

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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Issue 41-2016

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Friday 14 October 2016

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PRAISE REPORTS

■ A man raised from the dead

This story was recently told by David Platt in Tennessee. A southeast Asian believer trained by Southern Baptist missionaries began sharing the Gospel in a village that previously was totally unreached. The villagers responded attentively, but then the village leader died, and they superstitiously believed his death was caused by evil spirits upset by Christian activities. Discouraged by the turnaround, the Christians went to express their condolences at the leader's house. Standing over the fallen leader, they prayed that God would show His mercy to the people in the village, and show His glory and His love to them. As they were praying the man coughed! Then he started breathing once more. They shared the Gospel, people started coming to faith in Christ, and the villagers started burning their idols. Platt acknowledged that there is no medical evidence to verify the resurrection, but said, 'I do know at villages like this, they know how to recognise death.'

Praise: God for the good news of a Saviour who has conquered death, and for missionaries sharing the Gospel with the biblical clarity, precision and consistency that brings supernatural results. (Ps.103:4)

More: <http://blog.godreports.com/2016/09/david-platt-recounts-story-of-man-raised-from-dead-in-southeast-asia/>

■ Church streaming scheme a success

More than 40 thousand people from all over the world tuned in to watch Anglican church services in the last year as part of an initiative to open up worship via social media. Many types of liturgy, from traditional carols to a service in a tent at Glastonbury Festival, were watched on mobile phones, laptops and tablets as part of a ChurchLive scheme. A total of 53 churches representing diverse styles streamed services via Twitter app Periscope in a move to provide a first taste of worship, prayer and preaching for people unfamiliar with the Church of England. More traditional worship broadcasts included a carol service at St Martin-in-the-Fields church, London, while at St George's, Leeds, a group were baptised in the middle of a modern style of liturgy featuring drums and an electric guitar.

Praise: God for the way churches have embraced the opportunities offered by social media to proclaim the Gospel afresh and to reach new audiences. (Ps.119:18)

More: http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2016/10/11/church_hails_streaming_scheme_a_success/1264324

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Day of prayer - tomorrow!

What is God's plan in uncertainty? He wants His people to stand together and pray. As we pray and praise, situations change. This is a crucial time for the UK: a time of tension, pressure and spiritual opportunity. God wants to bless our nation and, through us, the world, so we need to get ready. There is an opportunity on Saturday to stand with others to worship the

King of kings and intercede for our schools, towns and cities to be flooded with God's purposes and plans: plans beyond our imagination, purposes that He intends for our lives. Come tomorrow to the International Convention Centre in Birmingham on Saturday, from 2:00pm to 6:30pm, to pray for God's deep blessings of unity, mercy, and reconciliation. You will be standing with key organisations and thousands of Christians asking for an extraordinary move of the Gospel to set people free and change lives. If you can't come, why not join us in prayer where you are?

Pray: for many to hear the Trumpet Call and prepare for action across our nations. (Joel 3:9)

More: <http://www.worldprayer.org.uk/what-we-do/prayer-events/trumpet-call-2016>

■ Prisons Week: 9 - 15 October

For forty years, Prisons Week has prepared prayer literature to enable Christians to pray for the needs of all those affected by prisons: prisoners and their families, victims of crime and their communities, those working in the criminal justice system, and the many people who are involved in caring for those affected by crime inside and outside our prisons. The prison population in England and Wales in October 2016 is 85,639, and 96,993 children have a parent currently in prison. On Wednesday the Prison Governors' Association asked the Government to set up an independent public inquiry into the state of prisons in England and Wales, due to an 'unprecedented' rise in prison violence and suicides. Last week Justice Secretary Elizabeth Truss promised an extra £14m to recruit more prison officers to change a 'brutal environment'. For a prayer leaflet to help you intercede go to: <http://prisonsweek.org/2016-prayer-campaign#resources>

Pray: for bonds of fear and isolation that exist in prison to be broken, for those involved with prison Alpha courses, and for those wounded by criminals to forgive and be healed. (Micah 6:8)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-37627313>

■ Street Pastors National Prayer Month

After several successful years of running a Street Pastors Network National Prayer Week, this year the Street Pastors' national prayer coordinator has named October a 24/7 National Prayer Month. The prayer theme is 'Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven'. In line with this theme, people are asked to pray blessings over our nation and anything else they feel led to by God. All Street Pastors, prayer groups, volunteers and church groups who want to support local Street Pastors are asked to take a period of one hour or more in October to pray, and to contact <http://www.streetpastors.org/> to let them know the time that will be happening. People can also adopt a street in their town and pray blessings daily over everyone who lives in or uses the street during this month.

Pray: for many to visit the Street Pastors website and be inspired to pray throughout this month. (Neh.1:11)

More: <http://www.streetpastors.org/street-pastors-network-national-prayer-month-october-2016/>

■ UK parliament condemns Russia over Aleppo

The House of Commons held a three-hour emergency debate on Tuesday on the unfolding humanitarian catastrophe in Aleppo and Syria. An emergency debate is usually called at short notice about an urgent internal matter, so it is unusual to have an emergency debate on international affairs. Politicians at home and abroad have called for a no-fly zone over Syria and the provision of safe havens for fleeing refugees. Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson told MPs that Russia's actions in Syria amount to 'war crimes'. Reportedly, sixteen people were killed by heavy bombing which targeted besieged rebel-held neighbourhoods. The former deputy supreme Allied commander of Nato said that the British should 'absolutely' be training other armed forces in the war-torn country and should occupy the skies to enforce a no-fly zone. See article 7 in the World section.

Pray: for an international effort to work with the least unreliable of potential allies to build trust and eventual peace. (Ps.65:5)

More: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/syria-war-assad-putin-johnson-aleppo-shelling-renews-a7356776.html>

■ Church of England v freemasons

Freemason William Wilson was buried in a churchyard in Cumbria in 2012. His niece asked the Church of England for permission to have the freemasons' square and compass emblem put on her uncle's stone. The church had no objections, but Geoffrey Tattersall QC, the Chancellor of the Diocese of Carlisle, in his capacity as a consistory court judge, said it would be inappropriate to allow it. He quoted a report on compatibility of freemasonry and Christianity, debated by the General Synod in 1987: 'Christians have found Masonic rituals disturbing and a few perceive them as positively evil. Some believe Masonic rituals are blasphemous because God's name must not be taken in vain, or be replaced by an amalgam of the names of pagan deities.' He added that the Synod's primary theological objections centred on freemasonry's use of the word 'Jahbulon' - the name used for the Supreme Being in Masonic rituals - which is an amalgamation of Semitic, Hebrew and Egyptian titles for God.

Pray: for all substitutes for God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit to be recognised for what they are, substitutes. (Mt.24:5)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/10/09/judge-bans-freemasonry-emblem-from-gravestone-of-senior-mason/>

■ Prayer points for Scotland

Pray for tolerance and integrity to be exercised by leaders during this time of heightened Brexit tension. Five current Scottish issues are: - 1. The number of homeless has been unchanged for 20 years. Pray for a new strategy to tackle this problem. 2. Nicola Sturgeon has told the SNP that she intends to call for a second referendum on Scottish independence if the Brexit negotiations are not in the country's best interests. 3. Holyrood ministers were warned that centralising power in Edinburgh will only lead to growing inequality. Pray for the God of the nations to direct Scotland's MPs in their decision-making. 4. Secondary teachers are to take industrial action over their 'excessive workload'. Nine out of ten union members back the move. 5. Young people are highlighted in the justice system, as judges and sheriffs are given new guidelines in an attempt to ensure consistency in the sentences they pass. Pray for the Scottish youth of today.

Pray: for all Christian SMPs to set examples, and for all SMPs not to become work-weary. (1Tim.2:1-3)

More: https://gallery.mailchimp.com/d1a09db4e896a5789a3bb1f56/files/Current_Issues_10.10.16.pdf

■ PM urged to admit 'Jungle' children

Christian, Jewish and Muslim faith leaders asked Theresa May to allow nearly 400 children in the Calais 'Jungle' camp to enter the UK, labelling the camp a 'stain' on the consciences of Britain and France. Francois Hollande announced that the camp would be bulldozed before Christmas, with 9,000 inhabitants dispersed around the country - a move welcomed by residents of Calais but causing disquiet elsewhere. The charity Care4Calais said, 'Neither government has made any attempts to identify these children, make assessments, or even put in place the legal framework necessary to get them to safety in the UK.' Demonstrators took to the streets in towns across France last weekend protesting against Hollande's plan. So far no children have been helped to leave the camp, despite changes to Britain's Immigration Act four months ago which were meant to assist them.

Pray: for Theresa May to grant amnesty to the 'deeply traumatised' children living in the 'Jungle'. (Ps.142:4b-6)

More: <http://www.newsjs.com/url.php?p=http://news.sky.com/story/religious-leaders-urge-pm-to-let-migrant-children-in-jungle-into-uk-10611023>

EUROPE

■ Ukraine: country at war, Christian unity

Ukraine is waging war on its own soil; Kiev has a daily 2:30 pm announcement of the communiqué from the front. The Minsk Agreement between Russia-backed separatists and Ukrainian forces is floundering. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch report civilians being held in prisons that authorities say don't exist, and there are ongoing killings. Meanwhile from 6 to 9 October the second World Congress of Christians of Evangelical Faith was held in Lviv with 2,200 delegates from 16 countries, with the theme 'Pentecost - the answer to the challenges of our time'. A Ukrainian bishop said, 'We gathered from different countries to pray in unity and reflect on challenges. As Christians, it is important to understand the time in which we live.' His Russian counterpart replied, 'No matter what happens, we will pray for you and empathise with you. I am honoured to serve God with you. We love you!'

Pray: for the spiritual unity displayed between Russian and Ukrainian Christians to prepare the ground for fresh green shoots of unity between the governments and military of these two nations. (Ps.84:5,6a)

More: <http://www.christiantelegraph.com/issue27799.html>

■ Greece: EU's shameful failure

Amnesty International reported 60,000 refugees stranded in Greece due to EU countries not implementing their agreed migrant quotas. Empty promises leave refugees in appalling conditions. Huge numbers have severe health problems, suffer acute stress, anxiety and depression. Only 7,500 are housed in apartments or hotels. The majority live in camps with conditions unfit even for short-term stay: sleeping on floors, poor hygiene conditions, harassment, violence, and lack of police involvement to resolve conflicts. Amnesty called for the international community to implement its promises and relocate asylum seekers from Greece urgently. The EU should increase the number of relocation places, grant humanitarian visas and establish fast-track and accessible family reunification procedures. The mechanisms to distribute asylum seekers across the EU already exist, but member states are either stalling or actively resisting efforts to implement them.

Pray: for all EU member countries to pull together and deal with the refugee migration situation. (Pr.3:35)

More: <https://www.rt.com/news/360268-amnesty-refugees-stranded-greece/>

WORLDWIDE

■ Haiti: aftermath of the hurricane

Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos is a Christian orphanage, nurturing vulnerable children in family environments. One worker writes, 'Finally the winds have eased and we can move about. So many stories of devastation after the hurricane. Houses gone, roofs blown away, animals lost, gardens destroyed - so, so sad. The worst of the storm came in gusts. I imagined Hurricane Matthew was a big dragon, blowing destruction on everyone. I was terrified trees would fall on us and I prayed to God to send His angels to hold back the trees. I imagined the angels doing just that. As I walked around the property this morning I couldn't help thinking the angels had been at work. Some trees fell inches away from children's homes. The outdoor chapel is a mess, but is the only area in the whole property where there are no houses. How wonderful that Matthew claimed his trees there and not elsewhere!'

Pray: for survivors burying the dead. Pray for God's provision for the displaced seeking shelter, without food, electricity, medicines, clothing or clean water; facing overwhelming uncertainty. (Pr.27:26,27)

More: https://www.nph.org/ws/page.php?path=news/archive/2016/haiti/haitcontinues.php&gclid=CjwKEAjw-Oy_BRDg4lqok57a4kcSJADsuDK1Ez8BfVrpJlazP1LNrHjcXB-eFKou-6atpYWyWLJTCxoC3zTw_wcB

■ Central Asia: press freedom

In Azerbaijan, investigative journalist, former political prisoner, and Radio Free Europe contributor Khadija Ismayilova told a US congressional hearing of the harsh conditions faced by journalists who report on high-level corruption, saying, 'There are no laws which state that journalism is a crime - but where critical journalism is concerned, it is difficult to enforce the rule of law.' 138 political prisoners are in Azerbaijani prisons. In Belarus a blacklisted rock star who uses music to fight censorship has been given a Freemuse award for promoting freedom of expression through music (awarded annually by a Swedish organisation which advocates and defends freedom of expression). In Crimea, Mykola Semena, who contributes to a Crimea Realities website, was charged under the Russian criminal code after he wrote an article saying that Crimea, annexed by Moscow in 2014, should be returned to Ukraine. He is currently under house arrest in Simferopol.

Pray: for independent journalists and human rights defenders in areas lacking honest journalism. (Pr.21:15)

More: <http://www.rferl.org/p/5788.html>

■ Ethiopia: teenagers on trial for evangelism

Ethiopian evangelical Christians frequently face discrimination and harassment. Eden (15), Gifti and Mihiret (both 14), and Deborah (18) were distributing a Christian book in Ethiopia's main language entitled 'Let's speak the truth in love - answers to questions'. The book answers questions posed about the Christian faith by a South African Islamic scholar who used to be head of the Islamic Propagation Centre International. Christians in a town east of Addis Ababa decided to distribute it following cross-cultural evangelism training. Local Muslims said the book was an insult to Islam. The four girls have made several court appearances and their case has been transferred to a higher court in Harar. Eden was beaten in prison but said, 'This suffering is an honour for us. We should expect persecution. We are not afraid. We are singing and praying here in prison.' Deborah said, 'It is an honour to be jailed for God's Kingdom.'

Pray: for the teenagers' faith to continue to be unshaken; for their safety and speedy release from prison. (Lk.10:19)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/four.ethiopian.teenagers.on.trial.for.evangelism/97713.htm>

■ Israel: terrorists and financing terror

A terror attack began at Ammunition Hill in Jerusalem on Sunday morning. The terrorist fired from his car at a train, wounding one woman critically. He then drove to Shimon Hatzadik train stop and opened fire at another car, wounding another woman. Meanwhile, Hezbollah's drug smuggling operations, used to finance terror in northern Israel, were exposed on an IDF interactive website last week. In July six suspects were arrested on suspicion of smuggling explosives that had been discovered south of Metulla and taken into custody for planning to carry out major terror attacks in Israel, according to a statement by the intelligence agency. In recent years, security services have dealt with several cases in which links were discovered between routes for smuggling drugs from Lebanon into Israel and routes for the infiltration of war material. See: <http://www.jewishpress.com/news/breaking-news/6-member-hezbollah-terror-cell-discovered-operating-in-northern-israel/2016/10/06/>

Pray: for smuggling attempts to be foiled and all those involved arrested; for perceptive information gathering and sharing across Israel/Lebanese border fences and deeper inside Israel. (Pr.18:11,12a)

More: http://www.jewishpress.com/news/breaking-news/terror-attack-in-jerusalem-terrorist-neutralized/2016/10/09/?pushcrew_powered

■ Venezuela: eating garbage to survive

Venezuela, once a candidate for 1st World status, has deteriorated to many citizens eating from dustbins to survive. A study found 15% of Venezuelans feed themselves exclusively with 'food waste discarded by commercial establishments'. 75% of all Venezuelans do not eat a diet of breakfast, lunch and dinner every day. 54 % go to bed hungry, and 52% buy food through the black market. 48% took time off work to search for food. Many believe the severe food shortage is caused by Venezuela's socialist economy. William Murray, chairman of the Religious Freedom Coalition, noted that when prices are allowed to rise in accordance with market forces, as in a free enterprise system, demand is reduced to a manageable level. But in Venezuela's centrally-planned economy, the government does not allow producers to raise prices on their goods to keep up with increases in the cost of production. Therefore, producers cannot afford to produce as much as is needed, and shortages result.

Pray: for President Nicolas Maduro to review his rationing system, and end police and military crackdowns on anyone trying to buy more than their allotted ration. Pray for a just and free marketplace. (Pr.11:24)

More: <http://www.wnd.com/2016/10/socialism-has-venezuelans-eating-garbage-to-survive/>

■ Aleppo being 'held hostage'

UN Syria envoy Staffan de Mistura appealed to Jabhat al-Nusra, Syria's al-Qaeda affiliate, to leave Aleppo saying, '1,000 of you are deciding the destiny of the 275,000 civilians.' Jabhat al-Nusra's role in Aleppo is omitted from most mainstream press accounts. John Kerry said, 'Russia and the Syrian regime owe the world an explanation as to why they keep hitting hospitals, medical facilities, children and women'. He called for war crimes investigations. The understandable impulse to assist Syrians suffering as a result of war is heartfelt and laudable – but for policymakers, there is also the need to weigh the consequences of military action, reflecting on what was learned from interventions in Iraq, Libya and Afghanistan. Even the establishment of humanitarian or safe zones would entail a 'major combat mission.' See also article 4 in the British Isles section.

Pray: for the terrorists to leave the city, and the Syrian and Russian governments to end the siege. (Is.9:7)

More: <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/10/un-syria-envoy-nusra-aleppo-hostage.html>

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