

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

■ Kidnapped priest released in Syria

Al-Qaeda-linked fighters in Syria abducted an Italian priest known for his peace activism and who has expressed his opinion championing the anti-government uprising in Syria on Vatican Radio. He has now been freed. While reasons for Father Jacques Mourad's release are unknown, a source told AFP that he said Mass yesterday for the first time since his abduction. He has ministered to Qaryatayn's Syriac Catholic community for 12 years. 2,000 Christians lived there before the war, none remain now, but the Priest works to promote Christian/Muslim dialogue and his ministry has been fruitful. Priests are fully aware of the risks they run, but they remain alongside the Syrian people, both Christians and Muslims. Often they are the only ones people have to turn to. When asked if he was intending to leave the area he said that he would do so only if forced - otherwise he would remain with his people. See also: <http://www.sconews.co.uk/news/30317/italian-jesuit-priest-and-peace-activist-kidnapped-in-syria/>

Praise: God for his release and for his bravery and ask God to continue to bless the ministry He has given him to reach the unreached people of Syria. (Lk. 19:10)

More: <http://www.premier.org.uk/News/World/Kidnapped-priest-released-in-Syria>

■ The power of a booklet in the refugee crisis

In the worst of times God is at work. There's proof of that with the refugee crisis. Hundreds of thousands have poured into Europe, legally and illegally, some to opened arms to the persecuted, some to closed gates. 'All sorts of churches and ministries are reaching out,' says Helen Williams of World Missionary Press. Churches, even in unwelcoming countries, are opening arms, accepting refugees and providing for them. In Hungary several churches went to train stations to give out food, clothing and the Gospel in Hungarian and translated languages to the flood of refugees. Other church groups and a Bible college are also ministering to refugees with the gospel. One of their favourite booklets to give is How to Know God, which was written specifically for Muslims. Almost every person that they gave it to received it gladly. So far they have given away 12,000 Scripture booklets in 10 different languages.

Praise: God and ask Him to send workers to disciple the refugees wherever they settle. (Job 27:11)

More: <https://www.mnnonline.org/news/the-power-of-a-booklet-in-the-refugee-crisis/>

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

▣ Tackling corruption

Transparency International is a global movement working towards a world in which government, politics, business, civil society and the daily lives of people are free of corruption. Transparency International UK (TI-UK) is the UK national chapter of this movement whose vision is a society in which the health of our institutions is enhanced, we can trust the integrity of those in authority and there is no freedom for the corrupt at home or abroad. At the beginning of this month Sir Eric Pickles gave a major scene-setting speech on corruption in his capacity as the recently-appointed Anti-Corruption Champion. Never before had any of his predecessors as Champion (Benn, Hutton, Straw, Clarke, Hancock) delivered such a speech. Characteristically frankly he said, 'I want to see this through and there's nothing they can do to stop me.' Then he set out his priorities: - domestic corruption, money laundering, asset recovery, sports governance and electoral fraud.

Pray: for God to bless and direct all UK initiatives tackling corruption in the UK and Overseas Territories' politics, business and commerce. (Pr.19:1)

More: <http://www.transparency.org.uk/news-room/12-blog/1342-what-the-champion-told-us>

▣ The Lordship of Jesus over all life

Dr Joe Boot argues that the common tendency among Christians to avoid political topics is not an act of prudence, but a failure to take seriously the work that God has given us to do in this world. 'In much of evangelicalism today, it has become a grievous fault, even a sin, to be concerned and vocal with regard to the modern state's redefinition of marriage, the mass murder of infants in the womb, the social engineering of the family, state-sanctioned theft and the usurpation of charity, the diminution of independent Christian education and the assault on religious freedoms and the Church. Concern is seen as 'political' and deemed outside the scope or priority of the gospel – as though true Christianity were a progression from the material to the spiritual, from the earthly to the heavenly, from the body to the soul. This is Neo-Platonism, not Christianity, and it has revived in recent decades, making deep inroads into the mindset of many Christians. See also the Mill Gathering. http://www.prayer-alert.net/index.php?view=download&alias=572-statement-from-the-mill-gathering-1&category_slug=insight-articles-1&option=com_docman&Itemid=216

Pray: for the Church to wake up, stand with Christ in clear opposition to all the works of the devil. (Eph.2:10)

More: <http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/social/body-and-soul-the-lordship-of-jesus-over-all-of-life>

▣ Northern Ireland – Illegal immigrants and drug-smuggling

On Monday three men were arrested in Portadown regarding a drugs' seizure and illegal entry into the UK. One was arrested for possession of criminal property and one was arrested for being concerned in the supply of Class B controlled drugs. The third man was arrested for importation of Class B drugs and illegal entry into the UK. Northern Ireland is the UK's back door for illegal immigrants and the number of illegal immigrants intercepted at Northern Ireland ports trying to reach other parts of the UK has risen significantly in the last three years. Home Office figures show 468 people were intercepted in 2014/15, including those who crossed the border with the Irish Republic. (up 71% on the 2012/13 total). This year's figures for interceptions in Northern Ireland include 30 convicted criminals who had previously been deported from the UK. See also: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-33728450>

Pray: for God to give wisdom and success to Immigration Enforcement, N.I. Police Service and Police Scotland as they tackle illegal entry/drug-smuggling into the United Kingdom. (1Ki.10:8)

More: <http://www.4ni.co.uk/northern-ireland-news/204754/three-men-arrested-following-drugs-seizure-in-portadown>

▣ Abortion-law handed to Scottish Parliament for debate

The UK Government has confirmed that abortion will be devolved to the Scottish Parliament. The decision has been welcomed by one of Scotland's leading Christian charities who have called for the issue to be debated for the first time in Holyrood. CARE for Scotland said, 'It makes plain constitutional sense for this new power to be given to Holyrood so that the Parliament here has power over start of life issues as well. The transfer of such a major new power clearly merits a full parliamentary debate and MSPs should take advantage of this opportunity as soon as possible.' Scottish Secretary David Mundell said that people felt very strongly about the issue and the Government understood that. 'We will bring forward an amendment to the Scotland Bill so that abortion law can be devolved to the Scottish Parliament,' he told the Scottish Affairs Committee in Westminster.

Pray: that Holyrood would honour God's laws as they consider the laws of the land. (Pr.28:4)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/abortion.law.handed.to.scottish.parliament.should.be.debated.says.christian.charity/67624.htm>

▣ Former Archbishops criticise tax credit plans

Two former Archbishops have criticised the Government's plans to reduce tax credits. Lord Carey and Lord Williams have called for a re-think of the policy, which they claim will hit the low-paid the hardest. Lord Carey said that he himself relied on Government support while bringing up his four children and knows first-hand what damage the proposed changes to tax credits could cause. He said, 'I support the aim of the Government to make work pay and put in place a reasonable cap on welfare pay. But I urge the Government to reconsider these cuts to working tax credits that will hit many hardworking families very hard.' Lord Williams said, 'They are inflicting heavy damage on hard-working families. It ought to be common sense and compassion.'

Pray: for a God-driven, compassionate Government that humbly adjusts policy if and when necessary. (Ja.1:27)

More: <http://danielbarker.mycouncillor.org.uk/2015/10/14/former-archbishops-criticise-tax-credit-plans/>

▣ British outrage over Karl Andree won't improve human rights in Saudi Arabia

The Archdeacon of the Gulf suggests that the British media outrage over a pensioner due to receive lashings in Saudi Arabia won't help advocacy work there. Karl Andree was sent to prison after breaking their laws and carrying homemade wine in his car. A further part of his punishment included 350 lashes. His family said he may not survive the lashes. His story hit the UK media and a spokeswoman for the Prime Minister said, 'We have provided consular assistance to Mr

Andree and his family and have raised the case repeatedly with the Saudis in recent weeks.' Then the PM wrote to the Saudis to raise the case again on the back of the action that had already been taken by the Foreign Office. Fr Bill said, 'One of the reasons we are not successful in advocacy in Saudi Arabia is that we cannot challenge them unless we get our facts correct. If we distort the facts or don't understand them then officials can dismiss our advocacy'.

Pray: for a greater understanding of the judicial system in Saudi Arabia in order to make sure we can stand up more effectively for the oppressed. (Ps.10:18)

More: <http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Gulf-church-leader-British-outrage-over-Karl-Andree-won-t-improve-human-rights-in-Saudi-Arabia>

■ Christian given permission to appeal tribunal ruling against her

On 5 October a senior occupational therapist who was disciplined for giving a Christian book to a Muslim colleague was granted permission to appeal an Employment Tribunal ruling against her. The judge recognised the significance of Victoria Wasteney's case in raising points of law of public importance and said that the Employment Appeal Tribunal should consider whether the original ruling had applied the European Convention on Human Rights' strong protection of freedom of religion and expression properly. Andrea Williams, Chief Executive of the Christian Legal Centre which is supporting Miss Wasteney, said, 'Victoria's case raises crucial questions about how the European Convention on Human Rights' strong protection of religious freedom applies in the UK and about the extent to which employers can censor freedom of expression.' An appeal hearing is now expected next year.

Pray: against 'political correctness' in the workplace that is stifling ordinary conversations about faith and damaging the development of healthy working relationships. (Ps.84:5,6)

More: <http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/freedom-of-speech/christian-nhs-worker-disciplined-for-giving-book-to-muslim-colleague->

EUROPE

■ Turkey: Kurds, Y.P.G. and dangerous instability

Turkey has launched waves of airstrikes against elements of a Kurdish separatist group known as the P.K.K., with its allies the Y.P.G. (who work closely with America relaying intelligence and coordinates for potential airstrike targets). The resulting strikes help Kurds seize territory along the Turkish border. Turks don't want Kurds on their border. Kurds have historically sought an independent state, which the Turkish government strongly opposes. The peace rally bombing has come just weeks away from a re-run of an inconclusive general election. For so long a beacon of stability between Europe and the Middle East, Turkey is fighting Kurdish militants in the east and struggling against violence from Syria. Until now most violence in Turkey took place in the Kurdish areas, but twin bombing at a peace rally close to government and intelligence buildings in the heart of Ankara has caused even Turks to be afraid of shopping centres and open spaces. The residents of Turkey just want a normal life. See also: http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/08/12/world/middleeast/turkey-kurds-isis.html?_r=0

Pray: and ask God to take control of the tangle of diverging interests in the region and pray that the current situation will not further unsettle Turkey's political stability. (Jer.29:11)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-34503388>

■ Albania, Southeast Europe

Not long ago, Albania was one of Europe's poorest nations. Now the state boasts an upper-middle income economy. Under Communist rule, no religion was allowed. Now, Islam claims twice as many followers as Christianity, though most who claim Christianity are reported to be nominal. The country has no restrictions on proselytism and no persecution threatens the Church. However, neo-paganism is growing in Albania and the Church needs to be equipped to respond in a relevant way. Albania is currently the most corrupt country in Europe and we are asked to pray that Albanian leaders would repent of their ways and seek God according to 2Cor.4:2 – Renouncing underhand ways and refusing to practise cunning.

Pray: that many searching for spiritual expression and fulfilment will encounter the Living God (Gal.5:19-21)

More: <http://www.1040windowreporter.com/#!/day-14/clpo>

WORLDWIDE

■ Israel: Fear is dividing Jerusalem

The Temple Mount has become a focus of friction between Israelis and Palestinians. Fear is dividing Jerusalem as Jews and Arabs lose their sense of security to a severe degree unseen since the second intifada. Violence is escalating, some are calling it another intifada. The last intifada damaged Jerusalem's economy and social structure to an extent from which some say the city has never recovered. A Christian in Jerusalem asks for the following prayers. –'For God's protection over every community; for the Palestinian press, reporting wildly exaggerated and untruthful stories; for the few politicians (on both sides) who are using the unrest for personal political purposes; that God will discredit leaders (religious, political and others) who advocate solving this conflict with violence; that the Israeli army and police will act with wisdom and Palestinian and Israeli officials will co-operate to bring an end to the tension.' On a positive note, Prophecy Today UK reports, 'Prime Minister Netanyahu is a convinced Bible believer and a survey reveals that 95% of Israelis have a Bible in their homes'. See: http://www.prophecytoday.uk/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=206:the-god-of-truth-is-active-in-the-middle-east&Itemid=150&Itemid=101

Pray: that God through his Spirit of Holiness will bring reconciliation and healing to Jews and Arabs. (Ps.86:11)

More: <http://www.cmj-israel.org/DNN>

■ Indonesia: Muslim extremists torch a church

Muslim extremists in Aceh province fulfilled a threat against Christians and burned down an Indonesian Christian church. Their pastor and congregation are greatly affected and asking people to support persecuted Christians there and to pray for

this church.' The arson followed a social media campaign by Muslim extremists and radical imams. The most dangerous time in the week for Christians is Friday afternoon after the mosque is vacated after prayers and extremists who have listened to messages preaching hate towards Christians, Jews and others come out fired up. Last month hundreds of extremists marched to the police and legislative offices demanding the closure of all churches. Every church member is guarding their own church right now. We are asked to pray that there won't be more church demolitions.'

Pray: that the police take firm actions to stop this violence; also for Christians to respond with love and wisdom in the most hostile place for Indonesian Christians to live. (Mat.5:44)

More: <https://www.mnnonline.org/news/muslim-extremists-torch-church-in-indonesia/>

▣ Canada: National election

A Canadian intercessor writes, 'On Monday, 19 October, Canada has a Federal Election which will determine who rules in Canada over the next five years. The three main parties are equally split and could result in a minority government or a coalition. The current PM is unpopular in the media. The Conservatives under Harper are the only party of substance that is not in favour of abortion, doctor-assisted suicide and the legalisation of marijuana. The Liberal leader will not permit a liberal candidate to be pro-life. Canada has been very supportive of Israel through Harper which would change drastically with any other party. At the moment the most likely result would be a minority government, not the most effective as they can be voted down at any moment by the majority. But let God arise!! Please pray for God's mercy on Canada. Thank you for your fellowship in prayer.'

Pray: for God in His mercy to provide Canada with a government that stands on Christian values. (Job 8:5,6)

More: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_in_the_Canadian_federal_election,_2015t.

▣ America: 'Battle for the soul of America'

This coming weekend more than 160 leaders of prayer ministries and networks across the USA will gather in Colorado Springs for a prayer initiative on national security, 'Seeking God's Face for the Deliverance and Destiny of America'. It will be a time of all-out intercession for the nation that seems to have lost its course in so many ways due to increasing social wickedness coupled with weak and corrupt government leadership. It is time to pray! One prayer leader wrote to say he sensed that it would be a 'battle for the soul of America'. This initiative is preceded by the National Day of Prayer Leadership Summit, at the same place. Many of their co-ordinators and other intercessors from around the country will gather. The two events are in tandem and the intercessors' prayer is that the Lord will bring greater unity to the prayer movement by all of them being in His presence together.

Pray: for a powerful and wonderful time in which personal agendas give way to His agenda for these gatherings and for the nation (Ps.2:8)

More: <http://www.worldprayer.org.uk/ipc-connections/item/7076-seeking-god-s-face-for-deliverance-and-destiny-of-america>

▣ Australia: Dangerous detention centres for child refugees

Detention centres were set up on Christmas Island, Manus Island and Nauru Island for processing asylum seekers from Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, China and Vietnam. A recent report revealed that suicide attempts and hunger strikes were common, and children were vulnerable to mental health episodes and growing more depressed the longer they were held. (Source: International Health and Medical Services). Children suffer especially acutely, from bed wetting, nightmares, ongoing effects of trauma and torture in previous countries, as well as 'situational crisis' from their current detention. On 15 October there was a renewed call for a guardian for children in immigration detention by two of the country's top welfare and overseas aid groups, saying the Australian Immigration Minister, Peter Dutton, has failed in his duty of care. Earlier this week, thousands of doctors at Melbourne's Royal Children's Hospital refused to discharge asylum-seeking children back into the care of immigration detention centre operators. See also: <http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/sep/17/extended-detention-worsening-depression-on-nauru-and-manus-island>

Pray: for the Australian Council for International Development to serve the needs of the children. (Lk.22:26)

More: <http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2015/10/15/renewed-call-guardian-children-immigration-detention>

▣ Cameroon: Obama sends 300 troops and drones to battle Boko Haram

The United States is sending 300 troops along with surveillance drones to Cameroon to bolster a West African effort to counter the Nigerian militant Islamist group, Boko Haram. An advance force of 90 military personnel began deploying to Cameroon on Monday with the consent of the Yaounde government. The troops will conduct airborne intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance operations in the region. US officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the troops would provide intelligence to a multi-national task force composed of troops from Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, Chad and Benin. On Sunday, two female suicide bombers killed nine people in Cameroon's Far North region, employing a tactic increasingly favoured by Boko Haram. US soldiers would deploy initially to northern Cameroon, near the Nigerian border.

Pray: that the Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, Chad and Benin armies will remove terror from the region. (Is.32:18)

More: <http://tribuneonlineeng.com/node/19698>

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE WORLD PRAYER CENTRE, BIRMINGHAM, UK

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