

# 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

### ■ Church engaging with Rugby World Cup

The Rugby World Cup, the world's third largest sporting event, is now in full flow, and churches across the land are engaging with their communities in themed rugby events. A global prayer wave started last Friday, the day before the World Cup began. Participating churches across the nations prayed at 8.00 pm local time, creating a prayer wave of people gathered in groups to cover the event in prayer. It was tracked online via an interactive world map on the Engage 2015 website allowing people to see the progress and contribute to a global community of prayers for the Rugby World Cup 2015. Across the UK churches have been organising rugby-themed prayer groups and church services, community festivals, family hosting for overseas visitors, screening the matches in church buildings, hosting guest events, and much more.

**Praise:** [God for the Church's witness in sport. \(Ps.26:7\)](#)

**More:** <http://engage2015.co.uk/>

### ■ Leila's testimonial

'I was born in Bethlehem. I'm one of 200,000 Palestinians living in Bethlehem. As a child I used to go to Jerusalem, to the Holy Sepulchre church, a special place for us Christians, and I swam in the sea in Tel Aviv. Things changed with the Intifada War. Curfews and bombs. Then they built the wall and now I need permission to go into Israel. I've been living with this division - and I don't want my children to live the same way. I had never met an Israeli, only soldiers with guns. Then I went on a young adults' trip with an organisation called Musalaha and had the chance to meet Israelis and even become friends with them. I still meet with them and we talk about reconciliation and how to accept each other. I hope for a peaceful solution, and I believe in the power of One I know.'

**Praise:** [God for all those working to reconcile Israelis and Palestinians. \(Col.1:20\)](#)

**More:** <https://www.musalaha.org/testimonials/leilas-story/>

## BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

### ■ Justin Welby to host refugees in Lambeth Palace cottage

The Archbishop of Canterbury, who said last weekend, 'Jesus was a refugee', will give a home to a family of Syrian refugees in a cottage at his London residence. A spokeswoman said, 'There are refugees here who are desperate for sanctuary from war-torn places, and the Archbishop wants to make a difference.' He has also criticised David Cameron's plans to resettle 20,000 Syrian refugees, saying the action was a 'very slim response' that is 'going to have to rise over the next five years'. Earlier this month Pope Francis announced that the Vatican would house two refugee families, and called

on Roman Catholic organisations to take in families and displaced individuals. The UK Green Party leader said that we hold 12% of the EU economy and should host a fair proportion of the two million refugees - urging the government to host 240,000 displaced Syrians.

**Pray:** for parishes, monasteries and Christian communities to respond to the cry of those who have lost everything and reveal Christ's servant heart in prayers, words and deeds. (Ps.4:6)

**More:** <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/archbishop-canterbury-justin-welby-pledges-host-refugees-lambeth-palace-cottage-1520439>

#### ■ Northern Ireland: Shooting, semtex, and Church plea for reconciliation

A 25-year-old man was shot in the leg in Belfast on 14 September. Sinn Féin MLA Pat Sheehan said, 'This attack must be condemned by everyone. Those who carried it out are not doing it in the name of the local community who have rejected these groups. There is no justification for these attacks.' Meanwhile, over half a kilo of Semtex, two handguns, 200+ rounds of ammunition and two detonators were discovered on the Ballymurphy Road in a terrorist activity investigation. A 45-year-old man was charged on Tuesday. Also on Tuesday, Irish Catholic and Protestant leaders united to urge politicians to take a 'critical opportunity' to restore hope, saying that a plan was needed to rebuild trust and advance the work of reconciliation. See also: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-politics-34321179>

**Pray:** for the streets of Belfast and all of Northern Ireland to be safe and free of terror. (Pr.3:6)

**More:** <http://www.4ni.co.uk/>

#### ■ Gospel singer on X Factor

A Gospel singer from Camden, London, has made it through to the next stages of the televised X Factor competition. Over the weekend Jennifer Phillips, 49, made it through the Boot Camp phase of the show. When she performed Mary Mary's Shackles, her rendition of the classic got the whole crowd up on their feet, including the judges - with the exception of Simon Cowell. Lyrics of the gospel song include 'Been through the fire and the rain. Bound in every kind of way. But God has broken every chain.' The final episode will be aired before Christmas and the winner will release their own original track. The next show will be aired this weekend on ITV. Another church-inspired group, BEKLN, is also doing well. The five members met in the London Community Gospel Choir, and have been praised on the show for the harmonies they have been delivering.

**Pray:** for audiences to hear with their hearts and spirits the Gospel message as it is delivered. (Is.29:18)

**More:** <http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Gospel-singer-passes-boot-camp-on-X-Factor-to-reach-judge-s-houses>

#### ■ UK church leaders expressing solidarity for refugees

English and French bishops took part in a 'Welcome Refugee' day of action in Calais, while other UK church leaders returned from meeting thousands fleeing conflict on the Greek-Macedonian border. The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Southwark and the Anglican Bishop of Dover joined the Bishop of Arras and 2,000 supporters from England, Ireland, the Netherlands, Germany and other countries in Calais. With winter looming for the camp's inhabitants, the leaders issued a joint statement encouraging people of all faiths to help. A participant at the day of action said she saw only one water source in the camp and eight portaloos, adding that the place was disorganised and ungoverned. Other than a small understaffed centre there are no official structures in place, and the limited number of volunteers 'struggle to cope' with the job of sorting and distributing donations. Anglican priest Rev Tim Clapton said the refugees found the Christian delegation an encouragement.

**Pray:** for Christians seeing the refugee needs not to feel helpless, but rather recognise the practical things that they could do. (1Pe.4:9,10)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/incredible.desperation.prominent.church.leaders.visit.refugee.camps.to.express.solidarity/65358.htm>

#### ■ Sharia gender discrimination in UK

Campaign group Equal and Free has launched a website highlighting the impact of sharia law on UK women. Sharia discriminates against women and girls, and the site carries true stories of women who have faced such discrimination. Although women from any faith tradition, or none, may suffer abuse and problems associated with dysfunctional families, the plight of those in Islamic communities is exacerbated by the application of established sharia law principles which inherently discriminate against women and girls. Forms of such discrimination include inequality in access to divorce (for men it is often effectively free and unconditional), polygamy (practised by men with multiple 'wives' and numerous children), discriminatory child custody policies and inheritance laws, and the implicit sanctioning of domestic violence. The online resource also explains and promotes a bill introduced by Baroness Cox, due to be debated in the House of Lords on 23 October, that seeks to tackle these challenges.

**Pray:** for David Cameron to honour his July promise to 'keep up the pressure on cultural practices that can run directly counter to British values' and to review sharia courts. (Ps.140:8)

**More:** <http://equalandfree.org/about-the-campaign/>

#### ■ Free school meals for infants could be scrapped

George Osborne is turning his attention to his November spending review, and free school lunches for infants could be scrapped. To provide free hot meals for all schoolchildren between four and seven, regardless of their parents' income, was a policy introduced under the coalition government by former deputy prime minister Nick Clegg. Despite an election promise to keep this policy, it is under threat as the Chancellor looks to reduce government expenditure across Whitehall, Sky News reports. The suggestion has attracted criticism from a variety of groups, who say that healthy school meals are essential for children's wellbeing. Tim Farron, a Christian and leader of the Liberal Democrats, said: 'All evidence suggests that children who have a school meal every day are two months further on in their studies than those who don't. To take away the policy is damaging to children, it's an insult to our schools.'

**Pray:** for children needing this service to continue to receive it, and for the school meals service to be improved not removed. (Ps.41:1)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/plan.to.scrap.free.school.meals.for.infants.branded.disastrous.and.insulting/65370.htm>

#### ■ **Teenage suicide**

It's hard to say how many young people attempt to take their lives each year. The way the data is reported and collected also means that exact figures for teen suicides are not readily available.

We do know that more than 1,600 people below the age of 35 kill themselves each year, according to suicide prevention charity Papyrus. For many, suicide is still a taboo subject but Papyrus says we need to create opportunities for teenagers to talk more openly about it. Suicide remains a major gender and social inequality and is a devastating event for families and communities. The Samaritans have produced a strategy, 'Working together to reduce suicide 2015-21', which outlines their commitment to work to reduce suicide rates by reaching more people who may be at risk of taking their own lives. This can be achieved only by understanding which groups of individuals are particularly at risk of suicidal thoughts and behaviours. See also: [http://www.samaritans.org/sites/default/files/kcfinder/branches/branch-96/files/Suicide\\_statistics\\_report\\_2015.pdf](http://www.samaritans.org/sites/default/files/kcfinder/branches/branch-96/files/Suicide_statistics_report_2015.pdf)

**Pray:** for the Samaritans and others working to reduce suicide rates in the UK. (2 Sa.22:7)

**More:** <http://www.bbc.co.uk/guides/z2gd2p3>

## EUROPE

#### ■ **EU: Migrant people pipeline and quota plan**

EU leaders will relocate 120,000 migrants across the continent, even though Romania, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary voted against a mandatory quota scheme. Pray for the toxic atmosphere around the quota system to be replaced by policies the EU countries can implement to help each other, rather than blaming each other. Pray for those leaders angry that their governments were outvoted on the issue of relocating refugees. As EU leaders are in disarray over what to do next, chaos on the ground has changed to an orderly means of transporting migrants from country to country. Migrants are travelling from Turkey to Austria, passing through Greece, Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia and Hungary through what has become a relatively efficient people's pipeline from southern into central and on to northern Europe, but this is no long-term solution to Europe's migration conundrum.

**Pray:** for God to heal the fault lines that have opened up across Europe because of this crisis. (Heb 12:12,13)

**More:** <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-34332759>

#### ■ **Belarus: Russian military base poses threat to Belarus's independence**

Russia is preparing to establish a military airbase in Belarus, fuelling concerns over potential threats to Poland and the Baltic states. The decision is the latest example of Moscow's determination to assert its influence beyond Russia's borders and rebuild its military capacities, which were eroded after the collapse of the Soviet Union. By giving permission to open a Russian airbase in Belarus, the official authorities help increase offensive capabilities of Putin's Russia by pitting Belarus against other countries in the region and the Euro-Atlantic community as a whole. Also the illegal annexation of Ukrainian Crimea by Russia demonstrates the Kremlin's readiness to use its foreign military bases against the countries that allowed them to open them in their territory. For two years Nato members have complained about increasingly assertive Russian behaviour along Nato's borders in eastern Europe. See also: <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/d0ae3166-5f84-11e5-9846-de406ccb37f2.html#axzz3mYII0zRS>

**Pray:** that this Russian military base would not threaten Belarus's independence or give the Putin regime a lever to influence Belarus. (Ps.28:7a)

**More:** <http://www.charter97.org/en/news/2015/9/22/170147/>

## WORLDWIDE

#### ■ **UN Post Millennium Development Goals 2015**

Many have not heard of the United Nations' eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). They were a blueprint agreed by all the world's countries and leading development institutions. The aim was to meet the needs of the world's poorest by halving extreme poverty rates, halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing universal primary education, all by 2015. There is now a post-MDG agenda - the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. At the Sustainable Development Summit on 25 September 2015, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were proposed with the intention of finishing the job in the areas of Poverty, Hunger, Health and Well-Being, Education, Gender Equality, Clean Water and Affordable Clean Energy, Work and Economic Growth, Industry Innovation, Sustainable Cities and Communities, Responsible Consumption and Production, Climate Action, Life below water, Life on Land, and Peace and Justice. See also <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

**Pray:** for the partnerships that need to develop and deliver new global conversations and action. (Ps.11:7)

**More:** <http://www.ua.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/mdgoverview/post-2015-development-agenda.html>

#### ■ **Australia: Prime Minister's stance on marriage led to his ousting**

Australia's Prime Minister Tony Abbott was cut down by one of his Liberal Party cabinet ministers, Malcolm Turnbull, last Monday. A major issue was same-sex marriage. Abbott had held back a relentless campaign to change the definition of marriage in recent years. However Australia's same-sex marriage political movement went into overdrive, cheered on by the media. After much debating to try to resolve the issue Abbott managed to block the introduction into the Australian Parliament of yet another bill to change the definition of marriage. This infuriated the opposition in the party and led to Turnbull telling parliament last week that he would honour the people's vote on same-sex marriage after the 2016 election. 'Poll-driven panic' produced the Prime Minister's departure. In his gracious concession speech, Abbott said, 'My love for this country is as strong as ever, and may God bless this great Commonwealth.'

**Pray:** for Australia's leaders to resolve this issue according to God's purposes. (Jer.29:11)

**More:** <http://www.acl.org.au/2015/09/same-sex-marriage-and-australias-revolving-door-prime-ministership/>

▣ **Canada: Parents across Ontario stand against inappropriate sex education**

A groundswell of concerned parents is making their voices heard regarding a controversial sex education curriculum. Parents' rights and pro-family groups say that the Liberal government's controversial curriculum violates children's innocence by introducing them to age-inappropriate explicit information and by pushing a dangerous sexual agenda. Pro-family analysis of the curriculum reveals that it introduces children to homosexuality in Grade 3, masturbation in Grade 6, and oral and anal sex in Grade 7; it also teaches there are six genders, rather than two biological sexes. A parent spokesperson said, 'A time of darkness calls for no compromise whatsoever, especially when the innocence of our children is at stake.' Parents across Ontario are pulling their youngsters out of school in the next two weeks as they protest against the Liberal government's curriculum.

**Pray:** for this movement of concerned parents in Ontario, to uphold the priority of God's agenda for education. (Ps.20:4)

**More:** [http://www.breakingchristiannews.com/articles/display\\_art.html?ID=16702](http://www.breakingchristiannews.com/articles/display_art.html?ID=16702)

▣ **Israel: Christian schools shut amid financial challenges**

Heads of churches in Jerusalem are calling for authorities to respond to 'modest and just demands' by Christian schools for financial support. In a statement they said, 'We are distressed that our schools in Israel have been on strike for more than two weeks. It hurts to see 33,000 students from all faiths and denominations out of their classrooms, while hundreds of teachers and employees are watching their schools empty. This situation is a grave inconvenience to the parents as their children remain at home, while education is a basic human right that no child should be denied. The struggle started almost two years ago, after serious budget cuts imposed on our schools caused a financial deficit. Negotiations between the Office of Christian Schools in Israel and the Ministry of Education failed; all solutions presented by the Ministry were unrealistic and would place further financial burdens on parents.'

**Pray:** that this painful strike will end, with the return of the full rights and respect for the schools. (Ps.33:11)

**More:** <http://www.anglicannews.org/news/2015/09/anglican-archbishop-in-jerusalem-joins-call-for-support-for-christian-schools.aspx>

▣ **Kenya: Schools shut amid financial challenges**

Kenya's teachers vowed to continue their strike, which began on 31 August. The government is appealing a court ruling granting teachers a salary increase. President Kenyatta ruled out giving in to teachers' demands, saying that to do so would 'seriously distort' public finances. Meanwhile Kenyan children across the nation are missing out on their education. The Kenya National Teachers' Union said its members won't go back to work until the government complies with last month's Industrial Court order to raise their pay. Kenya's main opposition party held a rally in Nairobi on Wednesday to back the teachers' demands. Kenyatta said that agreeing to wage demands would necessitate pay reviews across the public service, inflating the government wage bills and causing it to borrow money or suspend development programmes. 'This will raise the cost of living, slow down our economy and increase unemployment and poverty. None of these options is tenable', Kenyatta said.

**Pray:** for God to show the government's financial advisors the way forward to provide acceptable solutions to this stalemate. (Ps.90:16,17)

**More:** <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-09-21/kenya-schools-close-indefinitely-as-teachers-demand-60-pay-rise>

▣ **North Korea: State media condemns 'Bible balloons'**

North Korea's state media has released a proclamation condemning Voice of the Martyrs (VoM) for their balloon launches into North Korea this year. These brightly-coloured, helium-filled balloons either deliver Bibles in the North Korean language in electronic form or have scriptures printed on them. The balloons are released from outside North Korea's borders. Prayers are whispered, then they are released across North Korean airspace, letting Christian brothers know that they are being supported and prayed for. Despite ongoing tensions between the two countries, VoM Korea say their work is not antagonistic, and they have never endangered citizens of either country. 'As a Christian ministry we distribute Bibles because the Bible teaches us that all people are valuable and deserve to eat and live in peace; not because of their loyalty to a particular government, but because God created each one of us in His image'.

**Pray:** for Christian agencies seeking to proclaim the Good News of Jesus that cannot be stopped. (Mat.11:5)

**More:** [http://www.persecution.com/public/newsroom.aspx?story\\_ID==373832](http://www.persecution.com/public/newsroom.aspx?story_ID==373832)

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE WORLD PRAYER CENTRE, BIRMINGHAM, UK

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