

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

Issue 36-2017

Website

Contact Us

Donations

Friday 8 September 2017

■ Praise Reports

- [Iraq: Christians returning to Mosul](#)
- [Middle East: fearlessly spreading God's Word](#)

■ British Isles & Ireland

- [Friday Focus: visionary leadership](#)
- [Hurricane Irma: overseas territories devastated](#)
- [Brexit: no deal no problem](#)
- [Brexit: God's strategy](#)
- [Parents do not understand tax-free childcare](#)
- [Scotland: education gap](#)
- [Bishops join calls to end indefinite migrant detention](#)

■ Europe

- [EU: Northern Ireland's different Brexit deal](#)
- [European Court orders countries to take migrants](#)

■ Worldwide

- [North Korea: nuclear test](#)
- [South Korea: US training assassins?](#)
- [Global: un-natural disasters](#)
- [Myanmar: Rohingya refugees flee violence](#)
- [Nigeria: UK fight Boko Haram, neglect Fulani](#)
- [Australia: prayer for prisons](#)
- [Sudan: church challenges government interference](#)

PRAISE REPORTS

■ Iraq: Christians returning to Mosul

In July many feared that Christians would not be able to return to Mosul (see <http://www.prayer-alert.net/worldwide-pa-site/item/9569-iraq-will-christians-be-welcomed-back>). However, they are cautiously coming back; and as they do so, so does the Mass. Father Luis Montes celebrated Mass at St George's Monastery. The priest travelled to Mosul to record part of a documentary that seeks to show the reality of life for Christians in Iraq and Syria. 'The experience of celebrating the Eucharist amidst so much devastation was awe-inspiring', he said. 'In this place, which has been attacked for being Christian, the contemplation of the mystery of the cross, which is renewed in Holy Mass, had so much power. Some priests later told the young people who accompanied me that they believed that this was the first Mass celebrated in the last three years within Mosul, which was among the areas hardest hit by IS. It's really a gift from God.'

Praise: God for all those who are serving persecuted people across war-torn areas. (Joshua 1:5)

More: <http://www.ncregister.com/daily-news/the-mass-returns-to-mosul#When%3A2017-08-30+13%3A53%3A01>

■ Middle East: fearlessly spreading God's Word

Nizar Shaheen, of Light for the Nations (a Christian programme aired in Muslim-dense areas), says, 'I've seen many, many Arabic-speaking people turning to Christ, accepting Him as Lord and Saviour. It's happening all over the Arab world; in North Africa and the Gulf countries; in Europe, Canada and the United States. Everywhere, people are accepting Jesus.' Also in the Middle East, Coptic priest Father Zakaria Botros is confronting Islam with an in-your-face style of television and internet evangelism. He reports Muslims turning to Jesus: 'young and old, educated and not educated, males and females, even those who are fanatical.' It is not uncommon these days to hear of Muslims encountering God as they slept. Around the world, many who have converted to Christianity say they have done so after dreaming of a person who they believe is Jesus Christ.

Praise: God for the many stories now being told of people turning their backs on Islam and converting to Christianity. (Acts 4:4)

More: <http://www1.cbn.com/content/coptic-priest-fearlessly-spreading-gods-word>

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Friday Focus: visionary leadership

In 2015 forty Christian leaders gathered in the Lake District for 24 hours of prayer and reflection. Next week leaders gather once again at the invitation of HOPE, the Evangelical Alliance, and the Church of England, to seek God for His strategy to make Jesus known. (Roy Crowne, HOPE)

Pray: that the Church in these islands will unite to make Jesus known. May the leaders gathering next week be one in mind and spirit as they seek His face. May they hear His voice and act on what they hear. (Philippians 2:5)

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

■ Hurricane Irma: overseas territories devastated

Britain's fourteen overseas territories are under UK sovereignty and jurisdiction. They are self-governing but rely on the UK for defence, security and safety - including protection from natural disasters. As Hurricane Irma bombards the Caribbean, with at least fourteen deaths so far, several of these territories have been badly hit. Anguilla has been devastated, and the small island of Barbuda is 'barely habitable'. A state of emergency has been declared in the British Virgin Islands. The first British military relief flight left RAF Brize Norton today, and one navy ship has arrived in the region, but a second might take two weeks to get there. Theresa May said that the Government had responded 'swiftly' to the disaster, but others criticised the UK's lack of preparedness, in contrast to the French who had military on the ground in St Martin, ready to help. See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-41185042>

Pray: for governments, the military, and relief agencies to coordinate their efforts to save lives and bring help to those who most need it. (Proverbs 28:27)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-41196775>

■ Brexit: no deal no problem

Failure to strike a trade deal with the EU would not be a disaster for the UK, according to the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA). It said, 'If a bad deal is offered by the EU, the UK should walk away and trade with the EU under World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules rather than a protectionist and costly agreement.' The report calls for unilateral free trade after Brexit, 'complemented by free trade agreements with partners including the US, Canada and Australia. This arrangement would lead to lower consumer prices, increased productivity and higher wages through removing barriers to imports.' IEA research director Jamie Whyte said, 'Many believe disasters will happen without a deal with the EU. In fact, we could eliminate all import tariffs, which would give us most of the benefits of trade, and export to the EU under the umbrella of WTO rules. Then we can seek free trade deals with all major trading partners, including the EU.'

Pray: for the United Kingdom's tradition of fair trading across continents to be restored. (Deut.15:6a)

More: <http://www.cityam.com/270456/no-deal-no-problem-institute-economic-affairs-report-urges>

■ Brexit: God's strategy

The following declaration is from Passion for the Nation: 'We declare over our Parliament, over the EU and over all those involved in Brexit negotiations, that the Lord God is the Master Planner of heaven and earth. His plans are for good and not for evil, greater than every plan of man or the enemy to bring confusion, division or hopelessness. We come into agreement with His word, He is "the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist". We stand as Your Ecclesia, and in the Name of Jesus we call forth the strategies of heaven over all matters concerning Brexit. We declare they will be seen, heard, endorsed and enacted by those called to policy-making at this time'.

Pray: for the policies, treaties and concessions agreed between the UK Government and the EU negotiating teams to be legislated according to His wisdom, at a God-appointed time. (Romans 4:17b)

More: <http://us12.campaign-archive2.com/?e=be117c6125&u=307c3ce43ea66a282cde62b61&id=3616963405>

■ Parents do not understand tax-free childcare

A survey of 17,000 parents suggests that over 60% are 'unprepared' for the Government's Tax-Free Childcare scheme (TFC). By 16 August, 108,000 parents had successfully signed up to TFC. This compares with over 780,000 parents currently using childcare vouchers. 98% of parents said they would like access to childcare vouchers to be kept open alongside TFC. As of April next year, childcare vouchers will be closed to new entrants. In light of the findings, there are renewed calls for the Government to revise plans to close access to vouchers. Also, over 3,000 childcare providers found that 48% of parents had either not heard of TFC or didn't feel 'well-informed' about the scheme. 20% of those who had registered had experienced issues about receiving payments in a 'timely manner'.

Pray: for the government to produce additional advertising material of this scheme that will help to improve understanding amongst parents. (Psalm 127:3)

More: <http://www.nurseryworld.co.uk/nursery-world/news/1162142/thousands-of-parents-do-not-understand-tax-free-childcare>

■ Scotland: education gap

Nicola Sturgeon often says that she wishes to be judged as first minister on her government's record in education. She cares passionately about trying to close the attainment gap which sees pupils from better off homes performing better in school than children from more deprived backgrounds. But nearly three years after she became first minister, standards in Scottish schools have been judged by international measures to be slipping in reading, writing and maths. Her political opponents say she should be embarrassed by her record. On 5 September she said that education is the 'defining mission' of her government.

Pray: for deputy first minister John Swinney, in charge of education reform, to deliver Nicola Sturgeon's promises. (Zechariah 7:9)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-41160123>

■ Bishops join calls to end indefinite migrant detention

In a rare move, 17 Church of England bishops have united with church leaders of other denominations to urge the government to end indefinite detention. This move followed a BBC documentary describing Brook House immigration centre as 'a toxic, brutal and a failing environment where self-harming is commonplace'. Data from the Migration Observatory showed that in the final quarter of 2016, 2,573 of the 7,078 migrants released from detention had been held for more than 28 days, and 53 had been held for over a year. In a letter to the Telegraph on 6 September, the bishops say they are 'deeply concerned' by the findings, and accuse 'some politicians and sectors of the media' of dehumanising immigrants. The complaint was organised by former G4S manager and now whistle-blower and priest, Nathan Ward.

Pray: for a cap of 28 detention days, with court approval needed to hold immigrants for over 72 hours. (Isaiah 1:17)

More: <https://www.christiantoday.com/article/church.of.england.bishops.join.calls.for.end.to.indefinite.migrant.detention/113182.htm>

EUROPE

■ EU: Northern Ireland's different Brexit deal

The impact of Brexit on Northern Ireland - and its border with the Republic of Ireland - is one of the key issues being discussed in the early stages of UK-EU negotiations. Some feared a return to border checks that could undermine the Good Friday peace agreement and damage the economy. On 7 September the BBC reported that the EU wants Northern Ireland to have a different Brexit deal from the rest of the UK. The document says the UK should take responsibility for finding a 'unique solution' so that people can work, go to school or get medical treatment either side of the Irish border. The EU's chief negotiator Michel Barnier will publish details later. He said 'a lot more substantive work' is needed on the border issue.

Pray: for God's direction and anointing on a solution to the border challenge. (Jeremiah 6:16a)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-41183041>

■ European Court orders countries to take migrants

Many so-called asylum-seekers have refused to relocate to central and eastern Europe because the financial benefits there are not as generous as in France, Germany or Scandinavia. Now many believe a European Court ruling on 6 September, that the 28 member states must step up to the mark and accept their quota of migrants, highlights the degree to which the EU has usurped decision-making powers from countries and individuals. Hungarian prime minister Viktor Orbán said, 'Let us not forget that those arriving have been raised in another religion, and represent a radically different culture. Most of them are not Christians, but Muslims. This is an important question, because European identity is rooted in Christianity. Is it not worrying in itself that European Christianity is now barely able to keep Europe Christian? If we lose sight of this, the idea of a Christian Europe could become a minority interest in its own continent.'

Pray: for God to protect the true asylum-seekers and provide sanctuary. (Psalm 68:5)

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

WORLDWIDE

■ North Korea: nuclear test

Last Sunday Pyongyang conducted an underground nuclear test of a hydrogen bomb, and claimed it can now mount a thermonuclear weapon on a missile capable of striking the USA. The US Ambassador to the UN, Nikki Haley, said Kim was 'begging for war' and urged the Security Council to adopt the strongest sanctions measures possible to stop Pyongyang's nuclear programme. On Tuesday President Vladimir Putin voiced the fears of many when he warned that the escalating crisis risks developing into a 'global catastrophe'. While speaking to the leaders of Brazil, India, China and South Africa, Putin said that imposing further sanctions would be useless and ineffective, and that Kim would rather starve his people than see his regime overthrown. He also urged against 'military hysteria'. At the time of writing South Korea's PM said they expect the North to launch an intercontinental ballistic missile on 9 September.

Pray: for God to raise up His chosen negotiators within governments to help to settle this dispute. (Micah 4:3)

More: <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/09/05/asia/north-korea-putin/index.html>

■ South Korea: US training assassins?

US Navy SEALs who purportedly killed al-Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden will train South Korean commandos to take out North Korean leader Kim Jong-un in the event of war, according to the Times of London. 'We are in the process of conceptualising the plan; I believe we can create the unit by 1 December', said the South Korean defence minister. The US has also decided to waive restrictions on the size and range of South Korean ballistic missiles, allowing it to develop and drop bunker-busting bombs on the underground headquarters of the North Korean leadership in Pyongyang. President Trump told Japanese prime minister Shinzo Abe that the US is ready to use the 'full range' of capabilities, including the nuclear arsenal at its disposal, in dealing with North Korea.

Pray: for leaders to choose to think, do and say all that follows God's purposes. (Proverbs 16:7)

More: <http://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2017/09/07/534300/US-Navy-Seals-training-South-Korean-assassination-squad-to-take-out-Kim>

■ Global: un-natural disasters

The map of disasters is immense, according to agencies tracking changes in climate and disaster events. In south Asia 45 million people have been adversely affected by floods and mudslides, with 16 million children and their families needing life-saving support. Pray for emergency aid to reach areas cut off by the floods and against the spread of waterborne diseases, such as cholera, amongst communities living in temporary shelters. On the African continent, 500 lives were lost in Sierra

Leone and many are still missing after mudslides. Hurricane Harvey caused flooding and devastation on the Gulf Coast, and Florida has declared a state of emergency as Hurricane Irma moves in its direction. According to reports, 95% of the island of Barbuda in the Caribbean has been 'apocalyptically' destroyed, and its prime minister blames this on climate change. He criticised world leaders who deny global warming. See also <http://thenewdaily.com.au/news/world/2017/09/02/south-asia-floods-catastrophe/>

Pray: for help to reach the millions of anonymous victims needing food, clean water, medical and social aid, particularly in islands and regions that are cut off from support. (Isaiah 38:14)

More: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2017/sep/06/hurricane-irma-caribbean-islands-category-5-storm?page=with%3Ablock-59b0ec6ce4b066447a05c903>

■ Myanmar: Rohingya refugees flee violence

The Rohingya Muslims have lived for centuries in the majority Buddhist Myanmar. On 24 August the media reported clashes between Rohingya militants and Buddhist security forces in Rakhine state. Within two weeks the clashes escalated to a military operation, causing 15,000 Rohingya to flee daily to Bangladesh. The situation is becoming a humanitarian crisis in overstretched border camps, and 400,000 Rohingya are trapped in conflict zones where military 'clearance operations' continue. UN aid agencies are blocked from delivering food, water and medicine and humanitarian workers reported looting in warehouses stocking vital emergency supplies. Bishop Desmond Tutu has joined others criticising president Aung San Suu Kyi due to the 'clearance' actions of the army. In 2015, during a similar mass migration of Rohingya fleeing by boat from Myanmar, an estimated 25,000 were taken by human traffickers and many died at sea. This time an aid group rescuing refugees from the Mediterranean Sea is redirecting its ship to the Bay of Bengal. Pray for a greater international response. See also http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=57459#.Wa_VtsiGOM8

Pray: for aid to reach overcrowded camps and makeshift settlements, for the overwhelmed medical clinics dealing with a 50% increase of patients with serious injuries, and for the conflict to end. (Ps.46:9)

More: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/sep/05/more-than-120000-rohingya-flee-myanmar-violence-un-says>

■ Nigeria: UK fight Boko Haram, neglect Fulani

Last week, foreign secretary Boris Johnson and international development secretary Priti Patel visited Nigeria to assess British assistance in the fight against the Islamic terror group Boko Haram. A Nigerian special adviser on religious affairs, Canon Nenman Gowon, said, 'While the attention of the British government and other international development agencies is turned to the devastation caused by Boko Haram in the northeast, very little or nothing is even mentioned about the hundreds of villages and people killed by the Islamic Fulani cattle herders who are still prowling Plateau, Adamawa, Taraba, and other states.' The adviser blamed the president for turning a blind eye to the crises in Nigeria's middle belt, 'because it is a predominantly Christian region and the Fulani Muslims are of the president's tribe'.

Pray: for God to open the eyes of the international community of diplomats to the devastation caused by tribal conflicts. Pray for broken Nigeria to experience greater stability. (Psalm 146:5)

More: <http://www.globalchristiannews.org/article/uk-bolsters-assistance-to-fight-boko-haram-but-neglect-fulani-devastation/>

■ Australia: prayer for prisons

Each year a week of prayer is held for the ministry of Prison Fellowship Australia; this year it is from 10 to 17 September. The week gives an opportunity for Prison Fellowship to communicate and connect with churches and the community, focussing on its ministry among prisoners, ex-prisoners, the families of prisoners, and victims of crime. In keeping with the vision of Prison Fellowship, the week of prayer reflects the threefold mission of its ministry - transformation, reconciliation, and restoration. The themes for each day will be: Reconciliation Sunday, Victim Care, Restorative Justice, Ex-Prisoner Welcome, Correctional Services, Family Support, Prisoner Visitation, and Transformation Sunday.

Pray: for prisoners' lives to be changed. (Psalm 56:12,13)

More: <https://prisonfellowship.org.au/>

■ Sudan: church challenges government interference

The Sudanese Church of Christ (SCOC) is challenging a government decision to impose an unelected leadership committee on the church. On 23 August the Ministry of Guidance and Religious Endowments, which oversees religious affairs in Sudan, appointed an alternative executive committee led by Mr Angelo Alzaki. Before this, eight SCOC leaders had been arrested and charged with trespassing on church headquarters and refusing to hand over control of the church to him. They were later released on bail. The SCOC's leadership said that this action violates the procedures of the denomination. The situation mirrors the Sudan Evangelical Presbyterian Church, where a government-backed church committee that was not constituted in accordance with church procedures has sold church land to developers.

Pray: for God to lead His church, and protect His people. (Matthew 16:18b)

More: <http://www.csw.org.uk/2017/09/01/news/3687/article.htm>

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE WORLD PRAYER CENTRE, BIRMINGHAM, UK

Prayer Alert is distributed free of charge – Donations towards running costs are gratefully received.

To donate, please visit www.prayer-alert.net

Please feel free to distribute Prayer Alert to anyone you feel will benefit from its ministry. All we ask is that you do not edit or change it in any way or charge for its use without contacting us for written permission.

The views expressed in Prayer Alert and on our website are those of the authors, organisations and websites named, and are not necessarily those of the Prayer Alert Editorial Team, the Prayer Alert Steering Group or the World Prayer Centre or any of its employees or trustees. While we try to ensure that the information we provide is correct, mistakes do occur and we cannot guarantee the accuracy of our material. If you do notice any mistakes then please let us know.

Prayer Alert is produced in association with The World Prayer Centre: Cornerstone House, 5 Ethel Street, Birmingham, B2 4BG