the countries in the world, is probably one of the most restricted in terms of what they know about the outside world, because that view is almost entirely controlled by their government.

Praise: God that people in North Korea will have the opportunity to find out what life is like elsewhere. (Pr.18:15)

More: <http://www.premier.org.uk/News/World/Christian-campaigner-welcomes-BBC-s-decision-to-broadcast-in-North-Korea>

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Assisted dying: Archbishop urges MPs to reject bill

The UK will cross a 'legal and ethical Rubicon' if the law on assisted suicide in England and Wales is changed, the Archbishop of Canterbury has said. MPs will debate the Assisted Dying Private Members' Bill on Friday 11 September; it proposes to allow doctors to help terminally ill patients to die in some circumstances. Justin Welby said the bill would mean

that suicide was 'actively supported' instead of being viewed as a tragedy. He and the heads of other Christian, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh groups believe the bill goes beyond merely legitimising suicide to actively supporting it and they have issued a joint letter urging MPs to reject it. The Archbishop said that asking doctors to aid suicide would be a change of monumental proportions both in the law and in the role of doctors. 'This respect for the lives of others goes to the heart of both our criminal and human rights laws and ought not to be abandoned,' the archbishop said.

Pray: that the bill will not be approved and will never become an act of law; and that any future attempts to guide similar bills through the Commons or the Lords will fail. (Deut.5:17)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-34166605>

▣ Queen Elizabeth II now the longest-reigning UK monarch

Queen Elizabeth II became Queen of England in 1952 and holds the title of Supreme Governor of the Church of England plus a symbolically authoritative position in the Church of Scotland. Her duties are to appoint archbishops, bishops and deans of cathedrals. This seems to make her an Anglican; however, she also holds honorary membership of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. The Queen expresses a deep commitment to the principles of Christianity and during her millennium Christmas address said, 'To many of us, our beliefs are of fundamental importance. For me the teachings of Christ and my own personal accountability before God provide a framework in which I try to lead my life. I, like so many of you, have drawn great comfort in difficult times from Christ's words and example.'

Pray: for the Queen's protection; and for God to watch over and give wisdom to the Royal Family. (Lk.22:26b)

More: <http://hollowverse.com/elizabeth-ii/>

▣ Praying for our education system

A September Department of Education press release said, 'Millions of pupils returning to the classroom this term are being taught a new forward-thinking, knowledge-rich national curriculum that will give them the knowledge and skills to succeed in modern Britain.' The new curriculum is designed to raise standards for children aged 5 to 16, especially the poorest, and hopes to provide a broad and balanced education ensuring that all pupils gain core knowledge across a range of key subjects for a better start in life. The curriculum is less prescriptive, allowing teachers to concentrate on what they do best - teach.

Pray: for the supremacy of Christ over teachers implementing the new system. May they use it to eradicate illiteracy, help children master fundamental concepts, and bless our schools. (Ps.67:1)

More: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-curriculum-will-make-education-system-envy-of-the-world>

▣ 5,500 sex attacks in schools in three years

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More than 5,500 alleged sex crimes in UK schools were reported to police from 2012 to 2015. A UK-wide investigation by BBC Radio 5 Live into sex crimes in schools discovered that in Great Britain there were nearly 4,000 alleged physical sexual assaults and more than 600 rapes in schools. In Northern Ireland the category of sex assaults was not released. The investigation also found that in England sixty pupils were permanently excluded for sexual misconduct in 2013/14, while there were no exclusions in Scotland or Wales. Focus on the Family reported recently, 'The average age of exposure to pornography is eight. Today's child lives in a culture where hard-core pornography abounds. Our children are being seduced daily, and we need to bear this fact in mind whenever we have the occasion to redirect them away from pornography.' See also <http://www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/sexuality/when-children-use-pornography/when-children-view-pornography>

Pray: for improved child protection procedures in schools; for wise, swift action by local authorities and police; and for parents to be more aware of what children are viewing / experimenting with. (Pr.13:24)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-34167752>

▣ Former Archbishop of Canterbury says UK must rescue Syria's Christians

Reverend Dr George Carey believes that Germany opening its doors to the influx of refugees could turn Europe into a more attractive magnet for economic migrants, mostly young men travelling alone. 'We don't even know how many were combatants in the civil war'. He added, 'If what I say sounds harsh, let me make it clear that I welcome David Cameron's announcement to allow thousands more to enter Britain through refugee camps in Syria's neighbouring countries. But the frustration for those of us who are calling for compassion for Syrian victims is that the Christian community is yet again left at the bottom of the heap. Christians are the most vulnerable and repeatedly targeted sufferers of this conflict. Britain should make Syrian Christians a priority. We are a Christian nation with an established Church, so Syrian Christians will find no challenge to integration. The churches are already well-prepared and eager to offer support and accommodation to those escaping the conflict.'

Pray: that Mr Cameron's policy would not inadvertently discriminate against Christian communities. (Ps.97:10b)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/syria/11846651/Lord-Carey-Britain-has-a-duty-to-rescue-Syrias-Christians.html>

▣ Rights group brings legal action against UK government

After two British citizens who fought for IS were deliberately killed in an RAF targeted drone strike in Syria a human rights group, Rights Watch (UK), said it will issue judicial review proceedings in the High Court unless the government publishes the legal advice it received from the Attorney General to justify the drone strikes. They believe there is insufficient information to know whether the drone strikes were done lawfully and said, 'These strikes set a dangerous precedent for UK government activity. The UK government can now kill at will with no oversight.' Defence Secretary Michael Fallon said the government would take similar action again against other terrorists involved in other plots. Some are saying Cameron's drone strike in Syria means that the death penalty has returned to Britain, while Mr Cameron says it was an act of self-defence as the terrorists were known to be planning attacks in the UK.

Pray: for Downing Street and the Attorney General's office to publish clear evidence about the advice given to the Prime Minister that prompted the attacks by the UK on foreign soil. (Pr.12:18)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/syria.drone.strike.rights.group.brings.legal.action.against.uk.government/64314.htm>

▣ Vincent Nichols: we will rise and host refugees

On Tuesday Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster, called on UK Catholics to respond 'in prayer and in real practical action' to the call to house the 20,000 refugees coming to Britain. This follows Pope Francis' call on Sunday to the

Catholic Church: 'May every parish, every religious community, every monastery, every sanctuary in Europe host a family - starting with my diocese of Rome.' The Vatican will house two Syrian families. Nichols said the Church will work to 'ensure the effective reception and long-term resettlement of these desperate people.' Nichols said that the Church would work with the government and other authorities in its response. Specific details about how the parishes will carry out the hosting programme will be released in the future.

Pray: for the body of Christ across the UK to do whatever God tells them to do at this time. (Jn.2:5)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/vincent.nichols.we.will.rise.to.the.popes.challenge.to.host.refugees/64209.htm>

EUROPE

■ Greece faces emergency

Images of a small boy washed up on a Turkish shore flashed around the globe as a tragic representation of the current Mediterranean migrant crisis in which Greece is at the epicentre, with over 230,000 migrants surviving the treacherous journey to its shores in 2015. But Greece's emergency goes far beyond this influx of migrants. Greece is racked with impossible debts, with no easy solutions. A legislative election will be held on Sunday 20 September, after which major decisions will need to be made. Greece stands at a crucial moment in its history. However, the greatest threat to Greece is not economic, political, or social. It is spiritual. Even though the evangelisation of Europe started here, less than 0.5% of Greeks are evangelical today. The Orthodox Church, though large, is often devoid of true life and faith. Greece stands today at the edge of a dangerous precipice.

Pray: for the financial meltdown to drive people to Jesus for lasting peace and security; for the Church to be purged of any heresy, syncretism or division; and for God to raise up His anointed leaders over the nation. (Ps.143:10)

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

■ Europe's migrant crisis

Europe is facing the world's biggest refugee crisis since the second world war and it is being propelled by wars and persecution. Last autumn the EU suspended full-scale maritime rescue operations in the Mediterranean, believing that their presence was encouraging more migrants to risk the sea journey from Libya to Europe. However, people kept on coming (4% increase during the paused rescue missions). Millions of people are travelling to escape violence, poverty and conflict in their homeland. Their journeys have caused thousands of deaths. The European Commission has called for EU states to take in 40,000 migrants expected to arrive in Italy and Greece over the next two years. On Wednesday EU Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker proposed that 120,000 additional asylum seekers should be distributed among EU nations, with binding quotas. Several nations are anxious and undecided about resettling programmes for nationals seeking asylum and in need of international protection. See: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-34193568>

Pray: for protection for migrants and for leaders to be given wisdom how best to help refugees. (Ps.39:7)

More: <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/aug/10/10-truths-about-europes-refugee-crisis>

■ Berlin: Asylum seekers converting to Christianity

Hundreds of Muslim refugees are converting to Christianity in a Berlin church. Pastor Gottfried Martens has seen his congregation at the evangelical Trinity Church grow from 150 to more than 600 in just two years, describing the number of conversions as a 'miracle.' One of these converts is Mohammed Ali Zonoobi, a carpenter from Shiraz, Iran, who was recently baptised. For Zonoobi and his wife Afsaneh their baptism marks a new beginning. Zonoobi is one of hundreds of mostly Iranian and Afghan asylum seekers who have been baptised at Trinity Church. However, there are concerns that some are not genuine converts, rather professing a Christian faith to boost their chances of staying in the country. Martens acknowledges this possibility, but says that, once in church, most people do engage and that around 90% of converts continue attending after they have been baptised.

Pray: for God in His mercy to use the international church to change the lives of unreached people. (Eph.2:8)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/hundreds.of.muslim.refugees.convert.to.christianity.in.german.church/64114.htm>

WORLDWIDE

■ Global: Prayer Week for refugee crisis

This week 24-7 Prayer International are inviting the global church to pray in one-hour slots, wherever they are, for the refugee crisis. The prayer week is running from midday Monday 7 until midday Monday 14 September. Readers of Prayer Alert are invited to join this initiative. Praying into such an enormous situation can feel overwhelming, but we can't let that silence our prayers. Instead we can trust the promise of Ps 34:17 that God hears and answers prayer. According to Lev.19:34, pray that our reaction to refugees will always be love and not fear and that we will always love the one in front of us; regardless of background or status. Pray according to Ps. 11:28 for God's rule over the nations in war and crisis, for problems to be solved with major changes in countries of origin - Syria, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Eritrea, Afghanistan. Pray according to Mic.6:8 for the hard-pressed agencies working on the borders of land and sea. For helpful resources click the 'more' link.

Pray: for policy makers to handle this situation with grace and mercy as they address the root causes. (1 Tim. 2:10)

More: <http://24-7prayer.com/blog/2505/the-refugee-crisis-we-don-t-know-the-answer-but-we-know-we-have-to-pray>

■ Nigeria: 500 days since Chibok abductions

The president of the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria said that 176 of the girls kidnapped from Chibok by Boko Haram last year are from families in his denomination. Reverend Samuel Dali's revelation coincided with a Global Week of Action to commemorate 500 days since their abductions. Reverend Dali said that 8,000+ members of his church had lost their lives, and 70% of church facilities in Adamawa, Yobe and Borno States had been destroyed during the Boko Haram crisis. In addition 90,000 church members have been displaced by terrorist violence. Last week the 'Bring Back Our Girls' campaign had a Global Week of Action commemorating the 500th day since the Chibok girls disappeared. The week included

prayers, tree planting in honour of the girls, meetings with the Chief of Defence Staff and the National Human Rights Commission, and a march and candle-lit procession in Abuja.

Pray: for the unconditional release of the Chibok girls and the many others kidnapped in the north-east of the country. (Ps.37:9)

More: <http://www.csw.org.uk/2015/08/26/press/2741/article.htm>

▣ Saudi Arabia: Hajj 21 to 23 September

The Hajj is an annual pilgrimage for Muslims to go to Mecca in Saudi Arabia and seek forgiveness for their sins. Young Khaled wanted to be prepared for the prayers he would pray on the Hajj. But he was also very excited to watch cartoons. His favourite was the one about Isa al-Masih (Jesus), shown on a Christian satellite television station. He skipped down the hall, calling to his mother who was also waiting for the show. She first met Isa in a dream during last year's Hajj, and longed to know Him more. Saudi Arabia is a country completely closed to Christianity. No church is open to Saudi citizens, and talking about Jesus as Saviour is illegal. Yet Jesus Christ pursues Saudis who seek Him. Christian intercessors focus their prayers during the Hajj on Muslims coming to Christ. (See also praise article 2)

Pray: that Muslims with open hearts this Hajj will have dreams and visions of Jesus. (Acts 2:17)

More: <http://www.prayer-ap.info/countries/saudi-arabia>

▣ Syria: IS issues list of rules for Christians

'Our entire ancestral homelands have been completely taken and now they won't even allow us to sustain our religious faith in one God and His Son Jesus Christ.' IS has issued a 'safety contract' for Christians living in al-Qaryatayn. It comprises eleven specific commandments, including one which prohibits praying out loud to Jesus Christ under penalty of death. According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, Christians in the captured town will have to pay the jizyah tax imposed on non-Muslims, in addition to the other commandments issued by the extremist group's leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. The stipulations prohibit the establishment of churches, the displaying of crosses, making Muslims hear Christian prayers or rituals of worship, the hiding of spies, offending Islamic religious beliefs, the carrying of weapons, the sale of pork or wine to Muslims, and failing to dress modestly.

Pray: for God to comfort and protect the Assyrian Christian community, under heavy IS persecution. (Ps.91:1)

More: http://www.breakingchristiannews.com/articles/display_art.html?ID=16636

▣ Myanmar: Website launch ahead of elections

A website has been launched dedicated to Wirathu, a controversial Mandalay monk, and his hardline Buddhist monk group, Ma-Ba-Tha, dedicated to the primacy of all things Buddhist in Myanmar. Buddhist nationals could powerfully impact Myanmar's November election. The site promotes principles of Buddhism but its main content so far is the republishing of reports and opinion pieces siding with the recent Race Protection laws which criticise any other faith group. As Myanmar's election nears, mainstream political parties such as the NLD and the ruling Union Solidarity and Development Party have been careful not to distance themselves from the outspoken monk and his followers, such is their influence over Buddhist voters. President Thein Sein warned parties and citizens to maintain harmony and act responsibly during the campaign period, which begins next week, and he specifically urged politicians to 'take great care to not cause damage to social harmony or harm our diverse religious beliefs'.

Pray: that the firebrand monk will not be able to incite crowds with his divisive religious rhetoric; pray for God's purposes to be fulfilled for the country. (Ps.2:1 & 11)

More: <http://www.dvb.no/news/website-launches-dedicated-to-wirathu-burma-myanmar/56807>

▣ Yemen: Tweets from a Medecins Sans Frontières doctor

Medecins Sans Frontières (Doctors without Borders) doctor Natalie Roberts is an emergency doctor from the UK who has been working with MSF for two years and has just returned from Yemen. The following are five of her single-sentence tweets from last week: 'On the road for a long day from Amran to Saada mountains, bombing in our destination, so everyone is anxious. Car is full - 3 Yemeni colleagues, medical supplies to deliver, plus food and a generator. Stop at camp: 1k people live here in awful conditions, they left Saada due to airstrikes. Shortage of tents, food, latrines and water - we'll try to address as many needs as we can to prevent people getting sick. Displaced people are angry, say they left Saada because they were scared they would die. Now mothers are afraid their children will die here.' See also the Red Cross blog at <https://www.icrc.org/en/where-we-work/middle-east/yemen>

Pray: for the agencies working across the country trying to help thousands of displaced people. (Ps.10:12)

More: <http://www.msf.org.uk/article/one-day-in-yemen>

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE WORLD PRAYER CENTRE, BIRMINGHAM, UK

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