

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

■ First Christian animation in 20 years

Sony's new animation picture, The Star, was released on 17 November. The film's director said they are preparing for the movie to be this generation's Christmas classic. It is the first faith-based animation film to hit cinemas since Prince of Egypt in 1998. The director added, 'We're living in divisive and stressful times, and we read about violence continually. The power of this story is - many people from different walks of life. The "three kings" are upper-class foreigners, and the local shepherds are the bottom of the working class, making note that Jesus brought people from all walks of life together. The Star is "the greatest story never told".'

Praise: [God for The Star, and pray for people to have their faith strengthened by watching it. \(2 Corinthians 10:15b\)](#)

More: <https://www.christianpost.com/news/first-christian-animation-release-in-20-years-the-star-set-to-be-christmas-classic-interview-201819/>

■ Christian baker supported by gay community

Jack Phillips, a Christian bakery owner, is appealing a recent ruling against him after a complaint filed by a gay couple who sought a wedding cake from him - but he refused because of his religious beliefs. His case will be heard before the US supreme court in December. He is receiving support not only from Christians but also from many in the gay community who have spoken out in support of his religious freedom rights. One video says, 'I'm TJ, and I'm Matt; we're gay and we're here to support Jack Phillips, to buy stuff from him, and support him because we don't think any artist should be forced to create for something that violates their beliefs'. The video was posted by Alliance Defending Freedom, the conservative legal firm defending Phillips.

Praise: [God that the freedom for people to live out their convictions is being positively highlighted in the US media and across the internet. \(Galatians 5:1\)](#)

More: <https://www.christianheadlines.com/blog/colorado-christian-baker-receives-support-from-gay-community.html>

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Friday Focus: Prison Hope connecting with churches

Power is a vital tool in mobilising the Church. Jesus demonstrated 'power through weakness'. Yet the Kingdom, power and the glory are his. God made us joint heirs with Christ. Love so amazing, he left his Holy Spirit for the tasks ahead. We have hope and are assured to do greater works than Jesus, so that God will be glorified. (Danielle Fetuga-Joensuu, Prison Hope)

Pray: [Lord, we praise You that You showed us mercy when we were in darkness, gave us freedom when we were in chains, and showed us compassion when we were helpless. We pray for a fresh move of Your Holy Spirit to equip many churches to pray for and engage with their local prison, its staff and prisoners - bringing support and hope. \(2 Corinthians 5:16\)](#)

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

❑ **Intercessor Focus: Brexit**

At the second of eight late-night Commons sittings on the EU Withdrawal Bill, on 15 November, proposals were put forward for transposing EU law onto the UK statute book after Brexit. The expected backbench rebellion did not happen, but similar issues will be debated again in coming weeks. It appears that the problems arise from the same challenge (how Government approaches and drafts legislation). Pray for the Prime Minister, ministers, civil servants, and advisors to have supernatural support and strength to complete the task ahead in God's timing, and not go in ever-decreasing circles to achieve answers and agreements. Pray for the ministers to follow God's template for the transition. May all government departments have Kingdom answers and God's approval as they face the depth and scope of the task ahead. (Linda Digby, Prayer Alert)

Pray: for God to dictate every detail in every document. (Psalm 143:10)

❑ **Nazanin update**

Following last week's PA article, 'Foreign secretary's blunder', regarding Boris Johnson and Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe's imprisonment in Iran, continue to pray for this situation. Her husband Richard Ratcliffe has met Mr Johnson and hopes to travel with him to Iran; he said the 'softly softly' approach is not working. Pray for them to have a safe passage to Iran in the near future. It has been reported that Britain is preparing to pay a decades-old £450 million debt to Iran in a diplomatic effort at improving Nazanin's chances of release. Pray that Mr Johnson can use fresh negotiation methods which will be acceptable to the Iranians. Pray for further anointing and wisdom for all the staff preparing for these negotiations. Pray for Richard Ratcliffe, and all assisting him, to have patience and peace and for God to hold Nazanin close to Him and heal her emotional, physical and spiritual wounds.

Pray: for God to anoint Boris Johnson with discernment to recognise and deal successfully with Iranian ambassadorial methods that could hinder Nazanin's speedy release. (1 Thess. 3:11)

More: <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/world/britain-ready-to-pay-450-million-debt-to-help-free-nazanin-zaghariratcliffe-a3692281.html>

❑ **Muslims in Christmas advertisement**

A Christmas advert by Tesco, showing a Muslim family celebrating by exchanging presents and cooking Christmas dinner, has divided shoppers. One comment was, 'Muslims don't believe the truth of Christmas, and Tesco doesn't even have a halal turkey for them'; another, 'The advert is inclusive and promotes diversity'. Some are crying 'racism', but others say, 'It has nothing to do with racism, it is to do with religion. Christian festivals such as Advent, Christmas, Easter and Whitsun proclaim our nation's Christian heritage'. See also <https://www.christianvoice.org.uk/index.php/tesco-muslims-turkey/>

Pray: for shoppers to remember that Christmas celebrates God becoming one of us in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. (John 1:14)

More: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/tesco-responds-to-online-abuse-for-featuring-muslim-family-in-christmas-ad-a8050546.html>

❑ **Schools need financial help**

A school has written to parents asking for a £1-a-day voluntary contribution to help pay for pens, pencils, books, etc. The Robert Piggott CofE School in Berkshire said national changes to school funding meant they had to request donations to make up the shortfall. The school is in the Maidenhead constituency, which is represented by Mrs May. Many are saying that Theresa May was elected to represent Maidenhead on a manifesto that guaranteed to protect school funding, but she can't keep her promises to her own voters, let alone the rest of the country. Ministers have insisted that more money is being pumped into schools, and recently announced a new funding formula to ensure money is allocated in a fairer way. Education secretary Justine Greening said that an extra £1.3 billion will be found for England's schools from existing budgets. The next Budget is on 22 November. See also: <http://www.parliament.uk/about/how/role/check-and-approve-government-spending-and-taxation/the-budget-and-parliament/>

Pray: for God to work through the Chancellor of the Exchequer to make realistic budget proposals that will not adversely affect schools, hospitals or other services. (Hebrews 13:18)

More: <http://metro.co.uk/2017/11/16/school-in-theresa-mays-constituency-begs-parents-to-help-pay-for-pens-and-books-7083075/>

❑ **Scotland launches consultation on transgenderism**

On 9 November, the Scottish government launched a consultation exercise on proposed amendments to the Gender Recognition Act 2004. The suggested changes include creating a third gender, neither male nor female; allowing children as young as 12 to become transgender through the courts (even without parental consent); and removing the need to provide medical evidence of transgenderism, which will now be self-declared. Thomas Pascoe of the Coalition for Marriage said, 'These proposals are terrifying. Making it easier to change gender removes all protection against medical manipulation. One academic study found that doctors in Oxfordshire were stopping male paedophiles from transitioning in order to win the confidence of children by appearing to be women. If the law changes, there will be no grounds to prevent abuses like this taking place.' He said it is an attack on the family when children of 12 can change gender without parental consent; they are too young to understand the long-term effects of the decision. To see the paper go to <https://consult.gov.scot/family-law/review-of-the-gender-recognition-act-2004/>

Pray: for the Scottish Government to support families who are providing the love and support that confused children need. (Psalm 122:8)

More: <https://www.c4m.org.uk/scotland-launches-consultation-transgenderism/>

❑ **Christian teacher - disciplinary hearing**

Joshua Sutcliffe, a respected Christian maths teacher at an Oxfordshire secondary school, is facing discipline for 'misgendering' a student. On 2 November a complaint was made that Joshua referred to a pupil as a 'girl', rather than the desired 'boy'. Although born as a girl, the pupil had self-declared as 'male'. Joshua had not been given any formal instruction on how to refer to the pupil. An investigation began immediately; Joshua was prevented from teaching and

forced to spend all his time 'in isolation' in the staff room. He is now suspended, pending a further investigation. Joshua said, 'While "gender is fluid" conflicts sharply with my Christian beliefs, I recognise my responsibility as a teacher and Christian to treat each of my pupils with respect and dignity. I have never looked to impose my convictions on others, I just try to live out the gospel of peace.'

Pray: for an end to hostile enforcements of the current transgender fad in schools. (Proverbs 4:23)

More: <http://www.christianconcern.com/press-release/christian-maths-teacher-facing-disciplinary-hearing-after-calling-pupil-born-female-a->

EUROPE

Canopy of prayer over Europe

One meaning of 'canopy' is a gold interwoven piece of silk, which can be used as a roof over a royal throne for the glory of the King. Jewish couples are married under a chuppah (canopy). Imagine the image of the Bride of Christ in Europe meeting her Beloved Lord and King under this canopy of prayer. Intercessors with a heart for Europe have been receiving a regular email containing up-to-date information on events and situations that need God's attention. People from all European nations, all denominations, churches, ministries, and age groups are invited to join them and stand in prayer for Europe. The commitment is to pray for Europe for fifteen minutes each week. They will be guided by an online prayer letter as they join with many others. The vision is for a 24/7 canopy of prayer, intercession, and blessing over Europe.

Pray: for Europe to be saved through 365 days of continuous prayer over the nations. (Isaiah 56:7a)

More: <http://www.canopyofprayer.eu/>

France: Muslims clash with lawmakers in Paris

Muslims have been praying outside in the streets of Clichy since the closure of a place of worship in March. Now a Muslim association is taking legal action against French lawmakers after clashes with worshippers on Paris streets. The lawmakers want to stop street prayers, saying it is an unacceptable use of public space. Carrying a giant banner and singing the national anthem, the protesters tried to push past a police cordon. The president of the region said the state must face its responsibilities and help to find a solution, but not at any cost. France needs decent places of worship for everyone, but at the same time people must live in a respectful manner with each other. The growth of Islam in recent decades has prompted calls for limiting its public visibility.

Pray: for this situation to be resolved and not divide the communities any further. (Numbers 6:26)

More: <http://www.euronews.com/2017/11/14/muslims-clash-with-lawmakers-on-paris-streets>

WORLDWIDE

Zimbabwe crisis

Vice-president Emmerson Mnangagwa had been expected to succeed his lifelong political partner, Robert Mugabe, but he was sacked, supposedly so that Mugabe's wife could succeed him instead. On 10 November Mnangagwa threatened to lead a popular revolt to remove Mugabe from leadership of the ZANU-PF. Three days later General Chiwenga, Commander of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces, said he was prepared to 'step in' to end the 'elimination' of Mnangagwa followers. On 15 November explosions were heard in the night, soldiers seized the ZBC broadcasting station, and military vehicles appeared on the streets. This dramatic outcome of an internal party squabble could turn into a political takeover; opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai has returned to Zimbabwe, while Mugabe and his family are under house arrest. At the time of writing Mugabe's biggest rivals and other ministers are gathering in Harare as concerns grow for the country. Zimbabwe needs change. Inflation rises by 50% a month, and imported food is scarce. See also <https://www.theindependent.co.zw/2017/11/10/zanu-pf-faces-new-wave-purges/>

Pray: for this crisis to usher in, peacefully, new leaders who will release the economic potential of Zimbabwe that has been stifled over the years. Pray that the planned multi-party elections in 2018 will be free and fair. (Psalm 89:14)

More: <https://news.sky.com/story/ex-pm-morgan-tsvangirai-returns-to-zimbabwe-amid-military-coup-11128231>

Zimbabwe: Christian leaders speak out

The Archdiocese of Harare issued a statement after the armed forces had taken over. The general secretary of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, Rev Kenneth Mtata, called on politicians and social leaders to rebuild a broken society. 'The current situation was inevitable. We had reached a point of no return. Our politics of attrition and toxic public engagement have had their logical conclusion.' His statement echoed one made earlier by the Catholic Bishops' Conference and the Council of Churches in which they described the country's politics as 'poisonous,' and accused Mugabe of stifling political dissent. Mtata said, 'Our hope is that we can put the train back on the rails of democracy and citizenship engagement.' The fragmented society is a result of failures to deal with the hurts of the past, and the political system not allowing everyone to have an opportunity.

Pray: for the current selfish system to be replaced by politicians with a national focus, and for selfish ambition to be replaced by a sharing and just society. (Philippians 2:3)

More: <http://gatewaynews.co.za/military-takes-over-zimbabwes-capital-christian-leaders-awaiting-developments/>

Iran, Iraq: earthquake aid

Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu offered humanitarian assistance, via the Red Cross, to the victims of a devastating 7.3 magnitude earthquake that killed hundreds in Iran and Iraq on 13 November. He was immediately refused. Netanyahu said Israel has no quarrel with the people of Iran; the quarrel is with the regime that threatens Israel's destruction. Meanwhile tens of thousands of Iranians are living in the open, after homes built with earth were totally destroyed. The terrain is mountainous, and the temperature is dropping. The head of the Revolutionary Guards, Major General Jafari, said the immediate need was for tents, water and food. Pray for this crucial aid to reach the inaccessible areas as helicopters and army vehicles are mobilised. Pray for clear communication between agencies organising search

and rescue operations and relief camps. Pray for those in hospitals, and those in mourning. See also <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-offers-medical-aid-to-iran-iraq-after-quake-rocks-region/>

Pray: for suitable aid to reach the right places and people as quickly as possible. (Psalm 10:12)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/11/14/tens-thousands-left-without-homes-73-magnitude-earthquake-iran/>

▣ Bedouin: week of prayer

The Bedouin are traditionally Arabic-speaking nomads who live in tents throughout the deserts of the Middle East. In recent decades many have settled into small villages within their tribal territories while continuing to shepherd herds of goats, sheep, and sometimes camels. Culturally they have stronger ties to their families, tribal customs, and traditions than with conservative Islam - though all would declare themselves Muslim. They are very cordial. Even the poorest family will offer a cup of tea or coffee to their guest. Often behind that generosity there is a family suffering from degrees of brokenness and hopelessness. Desert life is difficult. They accept their fate 'ordained by God and unchangeable'. Because they live in remote areas, they are hard to reach and many have never met a Christian; however, what may seem impossible for us is possible for God. Pray for the Lord to send His rain to soften the dry ground of people's hearts, sending dreams and visions for people to talk about.

Pray: for strength, endurance and constant Holy Spirit filling to all ministering to Bedouin. (Psalm 18:29)

More: <http://mailchi.mp/cryoutnow/week-of-prayer-for-the-bedouins-across-the-arab-world?e=e7b6c445f8>

▣ Afghanistan: specific targeted prayer

A missionary writes: 'Afghanistan continues to be plagued by suicide attacks and violence. Recently more than 100 army and police personnel were killed in three days. Government and media offices as well as significant leaders were also targeted. The terrorist groups mainly responsible for this were the Taliban, IS, and the Haqqani network based in Pakistan. Together they are responsible for thousands of deaths each year. Yet when some of us who are still in the country recently prayed very specifically about this situation, within days the security forces uncovered a truck loaded with explosives and a house full of weapons, thus saving many lives. We need to maintain this level of specific targeted prayer. We also need to pray against the external sources which provide all these weapons. Finally, we need to pray that the Lord will continue to protect and provide for our colleagues and national personnel. (Psalm 18:36)'

Pray: for a powerful move of God through effective and sustained prayers. (James 5:13a)

▣ Yemen: civilians suffer from blockade

A Saudi-led coalition backing Yemen's government will not allow rebel-controlled air and sea ports to reopen until a better system is created to prevent weapons being smuggled from Iran. The coalition tightened its two-year blockade after a ballistic missile was fired at Riyadh airport. Iran denied arming Houthi rebels, and said the missile launch was 'an independent action' in response to coalition 'aggression'. 2,000+ have died since April from cholera, and 3,500 cases are being treated daily. The blockade will undo efforts to curtail its spread. 27,000 children a month are treated for severe and acute malnutrition. With no aid deliveries, nutrition supplies will run out within two months, affecting the treatment of 400,000 children over the coming year. The children will bear the scars of this conflict long into the future. Civilians are the only people paying the price for political wrangling.

Pray: for the leaders to agree to a solution that will end the 'siege on people's lives', and for the delivery of food to six million vulnerable people. (Psalm 147:6,14)

More: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-41932807?intlink_from_url=http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/topics/cwlw3xz0zl4t/saudi-arabia&link_location=live-reporting-story

▣ Russia: radioactivity and chemicals

A mysterious radioactive cloud that passed over 28 European countries recently was first detected over Italy. France's radioprotection institute has now detailed its findings, saying the origins of the cloud came from 'somewhere in South Russia'. The area in question has nuclear facilities, including one that converted nuclear fuel into weapons during the Cold War. Even after the location was identified, it is unclear how the radioactive cloud appeared, as there was no apparent accident at any of the nuclear facilities and it was not an 'authorised release'. Meanwhile, on 16 November, Russia and the USA failed to resolve a dispute over extending the mandate of a UN-backed investigative team which blamed Syrian forces for a chemical weapons attack in April that killed over 80 people. See <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-11-15/russia-u-s-at-odds-before-vote-on-syria-chemical-weapons-team>

Pray: for honesty to replace ruses around vetoing further investigations on sarin gas attacks and nuclear emissions. (Exodus 23:7b)

More: <http://www.ibtimes.com/mysterious-radioactive-cloud-hovering-over-europe-traced-back-russia-2613554>

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE WORLD PRAYER CENTRE, BIRMINGHAM, UK

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