

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

■ Purpose-built churches

In August 2011, Tottenham Hale in north London was at the centre of a series of riots, arson attacks and looting which ignited in London, the Midlands and the north-west of England. Two years later the work started on building St Francis. The first purpose built local church in 40 years provides a place of worship and also allows the congregation to grow and play an important role at the heart of Tottenham Hale life by hosting pop up cafés and the Make Lunch project, designed to tackle food poverty in the area. The new St Francis in the Engine Room Church is part of a planned 100 new Christian communities to be planted in the diocese. Elsewhere in London, planners have given consent for the 1970s Holy Trinity Church in Swiss Cottage to be demolished and replaced by a six-storey complex including a 450-seater auditorium, recording studio, and accommodation for vulnerable young people.

Praise: [God for innovative enterprises that present His gospel to the 'not yet Christians' \(1Cor.9:22b\)](#)

More: <http://www.anglicannews.org/news/2017/11/vision-for-100-new-churches-in-london-begins-with-first-new-purpose-built-church-in-40-years.aspx>

■ 60,000 'Boxes of Joy' this Christmas

The Christian Post recently joined Cross Catholic Outreach to pack Box of Joy gifts for children around the world. James Cavnar, president of the organization, was inspired by Samaritan's Purse to approach Catholic churches to follow in the evangelical organization's footsteps during the holidays. Operation Christmas Child is a popular evangelism tool used by Samaritan's Purse during Christmas to help provide gifts to children in need. Cross Catholic Outreach modelled their program, Box of Joy, after the same format and fills shoeboxes with gifts for less fortunate children. This year, Cross Catholic Outreach will send 60,000 boxes to children in Nicaragua, Guatemala, Dominican Republic and Haiti.

Praise: [God for Box of Joy, Shoebox, Samaritan's Purse and other seasonal charity\(Pr.28:27a\),.](#)

More: https://www.christianpost.com/news/catholic-ministry-inspired-by-samaritans-purse-to-give-60000-box-of-joy-gifts-this-christmas-207405/?utm_source=newsletter

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Friday Focus: Carol services in stadiums

In recent years, Sports Chaplaincy UK has been encouraging its Chaplains to host stadium carol services at Christmas. Sports stadiums have been described as secular cathedrals as many people go there at weekends. At Christmas we

remember God moving into our neighbourhood. How might you, or your church, pray for and support one of these carol services to celebrate this amazing fact? Warren Evans, Chief Executive of Sports Chaplaincy UK

Pray: Father, Give us boldness as we plan our Christmas programme to find spaces for us to start something new or join in with something that takes us beyond our church buildings. (John 1:14)

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

□ Northern Ireland, Ireland, Brexit border

Ireland has said it will block progress of Brexit negotiations in December, unless the UK gives a formal written guarantee there will be no hard border with Northern Ireland. Michel Barnier told the Centre for European Reform, 'We need to preserve stability and dialogue on the island of Ireland. We need to avoid a hard border. I know that this point is politically sensitive in the UK, it is not less sensitive in Ireland.' Ireland will be staying in the EU, The UK will be leaving, but neither side wants to tear up the Good Friday agreement and put a hard border. We can pray for all who are involved in border issues and discussions to have God inspired solutions to every challenge facing them now and in the future. Pray for inventive, original technological solutions that will maintain peaceful co-operation between North and South and provide even more new opportunities for cross border trade. (Linda Digby, Prayer Alert)

Pray: for Brexit Secretary David Davis as he considers borders, constitution, economy and the integrity of the United Kingdom. (Psalm 125:3a)

More: <http://www.prayer-alert.net/articles/british-isles-ireland>

□ Bereaved families lobby PM for legalisation and regulation of drugs

On UN's Universal Children's Day, (20 November) 'Anyone's Child – Families for Safer Drug Control' handed in a letter to 10 Downing Street calling for legal regulation of drugs. More people are dying in the UK from illegal drugs than ever before. Families who have lost loved ones to such drugs took a powerful message to Parliament, 'Failed UK and UN drug policy killed our children, and the government should take control of the drugs market to protect others. We are a group of ordinary families who have joined together because we share the grief and sorrow from having loved ones who have been hurt by our failing drug laws. Our group has now expanded internationally - Kenya, Afghanistan, Mexico, Canada, Belgium. We are uniting to demonstrate that the drug war causes untold misery in every corner of the world.'

Pray: for the government to meet with this group (they have previously refused to meet them) (Ps.106:4)

More: <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/24647>

□ Victims 'told not to report' child abuse

Children who have been abused by Jehovah's Witnesses were told not to report it by Elders. Men and women from across the UK said they were routinely abused but the religion's rules protected perpetrators. A child abuse lawyer believes there could be thousands of victims who have not come forward because of the 'two witness' rule. But there is rarely a witness to the crime of rape. The organisation said it did not shield abusers. Louise Palmer, waived her right to anonymity. Louise was born into the organisation along with her brother Richard, who started raping her when she was four. She told her parents and elders in the congregation. 'I asked, 'what should I do? Will you report it to the police, or do I tell them?' They strongly advised me not to go to the police because it would bring reproach on Jehovah.'

Pray: for the removal of practices that compromise child safety. (Job 5:11)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-42025255>

□ Budget 2017

The embattled chancellor was subject to conflicting pressures when he presented his Budget. The media wanted him to respond to the public's desire to end austerity. Amid media doom and gloom predictions, some encouraging Budget decisions are: Scrapping a fuel duty rise for petrol and diesel cars scheduled for April 2018. A new homelessness task force. Preventing developers purchasing land for financial reasons and then not building on it. £400m to regenerate housing estates. 80% of first-time buyers will be exempt from stamp duty. National Living Wage rise of 4.4%. VAT threshold for small business to remain at £85,000 for two years while large technology groups like Google and Apple will pay more. £40m teacher training fund for underperforming schools. Recruitment of 8,000 new computer science teachers for new National Centre for Computing. £2.8bn for the NHS in England. Pay rise for nurses, but not the police.

Pray: for an end to bleak media inspired forecasts, (Psalm 15:1 & 3)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-42089984>

□ Children's Gender Dysphoria

Today's culture is seeing the denial of God-given sex and gender. The NHS options for children and young people with suspected gender dysphoria include family therapy, child psychotherapy, parental support/counselling, group work for young people and their parents and regular reviews to monitor gender identity development. Treatment with a multi-disciplinary team includes mental health professionals as most treatments offered are psychological, rather than medical or surgical. This is because say the NHS, 'the majority of children with suspected gender dysphoria don't have the condition once they reach puberty'.

Pray: for community workers as they inform, and give support to confused adolescents struggling with identity distress, may they avoid giving a dysphoria label and hormones to minorities. (Ps.43:3a)

More: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/gender-dysphoria/treatment/>

□ Felix Ngole's Expulsion still gleaning attention

Earlier this year we prayed for Felix Ngole, but the courts did not give him justice. Felix, a Christian reading for a degree in social work at Sheffield University, leading to Health and Care Professions Council certification, joined in a serious discussion on a US website about same-sex marriage. Sheffield university was informed, summoned him, heard his defence and threw him off the course, saying 'his writings might damage confidence in the social-work profession'. The

university's decision has now raised online comments by a professor of commercial law, 'that somewhere, at some time, a hypothetical service user might have seen Mr Ngole's comments, discovered in some unspecified way that he was a social-work student, and as a result, again in some unspecified way, lost confidence in social workers as a whole'.

Pray: for Felix Ngole's case to continue to cause people to question the justice of the outcome. (Pr. 8:20)

More: <http://www.spiked-online.com/newsite/article/now-universities-police-speech-off-campus#.WhMOa0pl-M8>

EUROPE

□ Council of Europe (CoE)

If we want to pray for all in authority over Europe we should look at the CoE. It is an institution of 47 nations separate from the EU with headquarters in Strasbourg, France. It's a parliamentary assembly of delegates from national parliaments and has its roots in being one of the first attempting to reconstruct Europe after WWII. It has the oversight of the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg and through the work of their Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) it oversees subjects as diverse as non-discrimination, protection of children's rights, election observation and upholding freedom of expression. Our nation's delegates to the PACE can be found at

<http://www.assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/AssemblyList/AL-XML2HTML-EN.asp?lang=en&XmIID=NationalDelegation-uk>

Pray: for God to use the Europe-wide forum of CoE to uphold democracy and reconciliation. (Pr. 16:10)

More: http://canopyofprayer.eu/sites/default/files/canopy_letters/canopy_28_english.pdf

□ Mediterranean facing security challenges

This year, 2,800 refugees and migrants have perished in the Mediterranean, while countless others died crossing the Sahel desert. The UN Secretary General said there is displacement, and discrimination against refugees and increasing xenophobia that needs addressing. There is a need to re-establish the integrity of the refugee protection regime on both sides of the Mediterranean. Challenges facing the region include illicit trade in narcotics, weapons and petroleum products, refugees and migrants managed by smugglers, traffickers, and maritime pirates. (The Mediterranean Sea provides economic resources of hydrocarbons, fish stocks and invaluable trade routes.) But its benefits depend on stability and security cooperation.

Pray: for the UN to create safer ways to protect refugees and to police them effectively. (Pr. 2:8)

More: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=58120#.WhKwr0pl-M8>

□ Austria & Germany: Coalitions

Austrian far-right Party, FPÖ is talking with conservative party, ÖVP, and people have been protesting against the administration including FPÖ. FPÖ had led in the polls for two years - then Mr Kurz became chairman of the ÖVP and his charisma kept FPÖ (with neo-Nazi roots) from running the country. To govern Mr Kurz needs a coalition partner, and the FPÖ, was his first choice. Coalition talks began three weeks ago but nothing has yet been agreed. In Germany, coalition talks collapsed after a deadlock on migration and energy caused the FDP to quit negotiations. Angela Merkel faces either forming a minority government, or fresh elections. Many are wondering, 'Is Europe fending off a populist uprising?' see <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/nov/19/german-coalition-talks-close-to-collapse-angela-merkel>

Pray: for coalitions based on trust and helpfulness towards each other (Proverbs 3:29)

More: <http://www.euronews.com/2017/11/16/keep-the-freedom-party-out-of-government-demand-protesters-in-austria>

WORLDWIDE

□ Zimbabwe: Celebrations - then what?

On the 22nd November, when President Mugabe resigned, celebrations on the streets resembled scenes inside a stadium after a soccer world cup victory. Like many Sub Saharan Africa countries, Zimbabwe's population is young, 60% of the population is under 25 and 70% have known no other president. His successor Mr Mnangagwa, when minister for national security, was notorious for overseeing the brutal 1983 campaign against supporters of Mugabe rival Joshua Nkomo. It became known as 'Matabeleland massacres'. Between 10,000 and 20,000 Ndebele people died during the civil conflict, which involved the Zimbabwean Fifth Brigade, equipped and trained by North Korea. Mnangagwa is rumoured to have amassed a sizeable fortune, been involved in developing Harare diamond trading and was targeted by US sanctions early 2000, for undermining democratic development in Zimbabwe. He was also investigated by the UN for exploitation of mineral resources in Congo. Pray that his succession is not a continuation of the corrupt status quo.

Pray: for God to encourage Mnangagwa to work with other Zimbabweans, including opposition figures to move forward after years of economic failure and political repression. (Proverbs 12:22)

More: <https://news.sky.com/story/who-is-the-crocodile-emmerman-mnangagwa-11136829>

□ Indonesia: Communicating the gospel

Over 700 languages are spoken in Indonesia and people are scattered across 6,000 islands varying in composition from rural fishing villages to highly metropolitan mega cities. Persecution is a reality for many believers in the most populous Muslim nation in the world. Although only 15% of the population follow Christ, the Indonesian church is experiencing profound unity as a result of the persecution, and mission organizations are growing in number. Indonesian believers also face a unique challenge as many of their neighbours are in geographical transition due to large-scale resettlement projects, migration, and forced relocation after natural disasters. However, the emergence of Indonesian (a form of Malay) as the national language has allowed the Gospel to be communicated across ethnic and geographic borders as never before.

Pray: for God's favour on all the evangelistic endeavours; and for believers' protection (John 14:14)

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

▣ California: After the fire

Nearly 7,700 homes and buildings burned in Northern California's unprecedented wildfires. Like many others, they had minutes to grab important documents and photo albums. 'The day after the fire my mother-in-law spent the afternoon searching through rubble. She returned weary but eager to show me one find; her mother's porcelain Christmas ornaments, still dusted in ash. This struck me as a picture of grace. At Christmas we decorate trees. As Christians, we do this in celebration of God's merciful plan for redemption - Christ came to earth to die for sinners, the just for the unjust, making good the destruction sin has wrought. Yet, how often do I sing 'Amazing Grace' without amazement, blinded by comforts and my perceived self-sufficiency. Thank God for being at work in trials and suffering. Praise Him whether you are in plenty or in want, whether well fed or hungry.

Pray: for the people of California to find Jesus in the midst of loss. (1 Peter 5:10)

More: <https://www.ifapray.org/blog/after-the-fires/>

▣ Lebanon: Middle East Shakeup

Lebanon has a delicate shared power tradition of a Maronite Christian President and Sunni Muslim Prime Minister. On 5th November Prime Minister Saad Hariri suddenly disappeared, fearing assassination and turned up in Saudi Arabia, claiming he is free and will soon return to Lebanon. His sudden resignation coincides with an aggressive purge of rivals by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in his anti-corruption drive. Iran backs Hezbollah, who play a dominant role in Lebanese politics. There is heightened tension between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Hariri 'said' he hoped his resignation was a positive shock between the nations. Many doubt the authenticity of the statement; fearing Lebanon's crisis will set the stage for a Middle East calamity. Christians usually suffer in these regional conflicts. Windows International are asking people to pray for: -truth and transparency to emerge as Lebanon and other countries seek answers to Hariri's strange disappearance; -Prime Minister Saad Hariri and his family's safety and freedom of movement.

Pray: for Lebanese citizens, both Christian and Muslim to be treated equally (Colossians 3:11)

More: <http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?m=1010993290827&ca=5e6a5dea-aa06-4aa4-8b86-5be27134ed51>

▣ Israel: Aid for Syrian refugees

UK documentary director David Cohen filmed Israel's humanitarian work treating victims of Syria's civil war. 'Love Your Enemies' was premiered at a special Westminster screening. It featured interviews with medics and patients of pioneering surgery on horrific wounds at hospitals in Western Galilee. The film was enthusiastically received by an audience including former Cabinet Minister Stephen Crabb, Labour's Ian Austin, Andrew Percy MP, and Israeli deputy ambassador Sharon Bar-Il. But in a question and answer session following the hour long film Mr Cohen revealed that discussions with the BBC and Channel 4 over purchasing the film had so far proved fruitless. Israel and Syria are two enemy states, however a young Syrian patient said, 'we are taught that Israel is the enemy – but all I have seen here is humanity.' Unfortunately a documentary showing ground-breaking medical relief treatment of 4000+ Syrian war victims was considered 'too Zionist' for mainstream British television.

Pray: for brave, honest media reporting of security and neighbourly relations between those on both sides of the border (Proverbs 14:5)

More: <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/film-on-israeli-medical-aid-for-syrian-refugees-too-zionist-for-british-tv-fears-director-1.447090>

▣ Uganda: Over 9,000 drop out after registering for PLE (Primary Leaving Examination)

Pupils who pass their PLE exam can progress to secondary school. Primary school tuition is free but pupils, especially in rural areas, face serious challenges to finishing their education. They lack books and pens, often having to study all day on an empty stomach since no meals are provided at school, and schools often have poor teaching methods. Information obtained from Uganda National Examinations Board website indicate that out of 333,482 pupils who registered for PLE from 2010 to 2016, a total of 9,320 did not sit. A government official said, 'Grazing livestock is one of the major reasons for the school dropout.' The other reasons keeping children out of school, he said, are poverty, underage marriage, trading, tea picking, stone quarrying and mining. However he said they have engaged parish chiefs, sub-county chiefs and chairpersons of school management committees to arrest parents of children who are removed from school See also <https://www.theguardian.com/katrine/2010/feb/08/education-system-explainer>

Pray: for an end to child labour and poor attitudes towards education. (Psalm 72:4)

More: <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/More-than-9-000-drop-out-after-registering-for-PLE/688334-4198844-jampel/index.html>

▣ China: Crackdown on human-rights

Jiang Tianyong, a prominent Chinese human rights lawyer has been jailed for two years, the latest conviction in Beijing's crackdown on rights activists. He was found guilty of inciting subversion of state power and defaming China's political system. His wife told Reuters that the verdict was unacceptable. Amnesty International dismissed the trial as a 'sham'. It is estimated that over 300 lawyers, legal assistants and activists have been questioned, and more than two dozen of these pursued as formal investigations. Mr Jiang defended human rights activists and fellow rights lawyers as well as also Falun Gong meditation practitioners and Tibetan protesters. The court also found him guilty of using social media to attack the Chinese government and of inciting others to demonstrate in public. China tortures people in prison see also <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/blogs-china-blog-41661862>

Pray: for Jiang's safety and for Amnesty International and others to secure justice and release for those imprisoned dishonestly. (Psalm 15:2)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-42062142>

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE WORLD PRAYER CENTRE, BIRMINGHAM, UK

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