

PRAYER ALERT...

'If my people....will humble themselves and pray' ^{2 Chr 7:14}

Informing and equipping Christians - Online and to Inbox

www.prayer-alert.net

editor@prayer-alert.net

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PRAISE REPORTS

■ Witness of Christian workers in Syria

The sorrow of the ministry team leader who lost 11 workers and one of their children last month has been deep, but he takes heart that their faithfulness could help change the hearts of persecutors. 'They kept on praying loudly and sharing Jesus until their last breath,' he said. 'They did this in front of the villagers as a testimony for others.' He asked for prayer for surviving family members and for himself.

'These things have been very hard on me,' he said. 'What wrong did those people do to deserve to die? However, what is happening is more and more people are being saved. The ministry is growing and growing. In the past we used to pray to have one person from a Muslim background come to the Lord. Now there are so many we can barely handle all the work among them.'

Praise: God that the blood of the martyrs is delivering salvation to many. (Rev. 6:10)

More: <http://www.christianaid.org/News/2015/mir20151001.aspx>

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Watchman Intercessors – a word in season

Steve Botham, Director at the World Prayer Centre writes, 'This is a time of many warnings - of danger from terrorists, of severe economic collapse, of God's judgement on nations and situations. We can become very concerned, but all watchmen are subject to God - He is the ultimate watchman. Psalm 121 tells us 'He who watches over you will not slumber; indeed he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep'. God has called forth watchmen at this time – but ultimately it is up to all of us to weigh up the warnings and ask - is this God's voice to us at this time? He warns us for a serious purpose - to lead to repentance, prayer, practical action.' Watchmen and intercessors serve out of love for their community and church. God is looking for a servant attitude.

Pray: for God's Church to be humble, alert, available and able to discern God's heart as they watch, pray and declare what they believe God is saying at such a time as this. (Is.21:8)

More: <http://www.worldprayer.org.uk/eu-news/wpc/item/31-watchmen-on-the-walls>

■ Faith schools will be shut down if they teach intolerance

Speaking at the Conservative Party Conference David Cameron announced plans to force all religious schools to register and be inspected. 'If an institution is teaching children intensively then, whatever its religion, we will, like any other school,

make it register so that it can be inspected - and, be in no doubt, if you're teaching intolerance, we will shut you down.' he said. He promised the country that it was his duty to keep Britain safe and that it was time to 'really confront extremism'. David Landrum, director of advocacy at the Evangelical Alliance, said, 'It is right that we actively rebuild Britain as an even greater country and take stringent measures to eradicate extremist ideology. However, it is vital that committed Christians are not labelled as extremists by those who may disagree with aspects of their faith.'

Pray: that bills to tackle extremism will not undermine the democracy it seeks to protect. (2 Tim 3:16)

More: <http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/David-Cameron-tells-faith-schools-we-will-shut-you-down-if-you-teach-intolerance>

■ The personal cost of Christian freedoms

The Christian Concern organisation have a number of important legal cases to be heard in the courts over the next few months. These cases include a personal cost for those involved. It's a spiritual battle and the courts can often be hostile towards the Christian faith, so please pray for these courageous men and women and their legal teams fighting for the freedom to share the gospel, freedom to bring up children according to the Christian faith and the protection of vulnerable lives. To read a brief outline of each of the legal cases click the 'More' link.

Pray: for God to be in all the groundwork going into the initial preparation of these cases. (Ps.31:4)

More: <http://us2.campaign-archive1.com/?u=bed173cc9adfcad1e0e442a35&id=7fb9ae32fd>

■ British Christian converts from Islam are persecuted

A Christian family in Yorkshire who converted from Islam has said it has 'given up on the Church of England', after claiming it failed to provide them with support following ongoing persecution. Since their conversion, they claim they have suffered regular persecution from Muslim neighbours who view them as 'apostates.' Their victimisation included having their car windcreens smashed seven times in the last year, eggs thrown at their windows and verbal and physical confrontations. One prosecution was made and the father of the family, 49-year-old Nissar Hussain, has himself received a police caution. Nissar was forced to quit his job as a nurse, after being diagnosed with depression and post-traumatic-stress disorder, and the family have already moved house once. Mr Hussain has criticised both the police's and the Church of England's responses to their situation and has filed a complaint with the Independent Police Complaints Commission.

Pray: for an end to all religious persecution in closed communities and 'politically correct' responses by authorities when confronted with an unjust religious community issue. (Pr.21:15)

More: <http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/British-Christian-family-who-converted-from-Islam-has-given-up-on-the-Church-of-England-in-light-of-persecution>

■ Children in care need homes

Every day 50+ children are taken into care in the UK. They are removed from chaotic, traumatic, abusive, neglectful or desperate situations. Some need a home in an emergency. Some need a temporary home until they can return to their families. Some need a home to give their families a break. Some need a permanent home with a new family. The Church is uniquely placed to help to meet this need in terms of finding families to foster or adopt, and providing an excellent community of support to wrap around those in need. A new charity that was birthed last year, called Home for Good, aims to make adoption and fostering a significant part of the life and ministry of the Church in the UK. Working with Care for the Family and the Child Protection Advisory Service they are equipping and co-ordinating churches and individuals to provide homes for children in care in a welcoming church community.

Pray: for wisdom and resources for staff and volunteers as they work with the Government, local authorities and foster-carers to find homes for children in the UK. (Jas.1:27)

More: <http://www.homeforgood.org.uk/about-us>

■ Being a Christian in the entertainment world

Frank Skinner is a British comedian whose career has spanned three decades and endured despite changing tastes; he's reinvented himself several times - as a sitcom star, national lead football fan and latterly talk show host. Perhaps most surprisingly of all, however, Skinner is a committed and practicing Catholic, profoundly interested in developing his faith and always ready to talk about it. He manages to squeeze a reference to his faith into almost every edition of his now-established comedy panel show 'Room 101', and this openness is consistent with his approach to interviews. Unlike other well-known believers, the comic doesn't simply resort to a well-rehearsed line about how his private, personal faith is a great source of comfort - he positively engages with the subject as a fundamental part of his life. In conversation he is uncompromising, evangelistic and even controversial.

Pray: for Christian performers to experience God's influence as they enter into roles and lifestyles that could have an effect on them spiritually; may their faith influence others. (Ps.9:1)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/the.faith.of.frank.skinner.in.eight.quotes/61319.htm>

■ Former President of Ireland dismisses Archbishop's views on homosexuality

Mary McAleese has refuted claims by Archbishop Charles Chaput that the Catholic Church never said homosexuals were disordered. The Archbishop accused Mrs McAleese, who has a doctorate in canon law, that she had 'a very narrow point of view that's trying to control something she shouldn't try to control, that is the faith of the Catholic Church. They say that the tendency to same-sex attraction is a disorder of our sexual appetite,' Archbishop Chaput continued. 'A lot of people have disorders. Wearing glasses, not being able to hear well are all disorders that a person may have but it doesn't destroy their dignity. It just means they have an issue to deal with. So I think that language is being used by politicians in order to stir up one side against the other and that's inappropriate for politicians to do.'

Pray: for God's Church to proclaim its faith according to His word and not popular arguments. (Ps.119:17)

More: <http://www.thetablet.co.uk/news/2753/0/mcaleese-dismisses-archbishop-s-view-on-homosexuality>

EUROPE

■ Germany: Netanyahu cancels Germany trip amid terror wave

Thursday's meeting to strengthen diplomatic progress between Angela Merkel and Benjamin Netanyahu has been postponed due to a surge in Palestinian terror attacks in Jerusalem and the West Bank. (see this week's Prayer-Alert world article) Prayer is needed for a strengthening of Israel's relationships with Germany. In the middle of his address to the UN General Assembly Benjamin Netanyahu stood silently for 44 seconds and glared at all the representatives assembled as a protest against an absence of criticism of threats against Israel. Thursday's cancelled consultation meeting took on a special significance. In 2008 Chancellor Merkel's speech to the Knesset said that 'the historical responsibility for Israel's security is part of our *raison d'état*'. It would remain unchanged and continue to be one of the foundations of Germany's foreign policy.

Pray: that Thursday's meeting will only be postponed and not cancelled. Pray for a strengthening of relations between the two lands and the two governments. (Ps.133:1)

More: <http://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-cancels-germany-trip-amid-terror-wave/>

■ Migrant crisis will reveal Europe's true colours

As hundreds of thousands of people fleeing war, repression and poverty cross Europe's borders, the continent is struggling to cope. There is growing consensus that the EU's legal framework and individual member states are poorly equipped to confront the problem. Politicians will have to act fast if they want to avoid a humanitarian emergency this winter. They should also be aware that quick solutions will not make the bigger issue go away. The migrant crisis is, in fact, about Europe's identity. The coming weeks and months will be a test of European unity in the hardest times, with nationalist and extremist voices gaining ground and EU leaders strengthening border controls. So Europe's open door is soon to be closed in face of the tide that has overwhelmed Italy, Greece, Macedonia, Hungary, Serbia and Croatia and created problems throughout Europe.

Pray: that Europe's intellectual, moral and material reserves are not too empty for the continent to show its generous face. (Job 5:16)

More: <https://freedomhouse.org/blog/migrant-crisis-will-reveal-europe-s-true-colors>

WORLDWIDE

■ Israel: Upsurge of attacks against Jews

On Monday, two Palestinian youths were killed during clashes in the West Bank. One of them was thirteen and had been shot by mistake. Two days earlier, a Palestinian stabbed two Israelis to death in Jerusalem. Another stabbed and wounded an Israeli teenager. Police killed both attackers. On Tuesday a Palestinian woman stabbed an Israeli man in the back in Jerusalem's Old City, he then drew a gun and shot her. On Wednesday an Israeli woman driving to Jerusalem was attacked by a mob of rock-throwing Palestinians. The attack occurred on a route used by thousands of Jewish and Palestinian motorists daily. The mob beat her and tried to drag her out of her car but she escaped and was taken to hospital. These incidents follow a surge in violence in Jerusalem and the West Bank as Palestinians wage a war of terror, targeting Israel Defence Force soldiers and Israeli civilians. See also <http://unitedwithisrael.org/>

Pray: and call to God to give the people of the land relief from anguish, distress and fear. (Ps.4:8)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-34463701>

■ Syria: Russia fires cruise missiles at terrorists in Syria

Warships in the Caspian Sea launched cruise missiles in the first use of the Russian navy since the start of a military build-up in support of al-Assad. Sergei Shoigu, Russia's Defence Minister, said on Thursday that the navy hit 11 targets in Syria with missiles fired from ships in the Caspian Sea. Four ships in Russia's Caspian fleet fired a total of 26 cruise missiles at the targets. They flew 1,500km over Iran and Iraq and struck Raqqa and Aleppo provinces in Syria's north and Idlib province in the northwest. IS has strongholds in Raqqa and Aleppo, while al-Nusra Front has a strong presence in Idlib. Ashton Carter, the Pentagon chief, said the Russian strategy is a 'fundamental mistake' and coalition forces operating in the region will not co-operate with Russia. Putin stressed the need for co-operation with the US-led coalition fighting IS, saying that without co-operation from the US, Turkey and Saudi Arabia the intervention was unlikely to work.

Pray: for those fighting terror to co-ordinate their actions and avoid muscle-flexing rhetoric. (Ps.2:10)

More: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/10/cloneofrussian-warships-join-syria-war-rocket-at-151008050603182.html>

■ NATO's chief says the Alliance faces 'conflict, instability, and insecurity'

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) is an intergovernmental military alliance. They met on 5 October for consultations on the potential implications of the dangerous military actions of the Russian Federation in and around Syria. On 8 October NATO defence ministers gave further considerations to the implications for NATO's own security of the 'troubling escalation of Russian military activities' in Syria. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg, said NATO is ready to deploy forces, if needed, to defend alliance member Turkey. 'NATO is able and ready to defend all allies, including Turkey, against any threat,' the secretary-general said on Thursday. He said NATO had already increased its capacity, ability and preparedness to deploy forces, including to the south, including in Turkey, if needed.

Pray: for the Turkish Defence Minister Mehmet Vecdi Gonul and all NATO member states as they face a 'daunting array of contemporary security threats'. (1 Cor.1:10a)

More: <http://uk.businessinsider.com/natos-chief-says-the-alliance-faces-conflict-instability-and-insecurity-2015-10?r=US&IR=T>

■ **Nigeria: Abuja hit by more bomb blasts**

A series of explosions on the outskirts of the Nigerian capital Abuja killed at least 18 people last Friday. The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) reported a further 41 people were wounded by the blasts. The first two struck Kuje township; one by a suicide bomber near a police station, the other a bomb at a market. Another bomb exploded at a bus stop in Nyanya. More than 40 people were injured in the blasts, which security officials described as co-ordinated. This year, security forces have managed to reclaim most of the territory captured by Boko Haram fighters and have freed a number of people kidnapped, but militant attacks have intensified. The victims would have been normal working-class people who were going about their business in the streets, in the market-place or waiting for a bus.

Pray: for the families of the bereaved and injured to know God's peace and comfort. (Is.51:12)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-34431259>

■ **Central African Republic (CAR): Attack on key Christian in peace process**

The country has been in the grips of violence and political problems since the majority-Muslim Séléka group drove out President Francois Bozizé in a coup two years ago. About three-quarters of CAR is Christian. Thousands have been killed and thousands more displaced since 2013 and now extremists have attempted to murder a Christian in CAR who is heavily involved in civil war peace efforts there. The attackers looted and burned down the house of Revd Nicolas Guerekoyame-Gbangou, the chairman of CAR's Evangelical Alliance. The chairman wasn't in at the time and his family managed to escape before they were attacked. The armed gunmen murdered two other people taking refuge in the house. The attack was part of ongoing sectarian violence between Christians and Muslims in the country, after the body of a Muslim man was found in Bangui earlier this year. 100+ people have died in the fighting and around 30,000 are currently displaced as the result of current and previous political and religious fighting.

Pray: for peace and stability in the run-up to the political elections due to take place on 18 October. (Ps.37:37)

More: <http://www.premier.org.uk/News/World/Attempted-murder-on-key-Christian-figure-in-Central-African-Republic-peace-process>

■ **USA: Flooding swamped virtually all of South Carolina**

Residents in South Carolina's Lowcountry were warned that water from days of flooding across the state was moving in their direction and was going to have major impacts. Already seventeen people have died since the rain began a few days ago. Eleven dams have failed and thirty-five dams are being monitored. 400,000+ state residents are under a 'boil water advisory' affecting sixteen water systems. Now Lowcountry residents are sandbagging homes, businesses and tourist attractions as they prepare for the surge of water heading their way. Though some areas have already dealt with flooding from the initial event, authorities said some areas that didn't see flooding may get swamped before all the water moves out to sea. High waters are still a very dangerous reality. Rescue crews went door-to-door in the capital city of Columbia as officials freed residents trapped by floods that swamped virtually the entire state. See also <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/10/06/us/south-carolina-flooding/>

Pray: for those whose lives will never be the same. (Is.65:21)

More: <http://www.weather.com/news/news/south-carolina-floods-news>

■ **Australia: Getting hotter, drier and more ready to burn**

Australia experienced its third-driest September on record, with large parts of Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania getting very little rain. The chance of a drier than normal October is 70%, with the probability rising to 80% in Victoria where the government is attempting to find ways to get water to parched areas in the west. While summer is the time associated with the highest bushfire risk in the southern states, bushfire seasons are starting earlier and lasting longer. Many people living in high-risk bushfire areas are still under-prepared and ill-informed on the dangers and the preparations needed. El Niño is a climatic event. In Australia it is associated with reduced rainfall and higher temperatures. The current El Niño, which will last throughout Australia's summer, is one of the top four on record in terms of strength.

Pray: for the government to organise improved emergency radio, text and internet warning systems for residents in the path of bush fires and isolated communities. (Job 5:21)

More: <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/oct/08/as-el-nino-gets-stronger-australia-gets-hotter-drier-and-more-ready-to-burn>

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE WORLD PRAYER CENTRE, BIRMINGHAM, UK

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