

# PRAYER ALERT...



**‘If my people....will humble themselves and pray’** 2 Chr 7:14

Informing and equipping Christians - Online and to Inbox

[www.prayer-alert.net](http://www.prayer-alert.net)

[editor@prayer-alert.net](mailto:editor@prayer-alert.net)

Issue 38-2016

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Friday 23 September 2016

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## PRaise REPORTS

### ■ Martyred Christian witnessed boldly to Jihadi John

IS hostage Kayla Mueller's faith was so bold, so raw, so refreshing that 20/20 investigated her Christianity for an episode on the modern-day Stephen. A fellow-hostage (from Doctors without Borders) said, 'She was always considerate of others, even though she herself was in a very difficult situation. She was always concerned for other prisoners. She never stopped caring for others.' Kayla was kidnapped by IS in 2013. They told her parents she was alive in 2014, but then airstrikes hit. Her death was announced in 2015. Despite rape, torture and further unthinkable abuse, Mueller's fellow hostages say she refused to deny Christ and even witnessed to Islamic State executioner, Jihadi John. The 20/20 episode premièred last week and is available at <http://abcnews.go.com/International/fullpage/brian-ross-investigates-kayla-mueller-girl-left-41600838>

**Praise:** God for this story being broadcast and published. May Kayla's story witness to thousands. (Mt.10:22)

**More:** <http://www.charismanews.com/world/59605-meet-the-christian-woman-who-boldly-witnessed-to-jihadi-john-before-her-death>

### ■ France: church attendance up after priest's murder

'You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.' (Genesis 50:20) In the two months since Rev Jacques Hamel was brutally slain at the altar of his parish by an IS sympathiser, church attendance has increased in the town, said Archbishop Dominique Lebrun. He said that on a psychological level there is fear, but on a deep level in the soul, there is strength. 'I do not think Jesus said it is stupid to be afraid, or there is no reason to be afraid. No, Jesus said, have the courage to be afraid.' Pope Francis called the priest 'blessed', the step preceding sainthood.

**Praise:** God for the blood shed by believers that prepares the ground for renewal, and continue to ask God to free Christians from the legacy of fear after terrorist acts. (Ps.79:10)

**More:** <http://www.gospelherald.com/articles/66581/20160916/french-church-attendance-increases-following-murder-of-elderly-priest-by-isis-militants.htm>

## BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

### ■ NHS cuts planned

The BBC has seen draft plans which propose ward closures, cuts in bed numbers and changes to A&E and GP care in 44 areas. The plans, which are due to be signed off next month, are being drawn up by local health and social care leaders.

Many remain unpublished even though up to 20% of beds may be closed. The role of community hospitals is being questioned, and the number of mental health inpatient sites could be reduced. There have been no consultations on the plans so far. NHS England needs to find £22bn in efficiency savings by 2020-21 while improving patient care at the same time. Pray for the think tanks which need to make 'fundamental changes'. Pray for openness to public and political scrutiny, which so far has been lacking. In the past there has been reluctance from political leaders to address the way things are organised in the NHS.

**Pray:** for MPs and the NHS to address difficult issues together and achieve positive changes. (Ps.23:3b,4a)

**More:** <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-37186455>

#### ▣ Prayer and action for peace and justice

On Monday Hinde Street Methodist Church in London opened a life-sized copy of a border control point of the separation barrier between Israel and Palestine. Visitors walked through a checkpoint accompanied by photography, sound, testimony and eyewitness accounts. It is one of many events taking place in churches around the country as part of World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel organised by the World Council of Churches. It is described as a week of advocacy and action supporting 'an end to occupation'. While peace between Israelis and Palestinians is something Christians are actively praying for, resources provided in support of the week are biased against Israel and fail to present Israel's position on why the security barrier is needed. Also this week, on Wednesday, the UN held the International Day of Peace. Its purpose is to recognise those working to end conflict and promote peace and positive change.

**Pray:** for peace-making, peace-building and conflict transformation in Israel and wherever there is war and terror.

Pray that God will anoint peoples and nations committed to alternatives to war. (Ps.87:5)

**More:** <http://www.cufi.org.uk/news/methodist-church-in-london-to-exhibit-anti-israel-separation-barrier-multiple-christian-events-planned-for-across-uk/>

#### ▣ Scottish Brexit and trade

Michael Russell, the Scottish minister negotiating with the UK Government ahead of Brexit, has said he hopes to win the argument on staying in the single market. In a joint statement with Mr Davis, the UK Brexit minister, he said, 'While we clearly come from very different standpoints, we both recognise that a good working relationship is vital.' Meanwhile The Economist reported, 'The grittiest part of the Brexit negotiations will be over trade. Brexiteers correctly argue there's no need for a trade deal to trade, but without a comprehensive free-trade deal with the EU, British exporters could face tariffs and non-tariff barriers, where it currently faces neither.' We can pray for our nations to be aligned and connected for trade according to God's design, purpose and blessing, and for ministers and civil servants to carry God's vision and plans. We can pray life and blessing over all key trading links, old and new, and for doors which God desires to open to be supernaturally opened. See also: <http://www.economist.com/news/britain/21707251-britain-will-not-find-it-easy-strike-comprehensive-trade-deals-quickly-not-so-simple>

**Pray:** for God's anointing on commitments and treaties to be formed in the UK and globally; for wisdom and strength for Nicola Sturgeon, Theresa May and their respective Cabinets and advisers. (1Pt.2:6)

**More:** <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-37366162>

#### ▣ Christian comeback is coming

US theologian Brian McLaren is not alone when he says, 'Things are only now getting bad enough that Christian faith finally has a chance of getting significantly better.' In the US and the UK most forms of Western Christian faith are shrinking, with church movement but not church growth. However, McLaren suggests that if the Church could rediscover its call to unconditional love and service rather than focusing on a set of unquestionable beliefs, its future could be not decline but a new era of powerful renaissance. While organised religion is in decline, he sees a potential for 'organising religion' to take its place. He describes this as 'missional migration', which flows from a reaction against a Church which has been oppressive and genocidal, rooted in a conception of God as being violent and judgmental. Such heritage turns many away from the Church, offering nothing for those who identify as 'spiritual but not religious'.

**Pray:** for the Church to reach the unchurched through innovative activities using God's word as a plumb-line. (Ro.8:2)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/the.christian.comeback.is.coming.says.brian.mclaren/96090.htm>

#### ▣ Britain's opportunity for a new role

The following is from a message by Clifford Hill and David Noakes: 'God has mercifully given Britain the chance of deliverance from an EU marriage, and opportunities to forge a new role in the world under His blessing. This could be a powerful witness to the nations of the rewards available to all who seek a right relationship with God and are prepared to love and obey Him. There are many who are fearful of the future because they lack understanding of the word of God and lack faith in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. There are many churchgoers who share that fear because they too have never really learned to recognise the word of the Lord as sheep recognise the voice of their own shepherd. But God is loving and merciful and has a word for those who have been anxious about the future since the vote to leave the EU.' To read and prayerfully weigh a prophecy from David Noakes, click the 'More' button.

**Pray:** for the body of Christ to persevere in prayer that the work which God has begun will continue. (Rev.3:8)

**More:** [http://www.prophecytoday.uk/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=496:a-prophetic-word-to-britain&Itemid=151&Itemid=101](http://www.prophecytoday.uk/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=496:a-prophetic-word-to-britain&Itemid=151&Itemid=101)

#### ▣ Life-jacket graveyard

A migrant charity took over Parliament Square for the day earlier this week with a 'life-jacket graveyard'. Around 2,500 life-jackets were laid out across the site usually reserved for military memorials in an all-day protest urging the UK to do more to help those fleeing war-torn countries by giving them a home here. It was organised by the International Rescue Commission, whose president is David Miliband. However some criticised the 'misjudged' display, saying it will encourage more people to risk their lives in dangerous crossings to Europe. It came as a UN migration summit began in New York, with 193 countries approving a new document aimed at providing a more 'humane and co-ordinated' response to the

refugee crisis. Also, the BBC Radio 4 Today programme reported that many of the life-jackets, adult and child sizes, were fake, and would cause the wearer to drown not float.

**Pray:** for wisdom and discernment for all authorities and charities working to save refugees. (Ps.50:15)

**More:** <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3796793/Anger-London-s-Labour-mayor-allows-refugee-charity-headed-ex-minister-David-Miliband-Parliament-Square-graveyard-lifejackets-demo.html>

#### ■ Northern Ireland: restorative justice scheme praised

An east Belfast initiative with ties to the UDA (Ulster Defence Association) paramilitary group is moving towards official recognition. A review by the Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland found that the Resolve project is making a 'useful contribution in a fragmented community' while delivering value for a very small amount of money. It is believed to be the first such initiative linked to the paramilitary group. Run on an annual budget of just £37,000, it has only two staff members, supported by a small group of volunteers. Its main activities include mediating neighbourhood disputes and offering non-violent solutions, helping people under paramilitary threat, and tackling antisocial behaviour. A Police Service neighbourhood Inspector said that while he would be happy to refer cases to Resolve, he is unable to do so while it remains unaccredited.

**Pray:** for the scheme to proceed to the next stage of accreditation and be used widely. (Pr.21:15)

**More:** <http://www.itv.com/news/utv/update/2016-09-22/uda-linked-restorative-justice-scheme-praised/>

## EUROPE

#### ■ Hungary: government office to tackle Christian persecution

This week, Hungary, which has during the past year come under pressure for its handling of Europe's mass migration crisis, has become the first government to open an office specifically to address the persecution of Christians in the Middle East and Europe. 'Today, Christianity has become the most persecuted religion, where four out of five people killed for religious reasons are Christians' said Hungary's Minister for Human Capacities, Zoltan Balog. 200 million Christians live in areas where they are discriminated against. The move sets a precedent on the international stage. It comes after Hungary's right-wing conservative Prime Minister, Viktor Orban, drew criticism in the EU by saying Europe should focus on helping Christians, before helping millions of Islamic people coming into Europe. 'If we really want to help, we should help where the real problem is. We should first help the Christian people before Islamic people', Orban said.

**Pray:** for this government office to contribute towards helping Europe preserve its Christian roots. (Dt. 24:17a)

**More:** <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2016/09/4633819/>

#### ■ Sweden: TV advert says 'accept multiculturalism'

Swedes need to give up their identity and integrate with migrants because 'being Swedish needs to be about more than skin colour and place of birth'. In a new TV advert from Swedish charity organisation IM, Swedes are called on to create 'Det nya landet' (the new country). The English text from their website says, 'There is no turning back. Sweden will never be what it was before. It is an understanding of what the world actually looks like – that Sweden is needed as a safe place for people who need refuge. Some yearn back to how it used to be. It's okay to miss the past and talk about it – but we have to seek ways forward and find a way for everyone to live together. Because now we have a Europe and a Sweden that is what it is: in a state of change.'

**Pray:** for countries to accept different cultures, languages and customs, and promote inclusiveness. (Job 8:20a)

**More:** <http://www.infowars.com/theres-no-turning-back-swedish-tv-ad-says-swedes-must-accept-multiculturalism/>

## WORLDWIDE

#### ■ Israel: Netanyahu holds security meeting

Prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu is assessing the security situation ahead of the Tishrei holidays - Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Sukkot. He has increased police presence in the Old City and Temple Mount to prevent attempts to violate public order, increased watchfulness for PA Arab incitement on social networks, and established a response team to refute disinformation about Israeli policy about the Temple Mount (such as claiming the Jews are plotting to destroy the Al-Aqsa mosque). It appears that the wave of terror that the security personnel thought was behind them is back in full force. In just one day, 18 September, a 50-year-old policeman and a 30-year-old policewoman were stabbed near Jerusalem's Flower Gate, an IDF officer was wounded inside the town of Efrat in a terror attack, and an Arab woman pulled out a knife on two IDF soldiers near the town of Itamar. See also: <http://www.timesofisrael.com/soldier-hurt-in-stabbing-attack-in-efrat/>

**Pray:** for the motivation to attack Israelis to be removed and for the situation to stabilise. (Ps.36:10)

**More:** <http://www.jewishpress.com/news/breaking-news/netanyahu-holds-security-meeting-ahead-of-high-holidays/2016/09/19/>

#### ■ Syria: aid delivery to Aleppo to resume?

Yesterday the UN said it was ready to resume the delivery of life-saving aid to Syria, days after an attack on a humanitarian convoy killed 20 people and triggered the suspension of much-needed relief operations. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said, 'The preparation for these convoys has now resumed, and we are ready to deliver aid to besieged and hard-to-reach areas as soon as possible. The UN continues to call for safe, unconditional, unimpeded and sustained access to all Syrians in need, wherever they are.' However, today this hope now looks increasingly unlikely, following the collapse of talks between the USA and Russia and a resumption of the Syrian government's attacks on Aleppo.

**Pray:** for aid to reach the Syrians still without any supplies, for God's protection over the humanitarian workers and the communities they work in, and for an end to civilian massacres. (Nu.6:26)

**More:** <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/09/syria-war-raids-hit-aleppo-holds-crisis-talks-160921140335734.html>

#### ■ **Iraq: US pastor gives \$4,000 for weapons for Christian militia**

Pastor William Devlin of Infinity Bible Church in New York City gave \$4,000 from his own pocket to buy weapons for the Christian militia fighting IS. He bought grenades, rocket-propelled grenade launchers, and AK-47 assault rifles for the Nineveh Plain Protection Units, saying that weapons are much needed by the Christian militia in their battle against terrorists. However, many believe this raises the serious issue of what forms of aid and intervention Western Christians should offer to help their Middle Eastern brothers and sisters. How we engage has wide repercussions and demands deep reflection. Although the US has provided training for weaponry, the American government has not supplied weapons. Meanwhile the Iraqi ministry of the interior revealed that security forces had seized four trucks carrying explosives in southern Baghdad. They had come from Syria and entered Baghdad in collusion with some local authorities, paying \$13,000 per truck. See: <http://www.iraqnews.com/iraq-war/security-forces-seize-4-trucks-carrying-explosives-coming-syria/>

**Pray:** for further political and military collaborations and ceasefires as Middle East churches consider their future in the region amidst calls for a Christian homeland in Iraq (see next article). (Nu.6:26)

**More:** <http://www.christiandaily.com/article/american-pastor-spends-4000-for-christian-militias-weapons-against-isis-in-iraq/56617.htm>

#### ■ **Middle East: church summit**

Last week, Jordan hosted the 11th General Assembly of the Middle East Council of Churches. Presidents of churches from Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Cyprus, Lebanon, Egypt and Iran reflected on common challenges facing Christian communities in the region and met with King Abdullah who gave his support by saying, 'Christians in the Arab world are an integral part of the Arab social fabric and protecting their rights is a duty of all.' At the close of the three-day assembly, the leaders said how they appreciate the support of Muslim leaders in the region and value their combatting extremism. They asked for intervention to stop the war in Syria and to give support to the region's refugees, and urged the speedy election of a president in Lebanon. In Lebanon, the constitution requires the president to be a Christian but the post has been vacant for over two years as the sides cannot agree on a candidate.

**Pray:** for the IS threat to be eliminated and for Christians to be allowed to choose an area where they can settle and live in safety. Pray for Sunnis, Shiites, Kurds and Christians to live in peace. (Nu.6:24,25)

**More:** <https://www.sat7uk.org/briefing-september-2016/?bblinkid=25689272&bbemailid=2001809&bbejid=134708702>

#### ■ **Pakistan: plight of minorities**

The European Organisation for Pakistani Minorities organised 'Plight of Pakistani Minorities' at the 33rd session of the UN Human Rights Council. International speakers came from the European Parliament, International Forum for Rights and Security and the Institute for Gilgit-Baltistan Studies. They expressed deep concern over growing intolerance in Pakistani society, aggravated by the actions of the Pakistan government. They believe the government and military should realise that their policy to sustain and use extremist elements in certain neighbourhoods to achieve their own ends will sooner or later not only destabilise Pakistan internally but also spread to other parts of the world. Pray that the international community will recognise and work towards resolving this crisis, which has not been adequately addressed in the past.

**Pray:** for an end to killing journalists, lawyers and students who speak out against persecution. (Pr.12:20)

**More:** [http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ani/plight-of-minorities-in-pakistan-discussed-at-unhcr-116092200285\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ani/plight-of-minorities-in-pakistan-discussed-at-unhcr-116092200285_1.html)

#### ■ **Africa at the UN General Assembly, 20 to 26 September**

Thirty-two African heads of state are debating 'Sustainable Development Goals' at the UN. Some major concerns are: Chad - continues to fight Boko Haram. Malawi - respect for basic human rights as they open doors to refugees from neighbouring countries. Also millions need food assistance due to climate change. Tunisia - promoting security and human rights but needs support to improve its economy, emphasising Tunisia's commitment to build a prosperous, united Africa. South Africa - developmental progress in line with the African Union's agenda, also called for inclusive growth where countries put global interests ahead of national ones. Nigeria - anti-corruption stance and effects of the global downturn on the country, also pointed out that climate change effects are threatening livelihoods of 30 million people. Uganda - preventing discrimination based on religion, gender and political orientation. Ghana - Africa does not need sympathy or overseas aid, it needs a fair chance to trade with the rest of the world and amongst ourselves.

**Pray:** for developed and underdeveloped countries as they implement development goals. (Php.3:14)

**More:** <http://www.africanews.com/2016/09/21/highlights-what-are-african-leaders-saying-at-the-un-general-assembly-day-1/>

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE WORLD PRAYER CENTRE, BIRMINGHAM, UK

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**Prayer Alert is produced in association with The World Prayer Centre: Cornerstone House, 5 Ethel Street, Birmingham, B2 4BG**