

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

■ Biblical truths to stand on when the world shakes

Romans 8:38-39 says, 'Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation.' We may not have power over macro-scale world events, but every day we can make hundreds of choices to do good, love God and serve our neighbour. We can do plenty in our own spheres of influence to bring God's kingdom on earth. Philippians 4:6-7 says, 'Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.' When we choose to lay down our anxieties before God, who sees the beginning from the end, whose mind no one can fathom, before whom dictators and despots appear like ants, we will find inexplicable peace.

Praise: [God for His promises and teaching that is still alive today, piercing our hearts and minds. \(Heb.4:12\)](#)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/3.biblical.truths.to.stand.on.when.the.world.shakes/102692.htm>

■ School apology to Christian teacher

A Christian teaching assistant has won an apology from a school which disciplined her for telling a pupil that she did not believe in gay marriage. Vicky Allen took legal action after she received a formal written warning from Brannel School, in St Austell, Cornwall, which she said made her feel 'like a criminal'. They accused her of opposing their 'equal opportunities' policy when she told a 14-year-old autistic boy that she disapproved of gay ceremonies. The widow, who has three children, also told the pupil she did not like the way the biblical rainbow symbol had been adopted as an emblem of gay pride. Disciplinary action was launched after the teenager's mother complained to the school. Mrs Allen said she had done nothing wrong. 'I was asked a question and gave my answer based on my beliefs and I was disciplined for it.' The headteacher has now apologised to Vicky.

Praise: [God that we still have the right to share our Christian beliefs when asked about them. \(Ps.106:1\)](#)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/11/29/school-issues-apology-teaching-assistant-told-pupil-does-not/>

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ A prayer for the Church

'And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.' (Gen.1:3) Lord, we know Your Spirit is brooding over our nation, and we thank You for every purpose, ministry and strategy of your Kingdom in this season of Advent. We pray for Your people to continue to enter Your presence and to stand upon their watch. As You spoke and there was light, may Your people be so connected to your heart and Your words that every purpose of heaven will be achieved in this season in our

land. As Your Church opens its doors in unusual ways and your message of hope and salvation goes out with clarity and creativity, we pray for those who are spiritually open and hungry from every age group and community to hear and understand your message of truth and to experience your presence.

Pray: for many followers of Jesus to be birthed this Christmas. (Jn. 8:12)

More: <http://passionforthenation.uk/church-10/>

❑ Lack of confidence in church youth work

A new study by Youthscape revealed 'churches are losing confidence in their ability to deliver quality youth work.' The report, launched at Lambeth Palace on Wednesday, shows that many churches across the country are failing even to offer a youth work service, and those who do are concerned about its effectiveness. Common answers to the question 'what's going well in your youth work?' were 'not a lot', 'nothing', and 'it does not do so well'. There is a disparity between what young people want to engage with and what the church is actually doing. Two-thirds of churches never discuss pornography or sexuality, while over half never discuss mental health, even though a separate survey of teenagers suggests that these are topics which they are highly interested in talking about. Pray for the fear to be removed from looking at issues around sex and sexuality.

Pray: for up-to-date adequate training for youth workers that equips them to handle all topics under a Christian ethos and for the quality of youth work to improve. (Ps.106:47)

More: <http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/New-study-reveals-lack-of-confidence-in-church-youth-work>

❑ Britain's influence on vulnerable Yemen

The Government has said it is 'deeply concerned' about Saudi Arabia's use of UK weapons against civilians in Yemen, yet ministers will not halt the ongoing weapons sales to the Saudis. Boris Johnson does not believe the threshold has been crossed which would demand the suspension of arms sales to the Middle East country, even though it has been proved that an October airstrike, killing 140 Yemeni mourners at a funeral, was carried out by Saudi Arabia, using UK-built weapons and technology. The UN released a report earlier this year detailing 'widespread and systematic' attacks on civilian targets, which are in violation of international humanitarian law. Pray for renewed scrutiny of international export licence applications that could violate such laws. Pray also for the UK export licensing rules to be tightened. See also 'Yemen's starving millions' in Prayer-Alert World section.

Pray: for foreign secretary Boris Johnson, defence secretary Michael Fallon, development secretary Priti Patel and trade secretary Liam Fox to review ungodly trade relationships. (Pr.11:4)

More: <http://www.itv.com/news/2016-12-04/government-deeply-concerned-about-use-of-uk-weapons-in-yemen/>

❑ Supreme Court and Brexit powers

The UK's biggest constitutional case in decades, how we begin the process of leaving the EU, was discussed at the Supreme Court this week. Judgement is expected in January. The Government says it doesn't need MPs' approval to trigger Brexit, whereas Labour called for a Brexit plan to be outlined before Article 50 is triggered. There was a vote to 'respect' the Government's timetable for leaving. Although the result could complicate the Government's triggering of the process for the UK leaving the EU, it is not expected to stop Brexit happening. MPs also supported a Labour motion calling for Parliament to 'properly scrutinise' the Government in its proposals for leaving the EU. The votes followed a compromise between Labour and the Conservatives, who had argued over the questions to be put. See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-38183127>

Pray: for smooth and peaceful developments and decisions. (Pr.29:11b)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/live/uk-politics-37976580>

❑ Christians in parliament

A recent 'Investigating Faith' event with David Suchet was attended by over a hundred parliamentarians, staff and guests. Dame Caroline Spelman MP interviewed David about his life, work & faith and the significance of the Bible in his life. It was highly thought-provoking, with many leaving inspired to read the Bible more. The first full term of Tuesday chapel services has a growing number of regular attendees. Please continue to pray for further growth here, and pray for Rev Jason Roach, Rev Nigel Beynon and Sue Algeo, as they teach from the Psalms and Matthew's Gospel. Also remember the two groups of MPs meeting weekly for Bible study, and give thanks for new joiners and the return of a few members; may there be continued spiritual growth for all. Pray for the Parliament carol services next Monday and Tuesday, which members and staff from both Houses have signed up to attend.

Pray: for many to join a Life Explored course, looking at the Bible's response to some of life's big questions, starting in the New Year. (1Peter 2:9)

More: <http://us7.campaign-archive1.com/?u=27f9f921f9d32e6b902d123ff&id=f2d3b61dd1&e=1b6afc256b>

❑ Boris's 'awkward comments'

Boris Johnson accused Saudi Arabia of engaging in 'proxy wars' in the Middle East, and Middle East politicians of 'twisting and abusing religion for political gain', adding that Iran and Saudi Arabia were 'puppeteering' because of a lack of strong leadership in the region. Our foreign secretary said, 'There are politicians who are twisting and abusing religion and different strains of the same religion in order to further their own political objectives. That's one of the biggest political problems in the whole region. That's why you have these proxy wars being fought in that area. There is not strong enough leadership in the countries themselves.' He added that there was a lack of 'big characters' in the Middle East who are willing to reach out beyond their Sunni or Shi'a group and bring people together.

Pray: for diplomats to recognise and digest the truth of honest straight talking. (Pr.18:4)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-38245902>

■ Bishops call for rail strikes to end

Sussex bishops have urged for an end to the 'cycle of blame' and 'misery' that is impacting Southern Rail commuters. In a letter addressed to bodies from all sides of the Southern Rail dispute, the bishops' letter said that those involved had a 'moral obligation' to provide public transport and that the ongoing row was causing damage to the communities reliant on the service. Strikes are scheduled for this month and January, in a long-running dispute over changes to the role of conductors. The bishops say that, as Christian leaders, their task is 'to promote those processes which lead to human flourishing in a just and free society'.

Pray: for godly negotiations and actions to break the circle of blame in this dispute. (Pr.17:14)

More: <https://www.premierchristianradio.com/News/UK/Bishops-call-for-end-to-commuter-misery-amid-Southern-Rail-strikes>

EUROPE

■ Change driving political upheavals

Italian prime minister Matteo Renzi resigned after suffering a heavy defeat in a referendum over his plan to reform the constitution. In Germany a wave of violence is increasing, with over fifty attacks every day on German police. In France surveys show that a third of French Muslims want the full application of Sharia law, and the overwhelming majority of the French Muslims support jihad. Last month the next Secretary-General of the UN said, 'Migration to Europe cannot be stopped, politicians should therefore ignore the will of voters.' Reports from Belgrade say that refugees in South-Eastern Europe are becoming more and more indifferent - even to open hostility. A year ago, refugees were escorted by an army of aid institutions, but there is no such compassion now.

Pray: for God in his mercy to enter into every situation where there are political disputes. (1Cor.1:10b)

More: <http://de.europenews.dk/Europa/Andere-EU-Laender-77347.html>

■ Latvia: freedom and soft hearts

Every week, Greater Europe Mission (GEMISSION) lifts a country in prayer. This week, we join in prayer for Latvia, with thick forests, cool beaches and a history of being bullied. Political power and cultural influence have changed hands time after time. Now fear of Russia and refugees are on Latvian minds. Prime minister Laimdota Straujuma resigned last December before her term had ended, and multiple candidates turned down the position. Last month a new leader was chosen - Maris Kucinskis. He represents the same party as the former prime minister (centre-right), but is taking a harder stance against immigration and the few hundred refugees Latvia has been charged to take by the EU. There is brokenness in Latvia. 92% of children living in orphanages have living parents, whose domestic problems cause them to give their children to institutions. Many girls graduating from orphanages become victims of human trafficking. Latvia has the world's fourth highest suicide rate.

Pray: for Jesus to end the hopelessness that holds Latvians captive, pray for open hearts towards refugees. Pray for renewal and revival amongst lethargic churches filled with nominal believers. (Eph.5:14)

More: <http://www.gemission.org/pray-articles/latvia-freedom-and-soft-hearts>

■ Ukraine: a family's tragic story

The Ukraine humanitarian crisis is accompanied by an increase in persecuting evangelical Christians. Hundreds of Protestant pastors have suffered abduction, torture, arson, property confiscation, death threats, physical violence, expatriation, and even murder at the hands of the pro-Russian separatists. 'I am Alexey and I have two daughters, Evelina and Milena. We have fled from Gorlovka not because of lack of good life. We had a complete family, a job, a house. Our girls were glad and cheerful. My wife Anna and I tried to make their childhood unforgettable and joyful. Till now I cannot believe that when I used to come home from my job, I was welcome with the prepared meal on a table by a loving arm and a joyful noise. But today everything is lost [because of the war]. I fathom that I'm not the only one like this, but one's own grief is closer.' See also <https://missioneurasia.org/>

Pray: for the refugees to receive God's provision, and for an end to the deep division between members of the body of Christ in Russia and Ukraine, who need reconciliation in order to serve. (Ps.133:1)

More: <http://us11.campaign-archive2.com/?u=a9b3e4fe35187581ec007413e&id=ca7797fc8a&e=026ee53901>

WORLDWIDE

■ Bible translators face spiritual warfare

Christian persecution around the world has been increasing, and Bible translators in particular are facing a fierce onslaught of spiritual warfare. One report of Bible translators facing particular persecution comes from Wycliffe Associates. 'We are getting new reports of oppression literally every week,' stated Bruce Smith, CEO of the organisation. 'Spiritual warfare has become the "new normal" for many national Bible translators.' Forms of resistance to Bible translation include suddenly falling ill, being arrested and jailed, tortured, or even murdered. One translator even died in her sleep on her first day of translation work. Last year, Wycliffe launched a project aimed at translating the Bible into 314 languages in 76 countries. The founder of World Help, commenting on the increase in Christian persecution, said, 'At no other time in history have Christians been as persecuted as they are now'. For intercession ideas go to <https://www.wycliffe.org.uk/beinvolved/pray/prayerpack.html>

Pray: for an even more powerful outpouring of God's enabling power and protection over everyone involved in researching languages and Bible translation from linguists to technicians and their families. (Lk.10:19)

More: <http://www.christianheadlines.com/blog/bible-translators-face-opposition-through-spiritual-warfare.html>

■ Yemen: months away from starving

7,000 people have been killed in Yemen's war and three million have fled. 14 million are hungry, with half of those on the brink of famine. Yemenis are at risk of catastrophic hunger. Food stocks are due to run out in April under punishing import restrictions. Food imports are half the amount needed to feed the war-torn country's population. 'Yemen is being slowly starved to death,' said Oxfam GB. First there were restrictions on imports of much-needed food, then the cranes and warehouses in the ports were bombed, then the roads and bridges. This bombing strategy is systematic. Yemen's economy, institutions, and the ability of parties involved in the war to feed people are 'all on the brink of collapse'. Oxfam said, 'As one of the principal backers of this brutal war, Britain needs to end its arms sales and military support to the Saudis and help put Yemen on the road to peace.' See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-34011187>

Pray: for fighting to stop, ports to be fully opened, and Britain to play its part to prevent a catastrophe. (Ps.7:6)

More: <https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2016/12/6/yemenis-months-away-from-starving-to-death-says-oxfam>

■ Pakistan: prayer request

A missionary writes, 'Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God. (Ps 20:7) Visas: please pray about the ban on Christian workers getting visas (particularly Americans). This is a real problem. Health: pray for the many workers currently experiencing serious health problems. Christian TV banned: this law is also being brought against other minority groups. Several Christians have continued producing and broadcasting materials and have been arrested for it. Blocking satellite transmissions: they are trying to block satellite TV and radio; may they not be able to do this. Backup: there is a board managing 6-7 groups producing TV, radio and correspondence courses. Pray for backup copies to be made for every group. There have been times when police have come in unannounced and destroyed materials. Pray for protection over this material and wisdom in knowing how to proceed.'

Pray: for God's protection over church planting in a very vulnerable area. Pray also for laws against Christianity and Christian broadcasting to be overturned, and for God to continue to grow His Church. (Pr.3:5-6)

■ Burma: a cry for help

Tens of thousands of Rohingya people - 30,000 in eight weeks - are fleeing from the military. 'The Burmese army have set our houses on fire. Men are shot dead. We are in deep pain.' The Rohingya are called the most persecuted people group in the world; officially disowned by the government and stateless, even though many have lived there for generations. The UN reported civilians being mown down by helicopter guns. The Kachin people of Burma (predominantly Christian) are also fleeing their homes - nearly 100,000 have fled, many now in makeshift camps in atrocious conditions. Some try to escape by boat, but no surrounding countries will grant asylum. 200+ villages and 66 churches have been destroyed, and landmines make travel dangerous. 5,300+ people have signed a petition calling for an end to this violence and to lift the block on aid to those fleeing. If persecution does not end, thousands will starve to death or be killed by the military.

Pray: for the thousands in makeshift camps to receive aid, for many more people to put pressure on the Burmese government, and for that pressure to achieve peace and justice. (Ps.36:6)

More: <http://www.csw.org.uk/realchangeburma>

■ Gaza: new generation to shake up Hamas?

Closed elections are being held for Hamas' Shura Council. They will shape the future council and the leadership. Ismail Haniyeh (who left Gaza in September) is expected to be elected head of the political bureau - in effect leader of Hamas. This will be a new era following the departure of previous leader Khaled Meshaal. Historically, the Shura Council comprises religious leaders and imams. Now, well-educated individuals, professionals from Gaza and the West Bank and top Palestinian lecturers from around the world have joined it. A Gaza Hamas activist was asked, 'What would the younger generation view as an achievement?' His answer, 'When past leaders recognise they cannot continue to decide things on their own; others in the movement have opinions.' The election results at the end of December will reveal if Haniyeh prefers to remain in Qatar or live among his people and the youths who view his election as a harbinger of change.

Pray: for changes in actions and opinions; and pray for an end to regional hatred. (Ps.102:1,2)

More: <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/12/israel-gaza-strip-hamas-ismail-haniyeh-shura-council.html#ixzz4SFYGx570>

■ Indonesia: earthquake

On Wednesday a 6.5 magnitude earthquake struck Indonesia's Aceh province, destroying hundreds of homes, businesses and the Pidie Jaya hospital. To date 102 people are known to have died, including young children, and at least 1,000 were injured. The death toll could rise. The priority is for implementing search and rescue operations. Additional medical personnel have gone to the region.

Pray: for the rescuers sorting through the aftermath to find all buried survivors quickly. (Ps.40:13)

More: <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/12/06/asia/indonesia-earthquake/>

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE WORLD PRAYER CENTRE, BIRMINGHAM, UK

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