

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

■ Japan ministries

Many dedicated men and women are serving with hearts of compassion and love for the Japanese people. The following are just two stories. The Burnses are working in Nagoya, the largest city in Aichi Prefecture which is about five hours from Tokyo. The vision is to see a church near each school / university campus; their focus is reaching students. Together with other team members they identify and train future leaders of the Japanese Church in co-operation with Christ Bible Institute, a seminary in Nagoya. They and other mission workers in Japan are expecting an even greater harvest in years to come. The Fongs are missionaries to the greater Tokyo metropolitan area. Their particular interest is to help churches develop ministries that encourage and equip Christian returnees, those Japanese students who accept Christ overseas and want to share the gospel at home in Japan.

Praise: God for His workers who have the vision of a great Japanese harvest. (Is.2:2)

More: <http://jems.org/missions/japan/japan-missionaries.php>

■ Jesus visits a Buddhist monastery

After asking the Holy Spirit to direct their path, missionaries in the Himalayas visited some ancient ruins and found a monastery. They were made welcome. 'We are followers of Jesus, the man and God greater than any other god,' Tyler told the monk. 'I once heard of Jesus in India, but wasn't able to do any reading on who He was,' the monk replied. 'Can we introduce you to Him through the power of the Holy Spirit and the presence of Jesus?' Tyler asked. The monk said yes and put out his hands. Tyler recounts, 'Suddenly the power and peace of God descended, his eyes got big, he began to take steps back and began to laugh and shake his head in disbelief. He said he'd never felt a peace or power like this. We proceeded to preach the Gospel and gave him a Bible. He INSISTED we return in the morning to meet the other monks.' The story gets even better: click the 'more' link.

Praise: God for His peace and a power that changes lives everywhere. (Is.2:3a)

More: <http://www.godreports.com/ministry-updateview/1794>

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ British religious illiteracy

The BBC's head of religion and ethics claims the British public has such poor religious literacy that a modern audience would be baffled by the Monty Python film Life of Brian because it would not understand the Biblical references. Aaqil Ahmed said that failings in religious education over two generations were undermining public understanding of

contemporary national and international issues. Generations have missed out and we have to do something about poor religious literacy in this country. He was speaking at the launch of an ambitious three-part BBC2 series which will address the subject of pilgrimage from a broad perspective and is intended to attract the interest of atheists as much as religious believers. He also claimed that comedians tend to tackle religion in very general terms, not taking on specific Bible stories any more because no one knows them. Pray for the screening next month of Pilgrimage with Simon Reeve. May it open hearts and minds.

Pray: for Christian values and faith to return to the public sphere. (Dt.4:9)

More: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/media/tv-radio/it-s-no-laughing-matter-britain-has-become-a-nation-of-religious-illiterates-who-are-baffled-by-8890338.html>

▣ London City Mission

With fewer than 10% of Londoners going to church, the people of London are in desperate need of the gospel. London City Mission share Jesus patiently and sensitively and are committed to long-term work, supporting people to come to faith and follow Jesus. The workers know that without God they can do nothing. Prayer has been at the heart of London City Mission ever since it was founded in 1835, and today prayer is still at the centre of what they do. They want and need more people to be praying for London, its people and City Mission work. They have put together a quarterly prayer guide, and invite their brothers and sisters in Christ to pray with them and for them as they walk the streets, meet the people, and learn about the challenges they face. A prayer guide covering October 2015 - January 2016 is at <https://www.lcm.org.uk/get-involved/pray>

Pray: for prayerful wisdom for all who connect with communities mid-week and on Sundays. (Jas.1:5)

More: <https://www.lcm.org.uk/>

▣ Nuns who inspired Call the Midwife forced to sell convent

The nuns who inspired the hit television show Call the Midwife are being forced to sell their convent because they can no longer afford the upkeep. The Community of St John the Divine, in Birmingham, was the BBC's template for characters in the programme, which follows a group of nuns delivering babies in post-war London. Faced with a bill of around £17,500 to fix a leaking roof and chimney they have no choice; they just don't have the money for repairs. The convent includes twenty bedrooms and a chapel and is valued between £800,000 and £900,000. The nuns want to sell to another religious group, and do not wish to see the building demolished and the land used for development. Enough money must be raised through the sale to allow the sisters to buy a new home. Currently the group survives on pensions, donations and the small returns on a few longstanding investments.

Pray: for God to arrange a divine appointment between the sisters and a Christian organisation needing accommodation. (Mt.7:7)

More: <http://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2015/nov/03/sisters-inspired-call-the-midwife-call-it-a-day-nunnery>

▣ Theresa May's investigatory powers bill

A draft investigatory powers bill unveiled by Theresa May on Wednesday will give new surveillance powers to police and security services, allowing them to track every UK citizen's use of the internet without any judicial check. The draft bill will require internet and phone companies to keep internet connection records (tracking the websites visited) for a maximum of 12 months; the police, security services or other bodies will not require a warrant to access this data. Local authorities will be banned from accessing internet records. The bill will also introduce a 'double-lock' on the ministerial approval of interception warrants, with seven judicial commissioners given a veto before they can come into force. It aims to provide an overhaul of Britain's fragmented surveillance laws and comes two and a half years after disclosures by Edward Snowden of the scale of secret mass surveillance of global traffic in confidential personal data.

Pray: for God to prompt all Britain's authorities to make prudent decisions as they seek to combat terrorism at home and abroad. (Job 12:13)

More: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/04/theresa-may-surveillance-measures-edward-snowden>

▣ Stranded UK tourists in Egypt while UK welcome Egypt's president

Empty passenger planes will be flown to Sharm el-Sheikh in the coming days to bring home thousands of UK tourists stranded after the Government cancelled all flights between Britain and Egypt because of security concerns that a bomb may have brought down a Russian airliner that left Sharm on Saturday, killing 224 people. On Wednesday hundreds gathered outside Downing Street protesting against Egyptian president Abdel Fattah al-Sisi's visit to the UK to boost the countries' ties; however, the agenda is expected to change now. A spokesman for Amnesty International said, 'President Sisi is ruling with an iron fist. We are not saying that he should not come to London - diplomacy means talking to everyone - but leadership means not letting the other guy tell you what to do in your own house. Cameron must use the visit to raise human rights concerns.'

Pray: for David Cameron to voice widely-held concerns for an improved Egyptian democracy. (Pr.1:20)

More: <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/hundreds-protest-david-camerons-welcome-egypts-president-sisi-uk-1527316>

▣ The Living Wage: a Christian idea that's changing the world

One of the most exciting, widely supported and quickly growing social justice campaigns will be celebrated this week. It's an idea which didn't spring from politicians, thinktanks or focus groups. It came from churches where ordinary Christians teamed up with their friends of other faiths and none to bring major change. The Living Wage campaign began in churches and other civil society institutions fifteen years ago. But the idea itself is much older and comes from Christian theology. The idea of a living wage was first raised in a Papal encyclical in 1891. This week the new Living Wage figures will be announced and more than 1,500 employers who are accredited as Living Wage employers will respond accordingly and adjust their employees' pay. Many would like to see the Living Wage become compulsory across the nation, reducing the welfare bill as fewer people rely on tax credits to top up salaries.

Pray: for a 'National Living Wage' that meets the cost to actually live, and for assistance for the small businesses struggling to pay a Living Wage. (Ps.15:5)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/the.living.wage.a.christian.idea.thats.changing.the.world/69171.htm>

■ Northern Ireland high-security prison unsafe

Inspectors say Northern Ireland's high security Maghaberry Prison is unsafe and unstable for prisoners and staff. The inspectors who visited the prison in May found it in a state of crisis, according to an extremely critical report released on Thursday. The report said there were significant failures in leadership. It was published jointly by Brendan McGuigan, Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice NI, and Nick Hardwick, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons in England and Wales. Mr Hardwick said that visiting the prison was 'like stepping back in time' and said Charles Dickens could write about Maghaberry without batting an eyelid. He added that the prison was the most dangerous he had ever been in, and a 'very worrying and disturbing public institution'.

Pray: for prisoners, particularly the most vulnerable, to be held safely, and for all recommendations to be achieved quickly. Pray also for Christian prison visitors and the staff at this time. (Mt.25:36)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-34733832>

EUROPE

■ European churches remove crosses for Muslim refugees' benefit

Some churches in Europe are taking drastic steps to accommodate Muslim refugees, with some going as far as taking down altars and crosses. A Protestant church in Oberhausen, Germany has removed altars, pulpits, and crucifixes to make Muslim migrants feel at home. In addition, the church provides washing machines and gives free meals, exercising charity and goodwill. Another religious establishment that had earlier removed crucifixes is led by the Bishop of Stockholm, Eva Brunne. She explained to her congregation the importance of showing 'hospitality and tolerance' to others even if they have a different religion. She also said they did it to open the church to Muslim worshippers.

Pray: for the European Church not to be ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, nor dilute the word of God for political correctness. (Ro.1:16)

More: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/some-christian-churches-in-europe-are-taking-down-altars-and-crosses-for-muslim-refugees-benefit-149034/>

■ Romania: thousands demonstrate, Prime Minister quits

On Tuesday anger and grief spurred on twenty thousand chanting demonstrators in Bucharest demanding cabinet resignations as the death toll from a nightclub fire last weekend reached 32, with 130 in hospital in a critical or serious condition. They accused the authorities of corruption in the way they grant permits and inspect public venues. For decades Romanian authorities have fought widespread corruption. The president's brother is accused of taking a €250,000 bribe from a Romanian criminal gang. In return he is alleged to have tried to influence the court investigating the gang. Prime Minister Victor Ponta, already facing trial for corruption, stepped down on Wednesday as a result of the previous day's 'outrage revolt'. It was a surprise move that will probably produce a new cabinet led by a technocrat and might lead to a political realignment. See: <http://www.euronews.com/2015/11/03/thousands-in-bucharest-blame-corruption-for-friday-s-nightclub-blaze/>

Pray: for the national anti-corruption directorate to successfully investigate and eradicate corruption at every level in Romania; for wisdom as they select the next prime minister. (Pr.19:1, 3)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-34720183>

WORLDWIDE

■ Israel: youth leaders face new challenges

Young people experience many physical and emotional changes in this period of their lives as they seek to express themselves, be independent, and make their voices heard. In the Israel/Palestine violence recently we have seen them express themselves with knives, flags, racial slurs, riots, and marches. Youth in the Middle East receive many conflicting messages as they connect with Western secularism, their traditional upbringing, and political-religious ideology. Family structure is breaking down, youth respect their elders less and less, and the difficult economic situation they face often leads them to despair. Fear that their identity is being undermined or threatened can transform this despair into violence as an outlet to express their feelings. Pray for youth leaders working with this volatile age group. Pray particularly for a weekend conference on 13-14 November in Haifa, where delegates will discuss how to be a successful and effective youth leader.

Pray: for young people to address changes and frustration from a Biblical perspective. (1 Cor.13:6)

More: <https://www.musalaha.org/articles/youth-leaders-face-new-challenges/>

■ Turkey's election result - democracy or autocracy?

Turkey's president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, staged a political comeback in Sunday's general election, when his Islamist-rooted AKP party won a majority. Mr. Erdogan's success came after months of turbulence, and he argued that only a single-party majority government could deal with Turkey's problems. What was at stake in these elections was whether Turkey would emerge from them closer to a western-style democracy or a central Asian-style autocracy, under which freedoms and rights would be disrespected and the judiciary and the media be subordinated to power. Many fear that if the AKP decide that the election victory gives a free hand for breaches of constitution (crushing dissent, suffocating journalism, pursuing a disputed presidential system, suppressing Kurdish demands for devolution and zigzagging on the Syrian crisis), then we should expect an even more rapid slide to autocracy.

Pray: that President Erdogan's tightened grip on power will improve both ethnic and religious divisions, and that he will resist all temptation to be a repressive leader. (Is.19: 19)

More: <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/nov/01/turkey-election-choice-democracy-autocracy-erdogan>

■ **Iraq: Islamic State activity awakens Muslims to Islam**

Thousands of Yazidi fighters are joining forces with the Kurds to take on Islamic State. According to CNN, 5,000 Yazidi fighters are undergirding an imminent Kurdish offensive that's preparing to retake Sinjar in Nineveh Province - a symbolic and strategic prize on the main highway linking Mosul and Raqqa (Islamic State's bastions in Iraq and Syria). Shortly after declaring itself a caliphate, IS began taking major cities throughout Iraq. Iraqi and Kurdish forces have been battling to take back control and territory ever since. The battle for Iraq is more than defeating IS. Muslims around the world are coming to realise what their faith truly believes. National ministry leaders told Christian Aid Mission that Christian workers in northern Iraq can barely keep up with residents' desire to learn about Christ and the Bible. Kurdish Muslims are asking local believers about God and Truth, and are eager to learn what God's Word says.

Pray: that believers will continue in obedience and faithfulness to Christ, despite IS threats. Pray for adequate funding to support indigenous missionaries. (Jn.8:32)

More: <https://www.mnnonline.org/news/islamic-state-activity-awakens-muslims-to-islam/>

■ **Uganda: Christian woman murdered for sharing her faith**

Mamwikomba Mwanika, a mother of eight children, was beaten to death by a mob of Muslims because she and her family had not heeded their warning to stop preaching the gospel. Her brother-in-law was killed last month for the same reason. Last week she opened the door of her home to Muslims demanding to see her husband because he followed the religion of his brother. Mwanika's husband, George, was not there. This angered the mob, and they dragged her outside as she screamed and cried for help. She was later found in a pool of blood by her husband and neighbours, and she died on the way to hospital. The attackers are still looking for George. Ugandan authorities warn of a growing threat of Islamist extremism in reaction to Uganda's military involvement against al-Shabaab in Somalia. Attacks and killings of converts are not uncommon in the eastern region.

Pray: for George and his eight children to know God's peace, protection and courage. (Ps.12:5)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/christian.woman.murdered.for.sharing.her.faith.in.uganda/69174.htm>

■ **United Nations: global goals to end poverty and injustice**

The Global Goals for Sustainable Development, officially adopted by UN members in September 2015, set an agenda to achieve three extraordinary things in the next fifteen years: end extreme poverty, fight inequality & injustice; and fix climate change. Praise God that following a global campaign by the International Justice Mission over the last eighteen months and your prayers, the final goals include Goal 16, with targets on reducing violence; ending abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against children; ensuring access to justice for all; legal identity for all; and strengthening national institutions to build capacity at all levels. See http://prayer-alert.net/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=4758:un-s-new-development-goals&Itemid=168

Pray: for effective implementation of Goal 16, which will protect the poor from violence and achieve justice for survivors, and for all partnerships that need to develop and deliver action. (Is.1:17)

More: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>

■ **Democratic Republic of Congo: child soldiers**

It has been estimated that one in ten child soldiers in the world can be found in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The UN believes that 15-30% of all newly-recruited combatants in the DRC army are under eighteen. One reason both the army and the rebels use child soldiers is that the enemy cannot find it in themselves to kill children. Therefore, the number of recruits remains high as fewer of them are lost in battle. Child soldiers are forced to commit atrocious acts of murder which mentally scar them for life. Amnesty International reports that, as a 15-year-old soldier, 'Kalami' was made to 'kill a family, to cut up their bodies and eat them'. He goes on to say 'my life is lost. I have nothing to live for'. Female child soldiers are frequently used as sexual slaves by the commanders. The DRC has ratified many international treaties to protect the rights of children, but these have proved little more than public relations exercises.

Pray: for safety and protection of vulnerable street children and lone orphans who are easily recruited by the army as they have no family, no hope and nothing to lose. (Ps.12:7)

More: <http://www.child-soldier.org/child-soldiers-in-drc>

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE WORLD PRAYER CENTRE, BIRMINGHAM, UK

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