

# 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

### ■ Disfigured, disheartened - then he turned on his radio

Bharat held a good government job in India and lived a comfortable life. Then ugly white patches spread across his body. All his savings went on unsuccessful treatments. He lost his job and became bitter. The future looked bleak, he lost hope and quarrelled and fought with everyone. Then someone gave him a Trans World Radio programme guide and suggested he listen to The Word Today programme in his language. The man also prayed with him. Through the programme Bharat moved closer to Jesus Christ and pondered daily on what he had heard. His life changed, he had hope, he refrained from alcohol and stopped quarrelling with others. He said, 'Peace trickled into my life and the lives of my family members. When prayers were said on the radio, our family prayed along. Now my whole family believes in the Lord Jesus Christ and have accepted him as our Saviour.' God also removed 90% of the patches on his body.

**Praise:** God for Christian radio and the limitless waves of Godly messages circulating our globe. (Gen.18:14a)

**More:** <http://www.twr.org.uk/news/disfigured-and-disheartened-he-turned-on-his-radio/>

### ■ Finding new life in Croatia

Croatia typically makes headlines these days because of the 460,000 refugees that have passed through it to reach safe havens like Germany. Cold weather and stricter border controls are slowing down the mass movement of peoples, but refugees are still undeterred. Today, though, there is a different movement of people that is saving lives. It began last year when God put it on a woman's heart to create a life giving ministry in Croatia. With prayer support and training from crisis pregnancy centres in neighbouring countries, she began 'Choose Life Ministry'. Now desperate women learn about Christ's forgiveness and redemption, find hope and new life in a crisis moment, and hear about the life-giving message of Jesus Christ as they choose life for their children and hope for their future.

**Praise:** God for lives saved, for we know that God has a destiny and a purpose for each life. (Job 5:8,9)

**More:** <https://www.mnnonline.org/news/finding-new-life-in-croatia/>

## BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

### ■ David Cameron and IS funding

Former Lib Dem leader Paddy Ashdown suggests David Cameron has failed to exert pressure on Saudi Arabia and Qatar to stop 'rich businessmen' from funding jihadists because of the 'closeness' between the Tories and wealthy Arabs. Speaking on the Radio 4 Today programme, he said there was a failure by the government to put pressure on Saudi and

Qatar to stop funding the Salafists and the Wahhabists and also to remind them they need to play a larger military part in this campaign against Daesh. The last Saudi plane seen flying as part of the coalition over Syria was three months ago; the last Qatari plane was nearly a year ago. He also said, 'The Government has refused to have a proper inquiry into the funding of jihadism in Britain; this leads me to worry about the closeness between the Conservative Party and rich Arab Gulf individuals'. See also this week's Prayer Alert World article no 1.

**Pray:** for governments to unite to stem the flow of resources into Islamic terrorist groups, and for Christians in Parliament to be powerfully used by God at times of decision-making. (1Pt.5:7)

**More:** <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/david-cameron-accused-of-failing-to-pressure-gulf-states-over-isis-funding-due-to-tory-links-to-a6746686.html>

#### ■ Damascus comments on UK air strikes on Syria

Thursday's Damascus newspapers criticised the West's engagement in Syria. 'Britain didn't ask permission from Syria's government,' declares the state news agency SANA. 'Cameron told lies,' it says. Syrian officials insist Britain and its allies must follow Russia's example and co-ordinate their campaign with Syrian government forces. If they don't, they warn, they simply won't succeed. The deadlock over President al-Assad's future role will continue to block the formation of a unified command against a common enemy. It will also stand in the way of Britain's pledge that it will now also focus on finding a negotiated way out of this war. Syrian activists and opposition groups feel bitterly let down that the West did not give them this kind of military support to help remove Assad. Many Syrians, exhausted by war, want to believe Britain's promise that it is stepping up the fight to 'win the peace' - as hard as that is.

**Pray:** that the RAF operations against IS in Iraq and Syria will not be wasted. (Php.4:6)

**More:** <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-34992032>

#### ■ Woman loses court battle in gender abortion case

A woman has lost her legal challenge to bring charges against two doctors accused of agreeing to perform abortions based on the sex of unborn baby girls. Aisling Hubert, a pro-life campaigner from Brighton, accused the Director of Public Prosecutions of making 'politically motivated' rather than 'legally based' decisions. Sitting in London, Lord Justice Burnett and Mr Justice Irwin refused Ms Hubert permission to seek a judicial review; they will give their full reasons at a later date. The case centred on the actions of two doctors facing the first-ever private prosecution on gender abortion charges after an undercover newspaper investigation filmed them agreeing to arrange terminations because of the gender of the foetus. Ms Hubert now faces a legal bill of over £22,000. Her barrister said, 'The desire to choose whether people have boys or girls is creating problems and raising important issues which should be addressed by the courts.'

**Pray:** against sex-selective terminations ever becoming legal in the United Kingdom. (Gen.1:28)

**More:** <http://www.irishnews.com/news/2015/12/02/news/woman-loses-court-battle-in-gender-abortion-case-340374/>

#### ■ Northern Ireland: abortion law incompatible with human rights

This week, the Belfast High Court ruled that Northern Ireland's abortion law is incompatible with human rights. By not allowing for exceptions where the child has a 'fatal foetal abnormality' (FFA), or where the pregnancy is the result of rape or incest, the current law breaches the European Convention on Human Rights. Under Northern Ireland's existing legal framework, abortion is permitted when the mother's life is endangered by the pregnancy. Earlier this year, the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission applied for a judicial review of the legislation. In his ruling on the case, the judge said that it was 'illegitimate and disproportionate' to ban abortion of unborn children with a FFA as they are 'incapable of existence independent of the mother's womb'. He also said that not allowing a victim of rape or incest to abort 'completely ignores the personal circumstances of the mother'.

**Pray:** for pro-life organisations as they advocate for the rights of the unborn child. (Ps.127:3)

**More:** <http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/abortion/northern-ireland-abortion-law-breaches-human-rights-court-rules>

#### ■ Archbishop of York begins walking pilgrimage

Dr John Sentamu began a six-month walking pilgrimage of his deaneries in the north-east of England on Tuesday with morning prayers at St Mary's Church in Whitby, which hosted the Whitby Synod in AD 664, uniting Roman and Celtic branches of Christianity. He will spend six days in each of his 21 deaneries, walking 'considerable distances' between them. He said, 'My prayers have led me to this pilgrimage. St Paulinus, St Aidan, St Cuthbert and St Hilda of Whitby in their time shared the good news of Jesus Christ with the people of the North. Praying for those who come to know Christ is a great privilege and a joy. During this pilgrimage, I would like to encourage everyone I meet to commit themselves afresh to try praying, be open to encountering Jesus Christ, pray for a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and receive the gift of the joy provided by Jesus Christ - and be thankful.'

**Pray:** for the Archbishop, and the many who will pray with him, to have fresh encounters with Almighty God. (1Th.5:16,18)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/archbishop.of.york.begins.6.month.walking.pilgrimage.of.north.east/72327.htm>

#### ■ Compulsory sex education in schools

Campaigners are again pushing for sex and relationships education (SRE) to be made compulsory in all English schools. Currently local authority-maintained schools in England are obliged to teach SRE from age 11 upwards, and must have regard to the Government's SRE guidance. Academies and free schools, the majority in secondary education in England, do not have to follow the National Curriculum and so are not under this obligation. But if they do decide to teach SRE, they must also have regard to the guidance. Parents are free to withdraw their children from SRE if they wish to do so. The only exceptions to this are the biological aspects of human growth and reproduction, which are essential elements of National Curriculum Science. But this could change if government-funded campaigners have their way. Private members' bills have been tabled to introduce compulsory SRE. There have also been calls from across parties for the Government's SRE guidance to be updated to equip teachers more effectively.

**Pray:** for Edward Timpson MP and all in the government who are working with leading head teachers on future material that teachers would be required to teach. (Is.37:14b, 15a)

**More:** <http://www.cmfblog.org.uk/2015/11/19/why-is-the-government-giving-preferential-treatment-to-those-backing-compulsory-sex-education-in-schools/>

#### ■ Northern Ireland: gay marriage ban challenged

A legal challenge to Northern Ireland's ban on gay marriage opened on Thursday. The landmark challenge has been launched by two couples - Grainne Close and Shannon Sickles, and Chris and Henry Flanagan-Kanem. They have been granted permission for a judicial review of the Stormont Assembly's repeated refusal to legislate for same-sex marriage. They were the first and second couples, respectively, to enter into a civil partnership in the UK after Northern Ireland made that option available in late 2005. Northern Ireland is now the only part of the British Isles which does not allow gay marriage, following the Republic of Ireland's 'yes' vote in May.

**Pray:** against any change to the current legislation, in spite of all the pressure. (Mark 10:6)

**More:** <https://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Legal-challenge-on-gay-marriage-ban-in-Northern-Ireland>

## EUROPE

#### ■ Russia accuses Erdogan of buying oil from IS

Russia's deputy defence minister, Anatoly Antonov, has accused the family of Turkish President Erdogan of being directly involved in the trade of oil with IS. Mr. Antonov said Turkey was the biggest buyer of 'stolen' oil from Syria and Iraq. Mr Erdogan said Russia had no right to 'slander' Turkey. The Syrian conflict has given rise to an extensive war economy in which murky deals are struck between a host of partners, even including groups that are fighting each other on the battlefield (see also this week's Prayer Alert World article no 1). 'It is not possible to explain Russia's allegations by reason,' said Turkish prime minister Ahmet Davutoglu, rejecting Russia's claims at a meeting of businessmen in Ankara. US officials have previously said they have information suggesting Turkish 'middlemen' are involved in the illegal IS oil trade.

**Pray:** for God to prepare the way for the Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov and his Turkish counterpart Mevlut Cavusoglu to agree to meet, discuss the current tensions and defuse the situation. (Ps.37:5)

**More:** <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-34982951>

#### ■ Brussels: Christians 'the most persecuted'

In a high-level meeting on religious persecution in Brussels, the President of the European Parliament (EP) said that Europe cannot afford to continue ignoring the fate of Christians, who are clearly the most persecuted group in the world. EP President Martin Schulz said that the persecution of Christians is 'undervalued' and does not receive enough attention, which also means that it has not been properly addressed. For Islamists, Christians are the new 'crusaders' of Europe. Because of Islamic persecution in the Middle East, more than 70% of Christians have fled from Iraq since 2003, and a further 700,000 Christians have been forced to leave their homes in Syria since the outbreak of civil war.

**Pray:** that corrupted religion would be confronted and overcome by radical Christianity. (Rev.16:7)

**More:** <http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2015/12/03/european-parliament-president-christians-not-safe-europe/>

## WORLDWIDE

#### ■ IS sources of cash

Weapons, vehicles, employee salaries, propaganda videos, international travel - all cost money. IS's methods of financing are difficult to shut down. Terrorists use their control over a territory the size of the UK to develop revenue channels. The oil fields captured in Syria and Iraq fund the group through a black market oil trade flourishing along the porous borders of IS-controlled land. It is believed some traders have even sold oil from terrorists back to Bashar al-Assad's regime. Because terrorists control an expansive territory, they can levy taxes on the people living there. Some of these taxes are more like extortion. The group is heavily diversified: if one funding source is shut down, they turn to others to generate revenue. A steady flow of money to IS from rich individuals in the Gulf continues, with Qataris the biggest suppliers. See <http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/isis-terror/whos-funding-isis-wealthy-gulf-angel-investors-officials-say-n208006>

**Pray:** for countries to work together and cut off the 'fourth front' cash flow in the war against IS. (Hos.9:9)

**More:** <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/world/wp/2015/11/18/how-isis-makes-its-money/>

#### ■ USA: Christians are tired of being called the bad guys

Powerful advocates are trying to write protections into the law for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. Those advocates are battling against conservative Christians who are staunch in their beliefs of right and wrong; they wonder why anyone would deny others their rights. But some Christians say they're tired of being made into the bad guys. They're tired of being called the bigots and haters. They feel that the bigotry, hatred and discrimination is actually against them and they are being bullied, as the cultural tide seems to be moving away from hard-and-fast biblical prohibitions. They believe the government is abandoning them. Once at the core of American politics, some evangelical Christians feel increasingly relegated to the fringe, betrayed by their own conservative lawmakers as their cultural dominance is usurped by a smaller group wielding the heft of the media and corporations.

**Pray:** that LGBT rights will not threaten the rights of Christian expression in the public sphere and the Christian roots in American legislations and laws. (Gal.6:8)

**More:** <http://www.christianheadlines.com/news/bigotry-hatred-christians-say-they-re-tired-of-being-made-into-the-bad-guys.html>

#### ■ Burundi: lives on the line

Fearful of being recruited into the Imbonerakure (the violence-prone youth wing of the ruling party who are fighting anti-government forces), many Burundian children run away and become refugees in Tanzania. There have been seven months of crisis, sparked by President Pierre Nkurunziza's controversial decision to run for a third term. Since then 240,000 people have become refugees; thousands are unaccompanied minors. The journey is dangerous, walking for days through forests. Children who travel on their own fear danger from both armed people and other refugees who try to pass them off as their own children so that they can get better housing in the refugee camps. Violence continues, and the threat of civil war looms in a country full of poverty, beauty and potential. Often referred to as 'the Switzerland of Africa', Burundi is covered by mountains and bush and is bordered by Lake Tanganyika. See also: <http://www.greatlakesoutreach.org/burundi-page>

**Pray:** for the 240,000 refugees who have fled political violence. Pray for those who remain and struggle to make a living in the midst of fear. Pray for NGOs bringing hope and support. (Is.24:23,24a)

**More:** <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2015/11/unaccompanied-child-refugees-flee-burundi-151130084231030.html>

#### ■ Iran: Christian prisoner denied medical treatment

Maryam Naghash Zargaran has been in Elvin prison for nearly three years. She had heart surgery before her incarceration, now difficult prison conditions have caused her health to deteriorate further. She had another heart attack, and requires regular medical appointments. She was given medical leave on 27 October, but had to halt her treatment when Tehran's Attorney General refused to extend her leave permit. The 36-year-old Christian convert from Islam was arrested in February 2011 for converting to Christianity, being a member of a house church, establishing a house church, bringing young people to faith in Christ, contacting foreign ministries to carry out evangelism in Iran, and travelling to Turkey to attend Christian conferences. She was sentenced to four years on 9 March 2013. Also, please pray for fourteen other Iranian Christians who were arrested recently. Their families have no information as to their whereabouts.

**Pray:** for the many incarcerated Iranian Christians to have God's healing, peace and strength. (Jas.5:16b)

**More:** <https://barnabasfund.org/news/Christian-prisoner-in-Iran-sent-back-to-prison-during-medical-treatment-and-whereabouts-of-14-Iranian-believers-unknown-after-police-arrests>

#### ■ Venezuela: parliamentary elections on Sunday

It has been over two years since president Hugo Chavez died, giving way to an 'economic war' on the Venezuelan people. Violence from the opposition has led to Venezuela looking more and more like a powder keg. Demonstrations have wracked the country. A government prosecutor fled Venezuela in October, claiming that the state had pressured him to falsify evidence against the top opposition leader. Last week the secretary of the opposition Democratic Action Party was gunned down. Sunday's elections of new national assembly legislators are critical for the people. President Nicolás Maduro said that whatever the outcome, he will not stand down and will continue to govern in a civil-military union. There is public anger with an economic crisis caused by dysfunctional controls, plunging oil prices, high inflation, and widespread product shortages of everything from shampoo to rice. The government campaign has warned that the opposition will dismantle popular Chavez-era welfare policies, while the opposition has been lambasting the government's economic incompetence and corruption. See also

<http://www.cnbc.com/2015/11/30/venezuela-on-edge-ahead-of-parliamentary-elections.html>

**Pray:** that the competitive elections result will not ignite an even larger powder keg of violence. (Ps.5:8)

**More:** <http://news.yahoo.com/venezuelan-presidents-popularity-bounces-election-031117918.html>

#### ■ North Korea: digging a new nuclear-test tunnel

Satellite photos show images dating from October and early November of the addition of a fourth tunnel at test site Punggye-ri, on North Korea's east coast. The new tunnel is under mountains where North Korea conducts nuclear tests, and the images showed significant construction since April. While there are no indications that a nuclear test is imminent, the new tunnel adds to North Korea's ability to conduct additional detonations at Punggye-ri over the coming years if it chooses to do so. South Korea's Yonhap news agency quoted a South Korean government source as saying there was active movement of workers and vehicles working on a new tunnel at the site; this indicated an intention to conduct a nuclear test 'at some point', though this did not appear to be imminent. North Korea is under United Nations sanctions that ban trade which could fund its arms programme.

**Pray:** for the international communities' demands for North Korea's nuclear programme and WMD to cease immediately to be reflected on and adhered to by North Korea's leaders. (Jer.22:3)

**More:** <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/03/north-korea-digging-new-nuclear-test-tunnel-satellite-photos-show>

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE WORLD PRAYER CENTRE, BIRMINGHAM, UK

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