

# 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

### ■ Obama's anti-racism tweets

A tweet by Barack Obama condemning racism in the aftermath of a far-right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, has become the most liked tweet ever, with over three million people endorsing the sentiment so far. The tweet, quoting the late South African president Nelson Mandela, read, 'No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin or his background or his religion.' The former US president followed the tweet with more from Mandela's autobiographical Long Walk to Freedom: 'People learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love. For love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.' Each has had more than a million likes, and hundreds of thousands of retweets.

**Praise:** God for the repeats of good tweets far exceeding evil ones. (Proverbs 14:19)

**More:** <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/aug/16/barack-obama-anti-racism-most-liked-tweet-ever-charlottesville>

### ■ Networking Canada's prayer ministries

With the second largest landmass in the world and a very sparse population, it's easy for a Canadian prayer ministry, house of prayer or city-wide worship ministry to feel isolated. 'Ears to Hear' responded to this need with a network which for ten years has connected and united the senior leaders of these ministries for mutual encouragement and support. As a result, they have been able to move together when a national or regional need arises, help one another grow, and endeavour to support the emerging expressions of prayer in the nation. Their website says, 'We're in this for the Kingdom and for the prayer of Jesus - that they might be one - to be fulfilled in Canada.' The network meets regularly in video conference calls, praying, discerning and learning from each other.

**Praise:** God for the unity of the Body in Canada. May many similar ministries cover the world in prophetic prayer and declarations that usher in God's Kingdom here on earth. (John 17:23)

**More:** <http://www.ears2hear.ca/>

## BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

### ■ Friday Focus: freedom behind bars

When Jesus sets us free, we each have a story to tell. Later this year a new book called 40 Stories of Hope brings together the stories of prisoners who have discovered the hope and freedom Jesus gives. Join with Prison Hope, praying that this

collection of testimonies, Bible readings and prayers will inspire many people inside and outside prison. (written by Catherine Butcher)

**Pray:** Heavenly Father, thank You that Jesus has paid the price to set us free. We pray that 40 Stories of Hope will help many people to find the freedom that Your Son gives. May we each have an opportunity to tell our own story of hope to someone we meet in the coming week. (John 8:36)

**More:** [http://www.hopetogether.org.uk/Groups/283989/Friday\\_Focus.aspx](http://www.hopetogether.org.uk/Groups/283989/Friday_Focus.aspx)

#### ■ Islamic worship introduced at Greenbelt

The Christian festival Greenbelt (next weekend) will this year feature opportunities to learn Islamic worship chants. The Ansari Qadiri Rifai Tariqa, describing itself as 'an international non-profit spiritual organisation in service to the Divine', will be teaching 'basic universal Sufi chants'. The Greenbelt website says they 'are rhythmic, healing, and a unique form of worship'. The Ansari UK website says its mission is to promote Sufism which is 'founded on the Holy Qu'ran, the Holy Scriptures and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad and other Prophets (peace be upon them)'. Its primary mission is 'to be available to guide seekers of Allah'. There will also be Muslim contributors offering Islamic music and poetry, and a discussion led by a British Muslim convert entitled 'Scriptural Reasoning Remixed'. Greenbelt's creative director said they intend to introduce Islamic programme feeds to help build better religious literacy.

**Pray:** for Christian theological grounding to continue to be Greenbelt's ethos. May they be wary of false teaching. (Hebrews 13:9a)

**More:** <https://www.christiantoday.com/article/christian.worshippers.at.greenbelt.can.learn.islamic.worship.chants/111567.htm>

#### ■ Bishop attacks Trump and 'Christian Right'

The Bishop of Leeds, Nick Baines, has launched a scathing attack on the 'narcissistic amorality' of 'lying' Donald Trump, along with the American 'Christian Right' for failing to recognise the president's traits before he was elected last November. This assault on Trump and his evangelical backers was in a blog written in the wake of violence by white supremacists in Charlottesville, which Trump failed specifically to condemn on two occasions. But the blog goes broader than Charlottesville; it charts Trump's 'consistent' positions on domestic and international areas including North Korea, Russia and Nato. Bishop Baines blames what he calls the 'Christian Right' for failing to see this disastrous presidency coming. 'His misogyny, amorality, financial track record, sexual behaviour, narcissism and nepotism would have ruled out the candidacy of any other semi-reputable politician for the presidency of the USA.'

**Pray:** for the voices of Bishop Baines and others to be heard and understood by President Trump when they speak out against violence, unwise decisions and the risks he is taking. (Proverbs 8:33)

**More:** <https://www.christiantoday.com/article/anglican.bishop.launches.scathing.attack.on.lying.amoral.donald.trump.and.the.christian.right.for.backing.him/111929.htm>

#### ■ Modern slavery 'prevalent' in UK

In October, the Church of England will launch a three-year project aimed at helping people in dioceses across the country to tackle modern slavery. It is the latest in a series of moves the CoFE has made to help the government address this phenomenon. Over 200 years since Britain abolished slavery, there are still an estimated 11,700 potential slave victims in the UK. A new report from the National Crime Agency says that modern slavery is now 'prevalent' in every large town and city in the country. The Church of England, with a presence in every parish, is uniquely placed to be the eyes and ears of communities, and will be able to spread a message of awareness further afield. Churches are already running English classes for survivors. See also article 3 in this week's World section.

**Pray:** for many slaves to be recognised, released and rehabilitated through this initiative. Pray also for those volunteers who will be working to support projects among the vulnerable and poor. (Isaiah 32:16)

**More:** <https://www.theclewerinitiative.org/about-us>

#### ■ Religious freedom

'Preach the Word, but if you want to preach the whole gospel of God, the state wants to shut you up. Rev Barry Trayhorn, a Pentecostal minister, worked in HMP Littlehey, a prison for male sex offenders. Barry provided music, ministry and sermons at the chapel service, which prisoners could choose to attend or not. During a service, he quoted from memory 1 Corinthians 6: 9-11 and then continued, 'You may want to complain about this, but this is the Word of God. God loves you and wants to forgive you.' A single complaint was put in by one of the 'cross-dressed' prisoners to the equality and diversity officer of the prison, saying that his human rights had been violated by the preaching. Barry lost his job, went to the Employment Tribunal and then an appeal tribunal, but lost his case. The judge questioned whether 1 Corinthians 6 should be preached in a prison chapel service.

**Pray:** for the church to continue teaching 'the whole Gospel' and not be intimidated by what man can do or say to interfere with God's life-giving message. (Titus 2:1)

**More:** <http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/freedom-of-speech/a-judicial-warning-shot-that-should-put-the-fear-of-god-into-us-andre>

#### ■ People to pick their own gender?

The Government is planning to reform gender identity rules to make it easier for people to choose their own gender in law. Under plans being considered by ministers, adults will be able to change their birth certificates at will without a doctor's diagnosis, while non-binary gender people will be able to record their gender as 'X'. Changes to the law will be consulted on and will ultimately be included in a planned Gender Recognition Bill, set to be published in the autumn. Under current laws, established in 2004, a person who wishes to transition must apply for a Gender Recognition Certificate. This requires a doctor's diagnosis of gender dysphoria and the person must spend two years of living as a member of the opposite gender.

**Pray:** for the Church to speak out and stand firm on this issue proclaiming the whole Gospel, that it is God who decided our gender, it is not our choice. (Psalm 139:13)

**More:** <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/transgender-rules-reform-gender-dysphoria-changes-2004-gender-recognition-self-identify-a7855381.html>

#### ▣ Tackling the causes of knife crime

A Christian youth charity has warned that 'knife crime will continue to go up and down if we don't tackle the causes of why it happens in the first place'. Despite a new London-wide strategy intended to reduce knife crime, more needs to be done to prevent young people from carrying knives. The Metropolitan Police Commissioner said they are looking again at stop and search and sentencing, but that is looking at symptoms and trying to get knives off the street. It is not looking at why young people are carrying knives in the first place. A lot of it is down to fear and believing that 'since everyone else is carrying a knife, I should carry one just in case'. The Centre for Social Justice said that crime-linked poverty, family break-down, educational failure, and the idea of worklessness are all reasons why people are growing up in situations where carrying a knife seems like a good option.

**Pray:** for church mentors, social workers, educationists and youth workers to invest time and money into developing best practice for early intervention into vulnerable young lives. (Psalm 69:29)

**More:** <https://www.premierchristianradio.com/News/UK/Christian-charity-warns-knife-crime-will-continue-without-tackling-cause>

## EUROPE

#### ▣ Spain: Terror Attacks

A mass murder in Barcelona on 17th August by a van driving into a crowd outside a metro station and continuing along Las Ramblas for 500 metres killed thirteen and injuring one hundred and fifty. The driver fled on foot. Later, five suspected terrorists were shot dead at Cambrils. The terrorism began on the 16th with an explosion at Alcanar, killing one and wounding sixteen when they were attempting to 'prepare an explosive device'. The Las Ramblas attack suspect, Driss Oukabir, was arrested after turning himself in. Josep Lluís Trapero, was arrested in Alcanar. Islamic State claimed responsibility. God desires all men to live in peace, pray for peace in the hearts of all affected by these attacks. May God strategically position police and security services across Spain, so that they will be at the right place at the right time to catch all the perpetrators and prevent further attacks.

**Pray:** for all who will be giving support and counselling to survivors to rise into the fullness of who God has made them to be and be a light in some very dark places. (Psalm 4:8)

**More:** <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/aug/18/terror-timeline-of-barcelona-and-cambrils-attacks-and-other-terror-raids>

#### ▣ Ireland post-Brexit border proposals

The UK Government has said it does not want any border posts between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland after Brexit. Northern Ireland secretary James Brokenshire insists the proposals are realistic because of the trade involved for all sides. The UK stresses there should be no physical infrastructure, such as customs posts, at the border, which has almost 300 crossing points. Instead, the Government is arguing for a wide-ranging exemption under which small- and medium-sized businesses will not have to comply with any new customs tariffs. If the proposals are accepted, customs officials envisage using a mix of technology and physical checks to monitor the compliance of bigger businesses engaged in international trade. Critics are concerned that an open border might prove to be a 'back door' for EU citizens who wish to enter the UK without proper checks.

**Pray:** for a frictionless border between the UK and Europe, and strong customs partnerships. (Psalm 147:14)

**More:** <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-40941393>

## WORLDWIDE

#### ▣ Middle East: feeding the energy of youth

Tony Fayeze is a freelance singer-songwriter who performs for SAT-7, a media outlet broadcasting in Arabic, Turkish and Farsi. He writes lyrics and composes hip-hop worship songs, to reach out to young people and help young Christians worship in a language they feel belongs to them. 'The fast rhythm of rap reflects the passion, energy and speed of teenagers', he says. 'That's the music they listen to when they are together. It's a good way to reach them, using Christian lyrics that they can remember and sing along to.' Traditional churches and some parents say the language degrades Christian values and encourages poor vocabulary. Tony believes in giving youth freedom to express their faith in ways that are meaningful to them. 'They can listen to whatever music they choose so instead of trying to fit them into a rigid form, we can reach out to them and speak their language.'

**Pray:** for God's provision and protection over SAT-7 and similar Christian broadcasting. Pray for millions in Iran and other closed countries to be birthed, taught and encouraged in their faith through the media. (Psalm 40:10)

**More:** <https://www.sat7uk.org/feeding-energy-youth/?bblinkid=57002035&bbemailid=4690614&bbejrid=351484191>

#### ▣ North Korea: Kim to Trump, 'It's your move'

Ecclesiastes 9:17,18 says, 'The quiet words of the wise are more to be heeded than the shouts of a ruler of fools. Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one sinner destroys much good.' Tensions around Donald Trump and Kim Jong-un are dangerous. No one is backing down in their war of words. Yesterday Trump implied in a tweet that he had North Korea to back down over its threat to Guam. It is a dangerous misperception that could cause the crisis to escalate. Trump could miss the best chance he will have to halt the missile tests that threaten the American homeland. Anxious about annual US-

South Korea military exercises that begin next week, Pyongyang has presented the US with clear choices: reduce tensions or face a destabilising missile strike to the waters around Guam. Kim Jong-un is waiting to see what the 'foolish Yankees' do next. Pray for God's protection over Korea, Japan, Guam, and the USA.

**Pray:** for military leaders, politicians, and diplomats who are analysing the situation and giving counsel to the leaders. May wise decisions be made that will defuse the situation. (Proverbs 11:14)

**More:** <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/08/16/opinions/north-korea-us-guam-choice-adam-mount/index.html>

#### ▣ Global: poverty and slavery

When locusts descended on the American Midwest in 1875, they didn't just devour crops and forests. They destroyed years of hard-earned progress from settlers struggling to build a better life. In the same way, everyday violence is destroying the efforts of millions trying to rise out of poverty today and, because they are unsafe, the poor cannot benefit from the world's best efforts to help them thrive. There is an undercover plague that the world is ignoring or has failed to see. The violence crisis is silently undermining the fight against poverty. For the poor, violence is as much a part of life as hunger, illness or unemployment - but it is less visible. Without effective justice systems to protect them from violence (like rape, trafficking and police brutality), the world's poor live in a state of constant fear.

**Pray:** for agencies like the International Justice Mission who work to eradicate violent criminals, bring justice to the vulnerable and poor, and freedom to trafficked men women and children. (Romans 12:12)

**More:** <https://www.ijm.org/slavery>

#### ▣ Nigeria: unreasonable demands, further violence

In 1966 an Igbo leader, in south-east Nigeria, said that only one thing would prevent a civil war - 'that Nigeria be split, with all southerners in the north repatriated to the south and northerners in the south repatriated to the north'. This demand was followed by the Biafra civil war. In June 2017, irked by renewed secessionist calls from the same Igbo ethnic group, a coalition of northern groups demanded that 'all Igbo currently residing in northern Nigeria relocate within three months, and all northerners residing in the east are advised likewise'. Pray for peace. Meanwhile on 6 August, masked gunmen stormed into the early morning service at a church in the southeast and opened fire, killing 35 Christians. On Tuesday a woman suicide bomber blew herself up and killed 27 others at a market in the northeast. See <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/08/dead-nigeria-church-shooting-170806153758051.html> and <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-nigeria-security-idUSKCN1AV25K>

**Pray:** for this cry for division to be silenced, and for the harmony that only God can bring. Pray for the church to be strong in the face of adversity. (Ephesians 4:3)

**More:** <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2017/07/nigeria-brink-civil-war-170712131405928.html>

#### ▣ Asia / Africa: devastating floods and landslides

The annual monsoons in India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sierra Leone have caused hundreds of deaths, while thousands have fled flash floods and mudslides. In Nepal's southern plains, the home to much of its agriculture, huge swathes of land and 48,000 homes have been totally submerged by floods. Pray for those stranded on higher ground taking shelter in sheds, unable to move until the water recedes. Pray for the Bangladesh troops shoring up embankments, in places where such severe flooding has not been seen for thirty years. Authorities suggest the flooding is man-made, caused by the dams built on the India-Nepal border. Pray also for those grieving for the many hundreds who were killed by mudslides and floods in Sierra Leone's capital, Freetown. Many were buried alive as they slept. Pray for governments and NGOs as they work to support those who have lost not only homes but paddy fields, vegetable plantations, and fish farms. See: <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/08/17/africa/sierra-leone-mudslide/index.html>

**Pray:** for overseas aid to be given to those very poor communities who now have even less. (Psalm 22:11)

**More:** <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-40948482>

#### ▣ Saudi Arabia: Hajj - 30 August to 1 September

Each year, two to three million Muslims complete the Hajj to Mecca. Those who have done so add the title 'hajji' to their names. Jesus told people, 'Your sins are forgiven.' The same desire for forgiveness of sins is found on many blog sites, where Muslims ask if the Hajj will cleanse them of small common sins and big serious sins. They are told that their desire for forgiveness will be granted by Allah if they perform Hajj sincerely and properly. John the Baptist promised that Jesus takes away the sins of the world. God appointed Jesus to be judge of the living and the dead. Pray that the Muslims seeking to stay up all night to pray will have dreams and visions of the Lord Jesus Christ. Pray for them to have supernatural revelation of the truth that all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ receive forgiveness of sins.

**Pray:** for an open heaven for those who are genuinely seeking an encounter with God (Acts 2:17)

**More:** <http://www.pray-ap.info/hajj.html>

#### ▣ Armed disputes reveal Iraqi Christians' discord

On 6 August Patriarch Louis Sako, head of the Chaldean Catholic church, called on Iraqi Christians to unite under one banner and work past their various political affiliations and differing doctrines. In his statement, issued after two armed Christian factions clashed in the Nineveh plains, he said that Christian political parties and armed factions are 'responsible to a great extent for the suffering and disorder in which Christians live.' He added, 'We believe that a huge part of this ordeal is self-inflicted and caused by parties' divisions, their subordination (to Shi'ite and Kurdish groups), and their failure to unite efforts and ranks and make a unified decision.' Internal Christian divisions have existed for a long time, but they deepened when a number of armed Christian factions formed after IS took over Christian territories in the Nineveh plains.

**Pray:** for the leaders of the 14 Christian denominations, the 12 Christian political parties and the 7 armed Christian factions to agree to establish a safe zone in the Nineveh plains. (Psalm 37:37)

**More:** <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/08/christians-armed-factions-iraq-minority.html>