

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

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PRAISE REPORTS

■ Yemen: kidnapped priest finally released

On 18 March 2016 Prayer Alert readers prayed for the safety of an Indian priest who had been abducted when a Catholic care home for the frail and disabled in Aden was attacked. See <http://www.prayer-alert.net/worldwide-pa-site/item/8062-yemen-attack-on-catholic-care-home> On Tuesday India's foreign minister released a tweet that read, 'I am happy to say that Father Tom has been rescued'. Last December he appeared in a video, begging for his life. Pope Francis appealed for his release, but nothing seemed to happen. The video confirmed he was in very poor health. He will now go to Rome, where he will get medical treatment.

Praise: God for the release of Father Tom, and pray for his full recovery. (Psalm 51:15)

More: <https://www.premier.org.uk/News/World/Kidnapped-priest-Tom-Uzhunnalil-finally-released>

■ USA / Philippines: two convictions for trafficking

Courts on opposite sides of the USA convicted two men for sexually exploiting children thousands of miles away in the Philippines. Two young survivors flew to California to testify in one of the trials. Last weekend they were home, knowing that their voices had been heard and the men will terrify no more. The FBI shared intelligence with the Philippine National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), and the International Justice Mission supported the follow-up operations in the Philippines. The girls are now 10 and 13 years old. Their families supported having their daughters participate in both the local trial and the trial in California, a significant amount of time and preparation. One of the girls' mothers explained that she was 'willing to leave our families at home and testify abroad to fight for justice for what the men from California did to our children.'

Praise: God for international collaboration in the battle for justice of the abused. Pray for these girls and other rescued victims as they receive aftercare and attend trauma-therapy for survivors. (Psalm 71:20)

More: <http://news.ijm.org/two-american-men-convicted-for-exploiting-filipino-children/>

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Friday Focus: empowering peer to peer evangelism

The best and most authentic evangelism takes place in the context of relationship. Mission Academy Live launches tomorrow, using 10 video-based sessions to empower thousands of 11-18s across the country to reach out - intentionally, authentically and relationally - to six friends for Jesus. (Phil Timson, Hope Revolution)

Pray: Dear Lord, through Mission Academy Live, may young people engage boldly in your Great Commission, and be inspired to be whole-hearted, active, Christ ambassadors, who are compelled by the love of Christ to bring Your message of reconciliation to the world around them. (2 Corinthians 5:11-21)

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

▣ UK response to British territories' needs

Troops and police officers have been sent to the British Virgin Islands, where 100 'very serious' prisoners escaped from jail after hurricane Irma. Boris Johnson said the military presence there is ratcheting up now, with a thousand troops, increasing very soon to 1,250. RAF medics from RAF Brize Norton, along with British Army Engineers and Royal Marines, were deployed to Princess Alexandra Hospital in Anguilla. The Government has faced claims that the UK has done less to evacuate its citizens than other nations, and did not have the correct equipment in place to deal with hurricanes. The former attorney general of Anguilla described UK's £32 million aid as a 'drop in the Caribbean Sea'. Pray that during Boris Johnson's visit to the islands, his discussions with governors and inspection of damage will help the government to evaluate the situation correctly, give survivors the appropriate resources, and start planning future responses to similar events.

Pray: for hope to replace despair, for energy to replace weariness, for healing of broken hearts and lives, for transformation, and for the Church to be powerfully represented at this time. (Isaiah 40:31)

More: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/boris-johnson-hurricane-irma-anguilla-caribbean-island-damage-devastation-british-territory-a7944441.html>

▣ Parents remove son from CofE school

A six-year-old boy's parents removed him from a church school, in a row over another boy wearing a dress. Their son was confused as to why the boy dressed as both a boy and a girl. The couple were told that under the school's bullying policy their son faced being disciplined for misidentifying the gender of the other pupil. The diocese responsible for the school said it is required to 'respect diversity of all kinds', and its policy regarding boys wearing dresses is, 'if a child wants to do that then we just have to accept it'. The couple are suing the school for 'overriding their religious beliefs'. The Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust handle 'under-18 gender issues'. Since 2015 the number of referrals to them of children under the age of ten has risen from 87 to 216 (32 aged five or under). See also

<http://www.gospelherald.com/articles/71364/20170911/christian-couple-sue-church-england-school-6-y-o-boy.htm>

Pray: for society to recognise the pitfalls of encouraging young vulnerable children to embrace transgenderism, and for church schools to express Biblical truths freely in public. (Proverbs 22:6)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-hampshire-41224146>

▣ Priests-in-training and the BCP

The Prayer Book Society gives free copies of the 17th-century Book of Common Prayer to first-year students in theological colleges. This year they will also be given a key to some of the BCP's more old-fashioned words and phrases. Tim Stanley, the Society's press officer, conceived the scheme because although the language of the prayer book is very beautiful, it is also very ancient, and modern readers might find some words difficult to understand or interpret. The glossary will be given in a bookmark form, and is also available on the Society's website. See: <https://www.pbs.org.uk/a-prayer-book-glossary/a-prayer-book-glossary>

Pray: for the 2017 glossary to Cranmer's 1662 book to help the 21st-century Church to be both relevant to today's culture and true to the richness and depth of our spiritual heritage in Christ. (Ephesians 3:18)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/09/12/priests-in-training-given-glossaries-struggle-understand-book/>

▣ Prisoner 'suicidal' 11 years into ten-month jail term

33-year-old James Ward has a low IQ and mental health problems. In 2006 he fought with his father and was given a ten-month jail sentence. Unable to cope with prison life, he set fire to his mattress and was sentenced under Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP). An IPP is a sentence with no release date. All who know James believe he is not a risk to the public, he's just a risk to himself. He is suicidal, self-harms, and needs the right support. The Parole Board is now working to find James a hostel and mental health support. His sister said she had yet to speak to her brother about his release, and was unsure whether he even knew he was to be freed. She added, 'I hope other IPP prisoners who are way over tariff can now also be released'. IPPs were abolished in 2012, but 3,000+ people are still serving them.

Pray: for this case to draw attention to the urgent need to help adults with low IQ and mental health issues to receive appropriate help and treatment. (Matthew 25:36)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-41262920>

▣ Missing people

Over 335,000 missing person calls were made in 2015/16. One in every five had mental health issues. 3,000 people have been missing for over 10 years. Andrew Gosden is one of them. In 2007 14-year-old Andrew left his Doncaster home, boarded a train to London, and vanished. Andrew's family are haunted by thoughts of what might have happened to him in London. His father suffers from anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and suicidal thoughts. Police forces in England and Wales received one missing person call every ninety seconds last year. Margaret Cooper, from Huddersfield, has been searching since 2008 for her son Steven. She said, 'It's not knowing, that's the worst thing'. On 29 August, a new project started in London using an online tool to link rough sleepers to Missing People databases. Teams will help homeless people who use Night Buses and Tubes as a place to sleep to find accommodation and access to support services, and reconnect them with family and friends. See <http://www.missingpeople.org.uk/latest-news/951-london-mayor-s-new-night-team-to-help-homeless-people.html>

Pray: for the success of this project, and for more to be started across the nation. (1 Peter 5:7)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-south-yorkshire-41041855>

■ Christians in Parliament

Rev'd Rose Hudson-Wilkin is a familiar figure around Parliament: leading daily prayers in the House of Commons Chamber, officiating at Wednesday's Holy Communion, and providing pastoral care for Members and staff of both Houses. She is also available to discuss weddings and baptisms. Conservative MP Gary Streeter has been a Member of Parliament since 1992, and served as a minister under John Major. He specialises in international development, and is committed to supporting Christians across all parties to live out their faith in their work in Parliament. Labour MP Gavin Shuker previously served as shadow international development minister, and chairs the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on prostitution and the global sex trade. Before being elected, Gavin was employed by his local church and worked in the community. Democratic Unionist Party MP Jeffrey Donaldson, the DUP spokesman for defence and business issues, is a member of the UK delegation to the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly.

Pray: for these and all Christians in parliament. May they be used powerfully by God. (Psalm 5:8)

More: <http://www.christiansinparliament.org.uk/people/>

EUROPE

■ Germany: election on 24 September

Angela Merkel has been chancellor since 2005. Her Lutheran faith (she calls it an inner compass) expresses itself in her unflashy style and her instincts - debt is bad; helping the needy, good. She thinks ethically, not ideologically. 'I'm a bit liberal, a bit Christian-social, a bit conservative', she said in 2009. Her years in office have made her a familiar figure to Germans and to the world. However, Germany needs reform. The lowest-paid 40% of German workers are earning less than 20 years ago. Foodbank use is up. The rate of investment has been dropping since 2012. Bridges creak and potholed roads challenge even the best-engineered suspensions. The economically crucial car industry has been tainted, as has the country's air, by emissions from the diesel engines it favours (a scandal it tried to cover up). Dirty coal is filling gaps left by closing nuclear plants, and the country's carbon-dioxide emissions are up.

Pray: for God's sovereign purpose for Germany to be fulfilled by the leaders He raises up on 24 September. May they follow His paths for Germany and Europe. (Isaiah 30:21)

More: <http://discovery.economist.com/german-election/21728641-assessing-leader-inscrutable-sphinxes-divas-and-queens-how-angela-merkel-changing-136578529?red=n1>

■ Spain: refugees embrace Christianity at dramatic rate

Pablo leads a small indigenous ministry. He says Syrian refugees are frustrated with Islam, and when we begin to show the love of God in our actions and tell them about God in the Bible, they say they had never heard anything like it. When they start coming to church one of the brothers begins visiting them in their apartment, and explains that, as Christians, they are expressing God's compassion and kindness. The refugees become Christian. Every six months the EU sends 150 refugee families to this ministry for assistance to get resettled. Every month its human and financial resources are stretched. But they do whatever God tells them to do.

Pray: for God to provide these Christian workers with all the resources necessary for their evangelistic mission of mercy. (John 2:5)

More: <http://www.gospelherald.com/articles/71377/20170913/syrian-refugees-spain-frustrated-islam-embracing-christianity-dramatic-rate.htm>

■ France: Macron v unions

French unions are famously radical and resistant to reforms. On Tuesday rail workers, students and civil servants protested in cities from Paris to Toulouse against loosening labour regulations, seen as a key public test of the president's reformist resolve. Police said there were 24,000 protesters in Paris; stone-throwing activists clashed with police, who responded with tear gas. Four thousand strikes were called around France by the country's biggest public sector trade union, the CGT. The numbers were, however, well below protests against another labour reform last year.

Pray: for Macron's labour market reform to go forward without further disruption. (Isaiah 42:9a)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/09/12/hardliners-protest-french-labour-reform-key-test-emmanuel-macron/>

WORLDWIDE

■ Caribbean: recovery after Irma

Hurricane Irma only grazed Havana, but it remains largely still in the dark. It could take weeks for the power to be fully returned. The damage and loss across the Caribbean is immense. Pray for those who are now trying to return to some semblance of normality, as they pick up the pieces after the hurricane ripped through their homes and communities. Pray for well-thought-out networking between those who are working to deliver practical aid and counselling to survivors of this disaster. Pray for the availability and delivery of materials needed to reconstruct buildings. Pray for medical aid, to deal with the health issues arising from stagnant fetid water. Pray for the policing of areas where looting has been taking place. Pray for those who lived in the now non-existent fishing villages to have the help needed to restore their livelihood.

Pray: for the grim situation in areas where residents are running out of food and water which can only be delivered by boats - many of which have been damaged. (Psalm 28:2)

More: <http://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/article172958451.html>

■ Myanmar: 'ethnic cleansing' and mission

On Monday the UN human rights chief called the military operation targeting Rohingya Muslims 'a textbook example of ethnic cleansing', and urged the government to end its current cruel 'security' operations. High-profile individuals have publicly criticised Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi for doing virtually nothing to stop the killings and destruction in her country, and 400,000+ people have signed an online petition calling for her to be stripped of her award. Myanmar has a history of violence against minorities, including Christians. Many people are held captive by widespread drug use, spiritism, occult beliefs, and astrology. 84% of the population, including the Rohingya, have still not heard the name of Jesus. Even so, in recent years, there has been a growing openness to Jesus, especially among Buddhist monks. Prayers can change their physical and eternal reality. See [http://prayercast.com/myanmar-\(burma\).html](http://prayercast.com/myanmar-(burma).html)

Pray: for the international community to give food, shelter, aid and access to education; pray for mission agencies to reach the families fleeing violence and terror. (Proverbs 22:8)

More: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/sep/11/un-myanmars-treatment-of-rohingya-textbook-example-of-ethnic-cleansing>

■ Asia: the persecuted Church

Many Christians leaving Islam in Saudi Arabia are handed over to their relatives and vanish, never to be heard from again. To leave Islam is seen as a great source of shame to families and communities in Islamic nations. Christians in closed Islamic countries often feel they have no choice but to flee the oppressive regimes. And yet there are Muslims in Saudi Arabia, Iran, and other Islamic states who are risking their lives to follow Jesus. Pray for protection for these secret believers; may they grow in their faith. Globally, persecuted Christians face stark dilemmas every day. 'Can we practise the Christian faith without telling anyone?' 'How can we worship and evangelise without incurring the wrath of the mob?' 'Can we live out our faith in society when the eyes of the government are everywhere?' 'Can we get to a place where our house or church will not be bombed tomorrow?'

Pray: for persecuted Christians in 'hidden' churches to keep clear of the persecutor while still managing to influence their culture with Christian values and truths. (Psalm 17:8)

More: http://www.opendoorsuk.org/persecution/worldwatch/saudi_arabia.php

■ Australia: boy 'transitioned' to girl at 12 changes mind

Patrick Mitchell began transgendering to become a girl when he was twelve, then changed his mind two years later and will now be undergoing surgery to remove breast tissue that grew as a result of taking oestrogen. He gave a TV interview to explain how being called a girl actually made him realise he was comfortable as a boy. Walt Heyer, founder of SexChangeRegret.com, said 'Patrick's story is more proof that the trans-activist doctors go forward recklessly with transgender treatments, but have no way of verifying who is transgender and who is not. What we do know is that through persistent affirmation by parents, doctors and schools, we can cause children to think they are transgender.' Transgenders undergo hormone injections and irreversible surgeries to feel better, yet surveys reveal that they attempt and commit suicide at an alarming rate, even after treatment. One UK survey showed almost half of transgender children have attempted to kill themselves. See <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2017/jun/27/half-of-trans-pupils-in-the-uk-tried-to-take-their-own-lives-survey-finds>

Pray: for affirmation or medically induced cross-gender treatments to be withheld until age 18 when a person's thoughts have caught up with their developing body. (Genesis 5:2)

More: <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/boy-who-transitioned-to-female-as-pre-teen-changes-his-mind-i-began-to-real>

■ Iran: God's love for the Middle East

In countries where shame is used as a tool to change people's behaviour, the love of Christ has a powerful effect. That's what is behind Mohabat TV, a Christian satellite television ministry to Farsi-speaking people. Dr Mike Ansari says, 'Mohabat is a Farsi word, meaning Agape love. Our audience is the Farsi speakers of Iran, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan. When people talk about love, it really resonates through that culture. It's a culture of honour, it's a culture of shame. It's a culture where love really speaks volumes, so what better name for our ministry than the love of the Father for His children?' Mohabat TV strives to present the Gospel in a 'non-threatening, non-political' way; it partners with eighty ministries who supply programming, distribute Bibles, and help believers connect with each other.

Pray: for continued blessings on all outreach to Iranians and other Farsi-speaking peoples. (Exodus 15:13)

More: <https://www.mnnonline.org/news/satellite-television-ministry-spread-gods-love-to-the-middle-east/>

■ Global: 'Walk For Freedom' against human trafficking

Port Elizabeth, South Africa, will have its first Walk For Freedom on 14 October. The walkers will join people in hundreds of other cities across fifty nations, who will be participating in this global anti-human trafficking fundraising and awareness campaign. Between 8am and 12pm people will be dressed in black, walking silently, in single file, in popular locations such as the Eiffel Tower and the Hollywood Walk of Fame. They all have one thing in common: a desire to abolish slavery in a world where millions are enslaved as a result of the \$150-billion human trafficking industry.

Pray: for these walks to be publicised and bring greater awareness about trafficking and slavery. (Psalm 45:4)

More: <http://gatewaynews.co.za/pe-holding-first-walk-for-freedom-against-human-trafficking/>

■ Venezuela: food shortages and poverty

Despite being an oil-rich country, Venezuela has record levels of child malnutrition as it experiences severe shortages of food and an inflation rate of over 700%. The crippling economic crisis means that eating meat is a luxury for many, but the government believes it has the answer with a plan to breed and consume rabbits - 'because rabbits breed like rabbits', as President Maduro joked on state television when introducing the idea. A recent survey showed that nearly 75% of the population lost an average 19 pounds in weight from lack of proper nutrition because of poverty. Maduro said people needed to understand that the rabbit is not just a pet, it is 2.5 kilos of meat with high protein and no cholesterol. The IMF

said voracious inflation will climb to 720% this year. Poor Venezuelans spend 10% of their income to buy a kilo of meat. See also <http://prayercast.com/venezuela.html>

Pray: for the regional elections on 15 October to alter the direction of Venezuela's future. (Jeremiah 18:8)

More: <http://zeenews.india.com/world/venezuela-pres-maduro-urges-starving-citizens-to-eat-rabbits-2042473.html>

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE WORLD PRAYER CENTRE, BIRMINGHAM, UK

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