

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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Donations

Friday 06 October 2017

■ Praise Reports

- ✦ [Heroism at Las Vegas shooting](#)
- ✦ [Turkey offers to free pastor](#)

■ British Isles & Ireland

- ✦ [Friday Focus: Movement Day UK \(6-7 October\)](#)
- ✦ ['British dream' speech becomes a nightmare](#)
- ✦ [NI search for Stormont agreement](#)
- ✦ [Walkout threatened at Primates' meeting](#)
- ✦ [Gynaecologists back decriminalising abortion](#)
- ✦ [Mental health campaign welcomed](#)
- ✦ [Scotland bans fracking](#)

■ Europe

- ✦ [Spain: Catalan referendum](#)
- ✦ [Iceland wants to eliminate Down's syndrome](#)

■ Worldwide

- ✦ [Response to Las Vegas massacre](#)
- ✦ [USA: gun culture](#)
- ✦ [Myanmar: persecuted minorities](#)
- ✦ [Guinea: religious freedom and other challenges](#)
- ✦ [Dominica: a nation in ruins](#)
- ✦ [Ten non-religious countries hostile to Christians](#)
- ✦ [India's prime minister and human rights](#)

PRaise REPORTS

■ Heroism at Las Vegas shooting

The USA and the world are still reeling from the horrific shooting that killed 59 people and wounded over 500 more on Sunday in Las Vegas. While we are all still grappling with this senseless act of violence and 'pure evil,' as President Trump termed it, there are also stories of courage and heroism which showcase the best aspects of the human spirit. Many people acted selflessly during the shooting. One couple attending the concert fled from the scene in their pickup truck, but returned to help transport the wounded to hospitals. Another story emerged of a husband who gave his life for his wife by shielding her with his body as bullets rained down on the crowd. Two friends at the concert heard the shots and hid under some tables, then a complete stranger came and shielded them.

Praise: God for the lives that were saved, and continue to pray for the bereaved and those injured. (Psalm 10:4)

More: <http://www.christianheadlines.com/blog/stories-of-courage-and-heroism-emerge-in-wake-of-las-vegas-shooting.html>

■ Turkey offers to free pastor

Turkey's president has now confirmed publicly that an American pastor jailed for the past twelve months is being held as a political hostage. In a speech at his presidential palace, Recep Tayyip Erdogan openly called on the United States to exchange pastor Andrew Brunson for Muslim cleric Fethullah Gülen, a Turkish citizen living in exile in the US since 1999 who is accused of masterminding last year's failed coup via his international network of followers.

Praise: God for this initiative, while continuing to intercede for the release of judges, prosecutors, academics, and journalists who are still in jail for suspected terrorist sympathies or actions. (Proverbs 28: 18)

More: <http://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2017/october/turkey-offers-to-free-jailed-american-pastor-in-clergy-swap.html>

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Friday Focus: Movement Day UK (6-7 October)

Movement Day UK will bring together believers from across the country to seek God together, to dialogue and to explore strategic ways in which we can pursue the transformation of our places, in all areas of society. An open prayer event involving national leaders will also meet to pray for the unity of the Body of Christ and the nation. (Sarah Haynes, Movement Day UK)

Pray: Father, we pray that we may be one. Teach us what it means to be Your church in this land. Show us Your ways, and increase Christlikeness within us. Help us to engage in our places and spaces to be a light and a bearer of Your truth. Lord of all, we commit our lives and our nation to You. (John 17:21)

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

❑ 'British dream' speech becomes a nightmare

The PM's keynote speech at the Conservative Party conference was marred by a series of misfortunes: an incessant cough, interruptions by a prankster, and problems with the backdrop. She valiantly ploughed on with a speech designed to shift the focus from Brexit infighting to domestic policy on energy bills and council housing, but the accident-prone presentation made some people question how long she could carry on. Newspaper headlines made dismal reading the next day, with words like 'ordeal, shambles, tragic, disaster' on the front pages. Pray for God to give the Government a united positive vision for the future, and help the nation to recognise the vision as possible. Pray for the media to focus on the trustworthy character that those who know Mrs May give her credit for; may they focus on the positive words spoken by our leaders. Ask God to repair all that is broken in the Westminster community, lifting them out of a place of fear and disunity.

Pray: for God to anoint all our leaders with uprightness and righteousness. (Malachi 3:3a)

More: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/oct/04/theresa-may-british-dream-cap-on-energy-bills-housing-tory-conference-speech>

❑ NI search for Stormont agreement

Northern Ireland secretary James Brokenshire has made a fresh appeal for political parties to restore the devolved government at Stormont. At the Tory conference he said that while the DUP and the Tories were separate parties, they were working together at Westminster, 'standing firm against Jeremy Corbyn'. He promised the Government would 'provide the necessary political stability and governance' if no deal is reached, including setting a budget for the province later this month. In the past, he said, the political parties had resolved issues and displayed the leadership to create stability. 'So my message to you is: now is the time to reach agreement. Now is the time to look beyond the issues that divide you. Show the resolve you have demonstrated in the past.'

Pray: for political agreement and stability to be established through flexibility and resourcefulness. (Isaiah 30:21)

More: <http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/james-brokenshire-pleads-for-resolve-in-search-for-stormont-agreement-36186201.html>

❑ Walkout threatened at Primates' meeting

Conservative Anglican church group GAFCON has said some Primates may walk out of the Anglican Communion Primates' meeting, over the issue of same-sex marriage. The Scottish Episcopal Church will be asked to repent for its decision to let clergy conduct same-sex weddings last June. The Archbishops of Nigeria, Rwanda and Uganda refused to attend a recent Anglican Primates' meeting over what they deem to be a weak stance in the Church on the issue of sexuality. Meanwhile Justin Welby said yesterday that a ban on Scottish Anglicans taking part in some votes and holding certain offices 'will be followed through', after a meeting where anger and disappointment were expressed. The ban would involve exclusion from debate on doctrine and from chairing Anglican Communion committees. Archbishop Welby said that no vote was taken against the Scottish Anglicans by the Primates, but there was a 'consensus'.

Pray: for the Church to believe and act in humble obedience to the truth of the Word of God. (Hebrews 4:12)

More: http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/15574992.Archbishop_of_Canterbury_to_ban_Scottish_Episcopal_Church_after_anger_over_same_sex_marriage/

❑ Gynaecologists back decriminalising abortion

The senior council of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists has voted for the decriminalisation of abortion, despite protests that there should have been a members' ballot on this. Decriminalising abortion would remove moral standards for abortion practice from national legislation, trivialise legitimate moral concerns, and portray abortion as morally neutral. It would no longer be possible to ban dangerous DIY and sex-discriminating abortions. There might be regulations, but without legislation what makes those regulations anywhere close to enforceable? If abortion is viewed merely as a form of contraception, that would promote sexual irresponsibility. Additionally, decriminalisation could see some doctors come under fire for refusing to carry out abortions, which would be a further injustice. It also would run contrary to the Hippocratic Oath, taken by all those entering the medical profession.

Pray: for courts to recognise that life is precious and something to be preserved. (Jeremiah 1:5a)

More: <http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/abortion/why-the-rcog-vote-for-decriminalisation-matters>

❑ Mental health campaign welcomed

Christian Vision for Men (CVM) has welcomed a new campaign by the mental health organisation Time to Change, which urges men to support their friends if they suspect they're suffering from mental health issues. The 'In Your Corner' campaign asks men to be more open and supportive of their friends. A national survey of over 3,000 men found that 86% would feel comfortable supporting a friend who has a mental health problem. The research also highlighted that men who wouldn't feel comfortable in such circumstances hold these common beliefs: 'I wouldn't know how to support them' (58%); 'I don't know anything or much about mental health, so wouldn't be much help' (34%); 'I'd probably say the wrong thing and make it worse' (34%). CVM's Jeremy Geake said that any form of connecting such as texting a friend or meeting for coffee is valuable in helping to tackle mental health issues.

Pray: for more Christian counselling initiatives to be developed giving both men and women a place to talk openly, feel safe and receive Godly support. (Proverbs 8:14)

More: <https://www.premierchristianradio.com/News/UK/Christian-men-s-organisation-welcomes-mental-health-campaign>

❑ Scotland bans fracking

A decision by the Scottish government to ban fracking has been welcomed by the Church of Scotland. Church leaders said the vast majority of congregations oppose this controversial practice. They have now called for more opportunities to exploit greener energy sources, like wind. Adrian Shaw, the Church of Scotland's climate change officer said the Church is against fracking 'primarily because of a need to build a low carbon economy', adding, 'Continuing dependence on fossil fuels, coal, and gas delays a low-carbon economy.' He also said that the Church believes in the potential for Scotland to be fully green. 'Our resources for wind power, hydropower, and tidal power are enormous here.'

Pray: for all the UK to look after and protect the land, follow Scotland, and ban fracking. (Psalm 24:1)

More: <https://www.premierchristianradio.com/News/UK/Church-of-Scotland-backs-Government-s-fracking-ban>

EUROPE

Spain: Catalan referendum

Catalonia has its own history, language and culture. It has both 'nationality' status and autonomy within the Spanish constitution. It also has a history of nationalist politics. Last Sunday there was a referendum on Catalan independence that the Spanish government declared unlawful. Catalan volunteers guarded polling stations, not from criminals, but from the police. Social media images depict Spanish police kicking non-violent protesters, throwing them down stairs, breaking into buildings, and holding back Catalan police who were trying to help voters - police in a stand-off against each other! The Spanish police managed to force the closure of 93 of 2,000 polling stations. In Spain's Basque country, other independence-minded people are watching closely. ETA (a Basque terrorist group) has been respecting a ceasefire for many years. Some are wondering what it will do now. Spain is a member state of the Council of Europe, whose primary role is to promote democracy throughout the continent. See <http://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/spain>

Pray: for a modern democracy in the region that is built on governments respecting the will of the people, and for inclusive agendas for both parties that work to promote democracy and reconciliation. (Amos 3:3)

More: <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/catalan-crisis-spain-collapse-independence-referendum-police-violence-voters-civilians-protests-a7978131.html>

Iceland wants to eliminate Down's syndrome

The only Baptist pastor in Reykjavik doesn't want Down's syndrome eliminated. 'My family has spent a lot of time at the hospital. For over a year our five-year-old son has been undergoing chemotherapy for leukaemia. Our youngest son, born this April, also spent two months at the hospital as doctors ran tests on him, finding a genetic mutation in his X chromosome that only two other people in the world have been diagnosed with. Every day, as I walked into the intensive care unit at the hospital, I looked over a wall of pictures of young children and teenagers holding up photos of themselves as premature babies. They were born after as little as 21 or 22 weeks of pregnancy.' Meanwhile, there is talk of new legislation which would make abortion available in the 22nd week of pregnancy. Recently this issue took the internet by storm, with a report on how the country (population 340,000) is on the verge of eliminating Down's syndrome.

Pray: for changes in a culture that has stopped valuing life in the womb. Intercede for the foetus to have a chance to live. (Psalm 35:4)

More: <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2017/august-web-only/icelands-only-baptist-pastor-down-syndrome-abortion.html>

WORLDWIDE

Response to Las Vegas massacre

Taylor was attending the concert at the Mandalay Bay casino when a gunman killed 59 and wounded 527. He said that prior to the shooting he was an agnostic but, 'In a fight or flight situation you just take it to God and hope that you can make it,' In the midst of tragedy and fear, not knowing where to flee to, with bodies everywhere, his faith was renewed. The National Day of Prayer president said, 'The massacre has more to do with the fallenness of mankind than where God is. God is with the people of Las Vegas. He is with everyone who has suffered. We must trust Him, even when we see things like this occur and we have no idea why someone would do it. We are living in days like none before and being called back to God through every terrible event we are observing around the world. The Church must call out to God together.' See <http://www.christianheadlines.com/blog/in-midst-of-las-vegas-shooting-one-man-s-faith-was-renewed.html>

Pray: for God to have mercy and heal the wounds, bring good out of this terrible evil, and anoint the churches in Las Vegas as they deal with the aftermath of tragedy. (Psalm 32:8)

More: <https://www.charismanews.com/us/67534-national-day-of-prayer-president-how-christians-should-respond-to-the-las-vegas-massacre>

USA: gun culture

In the South, the rifle-bearing eagle insignia of the National Rifle Association is seen everywhere, and support of the Second Amendment is as common a topic in country music as sweet tea and tailgates. The bond between the NRA and country music spurred the formation of an entire branch of the gun lobbying group, prompting a series of concerts and events sponsored by the organisation and headlined by country stars to bring the two entities together formally. But the Las Vegas mass shooting at a country music festival has rocked some of the most ardent supporters of gun rights. Country guitarist Caleb Keeter, who performed at the festival, wrote on Twitter, 'I've been a proponent of the Second Amendment my entire life, until the events of last night. Now I cannot express how wrong I was.'

Pray: for wisdom to enter people's attitudes and hearts with regards to the gun laws. (Proverbs 1:7)

More: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/life/nation-now/2017/10/02/las-vegas-shooting-impact-country-music-guns/726070001/>

Myanmar: persecuted minorities

The ruling military changed Burma's name to Myanmar in 1989. At that time thousands were killed when a popular uprising was suppressed. The military still hold the upper hand. Ethnic Rohingya people in Myanmar face genocide. Violation of human rights is part of a pattern of religious-based persecution in south and south-eastern Asia. There are eight officially recognised ethnic races in Myanmar, speaking four different languages. While the majority of citizens are at least nominally Buddhist, some of these ethnic groups are predominantly Christian. Minorities in Myanmar experience discrimination, forced conversions and violence. Christian communities are targeted with abuse, even though on paper they are citizens and entitled to live there. The Rohingya are not registered citizens, and the government is making them leave. Prior to the recent military crackdown, almost one million had already fled in the past few decades. Some who reached places like Thailand were held for ransom, caught in sex trafficking, or murdered.

Pray: for Myanmar to defend religious freedom, and for religious nationalism in the region to end; for food, shelter and

medical attention. (Psalm 12:5a)

More: <http://www.christianheadlines.com/columnists/breakpoint/genocide-in-burma-why-a-persecuted-muslim-minority-should-matter-to-christians.html>

▣ **Guinea: religious freedom and other challenges**

Every October, Window International Network intensifies prayer for the 10/40 Window, and profiles a different country each day. Today the focus is on the peaceful country of Guinea where people live on less than \$1 a day, despite the country's wealthy resources. At least half a million Guineans protested against government corruption last year, denouncing supposed economic mismanagement by their president. Ethnic tensions increased, with the country divided along equal-sized tribal lines. Hundreds of thousands of refugees from Liberia and Sierra Leone have added to the strain. Low incomes and a poor economy create a challenge for those seeking help from a poorly-equipped health care system. Christians are not persecuted in this mainly Muslim country, but believers are starting to lose the religious freedom they once had, especially in major cities. Also, pray for a Godly transformation of the media and entertainment industries, which are highly influential but lack wholesome messages.

Pray: for the swift reversal of the recent trend to deprive Christians of religious freedoms. (Romans 8:2)

More: <https://www.1040windowreporter.com/day-6>

▣ **Dominica: a nation in ruins**

Despite being susceptible to devastating weather, the island of Dominica has a thriving banana industry that drives much of the economy, but not one tree, village, street, or person was spared the terrifying effects of Hurricane Maria. One of several devastating hurricanes in the Caribbean in September, Maria blasted the tiny island as a Category 5 storm. Communications are down. Drinking water is scarce. Over fifteen were killed and many more injured. Many say the devastation on this island is worse than a war zone. Dominica does not possess the means or infrastructure to rebuild after such a catastrophe. Though the majority claim Christianity (primarily Catholicism), nominalism is rampant, yet we praise God that evangelicals have experienced great growth, from 2% of the population in 1970 to 17% in 2010!

Pray: for this tragedy to awaken the Church. May Dominicans turn to Jesus in their moment of need. Hope and restoration lies in Him alone; He can bring beauty from ashes and life from death. (Isaiah 61:3)

More: <http://www.prayercast.com/dominica.html>

▣ **Ten non-religious countries hostile to Christians**

A two-year study by Pew Research of 199 countries and self-administering territories found Islam to be the world's most common state religion, and listed ten non-religious nations that are hostile toward Christianity and other religions. Most countries do not have an official or preferred religion: of the 43 nations which do, 27 follow Islam. Thirteen states have Christianity as their official religion, two have Buddhism, and one has Judaism. The study said that there are nine officially Christian countries in Europe, including the UK, Denmark, Monaco, and Iceland. The others are Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, and Tuvalu (in the Asia-Pacific region). Only Zambia in sub-Saharan Africa is officially Christian.

Pray: for God in his mercy to ignite Christian revival across secular and unbelieving nations, removing witchcraft and false religions, and releasing His fire that cleanses and purifies. (Psalm 80:18)

More: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/top-10-non-religious-countries-hostile-christians-pew-201634/>

▣ **India's prime minister and human rights**

Today Donald Tusk, president of the European Council, and Jean-Claude Juncker, president of the European Commission, will meet India's prime minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi. Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) International, a human rights group, urges the EU leaders not to 'turn a blind eye' to the rising persecution of Christians and Muslims in India. 'How many more victims of government-condoned violence against Muslims and Christians will the EU tolerate before it puts the issue on the agenda with Prime Minister Modi? No person should live in fear of being killed, tortured, or oppressed because of their religious beliefs.' The persecution of religious minorities in India has become worse under the government of the BJP, which is the political arm of the nationalist Hindutva movement. The party has been accused of inciting hatred and riots against religious minorities, including Christians and Muslims.

Pray: for international leaders to recognise the extent of persecution and begin to decree religious freedom to be a precondition to economic cooperation between nations. (Psalm 9:13)

More: <https://www.christiantoday.com/article/eu.leaders.urged.to.not.sacrifice.human.rights.for.the.sake.of.a.free.trade.agreement/115327.htm>

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE WORLD PRAYER CENTRE, BIRMINGHAM, UK

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