

# 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

### ■ Update on Christian schools threatened with closure

Christians in Israel are pleased to report that an agreement has been reached between the Israeli government and Christian schools that has enabled the schools to end their strike on 28 September. Last week we requested prayer on behalf of Christians in Israel concerned about the continued existence of Christian schools in the country after negotiations with the Israeli government over funding for the schools had reached an impasse. On Sunday an agreement was reached between the Secretariat of Christian Schools and the Education Ministry; the schools will receive a one-off payment of 50 million shekels immediately, as well as another 7.5 million shekels to be used for 'fostering development'. The Secretariat said it regards the agreement as a provisional achievement and welcomed the decision to establish a committee to review the legal status of Christian schools, which they trust will lead to a long-term solution.

**Praise:** God that the promised finance will enable schools to reduce parental contributions and pray that this agreement will lead to a long-term solution. (Ps.33:11)

**More:** <http://www.meconcern.org/index.php/en/>

### ■ Syria/Iraq: Praying for miracles, signs and wonders

A worker from the region reports, 'Last week I visited two groups of seekers and new believers who meet together to study scriptures. Everyone shared one thing they were thankful for that week. Each and every person in these groups told of God healing the sick, doing miracles and answering prayers supernaturally. I was amazed. In all my years on the field I have never heard of such a thing, and now we hear weekly of different groups seeing and experiencing God moving miraculously! God is doing wonderful things.' Jesus said, 'Whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.' We are in the middle of a week of prayer for Syria and Iraq. Pray that believers (new and old) will have the faith to go, proclaim God's word, and pray the big faith prayers.

**Praise:** God for the outpouring of His Spirit at this time, and ask Him for thousands more people to seek and find His truth and His power. (1Cor. 2:4-5)

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

## BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

### ■ Church schools are struggling to recruit Christian headteachers

The Church is the biggest education provider in England, with an estimated one million children currently attending a faith school. In a recent 'needs analysis' report, the Church's education office warns that the increasingly elderly body of headteachers means there is a need to recruit new, strong leaders. The report said that many dioceses have become flexible around the requirement that headteachers need to be practising Christians, and can reference successful church school heads from other faiths or none at all who are able to maintain a clear vision for education. It warns of a risk to the Church's vision of education if enough teachers and school leaders with a deep understanding of and engagement with the Church of England cannot be deployed.

**Pray:** for provision of extra training to promote the Church of England's education vision. (Ps.34:11)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/shortage.of.christian.headteachers.for.church.schools/66005.htm>

### ■ Majority says longer Sunday trading will be bad for families

The government's consultation on Sunday trading closed last week, but not before the Association of Convenience Stores (ACS) submitted the results of a survey of close to 2,000 adults in England and Wales showing that three in five people agree that shop workers will be forced to work longer hours if the law changes. The consultation was launched in the middle of the summer, with ministers using the increase in online shopping and the demands of the tourism industry to argue for longer shopping hours. For more detailed information by the Christian Institute go to

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?t=44&v=76Qjbq7BSes>

**Pray:** for the voices of churches, trade unions and retailers to be heard, and for Sunday to remain special. (Ex.23:12)

**More:** [http://www.christian.org.uk/news/majority-says-longer-sunday-trading-will-be-bad-for-families/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+christianinstitute+%28The+Christian+Institute%29&utm\\_content=FeedBurner](http://www.christian.org.uk/news/majority-says-longer-sunday-trading-will-be-bad-for-families/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+christianinstitute+%28The+Christian+Institute%29&utm_content=FeedBurner)

### ■ Scotland: Scottish government plans new moves to tackle reoffending

60% of those sentenced to less than three months in jail are reconvicted within a year. Under plans being revived by the Scottish government, minor offenders would receive community-based punishments rather than short jail terms and receive help for the causes of their offending behaviour, including drug or alcohol addictions or mental health issues. Justice Secretary Michael Matheson said that although crime levels are falling, Scotland has one of the highest prison populations per capita in Western Europe. Two-thirds of those jailed in Scotland receive terms of six months or less. Mr Matheson said evidence shows short-term prison sentences are ineffective in reducing reoffending. 'Prison will always be the right place for serious offenders who should be punished appropriately. This isn't about being 'soft' or 'tough', it is about being 'smart' and acting on the clear evidence in front of us.'

**Pray:** for the revived plans to provide appropriate help to offenders to turn their lives around. (Pr.10:12,13)

**More:** <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-34349792>

### ■ 'Good Lord, deliver us from successful bishops'

The Bishop of Chelmsford, Stephen Cottrell, made a courageous intervention in a sermon at the consecration of three new bishops at St Paul's Cathedral on Tuesday. Bishop Cottrell had this to say: 'Good Lord, deliver us from successful bishops, from too-well-prepared or even too-well-organised bishops, from ready answer in the back pocket and PowerPoint-strategy self-sufficient, all-efficient bishops. The first job of a bishop is to be a teacher and evangelist: not a MD of CofE plc, or a safe pair of managerial hands just emerged slick and shiny from the talent pool - not even as a graduate of the latest whizzy business school offer of better-organised salvation; a storyteller, poet, theologian - a gospel person, with the good news of Christ on our lips and in our hearts, and this good news translated into the languages of the smorgasbord of cultures in which we serve.'

**Pray:** for Christian leaders to be grounded in reality and familiar with the heights of prayer. (Is.58:14a)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/good.lord.deliver.us.from.successful.bishops.a.call.for.authentic.church.leadership/66204.htm>

### ■ NHS finances

It's nearly six months since the start of the financial year, a year that many believe financially will make or break the NHS. We don't know how hospital, mental health, ambulance and community services are shaping up. Last year foundation trusts finished the whole year with a £249 million loss. With non-foundation trusts included, this topped £800m. Trusts broke even after receiving a £250m cash injection from funding meant to be spent on buildings. The two economic regulators for the sector have not released the figures for the first quarter of April to June. A survey of a hundred finance directors by the King's Fund thinktank over the summer found that two-thirds were predicting deficits. The outlook was particularly bleak in the hospital sector, where nine in ten thought they would finish the year in the red. The NHS is the fifth largest employer in the world, with 1.7 million employees.

**Pray:** that the NHS and the government department of health will wisely and sensitively find the reserves and savings to cover overspend. (Ps.9:18)

**More:** <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-34383672>

### ■ NHS 111 helpline 'dangerously understaffed'

Former NHS call handler Irah Tahir said that the 111 call centre she worked at was dangerously understaffed, with 75% of calls going unanswered. Staff were under pressure and had to give medical advice when nurses were unavailable. She felt the service was completely unsafe. 'I'm not medically trained and I wasn't equipped to make those decisions.' Also staff were begged to do overtime or cancel holidays because of staff shortages. Derbyshire Health United, which runs the centre, refuted the claims. The helpline began in 2010 for those needing urgent medical help or advice. If someone's illness is judged to be an emergency by the 111 team, then an ambulance can be sent out. An NHS England spokesman admitted there had been issues and 'regional variations' with the helpline, but said they are working to ensure these are addressed.

**Pray:** for this service to be clinically safe, with appropriate staffing and funding levels. (Ps.74:21)

**More:** <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-derbyshire-34389420>

### ■ Deployment support for army families

While soldiers are away there is a range of family welfare support available to both regular army families and to those of mobilised members of the Army Reserve. Army life means that soldiers may have to be away from their home and family on

unaccompanied tours from time to time for an operational deployment, training or an assignment to a location that does not offer family support facilities such as healthcare or housing. The first point of contact for army personnel regarding any deployment issues is their Unit Welfare Officer. Families of regular army soldiers living in Service Families' Accommodation (SFA) will normally keep their house for the whole period of an unaccompanied tour.

**Pray:** for the smooth running of all the various services provided for families of our armed forces. (Ps.142:3a).

**More:** <http://www.army.mod.uk/welfare-support/23208.aspx>

## EUROPE

### ■ Romania: European Trumpet Call update

Between 31 August and 4 September a European Trumpet Call was held in Timisoara, Romania. The gathering was a truly international one, with delegates from across Europe including a great UK representation. One of the UK delegates wrote on the World Prayer Centre site, 'We were also blessed to have a team from the Pacific region who felt called to come and be with us. They have a mandate to thank Europe as their parent - the source of the gospel. We loved our Pacific friends' holy protocols. At each meeting they would stand with their hands on their hearts to welcome in the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, then hand the meeting over to Him. These were always holy moments, starting planning meetings and the main meetings in the presence of Jesus. We realised that welcoming Jesus as Lord, worshipping him and praising him was a key part of the Holy Spirit's leading.' To read the full report click on the 'more' link below.

**Pray:** for God's supremacy to flow through Europe, breaking hard ground and removing false beliefs. (Col.2:8)

**More:** <http://www.worldprayer.org.uk/news-wpc/item/7291-european-trumpet-call>

### ■ Russia: Need to talk with US military

The US and Russian military will hold talks 'as soon as possible' to avoid clashing in Syria, top diplomats say. Russian aircraft carried out about twenty missions against the so-called Islamic State group on Wednesday. But the US expressed fears that the targets were non-IS opponents (see this week's Syria article in World section). The strikes plunged the four-year-old civil war into a volatile new phase. Washington and Moscow are both aware of the risks of pressing ahead with rival, unco-ordinated air campaigns over Syria. To avoid an incident, last-minute decisions might have to be made by the forces on the scene. 'There's no time to raise it to a presidential level when two planes are closing at twenty miles a minute,' said one US military official, speaking on condition of anonymity. The two countries need to carry out talks to explore ways to keep their militaries apart. See: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-34408120>

**Pray:** for the risk of airspace 'accidents' to be eliminated through honest humble negotiations. (Pr.2:10)

**More:** <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/us-russia-conduct-rival-air-campaigns-in-crowded-syrian-skies/536391.html>

## WORLDWIDE

### ■ Syria: Official Syrian regime request

The Kremlin's chief of staff Serge Ivanov confirmed that President Assad of Syria had 'appealed to the leadership of Russia with a request for military aid.' Russia claimed that the airstrikes which followed, on Wednesday, were against IS positions, but local Syrian sources reported that they were exclusively against anti-government rebels. Syrian Civil Defence Forces, a volunteer emergency responder organisation, reported 36 civilian casualties from the Russian airstrike in northern Homs, in addition to several civilian casualties in Hama. Although there are small IS "sympathetic" cells in the rebel-held pockets of northern Homs, this decision signals Russia's intent to assist the Assad regime's war effort at large, beyond anti-IS operations. See also the Europe article about Russia and military talks.

**Pray:** for NATO and international leaders to prevent a worsening of the civil war in Syria. (Ps.109:31)

**More:** <http://www.iswresearch.blogspot.co.uk/2015/09/russias-first-reported-air-strikes-in.html>

### ■ South Sudan: UN says army raped and burned girls alive

Rights investigators from the UN mission in the Republic of South Sudan (Unmiss) have warned of 'widespread human rights abuses'. Some of the most disturbing allegations were abduction and sexual abuse of women and girls, some of whom were reportedly burned alive in their dwellings. The UN said it had tried to visit the sites of atrocities described by witnesses, but was denied access by the army. Aerial photographs show the burnt circles left after huts were razed to the ground. The army has previously dismissed allegations of rights abuses. The UN's report has been handed to government officials, who are yet to comment on its findings. Unmiss chief Ellen Margrethe Loej called for 'unfettered access' to investigate the reported crimes. She said, 'Revealing the truth of what happened offers the best hope for ensuring accountability for such terrible violence and ending the cycle of impunity that allows these abuses to continue.' See also: <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/sep/28/south-sudan-women-girls-raped-as-wages-for-government-allied-fighters>

**Pray:** that this report will bring about the beginning of an end to child soldiers, rape, abduction, looting, arson and unmentionable brutality. Pray for this poverty-stricken country split along ethnic lines. (Ex.23:6)

**More:** <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/jun/30/south-sudan-army-raped-then-burned-girls-alive-un-rights-investigators>

### ■ Vatican's new astronomer speaks out

Religion supports astronomy and religious people should not be afraid of the scientific study of celestial objects, according to the Pope's astronomer, Guy Consolmagno, the new director of the Vatican Observatory and a Jesuit. He says, 'Religious people need to know that astronomy is wonderful and that they shouldn't be afraid of it. John Paul II said of evolution that 'truth cannot contradict truth; if you think you already know everything about the world, you are not a good scientist, and if you think you know all there is to know about God, then your religious faith is at fault.' Dr Consolmagno said the Vatican supports astronomy because it is an important part of being human. Meanwhile Richard Dawkins told the Wall Street

Journal that 'ignorant Christians' are holding back science, and it was a wonder 'that America is the leading scientific nation despite having this incubus around its neck of an uncultured ignorant almost majority'. See:

<http://www.christiantoday.com/article/richard.dawkins.ignorant.christians.are.holding.back.science/66207.htm>

**Pray:** that people who have seen and talked about the 'blood moon' will also see the vastness and wonder of God and His creation. Pray also for Richard Dawkins to realise and grasp who God is. (Ps.19:1)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/if.you.think.you.know.everything.about.god.then.your.religious.faith.is.at.fault.says.vaticans.new.astronomer/66276.htm>

#### ▣ **Pakistan: Floods, Taliban and prayer warfare**

A Christian in Pakistan writes, 'The greatest thing anyone can do for God and for man is to pray. It is not the only thing, but it is the chief thing.' Some heavy flooding has taken place in the southern part of the Punjab as heavy monsoon rains have started again and India has let the water go in their own dams upriver. The government has helped many, but still hundreds of thousands are left desolate without homes, fields or livestock. PLEASE PRAY against Al-Qaeda as they have taken a new approach of offering help to people affected by the floods if the people will come and join them. A poor Pakistani without the money to go on Hajj can go to the central place of the 'Prince of Death', the central place of Al-Qaeda in Pakistan. They believe this will obtain the same merit; as many Pakistani people go to this stronghold as go to Mecca.

**Pray:** for the hold of this central stronghold in Pakistan to be brought down through prayer. (Lk.10:19)

#### ▣ **Afghanistan: Can government keep Kunduz secure?**

After losing control of Kunduz to the Taliban on Monday, the government says it has now reclaimed most of the city. Shockwaves of the Taliban's sudden seizure of this strategic hub on the main trade-route between the Afghan capital and Tajikistan continue to reverberate. On Thursday insurgents were still in various parts of Kunduz, and the Taliban insisted they had not yet finished fighting in the city. Questions remain about Afghan ability to protect Kunduz in future. To help you visualise the terror of residents in the area, the following is part of an email which Prayer Alert received on Monday. 'Mobile service has been cut off. Reports of fierce battles with security forces. T\*bn forces broken into main Kunduz prison, freeing hundreds -1 hour ago. More than half of Kunduz seized -12 minutes ago - now marching on airport. This would be a major disaster for Afghanistan and the first district main city falling back into the hands of the T\*bn.'

**Pray:** for God to protect, strengthen and give His peace to the people living in Afghan war zones. (Ps.140:4)

**More:** <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/10/01/asia/afghanistan-kunduz-taliban-attack/>

#### ▣ **Mexico: 'Where are our boys?' protest march**

The parents of 43 missing college students have led a march of thousands of people in Mexico City, marking one year since the students' disappearance. In January Mexico's government said the students had been handed over to a drug cartel by police and then killed and burned to ashes. Independent experts suggest they were killed because they unknowingly took control of a bus carrying illegal drugs and the government did nothing to protect them. Forensic teams said the government's conclusion is not supported by evidence. Protesters called the march 'a day of indignation', allowing people to show their anger over the handling of the students' disappearance. They carried posters saying 'No more disappearances and no more deaths'. 'We came with a thirst for justice. Behind the 43 are thousands of disappeared', student Sofia Rojas said. An anti-crime activist said the protest 'sets an example for all Mexicans to wake up, and not be silent.' See also: [http://prayer-alert.net/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=4152:mexico-missing-students-mysterious-developments&Itemid=168](http://prayer-alert.net/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=4152:mexico-missing-students-mysterious-developments&Itemid=168)

**Pray:** that the President will honour his promise to look deeper into the case. Pray also for the families of the many who have disappeared over recent years, and for justice to triumph. (Ps.9:19)

**More:** <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-34372180>

#### ▣ **Pakistan: Asylum needed for Christians**

The president of Pakistan's Christian Congress has urged Western nations to open its doors to persecuted Pakistani Christians. According to the Daily Pakistan, Nazir Bhatti said Christians seeking asylum should be accommodated in the USA, the UK, and other European countries. Bhatti's plea comes after the announcement that refugees from Syria will be welcomed by both the UK and Germany. Thousands of Pakistani Christian asylum-seekers are not economic immigrants but persecuted Christians who can't afford to pay human traffickers to reach the shores of Europe, wrote Bhatti. Christian asylum-seekers in Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Thailand and other Southeastern Asian countries have been waiting years for word on their immigration cases, without any support from the UNHCR, IRC or other international NGOs.

**Pray:** that Pakistani and all persecuted believers will know the hope God gives. (Eph.1:18).

**More:** <http://www.christianpersecution.info/any-asylum-for-persecuted-pakistani-christians/>

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE WORLD PRAYER CENTRE, BIRMINGHAM, UK

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