

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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Contact Us

Donations

Friday 13 October 2017

■ Praise Reports

- [Ukraine: 500,000 praise Jesus on the streets](#)
- [Digital Bibles in balloons](#)

■ British Isles & Ireland

- [Friday Focus: talking about Jesus](#)
- [Proposals for new deal with the EU](#)
- [Parliament 'to be shut out of post-Brexit trade deals'](#)
- [X Factor hopeful wows Wembley with Christian song](#)
- [Pray for our police](#)
- [Northern Ireland: pray for a better debate](#)
- ['My daughter had to share a classroom with her rapist'](#)

■ Europe

- [Balkan nationalists take hope from Catalan referendum](#)
- [Russia: peaceful protesters detained on Putin's birthday](#)

■ Worldwide

- [Global: pray for Hindus 8-22 October](#)
- [Azerbaijan: a 'democracy' that persecutes Christians](#)
- [Bangladesh: Myanmar children need psychological support](#)
- [California: wildfire disaster](#)
- [Egypt moves toward criminalising child marriage](#)
- [Nepal: still a disaster area](#)
- [South Africa: Global Leadership Summit 2017](#)

PRaise REPORTS

■ Ukraine: 500,000 praise Jesus on the streets

The streets of Kiev were filled with songs of praise and thanksgiving from 500,000 evangelical Ukrainian Christians who had gathered to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. People travelled from all four provinces to celebrate and thank God for the freedom to worship, to preach the Gospel in their country, and to celebrate His faithfulness to His Church. The gathering took place after Ukrainian president Petro Poroshenko signed an order recognising the anniversary of the Reformation.

Praise: God for this celebration. May their enthusiasm release blessings on the area. (Psalm 160:6)

More: <https://www.worthynews.com/27567-half-million-people-gather-streets-ukraine-praise-name-jesus>

■ Digital Bibles in balloons

A North Korean defector, Jung Kwang-il, has used 350 helium balloons to send 1,000 flash drives loaded with portions of the Bible from South to North Korea. The flash drives were donated by college and high school students in the United States. Jung said, 'It was confirmed by GPS that all balloons dropped in the Mount Kumgang area of North Korea. This launch is the last one for the year, because the direction of the wind is due to change.' Fifty-four-year-old Jung, who was sentenced to three years in a North Korean prison camp, is now based in South Korea and often sends USB drives, SD cards, and other devices carrying Christian material and testimonials from North Korean defectors across the border.

Praise: God for all the smuggling of Christian material into North Korea over the years. (Psalm 18:3)

More: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/north-korean-defector-sends-1000-digital-bibles-balloons-across-border-200286/>

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Friday Focus: talking about Jesus

It is usually easier to pray for someone than to talk with them, but the Great Commission is not 'Go into all the world and pray...' Perhaps now is the time to start a conversation. Ask questions. Be a listener. You could maybe suggest, 'Have you ever tried praying about that?' See what opens up! (David Hill, trypraying)

Pray: Lord, You are the God who speaks, and You call us to speak too. I ask that You give me a special Spirit-led opportunity for a conversation about Jesus this week. Help me to recognise it, and may my conversation be full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that I make the most of the opportunity. (Colossians 4:5-6)

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

▣ **Proposals for new deal with the EU**

In a statement to MPs, Theresa May called for a 'unique and ambitious economic partnership' with the EU after Brexit. 'Progress will not always be smooth', she said, but the UK can 'prove the doomsayers wrong'. Following her speech in Florence, when she gave assurances on payments to the EU and citizens' rights, she said the ball is now in the EU court. Her statement came as the fifth round of negotiations began in Brussels, the final set of talks before EU leaders meet on 19 October to decide if enough progress has been made to enable them to move forward and talk about post-Brexit trade relations with the UK. Two white papers, covering future trade and customs options, are being published (see next article). Justice minister Dominic Raab said that while the UK had to 'strive for the very best Brexit outcome', it must also 'prepare for all eventualities'. 'No-deal Brexit planning is under way'.

Pray: for a new, successful partnership between the United Kingdom and European Union. (Exodus 18:21a)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-41546701>

▣ **Parliament 'to be shut out of post-Brexit trade deals'**

The Trade Justice Movement has welcomed the Government's recognition, in its white paper, that our trade policy should be 'transparent and inclusive'. However it has criticised its commitments so far as woefully inadequate, in particular the lack of any clear role for parliament in scrutinising trade deals. The white paper outlines the contents of the forthcoming trade bill, a cornerstone of the Government's planning for Brexit. Trade deals have profound effects across domestic policy: health, environment, jobs, inequality, and climate. As a result, campaigners are calling for a democratic and transparent process for negotiating and agreeing trade deals after Brexit, with parliamentary oversight at its heart. So far 90 MPs have signed an early day motion supporting the campaign, calling for clear legislative frameworks guaranteeing the role of Parliament in trade policy.

Pray: for unquestionable executive powers that pave the way for future trade deals in a fair way. (Proverbs 16:11)

More: <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/24434>

▣ **X Factor hopeful wows Wembley with Christian song**

Sixteen-year-old singer Rai-Elle Williams has battled through to the next round of the X Factor by singing the gospel classic 'Break every chain'. She was forced into a sing-off to decide who would go through. Three artists had to sing in front of thousands gathered at Wembley. While the two others blasted out mainstream pop hits, Rai-Elle shocked the judges by singing the words 'There is power in the name of Jesus'. Her performance saw judge Nicole Scherzinger rise to her feet, along with many in the audience. Sharon Osbourne, who is mentoring the girls' category of the ITV show, said, 'You are fearless for a sixteen-year-old - you're unbelievable.'

Pray: for even more Christian undercurrents to flow through popular secular television and for Rai-Elle to continue to raise the faith banner with her music. (Hebrews 10: 35)

More: <https://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/There-is-power-in-the-name-of-Jesus-X-Factor-hopeful-wows-Wembley>

▣ **Pray for our police**

'For the past ten years I've been a police response officer. A colleague, summing up our lives, recently wrote: "Last week I was hit, spat at and punched. There wasn't one day that I ate my lunch. I held a man's hand who had just lost his wife. I took a child from his father who was wielding a knife. I pulled a girl who was mentally ill off a bridge. I locked up a worker who had nicked from the till. I persuaded a battered woman finally to speak - after seeing her every day, week after week. This is our job and we are all proud to do it." We are proud. And that's why we work earlies, lates and night shifts. But I want to challenge a policy that puts the public and the police at risk. It's called "single crewing" and it means that officers like me are sent out on jobs alone and face being attacked. Our team of 24 will have three double-crewed cars during most shifts: the rest of us will be on our own. That's why I've started a petition calling on Amber Rudd to stop this.'

Pray: for Amber Rudd to legislate for back-up for our police, and for God to protect all those standing against lawlessness. (Proverbs 1:3)

More: <https://www.change.org/p/amber-rudd-stop-single-crewing-police-officers>

▣ **Northern Ireland: pray for a better debate**

There are reports of a change of tone between the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and Sinn Féin; however, at present the prospect of a Northern Ireland executive and assembly being re-established remains elusive. The secretary of state has warned that Northern Ireland is on a glide path to the British government stepping in. While 'stepping in' remains vague enough to hold off direct rule by British ministers for now, options are running out. Further rounds of budgets will need to be signed off, and key decisions around health, education and capital investment cannot be postponed indefinitely. It is nearly nine months since the executive was brought down.

Pray: for healing of the schism between the power-sharing parties. May they come to a political agreement that will work. (Proverbs 2: 9,10)

More: <http://www.eauk.org/current-affairs/news/praying-for-better-debate.cfm>

▣ **'My daughter had to share a classroom with her rapist'**

Rachel's daughter was raped by a boy at her school. He was arrested, bailed, and put back into lessons, alongside his victim, the following day. 'A rape victim is already in a terrible place, but to be expected to be back in the same space as the rapist is terrible,' Rachel said. The Government is writing interim guidelines for schools to prevent such things happening, but campaigners say it is taking too long. Rachel said that the school seemed to have no policy in place, and dealt with the situation 'extremely badly'. She had to instigate a meeting and, despite her efforts, they did not prioritise her daughter's needs but were keen to protect her assailant's rights to education. Over 5,500 sex crimes in UK schools were reported in

the last three years, including nearly 4,000 physical assaults and 600+ rapes. See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-34138287>

Pray: for traumatised rape victims to receive correct care, counselling and justice; and for guidelines to be made available for schools when there are sexual assaults on underage victims. (Deuteronomy 16:19)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-41486776>

EUROPE

■ Balkan nationalists take hope from Catalan referendum

Catalonia's drive to separate from Spain is rekindling dreams of independence in ethnic pockets across the Balkans - a dangerous ambition in a region where nationalist violence claimed tens of thousands of lives in the 1990s. Among ethnic Albanians in southern Serbia and the Serbs of Republika Srpska, in the wake of the 'banned' Catalan referendum, separatist leaders are asking the same question: 'Why don't we do the same?' On the election day, graffiti of Catalan flags appeared several towns in the Serbian province of Vojvodina, along with the claim that 'Vojvodina = Catalonia'. Meanwhile, in the southern Bosnian town of Mostar, a giant banner appeared near the cathedral showing the flags of Catalonia and Herceg-Bosna, the self-styled Croat entity, reading 'Good luck. We are the next.' Local media are saying, 'The fact that one region (Kosovo) managed to secure independence has emboldened many like-minded leaders in the region'.

Pray: for peace in potential hot spots where self-rule is a topic of conversations. (1 Samuel 15:23a)

More: <https://www.thelocal.es/20171010/balkan-nationalists-take-hope-from-catalan-referendum>

■ Russia: peaceful protesters detained on Putin's birthday

Over 250 supporters of opposition leader Aleksei Navalny were arrested as they held peaceful protests in eighty cities across Russia on Putin's birthday. They were demanding that Mr Navalny be allowed to stand in the March 2018 presidential elections. He is currently jailed for organising public meetings, and the authorities say he cannot stand in the elections because of a suspended sentence. Amnesty International said, 'The Russian authorities must immediately and unconditionally release scores of peaceful protesters detained, and investigate allegations that the police used abusive force. The Kremlin's intent is to choke the life out of the protest movement, but it has also become clear that this reproachful goal cannot be achieved. Peaceful protest is a right, and many people in Russia want to exercise that right.' See: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/10/russia-scores-of-peaceful-protesters-detained-at-rallies-on-vladimir-putins-birthday/>

Pray: for the release of the demonstrators, organisers of the rally, and leaders of the pro-democracy group Open Russia. May Russia respect and protect the rights of protesters. (Proverbs 19:21)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-41538256>

WORLDWIDE

■ Global: pray for Hindus 8–22 October

Hinduism is the third largest religion in the world. The majority of Hindus have never heard the name of Jesus, and less than 2% of Protestant missionaries are serving among them. Centred mostly in India, Hinduism is much more than a religion; it is a way of life, a cultural identity. Acts of violence and intimidation by militant Hindus against other religions are on the rise, particularly against Christians. Barriers to the Gospel are many. But prayer opens doors! Join Christians around the world praying for Hindus between 8 and 22 October. During this time, Hindus celebrate one of their most important holidays, the Festival of Lights (Diwali). Despite candles and fireworks, millions remain separated from the only true source of light - Jesus Christ. Hindus are coming to Christ. In one instance an entire village turned to Christ after hearing God's Word preached in their language!

Pray: for former Hindus to reach out to others in Christ's name, bringing the message of truth through story-telling, and living a life that glorifies the Lord. (Matthew 11:28-30)

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

■ Azerbaijan: a 'democracy' that persecutes Christians

For years, Azerbaijan has been riding the line for years between democracy and fiefdom. Its New Azerbaijan Party is accused of authoritarianism and bribery. It imprisons corruption-busting journalists and human rights advocates. Friction with neighbouring Armenia was heightened last year, with bombings and continuous calls to war. Their dispute is over Nagorno-Karabakh, an Armenian enclave within Azeri territory. Oil export revenues have aided the Azeri population, elevating living standards and increasing military strength; but poverty and corruption plague the nation. Although Azerbaijan fell off the 2017 World Watch List of persecuted Christians, that is not because restrictions have eased. Christian detentions continue; they face harassment and intimidation, and many are given large fines for meeting as churches or giving out Bibles. Only 0.22% of the people are evangelical Christians. Azerbaijan was one of the first republics in the Soviet Union to face the problem of refugees. There are 618,137 refugees and internally displaced persons in the country.

Pray: for Christians to continue engaging in outreach among their neighbours and displaced people. (Galatians 6:9)

More: <https://www.1040windowreporter.com/day-9>

■ Bangladesh: Myanmar children need psychological support

'Children are visibly traumatised and distressed, and many have stopped speaking,' said a Save the Children team member in Bangladesh. Displaced children arriving there are exhibiting signs of trauma such as nightmares and loss of speech after witnessing horrific violence, and are in urgent need of psychological and emotional support. As well as providing food, water and shelter to more than half a million, charities have identified psychological and emotional support services as a critical need. Most of those arriving from Myanmar are women and girls: some have been raped and sexually abused. Hundreds of

children are separated from their families, and report having witnessed violence first hand. Their enormous psychosocial needs are obvious to anyone walking through the camps and makeshift settlements.

Pray: for more counsellors, therapists and child psychotherapists to volunteer to give the urgently needed emotional and psychological support to those who have experienced horrors. (Proverbs 20:27)

More: <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/24426>

▣ California: wildfire disaster

Massive wildfires in California have killed 31 people, and damaged thousands of homes and businesses. 8,000 firefighters, supported by 124 aircraft, are battling 22 wildfires, intensified by strong winds, in areas declared to be in a state of emergency. Flames have charred 170,000+ acres and damaged or destroyed 3,500+ structures, forcing the evacuation of 25,000 residents. Pray for comfort for those who have lost loved ones, and for the healing of hundreds being treated for burns and smoke inhalation. Ask God to strengthen those who have lost everything, and pray for the 600 missing people to be found alive and safe. Remember police as they strive to prevent looting, and for hospitals and homes without electricity. One sheriff said the wildfires are 'one of the worst natural disasters in California's history.'

Pray: for the mandatory evacuation orders to be complied with, and for those who have been evacuated to stay safe. (Psalm 23:4)

More: <http://abcnews.go.com/US/thousands-flee-wildfires-ravage-california-23-killed/story?id=50383162>

▣ Egypt moves toward criminalising child marriage

Rights advocates want to end Egypt's long-tolerated child marriage tradition. Azza is in her early 20s and has given birth four times. When she was twelve her father decided it was time she got married. It mattered little to him that the groom was over twice Azza's age and she had never met him. Azza and her sisters didn't go to school; only their brothers were educated. In Egypt's poor, rural communities, girls are deprived of education and become child brides at puberty, despite the legal age of marriage in Egypt being 18. But now the prosecution of an imam for marrying dozens of underage girls marks a shift in social attitudes. It also sends a message that the authorities are serious about enforcing the law. Maya Morsi of the National Council for Women (NCW) has urged parliament to raise the legal age of marriage to 21.

Pray: for the proposed draft of a new law criminalising child marriages to go through parliament, and for a change in culture so that it is robustly upheld in all communities. (Exodus 23:6)

More: <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/10/egypt-move-criminalize-child-marriages.html>

▣ Nepal: still a disaster area

In April 2015 the worst earthquake for eighty years hit Nepal, killing 8,891 people, injuring 22,300, and destroying or damaging over 893,000 homes, as well as schools, clinics and ancient buildings. 8.1 million people were affected. The rural areas (often remote and mountainous, and already poor) were hit hardest. After the earthquake the government published a vision for 'well-planned resilient settlements and a prosperous society'. But it has fallen short of that goal because of poor coordination between government and donors, poor understanding of local concerns, and a lack of civic engagement. Two years on, barely 5% of destroyed houses have been rebuilt, and 800,000 families still have no homes. It is still a disaster area where people face another hard winter.

Pray: for the government to help people with disabilities, female-headed households, and older people still needing support honourably and wisely. (Proverbs 28:15)

More: <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2017/04/nepal-earthquake-disaster-years-41bn-170412110550808.html>

▣ South Africa: Global Leadership Summit 2017

The 2017 Global Leadership Summit (GLS) is a series of two-day leadership training events in October, expected to be attended by 13,000 SA leaders. A hallmark of the GLS has been its ability to deliver a unique blend of vision, inspiration and practical skills that attendees can immediately apply. There are 21 events in 18 cities and towns. This annual summit was founded 22 years ago out of a vision in the heart of Bill Hybels of Willow Creek Church in Chicago to bring the best leadership training to the local church. It has just kept on growing, consistently inspiring church, ministry, business and organisation leaders. During 2017 it will reach 1,375 venues in 128 countries, teaching civility and respect, building resilience, increasing people's creativity and uniqueness, and reinventing performance management and fearless leadership.

Pray: for delegates to be inspired and positively changed after attending one of these events. (Exodus 4:12)

More: <http://gatewaynews.co.za/global-leadership-summit-2017-launching-on-friday/>

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE WORLD PRAYER CENTRE, BIRMINGHAM, UK

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