

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

■ 24/7 worship in Washington

Awaken the Dawn was a weekend of worship in the National Mall, a vast area of parkland between Capitol Hill and the Lincoln Memorial. Christians from every state and region had a tent on the Mall for the event, each one offering praise and adoration 24/7 all weekend. They desired to bless God and call His presence down on America. 'It's all about King Jesus,' said one participant. 'We're lifting His name up. The Bible says, "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me". We want to see a Great Awakening.' Another worshipper said, 'Just as you have congressmen and senators representing every state in politics, here every state in the union is represented by Holy Ghost Christian people of all races and colours. We are here to worship the King of Kings 24/7.'

Praise: God for the Christians pouring out love, worship and prayer on behalf of their country. (Psalm 24:7)

More: <http://www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/us/2017/october/awaken-the-dawn-a-weekend-of-worship-fills-the-national-mall>

■ Syria: IS cleared from Raqqa

US-backed militias have completely taken Syria's Raqqa from IS, said the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. The fall of Raqqa city, where IS staged euphoric parades after its string of lightning victories in 2014, is a potent symbol of the jihadist movement's collapsing fortunes. From the city, the group planned attacks abroad. The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), an alliance of Kurdish and Arab militias backed by a US-led international alliance, have been fighting IS inside Raqqa since June 2017. See also World Article 'Mission opportunities as country rebuilds'.

Praise: God for this news. Pray that IEDs and booby traps in the area are quickly detected and disabled, and that IS is also removed from the Euphrates valley and surrounding desert. (Exodus 15:6)

More: <http://www.jpost.com/printarticle.aspx?id=507658>

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Friday Focus: Hope for ex-offenders

Isn't it a wonderful truth that through Jesus we can be released from our past, make a new start and enter into relationship with the living God? Ex-offenders know how past actions have affected their freedom and future. We pray for their successful re-entry into society. With God's help this can be a true and lasting change. (Michael Pollard, Prison HOPE)

Pray: Heavenly Father, we think of those recently released from prison. You know each of their life stories so far. We pray that they will know that You love them, and that they can have a new start and enter into relationship with

You. We pray for the families to whom they return, and for opportunities for lasting change. (Philippians 4:13)

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

❑ **Brexit and 'political posturing'**

'Posturing' by Brussels in Brexit negotiations is posing high risks for businesses on both side of the talks. Welsh UKIP MEP Nathan Gill said that the EU's obsession with three key Brexit issues is causing unnecessary harm and asked, 'In this divorce bill, who are the children? In a divorce you consider the children and the children in this instance are the businesses of Europe, the traders.' He said that if he were a German manufacturer or a French wine producer selling to Britain, he'd be very annoyed at Michel Barnier's stubbornness. Britain has contributed massively to the EU for many years (the second largest contributor), so many believe that the loss of such a benefactor should prompt the EU either to persuade Britain to stay or make negotiations easier. Pray for an end to veiled threats and a refusal to talk about the future until after sums of money are agreed upon.

Pray: for all potential stumbling blocks in negotiations to be removed. (Zechariah 4:7)

More: <http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/866154/Brexit-news-juncker-eu-uk-european-union-british-business-ukip-michel-barnier-video>

❑ **UK missionaries kidnapped in Nigeria**

Last Friday four Britons were snatched by gunmen in Nigeria's southern Delta state. The region holds most of the country's crude oil and is Nigeria's economic mainstay. Kidnapping for ransom is common in parts of Nigeria, and several foreigners have been taken in the past few years. The abductors have not yet made contact. Those kidnapped are reported to be former GP David Donovan and his wife Shirley who run New Foundations, with their two sons. They have run Bible classes, a boat clinic and health care centre there for fourteen years. Four suspects have been arrested, and a joint task force will attempt to rescue the family. Travellers to Nigeria are currently warned to avoid going to areas of Delta state. See: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-41669074>

Pray: for the families' safety and rescue, for God to give them peace of mind and exactly the right words to say to their captors. Pray for the government to overcome militancy in the area. (Job 36:3)

More: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/18/four-british-missionaries-kidnapped-in-nigeria-delta>

❑ **Children in care**

Ninety children a day are taken into care in England and Wales, and currently there are 72,670 children in care - up 3% from 2016. Social workers are 'firefighting' the most serious cases late into the night. Professor Ray Jones, working in social services improvement, says that staff fear that children slip through the net as they try to keep up with rising pressures. Local government associations say children's services will face a £2bn a year funding gap by 2020. Social workers are spending a lot of time, late at night and during weekends, preparing for court proceedings. They are closing down work where children are unhappy and distressed because they have to concentrate on those in immediate danger. This causes considerable stress over concerns that they may be missing something.

Pray: for more staff and resources to be targeted towards improving children's services. (Proverbs 16:11)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-41581805>

❑ **Child trafficking victims vanishing from care**

Scores of Vietnamese children rescued from traffickers and placed in council care have gone missing, and are feared to have fallen back into the hands of slave masters. Figures suggest that gangs are re-trafficking victims, and local authorities are failing in their duty to safeguard children. Over 150 Vietnamese children have disappeared from care since 2015, but the true figure is likely to be higher; almost ninety others went missing temporarily. Most go missing within two days of entering care. At least 21 have vanished this summer, including 12 from Rochdale, a council whose child protection record is already under intense scrutiny. Children of other nationalities have suffered a similar plight, with growing concern about the number of missing Albanian children. Baroness Butler-Sloss described the figures as 'very disturbing', and said she believed there were far more at risk.

Pray: for the Home Office and councils to address the needs of young trafficked victims. Pray for strengthened regulations on children's homes, and higher ratios of staff per home. (James 1:27)

More: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/child-trafficking-victims-vanish-from-council-care-and-into-the-hands-of-criminals-baroness-butler-sloss-rochdale-gctdcqgg6>

❑ **Christian counsellors oppose gender therapy**

The Association of Christian Counsellors has spoken out against using conversion therapy to try to change a person's gender identity. The association has joined other professional bodies in saying this method of encouraging someone to identify as a different gender (male, female, non-binary or gender-fluid) is not supported by any evidence; whether in relation to sexual orientation or gender identity, it is unethical and potentially harmful. Studies into the use of conversion therapy should be kept under regular review, and healthcare professionals and psychological therapists must be aware of 'ethical issues relating to conversion therapy'. They added, 'This position is not intended to deny, discourage or exclude those with uncertain feelings around sexuality or gender identity from seeking qualified and appropriate help.' See also Europe article 'Gender: times are changing'.

Pray: for more righteous counselling for those wishing to explore, or experience conflict with, their sexual orientation or gender identity. (Genesis 5:2)

More: <https://www.cosrt.org.uk/latest-news/memorandum-understanding-conversion-therapy-uk-version-2-mou/>

❑ **Student loans and debt**

Former education secretary Nicky Morgan will lead an inquiry into the rising costs of the student loans system in England and its possible replacement by a graduate tax. The investigation is needed because of the steeply rising levels of debt

carried by graduates after leaving university. It will run alongside similar hearings on personal finance by the House of Lords economic affairs committee. A recent report from the Gambling Commission found that some students have £10,000 gambling debts. A 24-year-old who got into gambling at university said, 'It went from spending a few days after coming home from lectures and going onto my laptop to suddenly saying no to going out with friends, maybe saying no to going to uni. I think you can be very vulnerable. I'd never budgeted before, and money was a whole new concept to me.' See also: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-41226348>

Pray: for students to receive appropriate help with financing their education, budgeting while living away from home, and gambling problems when they arise. (Proverbs.16:2)

More: <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2017/oct/14/student-loans-former-education-secretary-morgan-to-lead-inquiry>

EUROPE

▣ Austria: election result

The commanding victory of populist parties in the national election will reverberate beyond Austria. Sebastian Kurz, when foreign minister, closed routes through the Balkans for immigrants, and his party spearheaded laws banning full-face Muslim veils in public spaces. His political rise follows the far right gaining influence in Germany last month. Nationalist and anti-immigrant forces across the EU are feeling emboldened by the vote, which could bring the Islamophobic Freedom Party to power in a coalition government in Vienna. The People's Party want to fine migrants who refuse to attend integration and language classes, but the Freedom Party calls for dropping such classes completely. It has also pledged to deny migrants access to welfare payments altogether. If the two parties became coalition partners, Austrian politics would take a seismic shift to the right.

Pray: for the political shift to the right to have no reverberations for the rest of Europe. (Proverbs 16:13)

More: <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/10/16/opinions/austria-nationalism-hockenos-opinion/index.html>

▣ Gender: times are changing in Europe

Children are dealing with questions like 'You look like a boy or girl, but do you feel you really are a boy or girl? You can choose who or what you want to be'. On trains in the Netherlands the announcer no longer says 'ladies and gentlemen', but 'travellers'. Many churches avoid the gender-neutrality topic, hoping they will not have to deal with it; in other churches the 'law of relativism' has entered and everything is possible. Christians believe that God created man and woman, and marriage is for a man and woman. We are living in a broken world, but when the brokenness becomes the normal standard, we should be awake as a Church and stand up and fight. There is more going on than we can see with our natural eyes and our pastoral hearts.

Pray: for those children who are confused, because they don't know 'who or what they are', to receive appropriate counsel and for all who have issues with their sexual identity. (Genesis 1:27)

More: https://gallery.mailchimp.com/ffd99da83edd4244458b59317/files/5c37ee72-8215-4256-b1fc-dc233fab74b0/Canopy_29_english.pdf

▣ Albania: prayer needs

In this Islamic country, only 0.4% of Albanians are evangelical Christians; 14.3% live below the poverty line, and there are over 8,000 refugees. We can praise God for the relatively good sense of unity and peace among people of different religious faiths, and the Church continues to grow. Many claim that concentrated intercession is responsible for Albania's openness to ministry. May a prayer movement be raised up within the country, to pray for all the region. Pray that unsaved members of Christians' families will come to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. There are three complete translations of the Bible in Albanian: one literal, one paraphrased, and one Catholic. Pray for widespread use of the Scriptures.

Pray: for translation of useful Christian books and literature and for their impact on people groups. Pray also for Christian broadcasting that brings growth of faith to Albanians. (Numbers 24:4b)

More: <https://www.1040windowreporter.com/day-14>

WORLDWIDE

▣ South Africa: pray for an end to the drought

South Africa is experiencing a devastating drought in five regions; rain is urgently needed in many other areas. In some areas this drought has been going on for nearly five years. Every day farmers watch their livestock dying, fields withering, and harvests going to waste. Visiting these regions and seeing the reality of the situation is traumatic. Jericho Walls have produced prayer guidelines for intercessors to use as they pray for the end of the drought. Congregations and prayer groups all over South Africa have been praying every Sunday, and also in a seven-day 24/7 prayer watch. When disasters occur, God looks for someone to stand in the gap. We can join the intercessors and pray, using the prayer guide at: <http://jwipn.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Call-to-pray-for-end-to-drought.pdf>

Pray: for intercessors everywhere to intercede at this time for South Africa. (Hebrews 4:16)

More: <http://jwipn.com/pray-end-drought/>

▣ Syria: mission opportunities as country rebuilds

Syria needs to be rebuilt. The economy needs to be re-established. New jobs and new opportunities need to be created. Business people from China see this as a golden opportunity to do business and make money, an opportunity to sell their products, technologies and services. The risk is high, but they are willing to come. Are Christians willing to say yes to this challenge? Are believers willing to say that we will take the risk, step out in faith and see a nation restored? This is the

moment and the opportunity to help in the reconstruction and rebuilding of lives and communities, while having the opportunity to share God's love in Syria's time of need.

Pray: for Christian-based businesses to be established; for Christian teachers, traders and technicians to enter communities and create opportunities for secular work alongside Christian outreach. (Romans 10:14)

More: <http://mailchi.mp/cryoutnow/rebuilding-syria?e=e7b6c445f8>

▣ East Africa: starvation in refugee camps

Famine continues, and refugee camps in Kenya and Uganda continue to fill. Church leaders in Uganda, Kenya and South Sudan have launched another desperate appeal for food aid to keep refugees and churchgoers alive until Christmas, after enduring an 18-month-long period of droughts, famine and conflict. Archbishop Stanley Ntagali of Uganda said, 'The numbers and the need are overwhelming. I appeal to you all to help us so that we can help these helpless people, the refugees from South Sudan.' The refugees, having fled famine and conflict in their homeland, are now living in Camp Rhino, northern Uganda. Most of their food aid is provided by Barnabas Fund, working through the Church of Uganda. Every day, 300 refugees from South Sudan arrive in the camp. The numbers have risen to 120,000, and are predicted to go even higher. A large proportion are women and children.

Pray: for God to open generous hearts of all those who hear and are able to give funds for food. (Luke 6:38a)

More: <https://barnabasfund.org/project-joseph?audience=GB#press-release>

▣ Bhutan: 780,000 have never heard of Jesus

There are 77 different people groups in Bhutan; most of them speak the official language, Dzongkha, but each group has its own mother tongue. Buddhism is Bhutan's religion, and 72 of the 77 people groups have never heard of Jesus Christ. Even though Christianity is outlawed in Bhutan, Christian Aid assists brave missionaries who seek to serve the Lord there. Just beyond the border, in Nepal, an indigenous ministry offers training for native gospel workers and leaders. The sessions are held in tents on rented land. Pray for a God-sized shield of protection to cover this brave group of ministers who are giving their lives more fully to the harvest in Bhutan. May they grow in wisdom and understanding and come to know God more deeply. See also: <https://joshuaproject.net/countries/BT>

Pray: for God to equip them and teach them as His called ones to be usable vessels for a great move of God in Bhutan. (Eph. 1:17)

More: <http://www.christianaid.org/News/Default.aspx>

▣ Bahrain: tolerance in a troubled region

Bahrain has a tradition of religious coexistence, and is an example of respect for others in a deeply troubled region. People are not required to pass through metal detectors before entering churches, and 'Jew' isn't a dirty word. Bahrain was the first Arab nation to assign a Jew as its UN ambassador (2008 - 2013). At a time when Coptic Christians face growing threats in their native Egypt, in Bahrain hundreds of Coptic expatriates travel every weekend from Saudi Arabia to worship freely. While ancient Catholic churches lie in rubble in Iraq and Syria, Bahrain is constructing the largest Catholic church in the Arab world. Christian pastors can find hope in a Muslim country. Although only 2.5% of the population are evangelical Christians, we can pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit to help them reach the seven Bahraini people groups who have not yet heard of Jesus.

Pray: for Bahrain's religious tolerance to be mirrored by other nations where 'religion' is used as a sanction for hatred. May Christ's light shine brightly and spread across the region. (Romans 8:29)

More: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/bahrain-optimistic-peace-middle-east-202403/>

▣ Uganda: combating violence against children

According to the Uganda Demographic and Health Survey (2012), more than half of 15- to 19-year old girls have experienced physical or sexual violence. In an effort to reduce the large number of children who remain exposed to abuse, exploitation, and violence, International Justice Mission (IJM) will work to set up community level referral mechanisms, legal counselling, and aftercare for child survivors of sexual violence. While child protection continues to be a critical challenge in Uganda, this project will enhance services and build strong violence prevention programmes for child survivors and those most at risk of sexual violence.

Pray: for the Ugandan authorities and IJM as they address violence against children in Western Uganda. (Psalm 12:7)

More: <http://news.ijm.org/ijm-to-consult-on-new-project-combating-violence-against-children-in-uganda/>

▣ Iran: cyberattack on UK Parliament, nuclear deal

In June, Iran was responsible for a 'brute force' cyberattack on Parliament, lasting over twelve hours. It was initially thought that Russia was behind the attack, but intelligence officials now conclude Iran was responsible. It was Tehran's first significant cyberattack on the UK. Hackers repeatedly probed 'weak' passwords of politicians and aides, forcing parliamentary officials to lock MPs out of their own email accounts as they scrambled to minimise the damage. The network affected is used by every MP, including the Prime Minister and her cabinet ministers. Nine thousand email accounts were affected. The revelations come after Britain, Germany, and France tried to keep the nuclear deal with Iran, agreed in 2015, on track after President Trump's refusal to back it. Trump stopped short of ripping up the deal, but said that it would be terminated unless measures were taken to 'toughen it up'. He believes the international community is being 'naïve' in its dealings with the regime.

Pray: for Theresa May, Angela Merkel and Emmanuel Macron as they work to preserve the national security of the region. Pray also for President Trump to consider the implications of his words and decisions. (Proverbs 14:3)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/10/13/iran-responsible-cyberattack-british-parliament/>

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE WORLD PRAYER CENTRE, BIRMINGHAM, UK

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