

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

editor@prayer-alert.net

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PRaise REPORTS

■ Houses Of Parliament - Red light for persecuted believers

#RedWednesday, an initiative spearheaded by the advocacy charity 'Aid to the Church in Need', is highlighting a lack of religious freedom in countries around the world. The Houses of Parliament, the Liberal Jewish Synagogue in St John's Wood, the Coptic Orthodox Cathedral in Stevenage, and Bolton Town Hall, are among dozens of buildings including churches, synagogues and mosques across the UK who lit up their buildings red on Wednesday to mark a show of solidarity with anyone persecuted for their faith. Lord Alton of Liverpool said, 'In this month of remembrance we are right to stand in solidarity with those who suffer. Our Houses of Parliament represent the struggle for liberty and freedom. In bathing them in red we commemorate those who enjoy none of those privileges and it is an earnest of our determination that they should.'

Praise: God for this demonstration of recognising those seeking freedom of expression. (Pr.29:26)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/houses.of.parliament.to.be.lit.red.for.persecuted.believers/101508.htm>

■ 'Son of God' and 'The Bible' Series - launch a TV Network

Actress Roma Downey and her husband, producer Mark Burnett, are to launch a new family and faith TV network. 'Light TV' will start next month on major broadcast networks in New York, Los Angeles and Chicago 24 hours a day. The network was created by Downey's LightWorkers Media and will now partner with MGM films and Fox to provide wholesome family and faith-based films and TV series. 'This is the beginning of our new, multi-platform faith and family network, where the demand is greater than ever for family-friendly entertainment,' Downey told Variety Magazine.

Praise: God for inspiring, Christian, uplifting programming that families can watch on a safe platform. (Ps.4:6)

More: <http://www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/us/2016/november/oldest-known-ten-commandments-tablet-sold>

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Dangerous days

There is a desperate need today for Christians of understanding and wisdom, who are able to pray strategically and witness to the truth in their sphere of influence in these dangerous days for Britain and the USA. Both are seeing an unprecedented level of social and political unrest. Both have had national referendums, democratically conducted. But both are now seeing these democratic resolutions challenged. In the US, 4 million people have signed petitions calling upon the Electoral College to reverse the decision of the people and appoint Hillary Clinton as President-elect. Technically this could happen. In the UK the Lib Dems, backed by Tony Blair, are campaigning for a second referendum to overturn the referendum

decision which they do not like. The UK party that championed democracy is now seeking to undermine democracy and to defy the will of the people. Many Christians on both sides of the Atlantic sense a great spiritual battle is raging over our nations for the soul of the West.

Pray: for the centuries of biblical heritage to stand firm in the face of opposition (Eph.6:12)

More: http://www.prophecytoday.uk/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=551:dangerous-days&Itemid=151&Itemid=101

▣ Autumn Statement

Denis Healey delivered the first version of the Autumn Statement in 1975 and made it a duty for the Government to publish two economic updates a year. On Wednesday the Chancellor of the Exchequer said, 'I am abolishing the Autumn Statement'. The Budget which happens in the spring will in future be the only update to the country on UK economic situations. Wednesday's Autumn Statement on taxation and spending plans was based on updated independent economic forecasts and projections by the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR). We can pray for our nation to be blessed and not cursed by these projections, that we lend and not borrow, create wealth and steward wealth wisely. We can pray also for Philip Hammond, civil servants and all working at the Treasury, for this year's economic projections, departmental spending allocations and Budget taxation plans to be wisely and successfully implemented and not blurred.

Pray: for long-term stability, investment in innovation, and for the UK to live within its means (1Tim. 6:10)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-37989374>

▣ #JoyToTheWorld this Christmas!

1 December sees the launch of www.achristmasnearyou.org which allows people to find their nearest Christmas church services wherever they live in the UK. The Church of England already has nearly 19,000 Christmas services and events registered online but now they want to upload other denominations on to the site and are asking churches to go to www.achristmasnearyou.org/upload to enter their individual churches and their service details so that people across the country can find out about the nearest service to where they live and join the #JoyToTheWorld campaign. The organisers will be sharing four Christmas videos throughout December and encouraging people to share their #JoyToTheWorld on social media. People can also download resources for their church at www.achristmasnearyou.org/resources.

Pray: for God's blessings over this website; for many prodigals to find it and use it this year. (Ps.119:176)

More: <https://www.achristmasnearyou.org/>

▣ 'JAMS' will be crushed over 5 years

The Autumn Statement offers little help to the 'Just About Managing' classes. Their overall incomes are set to be squeezed even more severely over the course of this Parliament than previously thought, according to a new analysis by the Resolution Foundation think-tank. They calculate that the inflation-adjusted incomes of the entire bottom third of the income distribution - the least well-off thirty per cent of households - will fall between 2015 and 2020. We can pray for the finances of the United Kingdom to function according to Kingdom values and the purposes and that plans in the recent Autumn Statement will bless the people. We can also pray for an end to greed, excesses and mismanagement by organisations.

Pray: for Government directives and individual company desires to be developed righteously (Pr.19:1)

More: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/the-one-chart-that-shows-the-incomes-of-the-jams-will-be-crushed-a7436206.html>

▣ Ashers may be able to appeal gay cake case again

Ashers bakery has been told it may be able to take its fight against a discrimination ruling to the UK Supreme Court. The Christian-owned bakery was ruled to have broken discrimination laws by refusing to make a cake with a slogan supporting gay marriage. It appealed the verdict but the Court of Appeal rejected it. The Christian Institute, which is supporting the McArthur family who own Ashers bakery, said in a hearing on Tuesday that it could potentially launch another appeal in the Supreme Court through what the Institute called 'a little known legal provision'. The Court has asked the McArthur family's lawyers to provide written submissions 'probably within the next week', according to the Institute. At Tuesday's hearing it was also said that the Attorney General, who intervened in their earlier case at the Court of Appeal, was seeking to refer the Ashers' case to the Supreme Court 'on devolution issues'.

Pray: for the recent ruling to be seen to undermine democratic freedom and religious freedom. (Ps.37:31)

More: <http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Ashers-may-be-able-to-appeal-gay-cake-case-again>

▣ England, N.Ireland, Scotland, Wales and Brexit

The Government is appealing against a High Court ruling that MPs must vote on triggering Article 50. The Scottish and Welsh Governments' senior law officers will also take part in the appeal. Further, an ancient Scottish 'Claim of Right' is to be used - triggering article 50 without MPs' vote would be in breach of a Scottish 1689 'radical revolutionary tradition' that has been 'enshrined in Scottish law for more than 300 years'. Northern Ireland's Attorney General is expected to take part in the court hearing, increasing the chances that the cross-border deal with the Republic of Ireland in the Good Friday agreement will also become part of the legal argument. We can pray that the activation of Article 50 and Brexit deadline will align with God's timing and that the influence of the Scottish Parliament, Welsh and Northern Ireland assemblies, every Court Decision and vote of Parliament will come together in God's timing.

Pray: for the strategies of heaven to be over all matters concerning Brexit (Ps.19:1)

More: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/nov/21/scottish-claim-of-right-brexit-case-against-uk-government-artical-50-supreme-court>

▣ Lost Media - 3 million people on Facebook hearing about Jesus

A new initiative hopes to drop evangelistic messages into people's Facebook news feed. Not cheesy cliché-ridden content, but attention-grabbing Christian content. This resource is focusing on the hundreds of millions of unchurched who need the

gospel in the UK, Europe and America. Lost Media's mission is to reach those who have no connection to Christianity and build a bridge with entertaining, relevant content which challenges their perceptions of Jesus, the Bible and Christianity. They will do this exclusively on Social Media. Lost Media TV will create and distribute high-quality Christian content across social media channels to promote the Gospel message and they hope to launch this Christmas if they get enough funding.

Pray: for many to catch this vision of evangelism through social media and become involved. Pray for the funding to launch it to be raised and for millions to be saved. (Ro.1:16)

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

EUROPE

■ Turkey: EU membership and Christian persecution

The European Parliament has voted to suspend Turkey's EU membership talks because of the Turkish government's crackdown since the coup attempt in July. The MEPs' non-binding vote has already been dismissed as "worthless" by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Meanwhile the Church in the country is being affected by the presence of radical Islam, the ethnic conflict, and a regime that aims to Islamise the country. The renewed fighting between the government's military forces and the Kurds is stimulating Turkish nationalism to new heights, which is impacting all believers, but converts from Islam most of all. Pressure on Christian converts from both family and community is acute. The presence of Islamic fundamentalists has already proved to be a huge threat for Protestant pastors; Open Doors say that Muslim-background believers can expect similar treatment. But we can praise God for signs of reconciliation between Armenian and Turkish Christians; ask Him to make the Church in Turkey healthy and strong. See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-38090121>

Pray: for God to protect and give courage to believers, especially recipients of death threats. (Job 11:18)

More: http://www.opendoorsuk.org/persecution/worldwatch/turkey.php?gclid=Cj0KEQIAvNrBBRDe3IOwzLn6_O4BEiQ_AmbK-DkMitP6vTBb5maLE0VOVDhdZS_xcaepZdPAx08dQGAaAnzk8P8HAQ

■ Islam in Europe

The arrival of hundreds of thousands of mostly Muslim refugees in Europe have drawn renewed attention to the continent's Muslim population. In many European countries, including France, Belgium, Germany, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, concerns about growing Muslim communities have led to calls for restrictions on immigration. Germany and France have the largest Muslim populations. The Muslim share of Europe's total population has been increasing steadily. By 2030 Muslims are projected to make up 8% of Europe's population. The average age of Muslims throughout Europe is eight years younger than the median for all Europeans. Views of Muslims vary widely across European countries, but ten nations in eastern and southern Europe have prevailing negative views while respondents in the UK, Germany, France, Sweden and the Netherlands gave Muslims a favourable rating. We can pray for the Church to develop culturally relevant and powerful evangelism tailored specifically for our Muslim neighbours.

Pray: for God to prevail over all issues of immigration within Europe and for the gospel to spread to the previously unreached people who are now entering Europe. (Eph.1:13)

More: <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/07/19/5-facts-about-the-muslim-population-in-europe/>

WORLDWIDE

■ Israel: Trump win prompts building spree

Jerusalem municipality will authorise the construction of 1,400 apartments in the Ramat Shlomo neighbourhood in the wake of Donald Trump's election. Previously they said that fears of antagonising Washington delayed their approval of wider construction plans for Jerusalem. In addition to the 1,440 homes, further plans include 3,000 units in Gilo and 2,600 in the Givat Hamatos neighbourhood. The international community regards these neighbourhoods as settlements, Israel considers them as neighbourhoods of annexed East Jerusalem and argues that it will be part of Israel in any negotiated peace agreement. Trump's vocal support is at odds with traditional US opposition to construction beyond the Green Line. Trump has called Jerusalem 'Israel's capital' and vowed to move the US Embassy there, essentially offering support for Israeli moves there. But the Palestinian Authority promised to 'make life miserable' for Donald Trump if he moves the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. see: <http://www.cufi.org.uk/news/palestinian-authority-threaten-us-over-trumps-promise-to-move-embassy-to-jerusalem/>

Pray: for these decisions and proposals to progress peacefully. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. (Is.31:5)

More: <http://www.timesofisrael.com/trump-win-spurs-plans-for-jerusalem-building-spree-over-green-line/>

■ Global: Helping children overcome the effects of war

Iraq is home to 3.4 million displaced Iraqis and provides sanctuary for a quarter of a million Syrian refugees. Agencies can get children who have fled from war back into school, but many children suffer from toxic stress and find it difficult to learn. Standing in front of her class of Syrian refugees, teacher Shirin asks her students to close their eyes. The children oblige and begin taking deep breaths in and out. Shirin describes how they should picture themselves blowing out five candles, inhaling the scent of a flower, and then when exhaling 'imagine you are blowing out a candle.' She repeats this five times, until the children have blown out five candles. Emotional learning techniques rebuild healthy brain structures and neurological connections damaged by trauma-induced 'toxic stress'. Benefits include improved academic performance, better social skills, positive self-image, as well as decreased aggression and emotional distress. Across the region, there are 6.5 million child refugees like Shirin's class.

Pray: for more safe healing and learning spaces to be developed in classrooms across Lebanon, Iraq and northern Syria so that more children can rebuild their education and their lives. (Ps.102:28)

More: <https://www.rescue-uk.org/article/inhale-exhale-helping-children-overcome-effects-war>

▣ Uganda: Property grabbing and plea-bargaining

With insecure land rights it's almost impossible for the poor to overcome poverty. A house and a small patch of land are their shelter, food and desperately needed income. But for widowed women and orphaned children even this fragile foundation is not safe. Powerful relatives or neighbours often steal their meagre property with violence or lies. However, we can praise God for a conviction in Gulu, achieved through plea-bargaining. This relates to the case of an 82-year-old woman who was physically threatened and then had false charges made against her, putting her and multiple children on her family's compound at risk. This is the first time an International Justice Mission team has achieved a conviction through plea-bargaining. Please pray for more convictions to be attained in Uganda through this effective and time-saving method.

Pray: for the remaining perpetrators in this case to be brought to justice as well. (Lamentations 3:34-36)

More: http://web.ijm.org/site/MessageViewer?em_id=44689.0&dlv_id=53087

▣ Indonesia: IS-inspired attacks

Two-year-old Intan Olivia Marbun was playing with other children outside the church in Samarinda when an attacker on a motorbike threw explosives into a parking area in front of the church. She died the following day from extensive burns and respiratory problems. Three other children are being treated in hospital. The attacker was wearing a T-shirt with 'jihad' written on it - and has previously been jailed for involvement in terrorist activity. He was arrested with five others. They are believed to be part of Jamaah Anshorut Tauhid (JAT), an Islamist group that supports IS. There have been a number of IS-inspired attacks in Indonesia. In the middle of a church service on 28 August in Medan, a Muslim man attempted to detonate a suicide bomb but when this failed he attacked the pastor leading the service with an axe.

Pray: for the Indonesian Christians, who until a generation ago, lived peacefully with Muslims (Hab.1:2)

More: <https://barnabasfund.org/news/Two-year-old-Christian-girl-dies-from-injuries-after-Indonesian-church-attack>

▣ Lebanon: Decides to build a wall

A controversial 'security' wall, with watchtowers, around the country's largest Palestinian refugee camp began to take shape on Sunday. The decision was taken by Lebanese authorities in coordination with Palestinian factions running the camp. On Thursday the army 'paused' the construction which residents call the 'wall of shame.' It is unclear whether construction will continue in the face of opposition. While the camp is already blocked off with metal fences and army checkpoints, officials said the wall was necessary to control radical armed groups fuelling violence within the camps. Regular clashes between various factions have continuously put refugee lives at risk. Last year fighting displaced thousands and injured tens of residents. Over 70,000 Palestinians live inside the camp, many calling the wall Lebanon's latest act of discrimination against them, comparing it with Israel's Separation Wall in and around the West Bank.

Pray: that this will not become a racist wall. May criminals be caught and the innocent protected. (Ps.122:7)

More: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/11/lebanon-freezes-plan-ain-al-hilweh-racist-wall-161121124417114.html>

▣ Canada: Theology Matters

A five-year study in Ontario called 'Theology Matters' has revealed that churches adhering to conservative theology tend to have better growth-rates. The study compared the traits of growing and declining mainline Protestant church attendances and clergy amongst 2,225 churchgoers and 29 clergy. They noted that the growing churches held more firmly to the traditional beliefs of Christianity and were more diligent in things like prayer and Bible reading. They further noted that the confidence that comes from having a united core set of beliefs can be attractive to outsiders. Confidence mixed with a message that's uplifting, reassuring or basically positive is an attractive combination. They also noted a correlation between clergy who read the Bible daily and viewed evangelism as important for the growth of a church. 71% of clergy in growing churches read the Bible daily, while 19% of clergy in declining churches did not do so.

Pray: for all Canadian churches to grow with committed Spirit-filled Bible-studying Christians (Matthew 16:18)

More: <http://www.christianheadlines.com/blog/study-churches-with-conservative-theology-have-better-growth-rates.html>

▣ Iran: Prisoners for their faith

Nasim - serving a four-year sentence in Evin prison since 2013. Earlier this year Prayer-Alert readers prayed for her health after she went on hunger strike and the prison released her on temporary medical furlough to recover. She did not fully recover and has serious health problems, including a heart condition; pray for her health and for peace for her family. Ebrahim Firouzi - in a particularly dangerous prison in Karaj, serving a five-year sentence for Christian activities. He sent a letter from prison to others in Iran, saying 'If you are courageous in God's way, God's grace will be with you. Do not fear what you are doing and raise the banner of Jesus in the name of God.' There are many others not serving sentences, but detained pre-trial. Among this unknown number, are Amin, Amir and Hadi - arrested on 26 August during a picnic with their families in Tehran province.

Pray: for justice in these cases and for God's protection over His growing Church in Iran. (Acts 9:31b)

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE WORLD PRAYER CENTRE, BIRMINGHAM, UK

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