

# 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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Issue 37-2015

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Thursday 17 Sep 2015

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## PRaise REPORTS

### ■ MPs reject assisted dying bill

During the last parliament sitting Lord Falconer introduced an assisted dying bill which peers, the media and the church all discussed. Amendments delayed its progress and parliament ended before it could be debated. Falconer suggested his proposals would have more of a chance if they were taken up by an MP in the Commons. So after the election the issue was raised again, and last Friday MPs voted on the subject of legalising assisted dying. After a passionate debate, MPs voted 330 to 118 against changing the law, in the first Commons vote on assisted dying for twenty years. Please continue to pray for effective and gracious Christian presence and influence in political debates, and for our Christians in parliament to give a wise explanation of God's truth in the public domain.

**Praise:** [God for this answer to prayer and ask Him to continue to lead our politicians. \(Ro.13:1b\)](#)

**More:** <http://www.theguardian.com/society/2015/sep/11/mps-begin-debate-assisted-dying-bill>

### ■ British public are open and welcoming to refugees

Campaigners marched to Downing Street from Marble Arch in central London on Saturday to show solidarity with refugees all over the world. Around 90,000 people attended the event, which comes amid the worsening refugee crisis as more and more people arrive in European countries. Sini Maria Heikkila, a Christian campaigner who works for an anti-persecution charity, said that she would like to see an even more united response to this humanitarian crisis. She stressed that the German public had been particularly kind, and hoped that the march on Saturday had sent the same message from the UK public to the government and to other EU countries. Home Secretary Theresa May held emergency talks about the refugee crisis on Monday.

**Praise:** [God for all who are giving their time, money, energy and voices of support to refugees. \(Ps.72:12\)](#)

**More:** <http://www.premier.org.uk/News/World/The-public-are-showing-they-are-open-and-welcoming-to-refugees-says-Christian-campaigner>

## BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

### ■ Northern Ireland: Praying into roots of rebellion

The roots of Northern Ireland's problems go back to 1167 and the Anglo-Norman intervention into Ireland's laws and policing. The two unrelated cultures were never united and found themselves living side by side. The IRA evolved from rural protection groups which developed to fight back against 'oppressive feudal regimes'. Through kinship, violence and relationships with officials, the group grew and adopted hierarchical structures with Mafia-like figureheads. The IRA fought

for the unification of Ireland and an end to the British occupation of Northern Ireland. Today the IRA are not engaged in violence; however, splinter groups (Real IRA and Irish National Liberation Army) have formed, and at least one works with a Colombian cartel aiding drugs and arms smuggling. Punishment beatings still occur in local communities, as 'inactive' IRA members attempt to maintain control within their communities. The recent killing of Kevin McGuigan caused a political row when the police chief accused members of the IRA of having a role in the murder, and said the IRA still existed. See also <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-34204542>

**Pray:** that the British Army will not have to be used in Northern Ireland again. Pray also for politics in the UK - for wisdom, integrity, self-sacrifice and policymaking for the good of all. (Ps.133:1)

**More:** <http://www.history.co.uk/shows/soldiers-stories/articles/northern-ireland-conflict>

#### ■ Is Jeremy Corbyn anti-Israel?

Newly-elected Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn's far-left credentials have found favour in his party, but his overtures to radical Islamists have caused concern among British Jews. Corbyn has been empathetic to Hamas and Hezbollah - terror groups committed to destroying Israel. He is widely regarded as one of the British MPs most hostile to Israel. In his victory speech, Corbyn called for a 'decent and better society' and urged party unity. The battle-hardened MP projects the image of a humble man who travels by bicycle and cultivates his own garden. A senior Jewish member of the Labour Party said that Corbyn's views give cause for serious concern, and Britain's top Jewish newspaper, the Jewish Chronicle, claimed that Corbyn was linked to 'Holocaust deniers, terrorists and some outright anti-Semites.' Six years ago Corbyn offered to host representatives of Hamas and Hezbollah in the British parliament.

**Pray:** for God's rule to direct the opinions and sentiments of our politicians. (Ps.47:8)

**More:** <http://www.timesofisrael.com/jeremy-corbyn-claims-victory-in-labour-leadership-race/>

#### ■ Mental health and well-being

The Mental Health Foundation reports that one in ten children aged between 5 and 16 suffer from a diagnosable mental health disorder - that's three children in every classroom. More than half of adults with mental health problems were diagnosed in childhood, but less than half were treated appropriately at the time. Today one in four adults experience mental health problems, and every church has a role to play to support all members of their community. There is a 'mental health access pack' designed specifically for the church community to help them to help others. Justin Welby said, 'The action pack will help equip churches to make God's love more visible in the welcome they offer. I am grateful to Livability and to Mind and Soul for all the thought and prayer that has gone into this resource, and I commend it to churches as a valuable pastoral tool.' See also: <http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/help-information/mental-health-statistics/children-young-people/>

**Pray:** for the church community to talk more openly about mental health problems, and learn how to put out the right messages and provide support and understanding to people in need. (Ps.46:1)

**More:** <http://www.mentalhealthaccesspack.org/endorsements/>

#### ■ David Cameron is warned of IS infiltration

Lebanese education minister Elias Bousaab met the Prime Minister during his lightning visit to the region and warned him that IS is sending trained jihadists 'under cover' to attack targets in the West, and that two in every 100 Syrian migrants smuggled into Europe are Islamic State-trained fanatics. If true, it could mean up to 400 of the 20,000 refugees Britain has promised to accept by 2020 have been radicalised. Mr. Bousaab said the extremists choose targets, including children, in refugee camps and schools before trafficking them into Europe via Turkey and Greece. On his first visit to Lebanon, the PM said that without aid, hundreds of thousands more people could attempt the perilous crossing into Europe. Bousaab said, 'IS will not stop at the border with Lebanon, before you know it IS will be in Europe.' He warned that without more help for those in the refugee camps people with 'no hope, no work, no education' and who are poor are 'easy to recruit'.

**Pray:** for appropriate support for refugees and wise pre-emptive action against terrorists. (Job 5:13)

**More:** <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3234458/Two-100-Syrian-migrants-ISIS-fighters-PM-warned-Lebanese-minister-tells-Cameron-extremist-group-sending-jihadists-cover-attack-West.html>

#### ■ Nicola Sturgeon and Labour's family impact assessment

Each year more than 20,000 children in Scotland have to deal with a parent going to prison. Labour proposed special assessments to be carried out to help these youngsters. Even though SNP MSPs on Holyrood's Justice Committee rejected the call for child and family impact assessments to be carried out, Labour MSP Mary Fee's amendment was passed by the committee, and now forms part of the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Bill going through the Scottish Parliament. Labour leader Kezia Dugdale was concerned that the SNP could use its majority to remove the bill at a later stage and urged the First Minister to 'do the right thing' and instruct her MSPs to back it. Ms Sturgeon told her, 'I can assure parliament we will give full consideration to the amendment that was passed and will consider whether or not that amendment meets our objective to help the children of those sent to prison.'

**Pray:** that the best provisions will be made available to children affected by a parent in prison. (Is.54:13)

**More:** [http://www.heraldsotland.com/politics/referendumnews/13712312.Nicola\\_Sturgeon\\_vows\\_to\\_consider\\_Labour\\_s\\_family\\_impact\\_assessment\\_proposals/](http://www.heraldsotland.com/politics/referendumnews/13712312.Nicola_Sturgeon_vows_to_consider_Labour_s_family_impact_assessment_proposals/)

#### ■ MP warns PM of Sunday trading rebellion

Conservative MP David Burrowes warned David Cameron that he faces strong opposition over proposed changes to Sunday trading laws which the government will discuss this week. Mr Burrowes said that many Conservatives would not vote for the proposals, pointing out that 'this wasn't in the manifesto or the Queen's Speech.' The reforms would undermine family life and hit the poorest in society. In April a Conservative representative said the government had no current plans to relax the Sunday trading laws and believes that the current system provides a reasonable balance between those who wish to see more opportunity to shop in large stores on a Sunday and those who would like to see greater restrictions. See <http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/family/conservative-u-turn-on-sunday-trading>

**Pray:** that the wisdom of the Bible will be listened to when MPs consider Sunday trading. (Gen.2:2)  
**More:** <http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/social/mp-warns-pm-of-sunday-trading-rebellion>

#### ■ Prostitution consultation deeply misguided

Last Tuesday an independent MSP launched a consultation on decriminalising prostitution and brothel-keeping. It was slammed by anti-trafficking charity, CARE for Scotland. The consultation, launched by Jean Urquhart who is standing down after next year's Holyrood elections, would allow the keeping of brothels, soliciting and kerb-crawling - all currently illegal under Scots law. CARE for Scotland said the consultation was deeply misguided and would send a terrible message to victims and those who find themselves in prostitution because of a range of external factors such as poverty, abuse or trafficking. The charity is calling on the Scottish government to bring forward a new piece of legislation to criminalise the purchase of sex, a method which has been proved to help reduce trafficking levels in Nordic countries. The charity has already urged MSPs to consider Northern Ireland's trafficking laws, where the purchase of sexual services is banned, as a template for Scotland to follow.

**Pray:** for laws that protect the vulnerable and prosecute pimps and trafficking partnerships. (Dt.23:14b)  
**More:** <http://www.care.org.uk/news/latest-news/prostitution-consultation-deeply-misguided>

## EUROPE

#### ■ Belgium: Freedom of philosophy

Belgium embraces a strong sense of 'living together.' This is seen in the way the country, though split into a Dutch-speaking region in the north and a French-speaking region in the south, encourages unity among its people. Living together in acceptance also appears in the government's treatment of religion and philosophy. Belgium adheres to a freedom of religion, and even recognises secular communities as religious organizations, providing funding for them as it does religious organisations. About 32% of the Belgian population do not identify with a religion, and the 'non-religious philosophical communities' that thrive there don't provide answers to life's core questions. The many diverse peoples of Belgium need unification not by language, but by the powerful love of Christ. Thankfully, international churches are growing in their appeal to both nationals and immigrants, and evangelical faith has never been stronger. These churches are attempting daily to become a symbol of unity for a divided nation.

**Pray:** for believers to unite across ethnic lines and impact the nation with the way, truth and life. (Jn.17:21)  
**More:** <http://www.gemission.org/pray-articles/pray-for-belgium>

#### ■ Norway: Proposal to put refugees in Arctic

Norwegian politicians are considering sending refugees to Svalbard, an Atlantic archipelago and one of the world's most remote areas, which is currently inhabited by more polar bears than people. Local government representatives hope that Svalbard could receive and then house refugees. The Green Party has asked Svalbard's governor to look into the legality of the plan, which could be undone by the fact that Svalbard isn't part of the Schengen free movement area and so can't take people as easily. Local politicians have committed to work '100 per cent' for a quick realisation of the plan if it is proved legal. Many of the islanders are employed in coal mines. Espen Klungseth Rotevatn, the leader of the Green Party on the islands, said, 'Europe is on fire, and it is now that our values and ethical standards are put to the test.'

**Pray:** that Norway will be able to facilitate refugees living and working there. (Mat.25:44)  
**More:** <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/norwegian-politicians-propose-putting-refugees-on-svalbard--remote-arctic-islands-with-more-polar-bears-than-people-10498859.html>

## WORLDWIDE

#### ■ Jordan: Refugee food rations cut - now what?

200,000 Syrian refugees in Jordan were told by text message last week that their food rations were being cut. The United Nations' World Food Programme sent the message as a last resort when no major donors stepped forward to fund the programme further. As startling as that is, it's not much better anywhere else. In just eight months, more than 350,000 refugees have crossed into Europe. More than half of Syria's population have fled their homes or been killed since the crisis began four years ago. The countries receiving them are cash-strapped. Tasos Ioannidis of AMG International said, 'Some countries have talked about closing borders so that the refugees will not be able to continue and enter their territory. They're concerned about the economic cost of the refugees, and also fear that somehow those who are coming in are going to be a problem for their local communities.'

**Pray:** for God to inspire leaders with His Way of ministering to overwhelming needs. (Heb.4:16)  
**More:** <https://www.mnnonline.org/news/food-rations-cut-now-what/>

#### ■ Azerbaijan: Old world and new

Sadly, corruption prevails here. Azerbaijan has high ratings of human development, but the government in this prosperous country abuses many rights of its population. Christianity is frequently associated with Russian imperialism and Armenian enmity, so Christians are harassed by law enforcement and threatened with heavy fines. As the first Muslim-majority democratic and secular republic, there is evidence of a new movement in Azerbaijani history. God has blessed the land with oil and natural gases and we are asked to pray for God to protect the nation from outside forces plundering its resources and territories. Most Azerbaijanis do not know Jesus Christ. We can pray for the few believers in the land to 'proclaim what great things Jesus has done' (Mk.5:20) in the dozens of towns and villages which have never heard the Gospel. Pray for

believers to lead the way in providing enduring solutions to conflicts with Armenia and Russia by 'loving and doing good' (Lk.6:27)

**Pray:** for God to raise up mature Christian leaders and teachers in the country. (Eph.4:12)

**More:** <http://www.gemission.org/pray-articles/pray-for-azerbaijan>

#### ■ Syria: Russia has 'positioned tanks in Syrian airfield'

Russia has positioned at least seven Russian T-90 tanks at an airfield near the Syrian government stronghold of Latakia, in a continued show of support by the Kremlin for President Bashar Al-Assad. Washington has said that the movement on the ground in Syria appears to indicate that Russia intends to create a forward air operating base at the airfield in the port city, which has been at the centre of a recent Russian military build-up in Syria. The Syrian Ambassador to Russia has rejected the claims as a lie spread by the US. 'We have been co-operating with Russia for 30-40 years in various areas, including the military sphere. We receive arms and military equipment in line with agreements between our countries.' He added, 'Supplies to Syria are accompanied by Russian specialists, who help to adjust the equipment and train Syrian personnel how to use the weaponry.'

**Pray:** that the latest movements will not escalate the civil war, in which President Assad is accused of war crimes against his own citizens. (Is.1:7a,17)

**More:** <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/syria-conflict-russia-has-positioned-tanks-in-airfield-according-to-us-officials-10501103.html>

#### ■ Nigeria: Clergy conduct more funerals than weddings

A bishop in Plateau state, Nigeria, said that during the last fifteen years he has conducted more funerals than weddings. Addressing hundreds of demonstrators at the Plateau House of Assembly on 31 August, the Rt Rev Benjamin Kwashi, Anglican archbishop of Jos, said the Christian funerals resulted from attacks by Muslim Fulani herdsmen working with Boko Haram jihadists. 'As a pastor, since 2001 I have conducted more burial services of those killed through attacks than weddings and naming ceremonies. It's sad to note that most victims are harmless children, infants, women and youths. The Nigerian government must end the killings. Attention should not be concentrated in the northeast alone, as people are being killed here in Plateau, Benue, Nasarawa and Kaduna states.' A protestor at the event said the Nigerian government's silence about the killings shows its silent support for the ongoing jihad against Nigeria's Christians.

**Pray:** for God to protect Christian villages from ethnic Fulani herdsmen, and for His people to have a deep sense of peace in their spirits regardless of all that is going on around them. (Pr.2:8,21)

**More:** <http://www.worthynews.com/21690-nigeria-clergy-conduct-more-funerals-than-weddings>

#### ■ Central African Republic: Election vote challenges

Attempts to foster reconciliation in Central African Republic could be derailed if refugees who fled to neighbouring states after the coup are unable to cast votes in the upcoming presidential election, billed as a major peacebuilding milestone. Around 470,000 Central Africans (10% of the population) are refugees in Cameroon, Chad, Congo-Brazzaville, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. CAR's constitutional court overturned parliament's earlier decision to exclude the refugees and ruled that all citizens should be allowed to vote in the 18 October election, whether they reside in the country or elsewhere. But eight weeks later, there are still no measures in place to allow the estimated 198,000 eligible refugee voters to actually cast their votes. The interim president, who steps down after the election, is opposed to allowing refugees to vote because of the organisational and logistical difficulties it would involve.

**Pray:** for God's light of justice and wisdom to rule the electoral process and become a key to building peace and constancy that enables national resources to be developed for economic growth. (Is.9:2)

**More:** <http://www.irinnews.org/report/101995/vote-limbo-for-central-african-refugees>

#### ■ Nepal: Update - lawmakers vote for secularism

Further to our article on 27 August (Nepal's proposed constitutional amendments would make Christianity illegal), lawmakers voted on Monday for Nepal to remain secular, thus protecting minority religions from persecution. Following this vote, bombs exploded at two different churches in Jhapa district in eastern Nepal, according to the Kathmandu Post. There were no casualties but the churches suffered damage. Police said investigations into the blasts were under way. Despite this week's vote for secularism, the draft constitution still includes the statement that the state will safeguard 'Sanatan Dharma' - often used as an alternative term to describe Hinduism. Christian leaders have also expressed concern about the provisions targeting religious conversions and proselytising. Nevertheless, this week's vote represents a step forward, considering politicians had recently raised the possibility of removing secularism altogether.

**Pray:** that this vote will quieten Hindu activists' voices against Christianity. (Ps.101:5)

**More:** <http://www.ucanews.com/news/lawmakers-vote-for-secularism-in-nepal/74264>

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE WORLD PRAYER CENTRE, BIRMINGHAM, UK

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**Prayer Alert is produced in association with The World Prayer Centre: Cornerstone House, 5 Ethel Street, Birmingham, B2 4BG**