

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

■ Middle East: moves of the Spirit

Intercessors have been fervently praying for the Muslim world, and God is answering. Bibles for Mideast were miraculously protected when Muslim terrorists interrupted a mass baptism for fifty new Christians. A large dust storm quickly moved in, blocked the militants and drove them away, saving the believers. 10,000 Muslims across the Near East study the Bible together each week, according to Cry Out ministry. Prayer movements are sweeping across the region. Churches are going through renewals as they reach out to migrating Middle East and North African refugees. In Kurdish Iraq, the first Christian church in 1400 years has opened. In Iran, Syria, Jordan, Iraq and Afghanistan, many are coming to Christ. 500 churches are planned to open next year in Jordan, Syria, Iraq and Egypt. In the Middle East people look for churches and Christians after having a vision of Jesus.

Praise: God that in spite of the immense pressure on Christian communities in the Middle East, there has been a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the region this year. (Isaiah 44:3)

More: <http://www.1040windowreporter.com/declaring-his-greatness>

■ Middle East: Christian broadcasting

Christian TV broadcaster SAT-7 broadcasts in the Middle East and North Africa and has just announced record viewership numbers of 21.5 million for its Arabic-language channels. Its audience has increased by 76% in the past five years. This remarkable growth is very encouraging, especially at a time when you would expect people to be preoccupied with hard-news channels due to the ongoing turmoil in the region. 'One explanation for the growth might be that many people are deeply distressed by the situation in the Middle East: they have lost trust and hope in both their religious and political leadership, and they are looking for divine help and guidance. Many are emotionally tired and are searching for something to lift their spirits; some positive news; something that can encourage them. The messages of faith and hope that we broadcast are very attractive to many,' says Dr Terence Ascott, founder and CEO of SAT-7.

Praise: God for the new life He brings through faithful servants developing Christian broadcasting. (Ps.119:105)

More: <https://www.sat7uk.org/new-survey-shows-record-number-sat-7-viewers/?bblinkid=31993747&bbemailid=2494829&bbejrid=179140193>

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Advent 2016

The Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu, is providing a daily online reflection throughout Advent. The Archbishop said, 'I love Advent, it's a wonderful season of watching and waiting.' Across the country denominations and organisations like Bible Lands, Salvation Army, Embrace and many more provide carol services, carol sheets, tips for organising community carol services or outreach nativity services, all-age church resources, and prayer booklets. They also offer many creative ideas for talks, schools resources, and Christian craft activities. Please pray for all the variety of Christmas outreach events organised for 2016. Also, remember those who find Christmas a difficult and challenging season, and those spending Christmas at home alone, or worse still on the streets and without a home. Pray for organisations like Shelter, Alabare, Crisis at Christmas, and churches supporting and helping vulnerable people at this time of year. See also:- <http://www.alabare.co.uk/>

Pray: for more volunteers to step out to bring Kingdom light into a dark world this Christmas. (Jn.8:12)

More: <http://www.crisis.org.uk/pages/volunteer-christmas.html>

■ Prayer - action - justice

Corruption, family breakdown, immorality, poverty, debt, addictions, and crime affect and ruin people's lives. Praise God that the Christian voluntary sector is doing much to alleviate needs and improve situations, but the Church also needs to develop a more powerful prophetic voice. Pray for Christians working in commerce, industry, government offices, NHS, social services, police, and wherever God has placed them, to speak out against injustice and corruption in the workplace and their communities. As the prophets were unafraid to say, 'Woe to you who call evil good and good evil', may we make our voices heard in the midst of today's noises. Pray for a fresh anointing of power and love on intercessors to plead for our nation and the people around us. As we pray, 'Lord, do something', may we also pray, 'Lord, what can I do?'

Pray: for many to pray with fresh inspiration and ask God to give His louder voice to His Church. (Ps.33:12)

More: <http://www.prayer-alert.net/articles/british-isles-ireland>

■ BBC and Christianity

Recently Prayer-Alert readers were asked to pray about the BBC reduction in Christian programming: <http://www.prayer-alert.net/british-isles-ireland-pa-site/item/8828-bbc-reduction-in-christian-programming>. This week BBC producer and presenter Roger Bolton said the BBC is 'failing at a time of global crisis to take religion seriously', adding, 'it's essential for the public, young people and immigrants to understand the crucial role of Christianity in the formation of British culture'. Many believe the BBC's programming policy should reflect the core values of this nation - as unique to, and derived from, Christianity. They also believe that Christianity should be given more airtime than minority faiths. Bolton also said the lack of an experienced, dedicated head of religion and ethics was a strange contrast when BBC has 'editors for almost everything under the sun'. Voice for Justice UK said this week, 'Christianity has been 'ideologically downgraded and marginalised in the media in recent years.' They have now released a petition for Christians to sign on this issue, to be sent to the Government minister for culture, media and sport.

Pray: for a voice of Christian hope and reason to be heard in this time of global uncertainty. (Ps.9:8)

More: <http://www.citizengo.org/en/38667-protect-christian-programming-and-coverage-bbc?tc=ty&tcid=29261151>

■ Ugandan pastor challenges UK church on persecution

A Ugandan pastor, severely injured by Islamic opponents of his faith, made an appeal for British Christians to help their persecuted brothers across the world. Umar Mulinde was badly burned by an acid attack outside his church. During a brief tour of the UK he spoke out - a challenge which coincided with reports of an assassination attempt on Baroness Caroline Cox in Nigeria by Fulani Islamic militants. Baroness Cox, a committed Christian, is a religious freedom campaigner and cross-bench member of the House of Lords. Umar's plea also comes amid ongoing violence against Christians in Uganda. He warned, 'Even in the UK, former Muslims who have converted to Christianity are not safe.' He mentioned Nissar Hussain whose family had to be moved under police protection following years of harassment. 'No country can say they are safe. It's a matter of time. This is not prophecy; it's reality. The UK is sitting on a time-bomb.'

Pray: for the Church in the west to address global persecution of Christians more aggressively. (1Cor.12:26)

More: <http://gatewaynews.co.za/ugandan-acid-attack-victim-challenges-uk-church-over-christian-persecution/>

■ Scotland's Free Church engaged in prayer

A National Day of Prayer took place on Wednesday, with congregations and presbyteries coming together to engage in praying together for the Church in Scotland and beyond. 'Mission is an absolute paradox - we are tasked, by God, to do the impossible,' said Free Church mission director David Meredith. 'Our immediate context of ministry is an increasingly secular Scotland which sees no need of God. The majority of people rest in an indifference towards Christianity which morphs into antagonism if the gospel is presented firmly and with conviction. The power of God, which is accessed through Spirit-led intercessory prayer, can effect radical change in our communities. We began the day with an honest assessment that we have sinned, and that the "success" of many of our churches will be nothing but smoke and mirrors without the work of the Holy Spirit.'

Pray: for churches to become agents of mission, salt and light in Scotland. (Mt.5:14)

More: <http://freechurch.org/news/free-church-mission-engaging-in-prayer>

■ Bishop of Leeds on intolerance

The Bishop of Leeds has said some secularists 'have a problem' with religion being mentioned. A current brand of 'intolerant' liberalism in the UK is dismissive of the Christian faith. He made his comments after Theresa May said it is important that people can talk freely about their faith, following claims that some Christians dare not speak about Christmas.

Bishop Baines said, 'Clearly there are some Christians who are concerned about whether they are free to talk about their faith in a respectful and appropriate way in the workplace. Equally, there are plenty who are not Christians who think that Christians shouldn't, or think there is an issue around it. I call it religious illiteracy.' The bishop said that some secularists are intolerant of Christianity, adding, 'This can end up in some people trying to strip the religion out of Christmas.'

Pray: for Christian boldness in the face of a liberal society, particularly throughout Advent. (Pr.28:1)

More: http://www.greenocktelegraph.co.uk/news/14940261.Bishop_of_Leeds_Some_Christians_too_scared_to_talk_about_faith_in_public/

EUROPE

■ EU facing a crisis? German call of the watchmen

We see success in the arrests of key people in Germany's Islamist terrorist arena, and the banning of the Salafist organisation calling itself 'the true religion'. Plans for distributing the Qu'ran by this organisation under the banner 'Read' (which in German is the word 'Lies' but pronounced 'Leese') will not now be allowed. After the UK's Brexit vote and the US election, Germans are asking the question, 'What are YOU doing here, Lord?' This is a time for us not only to pray for Germany, but also for the UK and the USA, and for God's purposes for these three countries to be fulfilled through these events this year.

Pray: for Germany as it enters 2017 – the 500th anniversary of the start of the Reformation. (Heb.11:1)

More: <http://www.waechterruf.de/international/our-vision/>

■ EU facing a crisis? Italy's Five Star Movement

After thirteen years of a struggling economy and unemployment at 40% among the young, 107,000 youth have left to seek work abroad. The average family income is less than it was in 2007. On 5 December Italy will vote in Prime Minister Matteo Renzi's referendum on constitutional reform. Mr Renzi has promised to resign if the referendum fails. Many believe that quitting would make way for the Eurosceptic Five Star Movement (M5S) to gain power. M5S was launched by Beppe Grillo, a youthful political rabble-rouser of the centre-left Democratic Party who proposes to limit the powers of the senate by cutting the number of senators from 315 to 100. All would be appointed (rather than elected as at present), and he would restrict their power to influence legislation. First Brexit, then Trump. Is Italy entering the west's populist wave?

Pray: for God to be in every wind of change across Europe. (Ps.1:4)

More: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/aug/06/matteo-renzi-italy-referendum-banks-brexit>

■ EU facing a crisis? French candidates for 2017

Far right Front National leader Marine Le Pen is a strong candidate for the French presidency, according to a recent poll. Her main opponent will be François Fillon, a former prime minister, who has won the presidential nomination for the conservative party. He opposes multiculturalism and has called for a new understanding with Vladimir Putin's Russia. Ms Le Pen is adamant that the same anti-establishment anger which saw Britain vote to leave the EU and Americans elect Donald Trump could sweep her to power. Do the forthcoming elections spell the end of the Eurocrats' dream?

Pray: for God's power to sweep His people into places of influence across Europe. (Ps.1:6a)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/11/27/francois-fillon-set-face-marine-le-pen-winning-french-presidential/>

WORLDWIDE

■ India: Hindus

Hinduism has roughly 1 billion followers, 94% in India. Hinduism is growing slowly, but is still winning followers from those searching for life's answers in religion. There are approximately 140,000 Protestant missionaries across the nations, but only 2% serve Hindu people. Despite this, Hindus from all castes are coming to Christ after hearing Bible stories they were able to relate to. In one instance an entire village turned to Christ after hearing His Word preached in their language! Pray for the Bible translators researching people groups and their languages to produce accessible Bibles. Leaving Hinduism means persecution, even to death. New believers are considered threats to Hindu society and are relentlessly pursued, violently attacked, or shunned from the community. Doubt and fear follow them because they accepted Jesus into their lives and became outcasts in their world. Pray for the new house church movement, welcoming recent converts.

Pray: for the real and present power of God to expose the myth of karma. (2Cor.3:7)

More: <http://prayercast.com/hinduism.html>

■ Nigeria: update

The UN has reported that 75,000 thousand children are at risk of dying of hunger and fourteen million people are in need of humanitarian aid in north-east Nigeria, as it deals with the aftermath of Boko Haram violence. Pray that they will receive all the aid they need to recover and resettle. A trauma care centre is being constructed by Open Doors in northern Nigeria to support Christians who have suffered religiously-motivated violence or abuse at the hands of Boko Haram and Fulani herdsmen. Pray for Open Doors and other organisations to receive adequate funding so that they can fulfil their objectives. Violence continues with a recent spate of attacks on five Christian villages in the Kauru local government area. Most of the fatalities were women, children and the elderly, who could not escape the Fulani herdsmen's gunfire. 120 houses, including eight house-churches, were burnt down.

Pray: for Nigerian Christians who were displaced by Boko Haram but are now beginning to return home as territory is being won back from insurgents. May they prosper and thrive in the future.

More: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/search/?q=Nigeria&k=1>

■ Iraq: Under the shadow of IS

In the ongoing instability in Iraq, Christians are not necessarily safe even if they escape areas held by IS. Esam (an Iraqi Christian) said that friends of his who escaped Mosul after being forcibly converted to Islam have been 'baptised back to Christianity'. Other aspects of their lives will take far longer to repair. Iraqi Christians who end up returning to Iraq know they return to a country whose sectarian fault-lines have been activated to lethal levels. Aid workers have warned that extensive reconciliation work is vital if Iraq's many different faith and ethnic communities are to cohere again, especially as levels of trauma among all sectors of the population are thought to be extremely high. The ordeal at the hands of IS members in Mosul has been horrific. Iraqi Christians tell of crucifixions, torture and sex slavery. Esam concludes, 'What happened is not easy, but in the end we must forgive.'

Pray: for the damage done by IS to be reversed, for people to realise God has prepared a future and hope for them.
Pray that they receive appropriate counselling and answers to their prayers. (Jer.29:11)

More: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2016/11/4736740/>

■ Global: fake news

Marco Chacon read, 'bucket of losers trending online', and freaked out. It came from a story he had posted on his website about a 'secret transcript' of Hillary Clinton's speech given to Goldman Sachs, which claimed Clinton called Bernie Sanders' supporters a 'bucket of losers.' Once posted, the story went viral and was picked up on Fox News - the scoop of a lifetime - but Chacon had made the whole thing up. Chacon said, 'This is ridiculous, things had gone way too far.' Fox News issued an apology for reporting it. Chacon's story is an example of fake news making real news headlines. Lies and fabrications of mainstream media are not 'sloppy journalism': they are intended to mislead. As intercessors we usually have the Bible in one hand and a newspaper in the other hand (or watch the news on TV). We need to be aware of the risk of clever fake news.

Pray: for freedom of expression in the media not to be compromised by fake news. (Jn.8:32)

More: <http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/fake-news-stories-make-real-news-headlines/story?id=43845383>

■ Iran: Christians awaiting trial

Yaser, Saheb and Mohammed Reza were arrested at a house church in May and charged with 'action against national security'. They were released on bail after weeks in detention. Their pastor, Yousef Nadarkhani, and his wife Fatemeh (Tina) Pasandideh were also arrested but not detained. However, Yousef was later charged for the same crime. All four were summoned to the revolutionary court in Rasht in October, but the judge didn't issue a verdict. The second hearing is on 14 December. In addition, Yaser, Saheb and Mohammed face charges related to consumption of alcohol (they drank wine during a communion service). Drinking alcohol is not illegal for Christians, but is prohibited for Muslims. The charges against Christian converts reflect the view that a Muslim cannot change religion. After a court hearing on 10 September, they were each sentenced to eighty lashes, but they are appealing this verdict. The appeal hearing is scheduled for 9 February 2017.

Pray: for the appeal to be successful, for all to be acquitted, and for peace for the men and their families. (2Sa.22:31)

More: <http://meconcern.org/2016/12/01/iran-further-court-hearings-scheduled-for-rasht-believers/>

■ Climate change: seasonal fires

Tens of thousands of Israelis have fled fires: 32,000 acres have been burnt, along with hundreds of homes and businesses. November has been very dry, with strong winds. Forest fires of similar magnitude, or worse, have recently been raging every year throughout the Mediterranean basin. Professor Carmel (of environmental, water and agricultural engineering) said, 'Climate change is causing things we haven't seen before.' Russian, Palestinian and American first-responders are helping Israeli fire-fighters. In the USA many months of drought brought weeks of wildfires in Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina, destroying hundreds of homes and sending thousands through 'hell-like' escapes. 4,000 firefighters were deployed to extinguish dozens of large fires all burning at the same time. Yesterday, winds of 70 mph intensified multiple fires in the Great Smoky Mountain National Park, and fires are spreading into communities and knocking down power lines. See also <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.755665>

Pray: for those with severe burns, the bereaved, those with destroyed homes and livelihoods (Ps.23:4)

More: <http://www.christianheadlines.com/contributors/debbie-mcdaniel/gatlinburg-under-mandatory-evacuation-as-fires-rage.html>

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE WORLD PRAYER CENTRE, BIRMINGHAM, UK

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