

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

■ Bravery as Texas floodwaters rise

Hundreds of thousands of people have been rescued as devastating floods continue to ravage Texas. Many people are refusing to allow it to crush their spirits. Instead, they are courageously choosing to join relief efforts. A Houston pastor took it upon himself to check vehicles stranded on what had been Texas State Highway 288. Although it was dangerous, he waded out to vehicles looking for people trapped inside. 'He wanted to make sure those cars were empty', said Brian Roberson, who witnessed the pastor's bravery. 'It was so powerful to see first-hand.' Another man drove his jeep around roads looking for flood victims to save. Many other stories of bravery and the undefeatable human spirit are emerging, even as the floodwaters continue to rise. Good Samaritans are offering boats, water and food to those trapped in flooded homes. See: <http://www.foxnews.com/us/2017/08/29/good-samaritans-in-texas-offer-boats-water-food-and-even-beer.html>

Praise: God for the Texans who are putting other people's safety first. (Mark 12:31)

More: <http://www.christianheadlines.com/blog/stories-of-bravery-emerge-in-texas-even-as-floodwaters-continue-to-rise.html>

■ Answered prayers: holiday hunger bill

In July, Prayer Alert readers prayed for an end to children going hungry in school holidays - see <http://www.prayer-alert.net/british-isles-ireland-pa-site/item/9620-school-holidays-hungry-children>. Yesterday the media reported that a plan to stop holiday hunger for children has been welcomed by over a hundred MPs. The School Holidays (Meals and Activities) Bill was backed by MPs John Woodcock and Tim Farron and presented to parliament. The Bishops of Durham and Liverpool also supported the bill, which would require local authorities to ensure that free meals and fun activities are provided for youngsters who would otherwise go without during the holidays. Mr Woodcock said that foodbanks have grown in recent years and hunger is a real issue in parts of our communities, often due to government cuts and benefits sanctions.

Praise: God that this bill has won support from many MPs and will be presented when they return on 5 September. (Matthew 25:40)

More: <http://www.nwemail.co.uk/news/barrow/Holiday-hunger-bill-welcomed-to-ease-summer-woes-db27b808-1aef-407a-974f-311484e648c3-ds>

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

▣ Friday Focus: hope for those on the margins

We rejoice to see the many Christian charities in our towns and cities that have sprung up over recent years, reaching out to serve the marginalised in our communities. Surely our hearts' desire is to see these broken needy ones welcome Jesus to be Lord in their lives. (Linda Owen, Speak Life)

Pray: Father, thank You for where we see Your Church serving all those on the margins of our communities. As we go out, pour out Your Spirit upon us. Let us see Jesus in those we serve, and we pray that they will see Jesus in us. Amen. (Matthew 25:35-40)

More: http://www.hopetogether.org.uk/Groups/283989/Friday_Focus.aspx

▣ Intercessor Focus: Brexit trade deals

New trade deals struck between the UK and third-party countries will depend on what Brexit secretary David Davis negotiates with Brussels. Pray for God to use him to shape and establish a Godly future for Britain's commerce and industry. A free-trade area (FTA) is the region encompassing a trade bloc whose member countries have signed a free-trade agreement. These agreements involve cooperation to reduce trade barriers of import quotas and tariffs, to increase trade of goods and services with each other. Britain's international trade minister is Liam Fox. Pray for God to strengthen him with wisdom as he seeks both international and EU trade deals. Britain could have to wait until Brexit is finalised to strike a deal with the USA, as Donald Trump has been 'advised to wait and see' what effects Brexit will have on the US economy. Pray for God to put His words in the mouths of the president's advisors. (Linda Digby, Prayer Alert team)

Pray: for God to inspire and enthuse Theresa May as she travels the world negotiating new trade deals with leaders of non-EU countries. (Ps.27:11)

More: <http://www.prayer-alert.net/component/k2/itemlist/tag/Brexit>

▣ Christian child to live with Muslim grandmother

A family court judge has ordered that a five-year-old Christian child, who had been placed with strict Muslim foster-parents, should live with her Muslim grandmother. A leaked internal document from Tower Hamlets council said the child was 'very distressed' after her foster-parents had taken a necklace with a Christian cross from her and banned her from eating bacon. Judge Khatun Sapnara made this decision at Tower Hamlets' request. The Children's Commissioner, Anne Longfield, said her office would contact Tower Hamlets with questions regarding placing a Christian girl with two Muslim foster families within six months. Media reporting on the case has been criticised by the Muslim community, who said the family dispute had been seized upon in an effort to demonise Islam.

Pray: for the child to be appropriately cared for without heated 'religious debate' in the community. (Jeremiah 29:11)

More: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/aug/30/child-in-fostering-row-should-live-with-non-practising-muslim-grandmother>

▣ Theresa May on North Korea

Speaking to reporters on her way to Japan, Theresa May four times refused to rule out British action to stop North Korea's illegal missile launches, as the rogue state threatened to increase its military tests. She called on China to do more to rein in dictator Kim Jong-un, and said such pressure was the key to easing the crisis. A British government source suggested that cyber-warfare might already be being deployed against North Korea, saying to reporters, 'If we were doing that we certainly wouldn't be telling you.' Mrs May landed in Japan on Thursday, a day after a North Korean missile flew over Hokkaido. Her talks with President Shinzo Abe will focus on trade, security, and Kim's nuclear and ballistic missile programmes.

Pray: for God's plans for peace in the region to be carried out by UN resolutions and peace talks. (Psalm 34:14)

More: <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/theresa-may-calls-on-china-to-rein-in-kim-as-she-refuses-to-rule-out-military-action-a3622936.html>

▣ Young people's fear of crime

New research from the Children's Society reveals that fear of crime is damaging the well-being of 2.2 million UK teenagers, with one in three girls fearful of being followed by a stranger and one in four boys worried they'll be assaulted. Over one million older children are contending with at least seven serious problems in their lives, significantly harming their happiness. Fear of crime has emerged as the most widespread issue for children, with almost 40% worried about falling victim to two or more crimes. The survey of three thousand 10- to 17-year-olds revealed that 53% have experienced at least three hardships in the last five years, making them markedly unhappier. Teenagers with seven or more serious issues in their lives are ten times more likely to be unhappy than those with none. Also 2.1 million teenagers were worrying because their parents were struggling to pay the bills.

Pray: for God to inspire the government with His solutions to the funding shortfall in children's services. Pray for police, schools and local agencies to work together to improve the wellbeing of children. (Psalm 34:6)

More: <https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/news-and-blogs/press-releases/fear-of-crime-blights-teenagers%E2%80%99-happiness>

▣ Bishops call for review of benefits freeze

Bishops have urged the Government to review its benefits freeze urgently, after a 'deeply disturbing' report, by the Child Poverty Action Group, found that poor working parents did not have the cash needed to look after children. Low-paid families are failing to keep up with inflation, and many welfare payments have been frozen. Families working full-time are 13% or £59 a week short of the amount needed to provide their children with a minimum standard of living, according to the report. The Bishop of Gloucester, Rachel Treweek, said, 'We have heard a lot about how earnings are not keeping up with inflation, but there is an urgency to recognise that low-income working families are taking a double hit due to the four-year freeze in child tax credits and other benefits. With rising inflation, it is time to reconsider this policy in order to protect the living standards of the poorest families.'

Pray: for the Government to take a fresh look at supporting working families with children. (1 Samuel 2:8a)

More: <https://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Bishops-call-for-new-approach-from-government-over-benefits-freeze>

▣ Affordable housing

Speaking during a tour of the £800-million Countesswells new town development in Scotland on Thursday, the Scottish Conservative Party leader, Ruth Davidson, said there were still fewer homes being built than before the financial crash. She added, 'We know there is a lack of housing across Scotland. We really need to get our fingers out and build more houses across the country. This new community simply wouldn't happen without the support of the UK Government.' Earlier this year 636 homes were earmarked for first-time buyers and renters by the Battersea Power Station Development Company, but by July it was offering only 386 affordable homes. The developers said the entire project may become financially unviable if they are forced to stick to their original figure, adding that they made the undertaking when London's new-build market was booming and construction costs were lower. See: <http://www.homesandproperty.co.uk/property-news/homes-at-battersea-power-station-blow-for-first-time-buyers-as-affordable-housing-target-at-luxury-a111481.html>

Pray: for more affordable housing to be delivered across the UK. (Isaiah 32:18)

More: <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/politics/1318982/we-need-to-build-more-houses-across-scotland/>

EUROPE

▣ Europol: prayer needs

Europol assists the 28 EU member states in their fight against serious international crime and terrorism. It also works with many non-EU partner states and international organisations to reduce terrorism, drug trafficking, money laundering, organised fraud, euros counterfeiting, and smuggling. But new dangers of online radicalisation and people-trafficking are growing. The networks behind crimes in these areas are quick to seize new opportunities, and are resilient in the face of traditional law enforcement measures. Pray for stronger and wider monitoring of danger through better intelligence-sharing at the highest levels, so that countries can maximise the use of information from all possible sources. Most terrorists have criminal backgrounds, and terrorism is funded by crime. Pray for police across continents to improve the sharing of databases on criminals as they establish an intercontinental cooperation network, so that policing reaches darker places not yet touched by law and order.

Pray: for God to rule through all those working to end corruption, terrorism, and cyber-crime. Pray for every plan or plot to be discovered and defeated and all that is hidden to be exposed. (Psalm 89:14)

More: <https://www.europol.europa.eu/about-europol>

▣ France: Macron's test on labour reforms

France has an unemployment rate of 9.5%, double that of the other big European economies, and President Macron has vowed to cut it to 7% by 2022. The country's unwieldy labour code, 3,000 pages long, is a straitjacket for business. Macron's popularity has plummeted recently as he begins his drive to overhaul the rigid labour laws, giving the details first to the unions and bosses' organisations and later to the public. He promised a 'revolution' to free up the energy of the workforce, making it easier for bosses to hire and fire. Protests against the plan, spearheaded by the far left, are expected on 12 September, but two of the biggest unions will not take part.

Pray: for acceptance of the sixty measures detailed in the document to be presented to unions and then publicly announced on 7 September. (Proverbs 14:34)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-41094790>

WORLDWIDE

▣ USA: extreme weather

Hurricane Harvey has overwhelmed residents of Texas and Louisiana. The situation is unprecedented, and potential impacts are currently unknown. Pray for God's strength and stamina for the local search and rescue teams and the 24,000 National Guard deployed to recover the many thousands trapped in homes and torrential channels of floodwater. Pray for God's peace and provision for weary refugees who have survived life-threatening winds and flooding, taking refuge in makeshift shelters, many having lost everything. Pray for the officials coping with a unique human crisis that is beginning to unravel; these communities will take years to rebuild. At the time of writing people have been enduring misery for seven days, they are running out of food and water and medical needs are overwhelming. But 'love your neighbour' community camaraderie is high - see this week's Praise article 1.

Pray: for the night-time curfew to be effective in preventing empty homes being looted, and that the body count will not rise significantly. (Romans 5:3b,4)

More: <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/08/30/us/harvey-texas-louisiana/index.html>

▣ Peru: social injustice

Social injustice occurs nationally, regionally and locally from unequal wealth and resource distribution, and unfair treatment of individuals of differing race or culture with laws that support exclusion. Last Friday an indigenous people living on Peru's largest oil-field concession threatened to block the government from accessing their territories, and to halt production unless a rights law is implemented within twenty days. They fear big oil concerns taking and destroying their homes while unequal government regulation considers profit of more value than people. The so-called 'prior consultation law', passed in 2011, requires the Peruvian government to seek free, prior and informed consent from indigenous groups before approving any development plans which might affect them. Tribal leaders accuse the government of refusing to carry out the consultation process while it negotiates a new thirty-year contract for Block 192 in the Peruvian Amazon with a Canadian firm whose current agreement expired in August.

Pray: for democratic rights to be respected for the 40,000 people living with oil spills, environmental damage, and lack of adequate compensation. (Matthew 5:3)

More: <http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Peru-Indigenous-People-Vow-To-Block-New-Oil-Contract-20170825-0025.html>

■ Global: military 'killer' robots

Former defence chief General Sir Richard Barrons says the rise of military 'killer robots' is almost inevitable. He stated, 'The advantages of artificially intelligent war machines that can make decisions, learn and open fire without human control will see countries face growing pressure to adopt the technology, despite ethical misgivings.' In his opinion a proactive international ban, such as the one called for by technology experts recently, is likely to be flouted by unscrupulous countries. He spoke after over a hundred technology leaders wrote an open letter calling the UN to outlaw 'lethal autonomous weapons', the use of which will lead to more civilian casualties and abuses. On Monday the Bishop of Oxford discussed the ethical implications of Artificial Intelligence on Radio 4. To listen, go to <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b092950v#play>

Pray: for God to thwart destructive plans through government's rulings and solve the West's military manpower problems without lowering moral values or endangering civilian lives. (Proverbs 4:11)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/08/27/prepare-rise-killer-robots-says-former-defence-chief/>

■ North Korea: brinkmanship

On Wednesday North Korea launched a missile over Japan, saying that it was 'the first step' of military operations in the Pacific. State media also repeated threats to the US Pacific island of Guam, which it called 'an advanced base of invasion'. Russia and China said that US military activity in the region was partly to blame for the increase in tensions. BBC correspondent Jonathan Marcus reported, 'Launching a rocket over Japanese territory, with the possibility that it could deposit debris on Japanese soil, shows that Pyongyang is intent on maintaining its brinkmanship. However, it is noteworthy that North Korea did not make good on its threat to direct a missile towards the US Pacific territory of Guam - something that might well have precipitated a US military response.' See also British Isles article 4 'Theresa May on North Korea'.

Pray: for God to establish a spiritual watch over the Sea of Japan and Pacific Ocean, with a fresh prayer anointing for Christians living there. (Luke 21:36)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-41083375>

■ Philippines: IS propaganda video

The IS terrorist group has released a disturbing propaganda video in which its fighters are shown stamping on a bust of Jesus, desecrating religious statues, and ripping up photos of Pope Francis, before the church went up in flames. The video, filmed in the Philippines, features a narrator speaking with an American accent; he praises 'the truthful soldiers of Mohammed' who have infiltrated the city of Marawi. About 200,000 residents have been evacuated from the city since the start of the conflict in May, but several hundred - many of them Christians - are held captive inside the city. The video narrator claimed that the Philippine government tried to subjugate the Muslims and expel them from the land, and said IS soldiers freed inmates from the local jail and attacked local churches. He added that 'the religion of the cross' would be broken.

Pray: for God to help President Rodrigo Duterte to bring about the captives' release, and for all copies of the video to be discovered and destroyed. (Proverbs 11:3)

More: <http://www.gospelherald.com/articles/71297/20170825/isis-releases-video-showing-fighters-stomping-status-jesus-destroying-philippines.htm>

■ Israeli psychiatrists fly to Houston

On Thursday the Israel Rescue Coalition sent members of a psychotrauma and crisis response unit to Houston, to aid those who have been affected by Hurricane Harvey. 'People need help on the ground,' said Dov Maisel. 'They need to be able to wrap their minds around what was lost, and they need assistance figuring out how to cope and where to go from here.' Maisel's previous experience includes serving in Haiti in 2016 following Hurricane Matthew, and in Nepal in 2015 after a devastating earthquake. Meanwhile, Donald Trump's administration has not yet decided whether to accept assistance from Mexico to help the victims. The Mexican government expressed its 'full solidarity' with the people and government of the US, and said it had 'offered to provide help and cooperation' in the wake of Harvey. In 2005, after Hurricane Katrina, Mexico provided soldiers to help serve meals, distribute supplies, and conduct medical consultations.

Pray: for God to give President Trump the humility to accept all assistance offered with grace. (Job 33:17b,18a)

More: <http://www.jewishpress.com/news/us-news/israel-sends-team-of-psychiatrists-to-underwater-houston/2017/08/31/>

■ Saudi Arabia: Global Day of Prayer

Saudi Arabia is one of the most unreached nations in the world. A partnership between Windows International, Saudi Advocacy Network and Pray for Saudi has designated 23 September as the international Saudi Global Day of Prayer. The group are dedicated to reaching Saudis for Christ, and know that prayer plays a crucial role. They are inviting Christians and prayer groups across the nations to unite and participate in a thirty-minute prayer slot. The vision is a circle of prayer from around the globe praying for Jesus to reach into the hearts of many Saudis and bring them to salvation. There will be live prayer times broadcast from different locations across continents. Resources and more information can be found by clicking the 'More' link.

Pray: for thousands to fill these 24 hours with prayer times, and for miraculous answers to prayer to be reported. (1 Timothy 2:1)

More: <https://www.saudidayofprayer.com/prayer-guides>

■ Hajj and Turkish Muslims

Many have been praying that God would give dreams of Himself to Turkish Muslims even while they are persecuting Christians. We can praise God that He is winning hearts in hard places: Turkish Muslims are having Christian dreams, visions and healings. Pray for God to continue to draw Muslims to Himself as they seek forgiveness during Hajj (which ends today), and to speak to them in the weeks following as they reflect on their pilgrimage. See: <http://www.prayer-alert.info/hajj.html>

Pray: for pastors, leaders and missionaries as they guide new believers into a correct understanding of Christianity. (John 16:13).

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

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE WORLD PRAYER CENTRE, BIRMINGHAM, UK

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