

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

■ Experiencing the supernatural

65% of UK Christians have experienced the supernatural, and 25% of those have had that experience in the last week. A new study by Christian Research showed just 5% did not believe in the supernatural while two thirds believe the supernatural may be caused by occult or evil forces as well as divine. Respondents' experiences ranged from feelings of God's presence during prayer to observance of physical effects of the supernatural or miracles. The leader of Soul Survivor said he experienced the supernatural first-hand when God showed him a man in need of help waiting to be collected at an airport. 'So we went to him and said, "Look, we're ever so sorry but we're Christians and we think maybe that Jesus has said to us you need some encouragement right now, and we could pray for you, would that be okay?" He looked shocked, and it turned out he was a pastor from Kenya.'

Praise: to our triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for all the encouragement which He gives us in different situations. (Mt.28:19)

More: <http://www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/us/2016/august/whopping-65-of-uk-christians-have-had-a-supernatural-experience>

■ Arabic Christian channel is now live on Facebook

SAT-7 has become the first Arabic Christian channel to stream live broadcasts on Facebook. Viewers have responded enthusiastically to the new service, which enables them to participate in live church services and other events as part of an online community. A viewer from Egypt posted on Facebook, 'Wow, what a great ministry to be able to watch the live streaming on mobile devices. God bless you. Please pray for me a lot.' The live broadcasts attracted 96,000 views and 28,000 audience responses in July. Give thanks for the opportunities created by social media to share Christian content. Pray that this will help isolated believers and seekers to connect with God and each other.

Praise: for all those seeking to bring God's Word to unreached people groups in new ways. (Ex.18:20)

More: https://www.facebook.com/SAT7Network/?ref=page_internal

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Pray for politicians after the summer break

Here are some general pointers to help us support our politicians in prayer through the coming difficult months of traditional business plus Brexit. Pray for our Christian MPs' faith to grow as they rely on God to support them through the pressure of their workload and the loneliness of being away from home. Write to them, let them know you are praying for them and ask how you might support them in serving your local community. Pray that Christian MPs, peers, policy staff and house staff

will grow in number; may the depth of their faith cause them to be a positive and gracious influence in Parliament. Pray for wisdom, integrity, self-sacrifice and policymaking for the good of all as the Government considers and negotiates Brexit. May there be an effective and gracious Christian presence and influence in political debate at home and abroad.

Pray: for wise illustrations of God's truth in thought, word and deed in the public arena. (1Ti.2:2b-4)

More: <http://www.christiansinparliament.org.uk/>

▣ What we know about Brexit negotiations so far

-Theresa May pledged to take time to secure 'a sensible and orderly departure' after 2016. -No second referendum, Brexit means Brexit, we're going to make a success of it. -Article 50 remains mysterious. A No.10 spokesman said that Parliament will have its say; but did not clarify whether this would be before or after Article 50 is triggered. -The cabinet needs to speak up. May's 'you break it, you fix it' approach to cabinet appointments means that key Brexiteers are now in charge of overseeing affected areas, such as farming and international relations. The PM is asking each minister to report back on opportunities for their departments. -Brexit comes with social mobility, 'We want to be a government and a country that works for everyone.' -All eyes will be on David Davis, aka Brexit minister, responsible for exiting the EU, a new ministerial department.

Pray: for a shared understanding of the limits of all future negotiations by Whitehall departments. (Ps.119:98)

More: <http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/staggers/2016/08/theresa-mays-cabinet-regroups-11-things-we-know-about-brexit-negotiations>

▣ NHS prayer needs

We keep hearing bad news about the NHS. This week it was announced that junior doctors will strike again, for five days at a time, over their pay claim. Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust chief executive, Katrina Percy, quit after the trust was criticised over the way it investigated patient deaths. Also, a report found that the NHS mental health trust had failed to investigate the unexpected deaths of more than 1,000 people since 2011. On Tuesday the BMA said that quick, turnaround GP appointments are 'running general practice into the ground. Doctors cannot treat patients properly under the current recommended ten-minute limit per consultation.' Public satisfaction with the NHS is falling - see

<http://www.kingsfund.org.uk/projects/public-satisfaction-nhs/bsa-survey-2014/satisfaction-nhs-overall>

Pray: for the NHS to remedy financial pressure, help the disabled, and apply safe working levels. (Hos.14:9a)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-37221250>

▣ Prison officer numbers fall

The number of frontline officers working in public-sector prisons has fallen over the last year, despite Ministry of Justice plans to recruit additional staff to help respond to the highest levels of violence, suicide and self-injury since recording practices began. Statistics show that there were 14,689 frontline officers in England and Wales in June 2016, down from 15,110 a year earlier. This leaves prisons with barely more frontline staff than the lowpoint of 2014 which prompted the ministry's current recruitment exercise. Almost every region has seen frontline officer numbers fall. Figures at 31 August 2016 indicate that, in spite of the recruitment drive, people remain unwilling to work in prisons under present conditions. Reducing resources while allowing the prison population to grow unchecked has created a toxic cocktail of violence, death and human misery. See <http://howardleague.org/>

Pray: for God to enthuse prison workers with abilities to end violence, drugs and despair in prisons (Job 5:13)

More: <http://www.ekkleisia.co.uk/node/23390>

▣ Churches going greener

More than 3,500 UK churches have become greener and either switched their electricity from fossil fuels to renewables or registered to do so, according to figures released by charities. The announcement coincides with the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation on 1 September, the beginning of a global ecumenical time of contemplation during which Christians are encouraged to pray and work for the protection of the environment. Around 2,000 of the switches come from 16 Catholic dioceses which are now running entirely on renewable energy; some of these dioceses made the switch following the Pope's encyclical for the environment. The number also includes the majority of the Salvation Army's UK sites and a third of Britain's Quaker meeting houses. They signed up through the website bigchurchswitch.org.uk promoted by Christian Aid and Tearfund. Following the success of the initiative, it will now be extended into the New Year.

Pray: for many thousands more to sign up and for the world to return to what God created it to be. (Ge.1:31)

More: <http://www.inspiremagazine.org.uk/Stories/Personal?storyaction=view&storyid=2291>

▣ More UK girls unhappy about their looks

Almost three-quarters of a million girls are unhappy with their looks and more than a quarter of a million are distressed about their overall lives, according to the annual Good Childhood Report. The number of 10- to 15-year-old girls who said their appearance makes them uncomfortable has reached 700,000 – more than a third of the total number of children surveyed. The survey, conducted by the Children's Society and the University of York for the past decade, also reveals that one in seven girls (283,000) aged 10 to 15 suffers from low mood and distress. This figure is up 21% from 2011. The number of girls citing their appearance as a reason for unhappiness has gone up by 8% over the past five years. The number of boys unhappy with their lives has remained constant (11%). Girls told researchers that boys were responsible for verbal abuse and criticism of their looks.

Pray: for children to be heard and helped to see themselves as beautiful and wonderfully made. (Ps.139:14)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/health/we-have-to-be-perfect-like-barbie-record-number-of-uk-girls-are/>

▣ New study on human sexuality

A new study exploring sexual orientation, gender identity, mental health and well-being by Dr Lawrence S Mayer, an epidemiologist trained in psychiatry, and Dr Paul R McHugh (described by The New Atlantis journal as 'the most important

American psychiatrist of the last half-century) found that contrary to popular belief, the claim that sexual orientation and gender identity are inborn is insupportable. The first part of the study, focusing on sexual orientation, concluded that the claim that it is 'an innate, biologically fixed property of human beings' is not supported by scientific evidence. There was found to be some correlation between childhood abuse and later same-sex attraction and higher rates of mental health problems amongst the LGBT community. Pray for more research in these areas.

Pray: for God to help researchers and scientists to come to precise conclusions, so that children with gender identity issues are not encouraged to transition through medical and surgical procedures. (Gen.2:23)

More: <http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/same-sex-marriage/new-study-challenges-claims-about-human-sexuality>

EUROPE

France: refugees update

Migrants in Calais seeking asylum in the UK should be allowed to lodge their claim in France, the president of the region has told the BBC. Xavier Bertrand said people living in the camp known as the Jungle should be able to apply at a 'hotspot' in France rather than waiting to reach Britain. UK officials currently check passports in France, stopping many from entering. The Home Office said 'those in need of protection should seek asylum in the first safe country they enter'. There are 9,000 people in the Jungle; most nights, many try to circumvent passport checks by hiding inside vehicles entering the port and the Channel Tunnel to get to Britain. Mr Bertrand hopes that amending the current agreement between France and the UK - called the Treaty of Le Touquet - will help to alleviate those problems. The treaty allows British immigration officials to check passports in Calais and their French counterparts to do the equivalent in Dover. The French government have repeatedly said that removing juxtaposed controls would not be in France's interests.

Pray: for the UK and French governments to work together to protect not just their shared border but the interests of the refugees. (Ex.12:49)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-37211267>

The lawless EU?

Europe's Competition Directorate dispatches corporate raids across Europe without a search warrant, and operates outside normal democratic judicial control. It is judge, jury, and executioner, imposing fines large enough to constitute criminal sanctions, but without the due process protection of criminal law. It misused evidence so badly in pursuit of Intel that the company alleged a violation of human rights. Apple has vowed this week to appeal against a €13bn Brussels fine for violation of EU state-aid rules, but the only recourse is the European Court of Justice - usually a forlorn ritual. Many believe that powerful EU forces are using state-aid probes to break the global dominance of America's technology giants, hoping to nurture its own 'Silicon Valley' behind a digital wall. Amazon, Facebook, Google and Apple are all under fire, while Microsoft has fought an epic battle. Are some in Brussels viewing America as the enemy?

Pray: for honesty and integrity to prevail in the EU's many corridors of power. (2Th.2:8)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2016/08/31/apple-travesty-is-a-reminder-why-britain-must-leave-the-lawless/>

WORLDWIDE

Africa: property-grabbing

The following is just one of the many stories of property-grabbing, injustice and false imprisonment of poor, vulnerable people. A mission worker writes, 'Please join us in praying for Albertina, an 82-year-old widow who has been working with The International Justice Mission (IJM) team in Gulu after falling victim to property-grabbing. The perpetrators in this case have repeatedly bribed local officials to get out of custody while actively threatening and assaulting Albertina and her family. Earlier this week, the perpetrators worked with the police to come up with false charges against Albertina and her adult family members, having them arrested despite a clear lack of evidence. The arrest of these victims left ten children under the age of thirteen living in huts alone with no supervision. Please pray for wisdom and favour as the International Justice Mission team works to secure the release of Albertina and the other victims.'

Pray: for protection over the children left on the family compound as IJM's aftercare team works to support them as best they can. (Ps.9:8-10)

More: <http://www.ijm.org/?gclid=Cj0KEQjwo5--BRCS8ceLjv-XppUBEiQAGp15EGEbKI4WuCQa0PpX2TIP0cBI84yuGXW-jMHvQ6cnsTwaAhG98P8HAQ>

Colombia: peace agreement after fifty years

Colombia declared an end to the longest-running civil conflict in the Western hemisphere last week. In a historic agreement, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia - known as FARC - signed a peace agreement with the Colombian government to end over fifty years of civil war that has killed nearly 225,000 people. Please pray that the marginalised communities will now have access to healthcare. Pray that land will be given back to rightful owners. Pray for a reconciliation process to start so that communities can overcome the legacy of bitterness.

Pray: for the Church to instigate and be key in dialogues of peace and reconciliation. (Lev.26:6a)

More: <https://fsrn.org/2016/08/fsrn-weekly-edition-august-26-2016/>

Libya: thousands of migrants rescued

On Monday, 6,500 migrants were rescued from the sea twelve miles off Libya in one of the biggest operations of its kind to date. Migrants from Eritrea and Somalia were cheering and some were swimming to rescue vessels, while others carried

babies aboard. The previous day, another 1,100 migrants had been rescued in the same area. Libya's instability has made it a hub for people-trafficking. About 106,000 people have arrived in Italy so far this year, while 2,726 have died in the attempt. The International Organisation for Migration says there are a further 275,000 migrants in Libya waiting to travel. Several vessels run by humanitarian organisations help to patrol the route, but the risks were highlighted earlier this month when Médecins Sans Frontières said one of their boats was fired on by armed men.

Pray: for the EU's border agency; for Proactiva, Open Arms and Médecins Sans Frontières saving the lives of those fleeing civil wars; and for God to bless and protect suffering refugees in transit. (Ps.41:2)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-37216881>

▣ **Vietnam: protesters beaten by police**

4,000 Catholics were beaten by police as they protested against the government allowing the contamination of seventy tons of fish from waste dumped into the sea. The pollution was caused by Formosa Plastic Group, a steel company. Christian fishing families affected by the pollution marched on municipal offices in Ky Anh, but were blocked and beaten by police, leaving several injured by truncheon blows. Officials deny that police used violence, saying people were injured because of the size of the crowd. International Christian Concern noted that the dying fish have left many families in a state of panic as fishing is a vital and important source of income and food. Pollution will also have an impact on the economy if the situation continues without proper counter-measures. Please also pray for an end to Vietnam's harassment and intimidation of religious minorities as countless Christian pastors remain in prison merely for their beliefs.

Pray: for those continuing to march, and that the local authorities do not resort to violence. (Ps.140:4)

More: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/4000-christians-beaten-police-vietnam-protesting-environmental-disaster-hurting-families-168241/>

▣ **MAF: flying for life**

For seventy years the Missionary Aviation Fellowship (MAF) has helped vulnerable people in hard-to-reach places. Flying onto desert and jungle airstrips, lakes and rivers, tracks and roads, its light aircraft and their mission pilots go the extra miles to provide a lifeline, working in partnership with other Christian and relief organisations. They have now started a new initiative that they hope will increase prayer support for their work. Each month they will produce a short prayer video that brings the needs of those in remote communities into people's internet mailboxes. This fresh approach highlights the stark differences between life in the west and some of the countries where they serve, prompting people to call on our heavenly Father with thanksgiving and praise, while seeking His provision for others. To watch the video and pray this month for those lacking access to clean water please click the 'More' button.

Pray: for continued help, healing, and hope given to remote and inaccessible communities. (Ps.28:7)

More: <https://www.maf-uk.org/pray/partner-in-prayer-videos>

▣ **Australia: online schoolgirls pornography ring**

An online pornography ring targeting thousands of Australian schoolgirls has re-emerged after police had closed it down earlier this month. Police and detectives in several states are investigating a website containing sexual images of girls from private and public schools across Australia. The website is in the form of a 'message chat forum' and has photos and requests of naked schoolgirls. Seventy Australian schools are mentioned in the requests. Detective Acting Superintendent Marcus Boorman said a number of the images allegedly depict non-consenting or underage girls. The page reportedly features naked photos of teenage girls, some with their names, so that others can rate them. NSW, Queensland, Victoria and ACT police are investigating - as are a number of education departments. However, it is difficult for law enforcement agencies to keep track of online sites, especially those hosted overseas. See also Australian Prayer Network.

Pray: for God to give wisdom and shrewdness to authorities attempting to shut these sites down. (Ex. 35:31)

More: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-08-30/online-schoolgirls-pornography-ring-re-emerges/7797122>

▣ **'Passion of the Christ' sequel?**

In a surprise announcement, Mel Gibson told evangelist Greg Laurie that he is working on a sequel to his film 'The Passion of the Christ.' Gibson said, 'We're talking about that. Of course, that is a huge undertaking. And you know, it's not "The Passion 2". It's called "The Resurrection". Of course, that's a very big subject and it needs to be looked at because we don't want to just do a simple rendering of it - you know, read what happened. The Passion is the beginning and there's a lot more story to tell.'

Pray: for Hollywood and for Christians in films and media to be noticed, understood and accepted. (1Sa.2:8)

More: <http://www.christianheadlines.com/blog/mel-gibson-says-next-project-may-be-the-passion-of-the-christ-sequel.html>

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE WORLD PRAYER CENTRE, BIRMINGHAM, UK

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