

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

■ 112 people per second open a Bible app

Every second, the world conducts 40,000 Google searches, creates five new Facebook profiles, and opens YouVersion's Bible App 112 times. In the app, three bookmarks are created, four verses are shared, and 18 verses are highlighted. More than fifty Bible chapters are listened to, and 342 chapters are read. YouVersion was launched in 2008 and now has 200 million installs, offering the Bible in 1,200 versions and 900 languages. Mobile devices are being changed into Bibles that people carry with them everywhere they go. 200 million installs represents countless moments of individuals transformed by their time in the Bible. The most popular Bible verse is Romans 12:2: 'Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - His good, pleasing, and perfect will.'

Praise: God for the global hunger for His words of wisdom and comfort. (Pr.4:6)

More: <http://www.christianitytoday.com/gleanings/2015/december/most-popular-bible-verses-200-million-youversion-app-2015.html>

■ Dominican Republic: pro-life landmark victory

The constitutional tribunal of the Dominican Republic has issued a landmark ruling overturning a law pushed through by President Danilo Medina. The new law, which had been personally advocated by the president as part of a broader revision of the criminal code, introduced a paragraph that would have allowed abortion to be legalised in cases of rape or incest, or when doctors deemed the preborn child to be suffering from illnesses or disabilities which rendered them 'incompatible with life.' After the president signed the law, two non-profit organisations filed a lawsuit challenging its constitutionality, arguing that it violated the constitutional protection of Article 37 of the Dominican Republic's constitution, which guarantees the right to life as inviolable from conception to death.

Praise: God for a pro-life victory amidst an international flurry of efforts to legalise abortion. (1Cor.15:57)

More: http://www.breakingchristiannews.com/articles/display_art.html?ID=17158

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Flood defences

It is going to be a grim Christmas for many in Cumbria as they clean up after the floods. Those who were also affected by the 2009 floods might not be inclined to believe the 'once in a lifetime' mantra which accompanied last weekend's weather. The Met Office's chief scientist suggested that all the evidence points to a link between climate change and our record-

breaking winter rainfall, and new methods of prevention and cure must be found and funded. As a nation of islanders we may have to rediscover a lost resilience in our relationship with water. Many are now saying that councils should utilise the skills of those who know the countryside best - and pay farmers appropriately to take natural flood management seriously. Pray for wise land management of the large swathes of north-west England, southern Scotland and Northern Ireland that are vulnerable to flooding.

Pray: for the flood victims. Pray for the Government to release funds to local authorities and farmers to enable them to improve land management upstream from vulnerable residential areas. (Ps.10:17)

More: <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/storm-desmond-britain-needs-better-flood-defences-but-we-must-also-wake-up-to-reality-of-climate-a6765701.html>

▣ RAF continue to bomb IS targets

Royal Air Force aircraft have continued airstrikes against the IS terrorist network inside Syria and Iraq. RAF Tornados and Reaper drones have now been reinforced by a detachment of Typhoon fighters, which carry the same Paveway IV precision guided bombs as the Tornados. The deployment of the Typhoons and an extra two Tornados offers a significant increase in strike capacity to both the RAF component and the wider coalition air campaign. Pray for wisdom and accurate intelligence for those conducting these airstrikes and for protection of the innocent; for protection for the RAF pilots carrying out these raids; for the families of RAF personnel stationed in Akrotiri, Cyprus, and particularly for the families of the 300+ RAF personnel deployed at short notice, who remain at home in the UK.

Pray: that our Government and other coalition member states will have wisdom in determining a long-term solution to the conflict that brings peace and justice to the region. (Micah 6:8)

More: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/update-air-strikes-in-iraq>

▣ A call to prayer following the decision for military action in Syria

Whatever we feel about the Government's decision for military action in Syria, we must pray! Christians cannot underestimate the spiritual warfare we are now in - not demonising peoples or communities, but prayerfully intercepting the powers of darkness seeking to steal, kill and destroy. Dr Jonathan Oloyede is calling us to stand in the gap and pray protection, blessing and intervention over our streets, communities, towns and cities now that Great Britain is at war. As the Church, we are under the authority of our Lord to blow the trumpet and sound the alarm! We must ask for God to thwart the plans of those who are planning acts of terrorism within the UK and abroad, praying protection over those in our armed forces engaged in airstrikes and praying for our intelligence services, police and ancillary departments directly or indirectly involved in the safety of all peoples in the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

Pray: for believers to immerse our nation in prayer, and for the Gospel to spread across the land. May His Kingdom come and His will be done in the British Isles. (1Ki.8:45)

More: <http://www.ndopwembley.com/>

▣ British lorry drivers in Calais in danger

It is being claimed that the migrant crisis is putting the lives of British lorry drivers at risk in Calais - and the government is being accused of not doing enough to protect them. Lorry driver Stephen Paul Morecroft has been describing his fear as he does his job to a BBC reporter, 'They've got gas and knives and ammunition now. I don't know where it is going to end.' Last month the boss of a British haulage firm claimed that the migrant crisis in Calais has descended into lawlessness and warned that it won't be long before someone is killed. One female driver said they attempted to open the doors to her vehicle and attacked the vehicle, leaving her very shaken. They are saying the situation is completely unacceptable and hauliers need someone they can go to in order to sort out this situation. To watch Mr Morecroft's interview, go to: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-35047731>

Pray: for resolution of a precarious situation, help for the desperate, and an end to violence. (Ps.84:3)

More: <http://news.sky.com/story/1587005/calais-lorry-drivers-facing-extreme-violence>

▣ Britain should 'stop acting as a Christian country'

An inquiry into the place of religion in modern society, chaired by senior judge Baroness Butler-Sloss, has concluded that 'Britain is no longer a Christian country and should stop acting as if it is.' The report calls for British public life to be systematically de-Christianised, pointing to a decline in churchgoing and the rise of Islam and other faiths. It states that a 'new settlement' is needed for religion, giving more official influence to non-religious voices and those of non-Christian faiths. Thankfully Cabinet ministers called it 'seriously misguided' and the Church of England said it has been 'hijacked' by humanists. But the Church needs to stand and pray against some of the report's suggestions such as abolishing the compulsory daily act of worship in school assemblies, cutting the number of Christian bishops in the Lords to give places to imams, rabbis and others, rethinking anti-terror policy, and ensuring students can voice radical views on campus without fear of being reported.

Pray: for the Church to wake up to her identity and commission to proclaim the Gospel. (2Tim.4:2)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/12036287/Britain-is-no-longer-a-Christian-country-and-should-stop-acting-as-if-it-is-says-judge.html>

▣ New service for young people hit by benefit sanctions

Merseyside Youth Association service in Liverpool helps 16- to 25-year-olds who have been hit by benefit sanctions and are going hungry but feel uneasy about visiting foodbanks. They might go to their nan's or to their friend's and say 'Can I borrow a few tins of beans?' Each client is helped to complete a form asking why they are attending, and a counsellor is available for emotional support. Although the service is only in its second week, organisers say 36 young people have already used it, with debt and benefit sanctions the most common reasons. These young people are constantly worried about whether or not they're going to be able to afford to feed themselves, as whatever money they do get has to go on rent. Research has shown that young people are disproportionately affected by benefit sanctions.

Pray: for vulnerable young (and older) people who do not have families to fall back on and who are struggling to live. (Mt.25:35)

More: <http://www.theguardian.com/society/2015/dec/10/food-bank-opens-young-people-benefit-sanctions-liverpool>

EUROPE

■ EU says IS has chemical and biological weapons

Islamic State is armed with biological and chemical weapons but Europeans don't take the existential threat seriously, according to a European Union parliament document. Also, Israeli experts say IS is armed with weapons forbidden by the Geneva Convention and that it is a state in every sense of the word, with its own currency, a university and even licence plates. The EU report said that chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear substances (CBRN) have been carried undetected into the European Union. Interpol's monthly CBRN intelligence reports show numerous examples of attempts to acquire, smuggle or use such materials. The report also said, 'At present, European citizens are not seriously contemplating extremist groups using chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear materials in Europe. Under these circumstances, should it occur, it would be even more destabilising. See:

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2015/572806/EPRS_BRI\(2015\)572806_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2015/572806/EPRS_BRI(2015)572806_EN.pdf)

Pray: for the Western coalition to succeed in removing IS infrastructure in the dozens of countries it currently inhabits, and for Middle East countries to create alternatives for their population to rely on. (Ps.143:9,10)

More: <http://www.jewishpress.com/news/breaking-news/european-union-isis-has-chemical-and-biological-weapons/2015/12/07/>

■ EU meeting to discuss UK proposals

On Thursday and Friday next week a meeting of the EU Council will be held in Brussels. David Cameron was warned that a central demand to curb immigration might be asking too much. Donald Tusk, president of the council, will chair the first detailed talks on the issue between Cameron and his 27 peers. He sent EU leaders a progress report after Cameron laid out the reforms he wants if he is to campaign for continued EU membership in a referendum due to take place in 2017. Mr Tusk said, 'We have made good progress, but have to overcome substantial political differences on the issue of social benefits and free movement.' Many governments are willing to make changes to keep Britain in the Union; however the main stumbling block is Cameron's pledge to cut immigration to Britain by denying benefits to workers from other EU states for four years after they arrive. The draft agenda for the meeting on 17-18 December 2015 can be seen on:

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/european-council/2015/12/17-18/>

Pray: for a solution that will not allow illegal and / or unjust discrimination against the poor and vulnerable. (Ps.9:18)

More: <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-eu-tusk-idUKKBN0TQ1RK20151208>

WORLDWIDE

■ India: Christian orphanage accused of brainwashing children

An orphanage in India has been taken over by local authorities, after a court ruled that the young women who live there have been brainwashed. Christian Today reports that the Moses Ministries orphanage in Tiruchy, Madras, is run by the Christian Initiative for India, initially founded in Germany by the Rev Gideon Jacob who was born in India. The court ruled that Jacob and the orphanage had not obtained sufficient documentation before admitting some of its children, and, after taking them in, had brainwashed them. Jacob said the girls were brought to the orphanage by parents who did not want them, and this is why the orphanage does not have records such as date of birth and parents' names. 'When you bring a baby to give her away you are committing a crime for which you can be imprisoned,' Jacob said. 'If you give away your child you aren't going to give your telephone number.'

Pray: for the Christian ethos of the orphanage to be continued and for Pastor Jacob to be exonerated. (Ps.82:3,4)

More: <http://www.christianheadlines.com/blog/christian-orphanage-accused-of-illegally-housing-trafficked-girls.html>

■ Egypt: latest election results announced

Since the outbreak of the first uprising in Egypt almost five years ago, two presidential elections, three referendums over constitutions, and two parliamentary elections have been held. However, queuing at polling stations has not yet led to change. Recent elections experienced both violence and apathy. Egypt's branch of IS bombed a hotel in North Sinai where seven judges overseeing the parliamentary elections were staying. Polling was light (28%), with many Egyptians indicating distrust and a feeling of apathy over the political process. It is probable the liberal Free Egyptians party has won a majority of seats, with the Islamist Al-Nour party coming second. The world waits to see how President El-Sisi and this new legislature will fulfil his pledge to set Egypt on a 'roadmap to democracy.'

Pray: for the Lord's plans for Egypt to be fulfilled through decisions made now and in 2016. (Ps.33:10-11)

More: <http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2015/12/04/election-results-for-second-phase-announced/>

■ Vietnam: Christian lawyer beaten up by police after human rights conference

Christians constitute 8% of Vietnam's population. On Sunday Nguyen Van Dai, a Christian lawyer, was beaten after leaving a human rights conference that sought to educate citizens about their rights of freedom of religion or belief. The police had requested that the conference be cancelled, but it went ahead without incident. Then Mr Nguyen and his friends travelled to the capital of Nghi Loc District where they were met by 20 plain-clothes police, who beat their shoulders and thighs with wooden sticks. Mr Nguyen was pulled onto a motorcycle and driven to a different province where the beatings continued. His documents, phone, camera, wallet, jacket and shoes were confiscated, and he was pushed into the cold sea. He was finally able to borrow a phone and call for help. Pray for Mr Nguyen. Pray for Vietnamese - particularly those with traditions of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism - to hear the gospel of Christ.

Pray: for lawyers and human rights defenders to be heard. (Is.35:3)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/vietnam.christian.lawyer.assaulted.by.police.after.human.rights.conference/73067.htm>

■ **Argentina: Mauricio Macri sworn in**

Military dictatorship and the failed Falklands / Malvinas war, followed by economic disaster, have led Argentina into spiritual hunger and receptivity to the gospel of Christ. Operation World states that evangelical numbers, under one million in 1980, reached 3.7 million by 2010. But spiritual openness is also seeing many drawn into Umbanda occultism from Brazil as well as some churches with questionable teachings. As Mauricio Macri takes over as president of Argentina, pray that he will be able to harness its vast natural resources to revive an economy that has for decades fallen short of its potential. Pray also for investments to stream into the country, bringing with it Christians to reach out to the highly-educated workforce. See also <https://missions-history.wikispaces.com/Argentina>

Pray: for the new government to succeed in fighting poverty and creating more jobs, and for the Spirit to continue to draw many to himself and to do deeper work in believers. (Ps.71:20)

More: <http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2015/12/10/argentinas-mauricio-macris-be-sworn>

■ **Lebanon: Islamist militant activity**

Lebanon is bordered by Syria and Israel, and is at the crossroads of the Mediterranean basin and the Arabian heartland. It had a rich identity of peaceful religious and ethnic diversity. Recently the army carried out a series of raids after two IS suicide bombs killed 44 people in crowded commercial and residential areas of Beirut. Then, on Saturday a suspected IS terrorist killed himself, his wife and mother when he blew himself up during an army raid on his home near Tripoli. At least ten other people were wounded in the blast, including four security personnel. Security forces carried out further raids in the same town after the incident, and arrested several Lebanese and Syrian nationals. Last week a Lebanese court charged 26 people with belonging to IS. 23 of them were directly linked to a Beirut bombing in November which targeted a Shi'ite Muslim suburb.

Pray: for an end to the war spilling into Lebanon, Sunni militants bombing Shi'ite targets, gun battles between opposing sides, and clashes between the army and rebels. Pray for Christian revival there. (Ps.85:8,9)

More: <http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Report-Three-killed-in-Lebanon-as-Islamist-militant-blows-himself-up-436381>

■ **Australia: trafficking women for sex**

In a country that promotes gender equality, it's a sad fact that women are being trafficked to Australia and sold for sex. The problem is bigger than most people realise. The UN and the USA have identified Australia as a destination country for trafficked persons. Research shows that there is a clear link between legalising prostitution and human trafficking. Women are trafficked into Australia and into brothels. Prostitution is a trap for the exploitation of women. The Australian Christian Lobby believes that the solution would be for public policy to tackle the demand for prostitution and criminalise the purchase of sex. This would lead to a drop in the number of prostitutes, and fewer people being trafficked into the country.

Pray: for legislators to introduce laws that would bring about an end to the exploitation of women. (Lk.4:18)

More: http://www.acl.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/acl_factsheet_singles_print-2.pdf

■ **Global: social media, the new megaphone for violent perpetrators**

Tashfeen Malik, the woman involved in California's mass shooting, is the latest in a growing number of extremists using social media to publicise their crimes. Facebook said she used an alias to praise IS online shortly before, or during, the attack. Malik's posting echoes similar bids for attention by violent perpetrators; for example, a disgruntled Virginia TV broadcaster recorded himself shooting two co-workers and then posted the video online, and a Florida man killed his wife and shared a photo of her body on social media. Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and other social media companies do their best to block or remove posts that glorify violence, but experts say it's an uphill battle. The advent of new services enabling people to stream live video from events makes the task more challenging. Online services use automated software to help detect posts depicting or encouraging violence; however, all the policies in the world won't help unless companies devote staff and resources to enforcing them.

Pray: for intelligence officials and online services to take effective steps to prevent terrorist groups, their followers, and deranged killers from glorifying violence. May they have enough manpower to avoid data overload. (Rom.16:20)

More: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/ap/article-3347122/Social-media-new-megaphone-violent-perpetrators.html>

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE WORLD PRAYER CENTRE, BIRMINGHAM, UK

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