

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

■ Theos annual lecture 2017

Former Liberal Democrat leader Tim Farron, who resigned after a row over whether gay sex was sinful, gave this year's Theos Annual lecture on 28 November. One of his comments was: 'Genuine Christianity has always been countercultural, going against the norms of the day. In Revelation 17, we read about the final fall of Babylon: materialistic, complacent, ambivalent towards the poor and vulnerable, self-satisfied, and proud. The Babylonian empire had been dead for hundreds of years by then, so why mention it? Because Babylon stands for every empire, every society where human beings choose to live for themselves and not for God. So Babylon in 90 AD was Rome, and today it is our society, and as Christians we are to live as aliens in such a land.' He also said that Christians are deemed 'dangerous and offensive' by the public.

Praise: God for Christian leaders who are prepared to express spiritual truths in public. (John 8:32)

More: <https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/in-the-news/2037/11/28/what-kind-of-liberal-society-do-we-want-theos-annual-lecture-2017-full-text>

■ A new day dawning

Over the years Prayer Alert has highlighted prayer requests from 'Cry Out Now'. Your prayers protected believers and birthed many disciples across Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Iraq. At a recent Cry Out Now prayer conference, a lady at the hotel heard their worship and was drawn to the room. She said she felt that God was there. After some women shared with her, she gave her life to Jesus. They also prayed for a group of believers who were standing on a large map of the region that they came from. Once the prayer time was finished, there were tears on the map. The conference was called Harvest Rain, and during the sessions there was physical rain across Lebanon. Also people working among the Bedouin shared encouraging stories of getting opportunities, for the first time, to share the gospel and pray for the sick.

Praise: for making the impossible possible through answered prayers. (Isaiah 55:10,11)

More: <http://mailchi.mp/cryoutnow/thank-you-for-your-prayers?e=e7b6c445f8>

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Friday Focus: hope for enquirers

Peter challenges us to 'be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks'. Sometimes the questions are not easy. The Christian Enquiry Agency is here to help. Our website (www.Christianity.org.uk) gives enquirers individual answers to their questions about Christianity, a Gospel of Luke if they request one, details of a local church, or prayer for any issue. (Peter Graystone, Christian Enquiry Agency)

Pray: Father God, thank you for the thousands of people who have used Christianity.org.uk over the years to find the

answers they need about Your Son Jesus and the Christian faith. Please bring the website to the attention of more people through church posters, invitations, parish magazines and the like, so that more people can find the answers they need. Amen. (1 Peter 3:15)

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

▣ A royal engagement

Students and staff at Immaculate Heart Girls' School in Los Angeles were buzzing with the news that a previous student was marrying into the British royal family. Meghan Markle studied there from age 11 to 18. On 2 December 1936, the royal engagement of Prince Edward and American divorcee Mrs Simpson was announced: within eight days Edward had abdicated. How times have changed as this week the royal family, politicians, media, and the public celebrate the news that next year an American divorcee will marry Prince Harry. The Archbishop of Canterbury confirmed there will be a church wedding.

Pray: for God to bless Harry and Meghan with peace and pleasure while they prepare for their wedding. (Genesis 2:24)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/11/28/meghan-markles-school-abuzz-news-royal-engagement/>

▣ Time for our nation to turn back to God

Time2Turn is a national prayer conference, to take place from Monday 12 to Wednesday 14 March 2018. It will be a time to pray for things to change, and to be willing for God to use us as His instruments of change. This WPC National Prayer Conference is as much a calling as it is a conference. It is for people who want to stand in God's presence to worship Him and let Him minister to them; a time dedicated to praying for God's Kingdom to come in our lives and in our nation; a time of listening to His call. It will be a conference for all people, whether new to prayer or seasoned intercessors, young or old, from any background. This conference is for people who have a hunger for the purposes of Jesus and a hunger to see change in our nations. The guest speaker will be Malcolm Duncan.

Pray: for many to hear God's mobilising call to go and pray. (Acts 2:18)

More: <http://www.worldprayer.org.uk/events-calendar/icalrepeat.detail/2018/03/13/295/-/time-2-turn-national-prayer-conference>

▣ Trump 'not welcome'

The Government's minister for faith, Lord Bourne, has said he is 'unable to welcome' Donald Trump to UK on a state visit following his retweeting of videos posted by the far-right group Britain First. Lord Bourne said millions of people will be appalled by the conduct of the US president when he shared videos claiming to show Muslims inciting violence. Trump was later condemned by Theresa May, to which he responded that she should 'focus on the destructive radical Islamic terrorism that is taking place within the UK'. Although Downing Street confirmed that Trump's visit to the UK still stood, Lord Bourne said that many feel 'unable to welcome him here under these circumstances'. His feelings were echoed by London's mayor, Sadiq Khan, who called on Mrs May to cancel her offer. He said, 'It's increasingly clear that any official visit from President Trump to Britain would not be welcomed.' Others expressed a different viewpoint, commenting that the UK's relationship with the USA was strong and a different issue from the President's comments.

Pray: for the US/UK political relationship to remain strong. (Micah 4:3)

More: <https://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Gov-s-minister-for-faith-unable-to-welcome-Donald-Trump-to->

▣ National Anti-Slavery March - 9 December

Christian charity Hope for Justice has encouraged those appalled by the Libyan slave trade (see World article no 2) to take action. They produced a petition asking for the Government to put pressure on Libya to stop enslavement of Africans; by 30 November, 90,000 people had signed it. Also a national anti-slavery march has been organised for 9 December. Protesters will meet in Belgrave Square at 12 noon and walk peacefully to the Libyan embassy. The march will also raise people's awareness that globally 24.9 million people are held in slavery. International Organisation for Migration has helped 13,000 people to get out of detention centres in Libya and 8,000 in Niger, but that is the tip of the iceberg.

Pray: for more people to realise the reality of what slavery today entails and take action. (Micah 3:1)

More: https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/african-lives-matter-march-against-slavery-in-libya_us_5a1c540ce4b0e580b35371ee

▣ Care homes' unfair fees

The Competition and Market Authority found some care homes applied large upfront costs, and charged families for weeks after their relatives had died. The watchdog also highlighted how those paying for themselves were charged an average of 40% more than council-funded residents - effectively paying a multi-million pound subsidy every year to keep the ailing £16bn sector afloat. It said another £1bn of government money was needed to create a fair and properly-funded system. Also highlighted were an inadequate complaints system, making it difficult for families to raise concerns; unclear terms and conditions; fees being raised after residents moved in; insufficient support at a national level to help families navigate their way round the system; and people being unfairly banned from visiting.

Pray: for the 400,000 elderly in care and nursing homes and their families to be assessed fairly and invoiced for the services they receive, and for funding reforms to social care. (Ps.50:6)

More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-42175297>

▣ The Budget and government's values

Nothing reveals a government's values and priorities like a budget. Ekklesia suggests, 'The Government's heart is with the wealthy, healthy, strong, and secure. The poor, sick, powerless or insecure seem to be mainly regarded as a political problem, to be solved as cheaply as possible as this budget continued the seven-year pattern of prioritising deficit reduction over the welfare of Britain's people.' Austerity continues, although some view it as economically unsound, shrinking the economy as spending power is systematically reduced, and causing the most sustained fall in living standards for over sixty

years. If the nation continues to overspend, it will cost future generations dear. Others suggest that the Chancellor could, if he chose, direct spending to the people and the sectors most in need, prioritise socially beneficial activity, and allow austerity to fall more heavily on areas less vital to our wellbeing.

Pray: for the Government to take to its heart the serious concerns of individuals, agencies and duty of care for the vulnerable and to address these issues wisely. (Matthew 6:21)

More: <http://www.ekkesia.co.uk/node/24690>

EUROPE

Europe if Merkel goes

Mrs Merkel brought unity and peace to the EU's high table, which was unusual as she seldom had much to say. Like many German politicians she was unimaginative about how to stop financial rot from spreading to countries like Italy. But she had an asset that most leaders can only dream of - authority. When she talked, others listened. The arguing stopped. If her present attempts to form a coalition government fail and she steps down, who will have the same effect? The Brexit vote was representative of a big political undercurrent in European politics, a force that was moderated by Merkel. Without her, or anyone else with a unifying idea about the EU, the cracks in its thin ice could become dangerous splits. Emmanuel Macron draws the support of other radicals like Jean-Claude Juncker, but their vision of Europe is at odds with the view of most. Other leaders are silent.

Pray: for God to inspire EU leaders with a realistic vision that will unite them. (Isaiah 1:17)

More: <https://www.spectator.co.uk/2017/11/without-merkel-in-charge-europe-could-fall-apart/>

Germany: stabbing escalates

A recent surge of violence perpetrated with knives across Germany draws attention to the deterioration of security in the country. People armed with knives, axes and machetes have wreaked havoc across Germany; committing jihadist attacks, homicides, robberies, raids, sexual assaults, honour killings and other violent crimes. Knife violence occurs all over the place, and many people feel that danger lurks everywhere, with little or no public security. The police admit that they find it difficult to maintain order, day and night; they are being accused of not reporting many crimes, to try not to 'disturb' public opinion. However, reports indicate that in 2017 incidents of violence with knives and stabbings will reach record levels.

Pray: for an increase of God's provision for the police and justice systems, particularly in Berlin where some areas are now exclusion zones. (Jonah 2:2)

More: <http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/10488/germany-stabbings>

WORLDWIDE

Indonesia: new eruption threat

In September we reported that 122,500 people had been evacuated to locations outside a 7.5-mile exclusion area around Bali's Mount Agung volcano as magma rose during hundreds of daily tremors (see <http://www.prayer-alert.net/worldwide-pa-site/item/9810-indonesia-and-vanuatu-volcano-eruption-fears>). On 25 November thousands were evacuating an area within 8-10 kilometres from the peak as lava began to appear. The next day most people had fled but some have remained, despite plumes of smoke and visible lava. They are too frail or sick to move. If Agung erupts again, they will die when fire and rocks rain down and boiling lava flows. Many of the people forced to evacuate their homes are the poorest in Bali. Farmers and construction workers will find it hard to earn money while living in the camps to which they have been evacuated. No one knows when they will be able to return to their villages; financial pressures may force some to go home before the danger has passed.

Pray: for God to reveal Himself to the people living in fear. Pray also for authorities managing people and livestock movement, and for those organising alternative accommodation. (Psalm 40:17)

More: <https://news.sky.com/story/mount-agung-living-in-the-shadow-of-balis-erupting-volcano-11149687>

Libya: slave trade

Recently CNN showed West African refugees in Libya being held by smugglers, mistreated, and sold 'like cattle' for £300. Also, Al Jazeera has reported that migrants are being traded in Libyan garages and car parks. Refugees from Nigeria, Senegal and the Gambia are captured as they head north towards Libya's coast to catch boats for Italy. So far public pressure has convinced France and Spain's foreign ministers to speak out, which has caused the Libyan government to investigate. Pray for more media coverage of trafficking for the watching world to see and for more leaders to speak out and take action against it. The UN support mission is 'actively pursuing the matter with the Libyan authorities'. However, rights advocates caution that real action may be slow in coming.

Pray: for God to endow governments and NGOs with all they need to eradicate slavery. (Psalm 54:4)

More: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/11/african-refugees-bought-sold-murdered-libya-171129103602048.html>

Myanmar: humanitarian crisis

Aid agencies are appealing for food, medicine, and construction materials for shelters as the latest round of violence against Rohingyas continues. One agency writes, 'The situation constantly changes; we are delivering long-term aid within Myanmar for the Rohingya community. We also have teams in neighbouring Bangladesh to support those fleeing violence.' Pope Francis, on a four-day visit to Myanmar, did not publicly mention the plight of the Rohingya by name. Khin Maung Myint, a Rohingya activist, said he was disappointed: 'not in Pope Francis, but in the advisers who have dissuaded him from bringing up the plight of the Rohingya people.' The Pope talked about forgiveness and ignoring the desire for revenge, without mentioning the violence, gang-rape, massacres and arson against the Rohingya.

Pray: for God's Holy Spirit to break into this situation. May he work in Aung San Suu Kyi, the military, diplomats,

governments, Church, and journalists to bring about change. (Psalm 46:5)

More: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/nov/29/pope-francis-disappoints-rohingya-by-failing-to-condemn-persecution>

▣ Pakistan: a missionary's message

'Nawaz Sharif has been ousted from government several times, but he has returned to Pakistan, leaving his wife in an English hospital dying of cancer. The High Court ousted him on corruption charges, and he is banned from taking any political office; but his party (the major party) have changed the parliament's constitution so that Nawaz can become its president. They also passed a stricter Islamic law, making it much harder for Christians and other minorities. The present temporary prime minister has little backing. There is no control in the country. Terrorists are crossing back and forward across the border. When US secretary of state Rex Tillerson came to meet Pakistan's military on the Afghan situation, he was undercut by Pakistan's government who demanded that he speak to it only. The military is held in favour by much of the populace.'

Pray: for the US defence secretary's visit next month to begin a process to stop terrorism and clashes between opposition groups. Pray for Nawaz to leave without destroying Pakistan. (Acts 26:18)

More: <http://www.prayer-alert.net/articles/worldwide/itemlist/search?searchword=pakistan&x=0&y=0&categories=35%2C32%2C34%2C24>

▣ Global: Jehovah's Witnesses

There are seven million Jehovah's Witnesses in North America and Europe. They believe that Jesus is an inferior being, the Holy Spirit is simply a force of Jehovah, and that Jesus was resurrected in spirit, not in body. They trace their origin to Charles Taze Russell who believed that Christ's second coming occurred in 1874. He spread his 'New World Translation' of the Bible and the Watch Tower magazine. Russell's groups took the name Jehovah's Witnesses in 1931 to reflect their proselytizing focus. Though Witnesses identify themselves as a part of Christianity, many Christians consider them a cult, associated with occasional inconvenient knocks on the door or groups on street corners offering literature. But they are God's beloved, beautiful creations who are in need of the truth of Jesus Christ.

Pray: for God to open the eyes of Jehovah's Witnesses to Emmanuel - God with us. (Luke 24:39)

More: <http://www.prayercast.com/jehovah-s-witness.html>

▣ Zimbabwe: church leaders call for prayer

The country's leaders of different denominations say Zimbabwe is between a crisis and a kairos opportunity. They are calling for prayer for, peace, respect for human dignity, a transitional government of national unity, and national dialogue. Their statement said, 'The nation's challenge is one of a loss of trust in the legitimacy of national processes. There is a strong sense that the hard-earned constitution is not being taken seriously. The wheels of democracy have become stuck in the mud of personalised politics where the generality of the citizenry plays an insignificant role, but we see the current arrangement as an opportunity for the birth of a new nation.' The World Council of Churches is asking churches around the world to pray for Zimbabwe to embrace change and move forward without vengeance.

Pray: for peaceful developments and a spirit of reconciliation in Zimbabwe. (2 Corinthians 5:18)

More: <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/zimbabwe-heads-of-churches-issue-statement>

▣ Egypt: mosque attack

The village where 305 worshippers were killed by Salafi militants on 24th November had been warned against hosting Sufi gatherings. Salafi Muslims follow an ultra-conservative Islam and believe Sufis are heretics. This attack, the worst in Egypt's history, was the security forces' second failure in five weeks, following 50+ policemen being killed in a Muslim Brotherhood militants' hideout. After that incident President el-Sisi demoted his army chief of staff. Washington told el-Sisi that the Egyptian security forces' preparedness was clumsy and predictable, saying that in the fight against terror and guerrilla groups quicker action is needed, combining precise intelligence and commando forces. The Egyptians are still very far from employing advanced methods; they responded to the attacks by bombing IS vehicles.

Pray: for the Egyptian security forces to be more astute when gathering intelligence, and in knowing how to respond. (Proverbs 29:11)

More: <http://www.newsweek.com/isis-warned-egypt-village-site-mosque-massacre-stop-sufi-gatherings-722759>

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE WORLD PRAYER CENTRE, BIRMINGHAM, UK

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