

# 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

- ✦ [45,000 people baptised at Saddleback Church](#)
- ✦ [A remarkable day](#)

## ■ British Isles & Ireland

- ✦ [We're all equal](#)
- ✦ ['Offensive' teaching of Jesus?](#)
- ✦ [Praying for parliament](#)
- ✦ [Theresa May's first EU summit as PM](#)
- ✦ [Archbishop meets Patriarch](#)
- ✦ [MakeLunch](#)
- ✦ [The Bible? Not for me, say most Britons](#)

## ■ Europe

- ✦ [France: migrants leave Calais](#)
- ✦ [EU/UK freedom of press?](#)

## ■ Worldwide

- ✦ [Syria: points for prayer](#)
- ✦ [Iraq: fears as government troops attack Mosul](#)
- ✦ [Asia: persecution increasing](#)
- ✦ [Australia: October - month of prayer for marriage](#)
- ✦ [Israel: UNESCO votes against Jewish connection to Temple Mount](#)
- ✦ [Pakistan: Aasia Bibi appeal adjourned again](#)

## PRAISE REPORTS

### ■ 45,000 people baptised at Saddleback Church

Rick Warren called the moment 'historic' when Alberto Flores became the 45,000th person to be baptised by the church. Flores was baptised along with his 13-year-old son, Andre. 'This weekend is a historic weekend for our church,' Warren told his congregation last Sunday, 'Somebody in this group is going to be the 45,000th baptism of Saddleback Church, and I'm going to take that person out to lunch.' Almost 800 people were baptised across Saddleback's 16 campuses last weekend alone, taking the total to 45,743. The news follows research that suggests the US church is in decline: Saddleback said it saw its own increasing number of baptisms as a source of encouragement in contrast to these pessimistic reports.

**Praise:** [God for being in the midst of His people as nations go through seasons of change. \(Ps.51:12\)](#)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/45000.people.baptised.at.rick.warrens.saddleback.church/98058.htm>

### ■ A remarkable day

The Trumpet Call national day of prayer in Birmingham on 15 October was a time of release and re-commissioning. Jesus is calling His church to pray and evangelise. We remembered the life-changing work of redemption, mercy, restoration, reconciliation, unity and freedom. Six ministries with focus on these themes shared their vision, and we prayed for their work. As we prayed, a trumpet was sounded and the 1,500 audience made Gospel declarations. It was a day of prayer and praise, with many moments of God's tangible presence. As a nation we are called to pray for the power of the Gospel to be released in this land, for unity and respect across generations, ministries, churches and cultures, for the return of the prodigals to the cross of Jesus, and for children to enter into the fullness of who God called them to be. There is a unique call on the British Isles to take the Gospel to other nations, and pray with renewed vigour for the persecuted church. See: <https://www.facebook.com/WorldPrayerCentreInt/videos/>

**Praise:** [God for His new Trumpet Call for the church to unite, pray and go. \(Jn.4:14b\)](#)

**More:** <http://wpc.prayerhub.org/world-prayer-centre-news/item/8727-a-remarkable-day-of-prayer>

## BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

### ■ We're all equal

Today, possibly as you are reading this article, Lord Shinkwin's Abortion (Disability Equality) Bill is receiving its second reading in the House of Lords. Under current law (the 1967 Abortion Act) an unborn child with a disability can be aborted right up to birth; the new bill seeks to remove that possibility. Please pray. The law says we're all equal. Discrimination on the grounds of disability was made illegal by the 1995 Disability Discrimination Act, but legal and lethal discrimination on grounds of disability has been a reality for almost fifty years. Unless we pray and act to change the law and ensure disability can no longer be given as a reason for termination right up to birth, it will continue to happen.

**Pray:** for the law to be changed that lists disability or 'handicap' as grounds for abortion. (Ps.127:3)

**More:** [http://allequal.org.uk/?Concern&utm\\_term=0\\_9e164371ca-d1147a55bc-127499253](http://allequal.org.uk/?Concern&utm_term=0_9e164371ca-d1147a55bc-127499253)

#### ▣ 'Offensive' teaching of Jesus?

Repentance isn't preached so much any more. We can dress up the concept in all sorts of fancy terms for those who do not yet believe. It seems offensive to tell people who live in a self-centred, self-sufficient society that they need to recognise they are sinners and surrender to Jesus. But that's the gospel, the good news, the pearl of great price. Our salvation costs us everything - but gives us so much more. It is also worrying that we do not now talk much about holding short accounts with God. We don't often acknowledge that as fallen humans we have a tendency to sin, and as Christians we still have to face that battle every day. Also, what about keeping our hearts softened towards the Holy Spirit, so that we can hear his whispers? When editing Bible study notes I was asked to find alternatives words for 'sin' and 'repentance', because they might turn readers off. I understand the need to be relevant, but teaching that strikes at the heart is exactly what's needed.

**Pray:** for the Church to remember the full message our Saviour preached. (Acts 2:38)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/the.offensive.teaching.of.jesus.that.christians.have.tried.to.to.ne.down/98311.htm>

#### ▣ Praying for parliament

There is an active community of Christians from both houses of parliament who regularly pray, worship and study the Bible together. A strong focus at the moment is Brexit. We can pray for the responsibilities of office and the difficulties of decision-making to be made clear through God's anointing on individuals and their commitment to stand and state their convictions based on God's Word. Pray for the wise use of money and resources, for the opposition parties in the task of constructively holding the government to account, and for Christian MPs' faith to grow. Pray for policy issues abroad, asking God to create constructive relationships between nations and their representatives, and for grace, wisdom and discernment in their dealings with each other. Pray also for domestic policy issues, and for Government responsibilities towards those in education, health, police, the armed forces, social and welfare services. Pray for them to handle issues of terrorism, its threat and its causes, with great wisdom.

**Pray:** for Christians in parliament to speak out and be a collective voice for all that is good. (Ps.72:2)

**More:** <http://www.eauk.org/current-affairs/politics/get-involved/prayer-for-parliament.cfm>

#### ▣ Theresa May's first EU summit as PM

The Brussels summit, which brought together the leaders of all EU member states, did not particularly focus on the UK's Brexit. The official agenda was dominated by migration, trade and Russia. However, Brexit still loomed large, particularly at a working dinner last night, where Mrs May gave a brief 'Brexit update'. Open discussion has been ruled out but Brexit will remain the red, white and blue elephant in the room during all the official discussions tabled at this summit. There is a distinct hardening of attitudes, even amongst Britain's closest EU allies like Germany. Leading Brexiteers boast confidently that Europe's most powerful nation is bound to push hard for a good EU deal for the UK. They cite German self-interest and a four-letter word - cars. The UK is Germany's third largest export market, while one in five German cars is sold in Britain. See: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-37711570>

**Pray:** for Theresa May's speeches and every conversation she has at the conference. (Ps.119:65,66)

**More:** <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-37710786>

#### ▣ Archbishop meets Patriarch

The Archbishop of Canterbury met for the first time with His Holiness Kirill, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, amid what Lambeth Palace acknowledged are 'tensions' between Russia and the UK. Earlier, Welby and the Bishop of London were present as the Queen hosted the Patriarch at Buckingham Palace. The relationship between the two churches has endured for more than three centuries. The two men discussed the persecution of Christians around the world, especially in the Middle East. In a statement they acknowledged that tensions currently exist between the governments of their two countries, but they agreed that the first loyalty of the Christian Church is to the Lord Jesus Christ, and they affirmed that reconciliation is the key ministry of the Church in situations of conflict.

**Pray:** for their witness of unity to be noted and eventually duplicated by those currently in the midst of UK / Russia tensions over the war in Syria. (Ps.133:1)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/archbishop.of.canterbury.welcomes.russian.orthodox.patriarch.to.lambeth.palace/98318.htm>

#### ▣ MakeLunch

Schools next week will be on their half term break. Their kitchens will be closed. Nearly two million children rely on free school meals as their only hot meal of the day. MakeLunch is a network of churches working to fill the holiday hunger gap. Volunteers based in churches, community centres or sometimes school buildings believe that one meal for one child makes a difference. Not daunted by the scale of the issue, they focus on providing what they can when they can, offering a free hot meal to children from low-income families, and seeking to ensure that the families that need it the most get invited. Just one example is St Mark's Church in Milton Keynes which will provide 300 children with meals this half term, in three primary schools and a children's centre. Rev'd Paul Oxley talks about how his church's involvement in meals provision for children has grown over the last year. Listen to the story at: <http://bit.ly/2e5vl39>

**Pray:** for more donations, volunteers, and evangelistic networking. (Mt.25:35)

**More:** <https://www.makelunch.org.uk/>

### ■ The Bible? Not for me, say most Britons

For almost 75 years it has been a reassuring weekly fixture following an unchanged format, part of the fabric of the nation. But the pace and reach of social change appear to have left Desert Island Discs behind. A new poll suggests that only 31% of people in the UK would like a copy of the Bible to take to a desert island. The Radio 4 programme's imaginary castaways are given a Bible and the complete works of Shakespeare, along with their choice of eight pieces of music, another book and one luxury item. With increasing secularity and diversity of British society, the poll found that 56% of respondents would not choose a Bible, and 13% were unsure. Fewer than one in three welcomed the inclusion of a Bible in their musical and literary accompaniments to a solitary existence. There was a noticeable generational difference: 18% of 18-to-24-year-olds would choose a Bible, compared with 39% of over-65s.

**Pray:** for Church-led evangelistic Bible-based creative initiatives that will engage with today's culture. (Ps.1:3)

**More:** <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/oct/15/desert-island-discs-bible-radio-4>

## EUROPE

### ■ France: migrants leave Calais

Migrants have had to leave the 'Jungle' camp as the French government is about to bulldoze the area. They were given free suitcases to pack up their belongings and leave. Some queued for food handouts, while one man was pictured receiving a haircut by another migrant. On the fringes of the camp a coach-load of refugee families, including young children, left Calais ready to start new lives in the south of France. Among the first to claim a seat were Naeqebullah Noorzada from Afghanistan, his three children (aged eight, six and ten), and his sister-in-law. He paid people-smugglers £24,000 to get his family out of his war-torn country via Iran and Turkey before reaching Europe by boat. Mr Noorzada said, 'There are many problems here, particularly if you have children, so we are moving to the south near the Spanish border. We had to escape the Taliban. I want my children to have an education.'

**Pray:** for the safety of 10,000 migrants and refugees being moved to reception centres and for the unaccompanied children attempting to exercise their rights to asylum in the UK. (1Pt.5:7)

**More:** <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3848084/The-day-Jungle-Migrants-given-free-suitcases-pack-belongings-leave-makeshift-camp-bulldozed.html>

### ■ EU/UK freedom of press?

Russia Today (RT) UK news channel has its offices in England and covers global, political, business, sport and current affairs. On Monday they were told that their bank accounts will be frozen. John Laughland, Director of Studies at the Institute of Democracy and Cooperation in Paris, believes this decision is politically inspired. He said, 'My suspicion is that it's part of a coordinated and Europe-wide policy of harassment against organisations associated with Russia', adding that a decision made six months ago at an EU summit to restrict 'Russian propaganda and disinformation' is being implemented. The EU has established a special unit specifically designed to combat Russian disinformation - particularly RT, which they say has irritated people in the West because of its strong editorial policies.

**Pray:** for freedom of all press that is not obscene or breaking UK laws. (Ps.45:4)

**More:** <https://www.rt.com/news/363013-rt-uk-accounts-blocked/>

## WORLDWIDE

### ■ Syria: points for prayer

What began five years ago as a peaceful uprising by Syrians complaining about high unemployment, corruption, lack of political freedom and a state repression under President Bashar al-Assad has now left 250,000+ dead. A key factor in the escalation of violence has been intervention by regional and world powers. The military, financial and political support for government and opposition by Iran, Russia, Saudi Arabia, USA and the UK has contributed directly to the intensification and continuation of the fighting, which has turned Syria into a battleground. The UK has sent £100m through the Conflict Stability and Security Fund for non-humanitarian purposes, and heavily-armed members of the SAS have been photographed on patrol inside Syria. British special forces, operating from Jordan, have been working since the spring with the Syrian rebels to open a new southern front against IS. See: <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/sas-troops-deployed-at-rebel-base-in-syria-j5xrvhpkj> and <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-35806229>

**Pray:** for a resolution to this bloody civil war. Pray also for outside military powers to step back from escalating the war, and for a stable peaceful Syrian state to emerge with an inclusive government. (Is.59:15b,16)

**More:** <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-17258397>

### ■ Iraq: fears as government troops attack Mosul

As the attacks on Mosul intensify, concerns mount over the scale of potential civilian injuries or deaths. The Red Cross said that they are prepared for chemical weapons being used. 200,000 civilians are expected to be displaced in the early weeks of the campaign, possibly the largest humanitarian operation this year. A total of eleven camps, to provide shelter for 120,000, will be ready soon. On Wednesday, Iraqi forces advanced further and retook Qaraqosh, a majority-Christian town captured by IS in 2014: at that time the expulsion of its residents sparked concern over the future of Christianity in the region. The UN reported that thousands of Mosul residents were trafficked to Syria's Al Hol refugee camp. Refugees will use Al Hol as a staging-post before moving back across the border to a safe Iraq location. Al Hol will eventually take up to 50,000 people. The camp currently has just 16 latrines and no clean water. See: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-37701235>

**Pray:** for Mosul residents to escape safely, and for aid agencies preparing to care for the influx of people. (Ps.40:13)

**More:** <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/oct/19/mosul-thousands-flee-syrian-refugee-camps-iraqi-forces-close-city>

#### ▣ Asia: persecution increasing

The high-end estimate for the number of Christians killed for their faith in the world every year, which comes from the Centre for the Study of Global Christianity, is around 100,000. The Global Council for Indian Christians, a largely Protestant body in India, estimates for the last decade that there has been an average of one violent assault on a Christian in their country every other day. It also condemned a recent attempt by radical Hindus to storm the United Theological College in Bangalore, and all other acts of violence against Christian institutions. In Indonesia on 18 October it was reported that a Muslim woman was flogged 23 times in the province of Aceh for standing too close to her boyfriend. She was one of 13 people flogged recently for breaking Sharia law in Aceh. Floggings have spiked in the province.

**Pray:** for Christians in the west to advocate, speak out and bring greater awareness and attention to the plight of Christians who are being persecuted in their homelands. (2Sa.15:4)

**More:** <http://www.persecution.in/>

#### ▣ Australia: October - month of prayer for marriage

Scripture and the Church's history give us many examples of the great impact when a whole community undertakes prayer and fasting together. All Christians everywhere are invited to unite for a month of prayer and fasting in parishes, schools and homes across Australia during the month of October 2016. It is hoped that this time of national conversation on the subject of marriage will be used to encourage everyone to pray for the well-being of marriages and families, and in a particular way for people who are 'same-sex attracted' or 'gender-questioning' to think deeply. Resources for the month include a parish and school resource kit, bulletin clips and prayers for each Sunday, a poster, prayer cards, and a downloadable resource kit.

**Pray:** for this fasting and prayer to usher in healing and strengthening of Australian marriages. (1Ki.8:45)

**More:** <http://www.acmfc.org.au/month-of-prayer-and-fasting/>

#### ▣ Israel: UNESCO votes against Jewish connection to Temple Mount

UNESCO, the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, at its executive board meeting in Paris passed a Palestinian-backed measure with 24 votes in favour, 6 against and 26 abstentions, referring to the Temple Mount as Al Haram Al Sharif (the Islamic name) without mentioning that it is the holiest site in Judaism. It also used the term Buraq Plaza for the Western Wall Plaza, denying the Jewish connection to the site. Hebron's Tomb of the Patriarchs is called al-Haram al-Ibrahimi, and Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem called the Bilal ibn Rabah Mosque. Israel's delegate to UNESCO said, 'Israel and the Jewish people don't require UNESCO's or any other country's confirmation of the special connection between the Jewish people and the State of Israel. There is no connection of another people to another place in the world that comes close to the strength and depth of our connection to Jerusalem from a religious, historical and national perspective.'

**Pray:** for the Jewish connection of thousands of years to Jerusalem and Israel to continue. (Ge.15:18)

**More:** <http://forward.com/news/breaking-news/351907/unesco-votes-against-jewish-connection-to-temple-mount/>

#### ▣ Pakistan: Aasia Bibi appeal adjourned again

Since 1987 more than 1,300 people in Pakistan have been charged with blasphemy, with the number of accusations in a single year rising to over a hundred in 2014. A disproportionate number of those accused are Christians. A lawyer, a judge and two leading politicians have been assassinated for taking a stand against the blasphemy laws. Aasia Bibi's appeal against her death sentence for apostasy has been adjourned again, following the decision of a leading judge to withdraw from the trial on the grounds of conflict of interest. The blasphemy laws are being used to fuel the flames of intolerance and must be repealed but it will take immense courage to withstand intimidation and release Aasia Bibi - a fact underlined by the large number of riot police at the court. 150 Muslim clerics have issued a fatwa warning the government not to release Bibi, and threatening to kill anyone who helped any person accused of blasphemy.

**Pray:** for Bibi and 15+ others on death row on blasphemy charges, and for an end to the blasphemy laws. (Ex.23:6)

**More:** <http://www.eauk.org/church/stories/asia-bibi-appeal-adjourned-again.cfm>

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE WORLD PRAYER CENTRE, BIRMINGHAM, UK

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