

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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PRaise REPORTS

■ Bahrain wants religious tolerance

For many years intercessors have prayed that Christian persecution would be replaced by interfaith tolerance. Recently the king of Bahrain took unprecedented action in the Middle East North Africa (MENA) region and issued a declaration of interfaith tolerance that he believes will promote similar action in other MENA nations. Muslim, Christian and Jewish scholars reviewed the king's declaration and hope it will gain sign-offs globally from leaders of all faiths. Individual religious freedom is specified as one of the five points in the declaration. Terrorism, suicide bombing, sexual slavery, inciting extremism, and the abuse of women and children are specifically disowned. Preaching hatred and violence in the name of God is condemned as a desecration of His name. The king has also promised to build a museum of tolerance.

Praise: God for the first such declaration by the head of an Arab state. May Bahrain's church thrive and generate more ministry to the MENA region. (Acts 2:46-47).

More: <https://www.1040windowreporter.com/declaring-his-greatness>

■ Israel: significant anniversaries

In 1867, two visitors to Ottoman Palestine separately showed that Palestine had declined since the Jews had left. First a British archaeologist, Charles Warren, conducted major excavations of Jerusalem's Temple Mount and found relics of King David's city; then American writer Mark Twain, after visiting the Holy Land, wrote a hugely popular travel memoir entitled 'The Innocents Abroad, or the New Pilgrims' Progress'. In 1917 the British defeated the Ottoman Empire and took control of Palestine. On 2 November 1917 they issued the Balfour Declaration pledging to support the establishment of a Jewish national home in the territory. In 1948, Zionists drove the British out of Palestine and founded the state of Israel. Then, when Israel captured eastern Jerusalem and its holy sites from Jordan in the 1967 Six-Day War, some claimed the messianic era was nigh.

Praise: God for Charles Warren, Mark Twain, Arthur Balfour, David Ben-Gurion, Yitzhak Rabin, Golda Meir and all connected to these Israel-related anniversaries of change. (Revelation 22:20)

More: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/in-big-anniversary-year-for-israel-christian-zionists-see-signs-of-the-messiah/>

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Friday Focus: Remembrance Day

11 November will be the 99th anniversary of the ending of WW1. We remember all those who gave their lives not only in two world wars but also in the many conflicts since. Should we not also pray for those who still serve our country today in

the armed forces and for those veterans whose lives bear the scars of their service? (Val Hall, Armed Forces Christian Union)

Pray: Almighty God, we thank You that the Lord Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. We remember with sorrow and gratitude the sacrifice of so many in the service of our country. We pray that those currently serving will hear and respond to the gospel, and those troubled or injured during their service will turn to You for healing. (John 15:12,13)

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

▣ Praying for our Government

Theresa May has called for a 'new culture of respect'. In this challenging time for our Parliament, we can intercede for all our leaders to begin to demonstrate the Kingdom values of respect, moral uprightness, financial integrity, truthfulness and wisdom. We can cry out for a fresh move of God's Holy Spirit to touch minds and hearts so that the guilty are convicted and repent, victims see justice, and all corruption and scandals are removed to make way for a new Kingdom culture to be established at the centre of political life. Pray that God will cause the Prime Minister's spoken words to become a self-fulfilling prophecy: 'a place in which everyone can feel confident that they are working in a safe and secure environment, where complaints can be brought forward without prejudice and victims know that these complaints will be investigated properly'.

Pray: for our leaders to discern and remove wickedness in all its forms. (Proverbs 20:26)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-41881125>

▣ UK discriminating against Christians

IS tried to wipe out Christians and Yazidis from Syria. However, figures obtained by Barnabas Fund show that the British Government and UN have prioritised Sunni Muslims over Christians and Yazidis in granting asylum. Of 8,136 given shelter in the UK in 2015 and 2016, only 70 were Christians, 22 were Yazidis, 33 Shi'ite Muslims and the rest were Sunni. Of 10,801 resettled by the UNHCR between October 2015 and September 2016, 56 were Christians, 20 Shi'ite, 17 Yazidis and the rest were Sunnis. In 2005 the UN adopted the responsibility of states to protect citizens from genocide and crimes against humanity. It has failed miserably.

Pray: for God to help the Home Office to prioritise the most vulnerable and inspire the various authorities as they establish resettlement schemes that are fit for purpose. (Matthew 10:29)

More: <http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/873310/UK-Christians-Islamic-State-Syria-United-Nations>

▣ Foreign secretary's blunder

Evin is a brutal and infamous prison. Dorothy Parvaz, who was held there in 2011, said detainees face daily cross-examinations, with constantly changing conditions in attempts to trick prisoners to admit to alleged crimes in a psychological battle. In May 2016 we reported on a campaign to free Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, a Christian British charity worker held in Evin prison. A petition was given to David Cameron to act on her behalf for early release. But she was given a five-year sentence for 'attempting to topple the government'. Now, foreign secretary Boris Johnson has told the House of Commons that she was 'teaching Iranians journalism'. It was an incorrect statement which could cause Iran to double her five-year sentence. Nazanin suffers depression from being separated from her husband and three-year-old daughter. Boris's latest blunder has provoked an online petition accusing him of being unfit for the job, lacking attention to detail, a threat to British people, and damaging overseas relations. It calls for his resignation.

Pray: for the Government to repair the damage done to Nazanin and her case and work more effectively to get her release. May God embrace her and her family with His comfort and justice. (Proverbs 9:9)

More: http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/former-inmate-of-tehrans-evin-prison-says-boris-comments-could-be-devastating-to-nazanin-zaghari-ratcliffe_uk_5a01bf72e4b07eb511821127

▣ Fixed odds betting terminals

Churches and faith groups have urged the Government to be strong on reforms to fixed odds betting terminals (FOBTs). While they welcomed its recent announcement of a consultation on proposed changes to gaming machines, they warned that the range of options for a maximum stake for FOBTs was too wide. They believe that if the maximum stake is radically reduced, from the current £100 maximum to £2, this will help to reduce the potentially enormous financial loss some people experience, and therefore the consequences - which include debt, depression and crime. They urged the Government to view gambling addiction as a public health issue, stating, 'The Department of Health must engage with gambling addiction strategically, at the levels of prevention and also treatment for individuals.'

Pray: for the Government to read, digest and act positively on these recommendations. (Proverbs 10:8)

More: <http://www.eauk.org/current-affairs/news/church-government-fixed-odds-betting-terminals.cfm>

▣ One month, one church, one prayer

This month Christian organisations are seeking to encourage the Church to pray for fellow believers who suffer because of their faith. Around the world, Christians risk harassment, discrimination, imprisonment and even death simply for trying to live out their faith or worship together. This has become such a significant issue that Release International, Open Doors, Christian Solidarity Worldwide and the Evangelical Alliance have joined together to form the Religious Liberty Commission. The RLC focuses on encouraging Christians to pray for brothers and sisters across the globe who suffer and are persecuted because of their faith. While it enables the member organisations to speak as one voice for persecuted Christians, it does not claim to be the only voice and action group for them, and very much welcomes the fact that others are also doing excellent work in this area (see the next article).

Pray: for many to join this coordination of prayer and voices speaking out against persecution of people for their religious beliefs, and for political leaders to act in response to this injustice. (Proverbs 12:18)

More: <http://www.csw.org.uk/oneprayer>

■ Safe Haven

Safe Haven gives refuge to those who face the threat of violence for freely choosing to leave Islam and follow Jesus. It does this mainly by connecting victims with those who can provide a safe place, a secure and loving home away from the hostility. It acts as a go-between, bringing together those in need with those offering help. The plan is to create a national network of safe houses for Christians who have converted from a Muslim background. It is looking for people to help or people who can provide accommodation. Anonymity is vital in these kinds of situations, and Safe Haven maintains strict confidentiality in all its dealings with both victims and those offering help.

Pray: for the development and success of this initiative, and for all who are persecuted for their faith in the United Kingdom to have complete peace and security. (Proverbs 12:2)

More: <http://www.safe-haven.org.uk/>

EUROPE

■ Intercessor Focus - Brexit

At the time of writing, ambassadors from the 27 other EU member states have been discussing how to negotiate the transition that will start when Britain parts with Brussels in 17 months' time. Insiders say the opinion is that London will fail to meet the EU conditions for opening further talks on 14 December, with Germany and France insisting Theresa May must first agree in principle to pay a multi-billion-euro exit bill to Brussels. We can pray for clarity in all decision-making, and for Godly decisions which will turn the situation around. We pray for those who work in government, finance and the law to work towards practical solutions according to God's instructions 'to acknowledge bills that need payment, to fulfil all financial commitments and use honest scales and weights' (Proverbs 16:11).

Pray: pray for all negotiators to know God's presence, guidance and peace. Pray for all nations affected by the current situation to experience God's perfect and lasting solutions (Pr.16:12)

More: <http://www.prayer-alert.net/articles/regions/europe>

■ Europe: complaints, confusion, confrontation and change

In Britain, we see chaos and confusion surrounding government. It is not just in Westminster; Brussels has many political, legal, commercial and ideological 'unknowns'. Throughout Europe there are signs of growing discontent and dissatisfaction with policies and attitudes that have been followed by traditional leaders for decades. In Catalonia, independence protesters brought areas to a standstill as they objected to the incarceration of former nationalist ministers and vice-president Oriol Junqueras. Young people are rising up to challenge traditional authority. France, Austria, Italy and the Czech Republic have all voted for young leaders. Austria voted in October for 31-year-old right-wing Sebastian Kurz, who is talking to the far-right Freedom Party about forming a government. 30% of the Czech Republic voted for anti-establishment leader Andrej Babis, and Germany's far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party won 94 seats in the Bundestag.

Pray: for God to work through the changes to achieve an upright, productive, biblical authority structure in Europe's governments with trustworthy leaders anointed with His wisdom. (Psalm 119:4,5)

More: http://prophecytoday.uk/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=875:europe-in-turmoil&Itemid=185

WORLDWIDE

■ Iraq: a 'second army'

For almost two years US-backed Iraqi government forces, with Kurdish Peshmerga forces and other allies, fought to remove IS fighters. 63 factions make up Iraq's Popular Mobilisation Forces (PMF) - groups united by ethnic and tribal leaders, whose fighters are either loyal to religious scholars, Iraqi political leaders, or Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps. The diversity of PMF's forty divisions of 60,000+ fighters sheds light on many of Iraq's sectarian tensions and its ambiguous political future. Although formed via a religious decree to fight IS, many fighters are empowered by Iran and other non-state commands. Others are represented in Iraq's parliament. A Middle East Forum analyst said that various larger PMF factions have been fighting to expand their political influence to gain ground for next year's parliamentary elections while smaller, weaker PMF factions also have political ambitions and cannot be ruled out.

Pray: for restraint in Iraq's power struggles, and for a balance between parliament, police and army that will bring constant, transparent reliable rule. (Proverbs 12: 15,16)

More: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/10/iraq-army-171031063012795.html>

■ Iran: proposed changes in voting

Conservative MPs in Iran are proposing that Iranians should only be allowed to vote for members of their own religious group, making it impossible for members of religious minorities to be elected to any position of authority (90-95% of the population is Shia Muslim). Recently a Zoroastrian was suspended from the city council of Yazid, a historic city with many ancient Zoroastrian sites. The ruling clerics are becoming increasingly unpopular for taking harsher measures to block members of religious minorities from higher office. The proposal to force voters to vote for candidates from their own religious background would violate everyone's democratic right to elect and be elected. Journalists, lawyers and some MPs have pointed to the presence of three Christians, a Jew and a Zoroastrian in Iran's national parliament. The constitution currently allows each of the three minority groups a representative in parliament.

Pray: for Iran's parliament to be made up of trustworthy people regardless of faith. (1 Timothy 2:1,2)

More: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/11/iran-mps-seek-law-change-voters-can-vote-candidates-religion/>

■ Uganda: property theft from widows

In 2012, International Justice Mission (IJM) began a project in Uganda to improve the legal response when criminals attempt to steal from widows. An IJM study showed that nearly one in three widows had their property stolen from them after their husbands died. When they narrated their personal experiences, widows commonly described perpetrators threatening and physically assaulting them. 18.3% of victims reported that attempts were made on their lives, and 31.6% had threats made against their children by perpetrators. In the study's review of police case files, more than half of property grabbing cases included physical violence. IJM are now evaluating the successes, failures and overall impact of their project so that they can develop a strong national programme to protect women and children in Uganda from violence.

Pray: for the conclusions of the evaluation to lay a foundation for programmes that will protect thousands of women in the future. (James 1:27)

More: https://www.ijm.org/sites/default/files/resources/IJM_Brief_Uganda_FINAL.pdf

■ Global climate change

The World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) is the UN's authoritative voice on the behaviour of the Earth's atmosphere, its interaction with land and oceans, and the weather it produces. On 6 November WMO predicted 2017 to be among the hottest years recorded. A few days earlier NASA revealed maps of Greenland's coastal seafloor and bedrock beneath its ice sheet having up to four times as many coastal glaciers at risk of accelerated melting as previously thought. We are in a long-term warming trend with the highest ever recorded CO2 in the atmosphere and many unusual meteorological events this year, seemingly due to climate change. These issues were discussed at the COP 23 climate talks (6 to 17 November) in Bonn. Justin Welby wrote to the delegates to say that the Anglican community supports their work and recognises addressing climate change as an urgent priority requiring immediate attention. See http://unfccc.int/meetings/bonn_nov_2017/meeting/10084.php

Pray: for an end to atmosphere pollution that limits light levels and damages the air we breathe, and for ground poisoned by chemicals and stripped of trees to be renewed. (Psalm 24:1; 50:1)

More: <http://www.euronews.com/2017/11/06/2017-set-to-be-among-hottest-years-recorded>

■ Asia: Trump's tour

Escaping scandal in Washington after indictments of his campaign associates, President Trump is on a 13-day tour through five Asian capitals. Trump's first stop was Japan, where the priorities were a Japan-US military alliance and trade. While visiting South Korea, China, Vietnam, and the Philippines, he hopes to encourage other regional powers to step up their efforts to pressurise North Korea into abandoning its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes. The continent is gripped with tension over the nuclear standoff on its eastern edge. Trump told South Korean lawmakers that Kim Jong-un would face disaster if he continued to lead his nation down the dark path towards nuclear weapons. 'Do not underestimate us. Do not try us' was a direct warning to Pyongyang. Trump is trying to persuade Chinese leaders to put even more pressure on North Korea. At the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Vietnam (9 to 10 November), he hopes to enlist President Putin's help in changing North Korea's behaviour. See next article.

Pray: for Donald Trump to seek and receive Godly advice and wisdom from those around him as he engages with the Asian culture both in the coming days and in the coming months. (Proverbs 15:22)

More: <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/11/04/politics/trump-tokyo-asia-trip-shinzo-abe/index.html>

■ Vietnam: Putin / Trump talks

Presidents Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump may bring different expectations to the table at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in Vietnam (their last meeting, at Germany's G20 summit, produced a de-escalation plan for the Syria/Israel border). They are reluctant to comment on whether they will make a thorough review of some equally challenging issues to Russia and the US, but the latest messages from Moscow suggest that the two men are considering a discussion of the Syrian settlement. The Russian ambassador to the USA said that the agenda for their meeting included 1) war on international terrorism; 2) Syrian peace settlement (Jordan and Russia want to end fighting in southwestern Syria as part of border deals between Amman, Washington and Moscow); and 3) North Korea's nuclear plans. See previous article.

Pray: for strong personalities to submit to God's Holy Spirit to give them direction in conversations, and for opposing opinions to be replaced with Godly principles and plans. (Proverbs 3:6)

More: <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/11/putin-trump-talks-agenda-russia-apec-summit.html>

■ Pakistan: Christians seek answers after murder

On his third day of high school, the parents of 17-year-old Sharoon Masih learned that he had been in a fight and had been taken to hospital. They rushed to the hospital but found he was dead. His school friends said he died in the classroom. Police said that another student at the Punjab school kicked Sharoon in the stomach and that he died of internal injuries. The student charged in his death now awaits trial, but police are not calling the attack a hate crime. Many suspect the teenager was targeted because he was a Christian. Christians are regularly discriminated against in education, employment and housing. Sharoon's parents want to know what happened and why no-one saved him. He wanted to be a lawyer, and was to start as an apprentice at a lawyer's office after completing high school. Sharoon's father has stopped sending his six other children to school because he does not feel they will be safe.

Pray: for the family's protection and peace of mind. Pray also for Christian advocates supporting minorities experiencing discrimination and persecution for their faith. (Psalm 91:1-3)

More: <https://religionnews.com/2017/10/20/family-looks-for-answers-after-christian-boy-beaten-to-death-in-pakistan/>

■ USA: gunman not recognised as dangerous

On 5 November Devin Kelley killed 26 worshippers in a Texas church. We can pray for the Sutherland Springs community trying to cope with the tragedy. Pastor Frank Pomeroy knew Kelley as 'not a good person' but said, 'How do I turn him away?' Kelley had a violent history that was left out of a gun background check system. Pray for the such checking systems to be fit for purpose. Kelley left the air force in 2014 with a bad conduct discharge and the air force has previously requested

a broader review of criminal record reporting across the defence department. The FBI said that there were missing records, bad procedures, and faulty reporting in the air force's dishonourable discharge records. See <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/nov/06/texas-shooting-suspect-devin-kelley-domestic-abuse-background-check>
Pray: for the revelations of substandard procedures around gun control to bring about changes in the US gun laws, and for the database checks to be improved. (Exodus 20;13)
More: <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/11/08/us/texas-church-shooting/index.html>

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE WORLD PRAYER CENTRE, BIRMINGHAM, UK

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