

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

■ South Africa's parliament shaken by prayer

A momentous prayer meeting, likely to have lasting significance, has taken place in South Africa's parliament. The focus was reconciliation. White people asked forgiveness from blacks, who in turn confessed their sins against the white community. Many were brought to tears during an extended time of prayer and confession. MP Steve Swart confessed the government's anti-Semitism during World War II, when Jews fleeing the Holocaust were not allowed to disembark in Cape Town. The meeting was held in the parliament's former main chamber where many discriminatory laws were passed. As Ezra drew people back to God by reading the Law, so South Africa is experiencing restoration in spirit and in truth. People repented of apartheid, inferior education, corrupt laws, detentions, imprisonments, discrimination, tortures and violence. To comprehend the enormity of the meeting, click the 'More' link.

Praise: [God for tears of repentance; may they lead to tears of joy in South Africa's future. \(Psalm 126: 4-6\)](#)

More: <http://www.prophecytoday.uk/comment/world-scene/item/905-parliament-shaken-by-prayer.html>

■ Waiting outside an abortion clinic was worth it

A mother wrote to Karen Swallow Prior, 'I met you outside Women's Services. I was 15 years old. I was alone, about to start a two-day procedure. On day one of the would-be termination, I was to wait at home, come back the next day and complete it. That night I felt my son move. The next day, before entering the building, I met you. You read me some scriptures and made me aware of other options. So I decided to have the laminaria removed and continue with the pregnancy. You saved my son's life. You took me home and never left my side, took me to your church, linked me to several agencies. You were truly a blessing to me. Today my son is almost 20 and in his second year at college. I miss him so much, he's the best thing that ever happened to me.'

Praise: [God for the men and women who speak to patients outside the abortion clinics. \(Psalm 127:4\)](#)

More: <http://www.christianitytoday.com/women/2017/december/waiting-outside-abortion-clinic-years-ago-was-worth-it.html>

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ Friday Focus: Christmas HOPE

When the shepherds had seen the new-born Jesus, they spread the word and amazed everyone who heard their story. This month churches will be distributing the Christmas HOPE magazine door-to-door in villages, towns and cities, spreading the Jesus story and inviting people to church. How will you and your church be reaching out to people in your community this month? (Catherine Butcher, Hope for Every Home)

Pray: [Heavenly Father, thank you for sending Jesus to make it possible for us to know You. We pray for churches during this busy Advent season, that we will take the many opportunities Christmas gives, to talk about Jesus, to](#)

invite people to Christmas events and to testify to the hope Jesus gives each of us when we trust him. (Luke 2:16-18)

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

▣ **Intercessor Focus: Brexit and Ireland**

The problems over the Irish border dispute seem to have been resolved, after intense negotiations between London, Brussels, Dublin and Belfast. We can pray for God to bless everyone powerfully with the wisdom and discernment needed to bring about His purposes in all future discussions. May each nation prosper and flourish in its different Christian heritage. Pray that the UK will prosper as a result of what is negotiated in the days to come. Pray for Ireland, Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK to be in unity and not divided; pray for Stormont, Scotland's parliament, and the Welsh assembly to work in co-operation with Westminster; pray for God to be the author of all lawmaking, boundaries and borders. (Linda Digby – Prayer Alert Team)

Pray: for every negotiated agreement to come about in God's timing. (Ecc.3:1)

More: <http://www.prayer-alert.net/component/k2/itemlist/search?searchword=Brexit+&x=12&y=3&categories=35%2C32%2C34%2C24>

▣ **Christmas outreach**

As Christmas approaches, churches will be presenting carol services and other seasonal activities where the gospel is preached. Pray for God to anoint His people with powerful evangelism, and for the Holy Spirit to speak through the Church as she faithfully witnesses to the true gospel message. The Evangelical Alliance recently won an award for their website at the Premier Digital Awards. At this site churches can order from over 200 different outreach materials and ideas to inspire, equip and support the Church to make Jesus known. Pray for many thousands of unsaved people to realise this year that Jesus was born to give them a full life that never ends. Christmas can be a very lonely time, a time without hope. The Salvation Army has begun its 2017 Christmas appeal to raise awareness and finance for their work amongst the poor, vulnerable, and homeless. See: <https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/christmas-present-appeal>

Pray: for Christian outreach to bring hope and salvation to all that they minister to. (John 1:4)

More: <https://greatcommission.co.uk/>

▣ **Archbishop's plea to Trump**

Before President Trump decided to recognise Jerusalem as Israel's capital, he received last-minute pleas from many people, including the heads of Jerusalem churches and the Archbishop of Canterbury. Justin Welby wrote, 'Mr President, we have been following, with concern, reports about the possibility of changing how the United States understands and deals with the status of Jerusalem. We are certain that such a step will yield increased hatred, conflict, violence and suffering in Jerusalem and the Holy Land, moving us farther from the goal of unity and deeper toward destructive division. We ask you to help us all walk towards more love and a definitive peace, which cannot be reached without Jerusalem being for all.' For the full letter to President Trump, go to <https://www.facebook.com/archbishopofcanterbury/photos/pcb.1501192199934921/1501192176601590/?type=3&theater>

Pray: for God to watch over Justin Welby and all His church leaders, inspiring their comments and activities and using them to bring about unchanging peace across Jerusalem. (Psalm 66:7)

More: <https://www.facebook.com/archbishopofcanterbury/posts/1501135403273934>

▣ **Churches call for a nuclear weapons ban**

A two-minute video calling on Christians to safeguard God's good world by working towards a future free of nuclear weapons has been released. This call to action is being distributed digitally to thousands across the world by the Baptists, Methodists, Quakers, Church of Scotland, and URC. The video explains, in simple cartoons, the basis for the Church's support for the new UN treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons, and calls on people to join in this multinational movement towards a world free of them. The treaty, once ratified, will make the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons illegal under international law. People are being invited to submit their names to a picture petition, which will be delivered to the UK Government in February.

Pray: for the Government to develop and publish a transition plan so that the UK is ready to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. (Matthew 5:9)

More: <http://www.ekkleisia.co.uk/node/24763>

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Numbers are falling in the Church in Scotland, church buildings are closing, and in a recent survey 51% said that they have no religion. However, there is a 'stirring' going on under the surface. The Church has often been called the 'sleeping giant'. We may be experiencing a reduction in numbers but, as the story of Gideon's army tells us, numbers are not everything when it comes to accomplishing the plans and purposes of God for a people and a nation. The sleeping giant is starting to awake from its slumber! There have been many local outreaches, summer missions, etc, which, together with the excellent Alpha courses, have borne fruit with folk coming to Christ. With Ffald y Brenin, we can pray, 'O High King of heaven, have mercy on our land. Revive Your church. Send the Holy Spirit for the sake of the lost, the least and the broken. May Your Kingdom come to our nation. In Jesus' mighty Name. Amen.'

Pray: for churches to be in unity, full of God's anointing and achieving His purposes. (Jeremiah 29:11)

More: https://gallery.mailchimp.com/fcb85bdb8da62409e6832f859/files/a8ddee5f-5d34-4c88-b231-3ae70c4e509f/17_11_29_text_for_e_letter_pdf.pdf

▣ **Churches and a new mental health report**

The Christian mental health organisation Livability called for churches to be more honest about life's difficulties. A survey found that half of UK adults (26 million people) would feel uncomfortable or unsure about telling others if they experienced a mental health problem. The director of Livability said, 'It's about creating communities where we talk about our well-being. There's a real need for us to start normalising the level of conversation that we have in our churches. There's a negative

impact when we don't talk about these things.' He encouraged churches to move away from criticism and adopt a culture of honesty, with leaders talking about their own emotional and mental well-being. The survey found that people aged between 16 and 24 are most likely to experience mental health issues. To be called a 'snowflake', implying that you are easily offended or hurt, is damaging to mental health.

Pray: for youth leaders and organisations to use material that opens up mental health issues. (Romans 8: 6)

More: <https://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Churches-urged-to-promote-honesty-after-new-mental-health-report>

EUROPE

■ Europe: prayers for Advent protection

On 9 December it will be one year since the attack on the Christmas market in Berlin. Europe is on a high level of alert for possible terrorist attacks. In many countries there will be Christmas bazaars, street nativity scenes, carols, and other seasonal events. Pray for God to give a double portion of wisdom and discernment to police and military personnel as they work to keep our borders and streets free of terrorists and terror attacks. Pray for God's perfect networking and communication between those whose job is to detect dangerous individuals, identify and safeguard potential soft targets, and monitor distrusted individuals. May there be early detection of any planned attacks this Christmas. In England in 2016 combat teams worked undercover to protect Christmas shoppers from an attack in London's Oxford Street. Pray for the success and protection of all undercover workers this Christmas season.

Pray: for God to watch over our streets and embolden those keeping us secure. (Psalm 127:1b)

More: <http://visionofhumanity.org/global-terrorism-index/global-terrorism-index-2017/>

■ EU / Turkey relationships

Turkey-EU ties are currently marked by mutual resentments and appear to be going nowhere. In a sign of the times, Brussels is withholding 175 million euros in pre-accession funds for Turkey, which on paper remains a candidate for EU membership. Ankara says it doesn't need EU money or membership, but it is developing ties with individual EU members, which seems to be a search for another kind of relationship with Europe. French president Emmanuel Macron, who has emerged as Erdogan's principal European speaker, said Turkey is a partner in many crises Europe faces, notably the immigration challenge and the terrorist threat. Countries such as Germany and France are angry about EU citizens arrested in Turkey on what they say are trumped-up charges linking them to the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) or the so-called Fethullah Gulen Terror Organisation (FETO). They are accusing Ankara of holding these people hostage.

Pray: for Turkey to achieve European standards of democracy and human rights. (Proverbs 28:2)

More: <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/12/turkey-european-union-seeking-new-kind-relationship.html>

WORLDWIDE

■ Israel: Trump recognises Jerusalem as capital

In 1995 the US passed the 'Jerusalem Embassy Act,' which formally recognised Jerusalem as Israel's capital and called for their embassy to move there from Tel Aviv. With overwhelming support it passed the Senate by 93 to 5. President Trump has now implemented that decision. Israel's intelligence services minister Yisrael Katz said, 'The Palestinian reaction is a rejection of Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state, just as Arabs did 70 years ago.' He also said that this action will make it clear to Palestinians that they too must recognise Israel, which is necessary for the peace process. He said Israel would take economic steps to help the Palestinians, singling out the regional railroad project currently being proposed. Manuel Hassassian, Palestinian representative to Britain, warned, 'Trump is effectively declaring war in the Middle East'. See also <http://www.jpost.com/Diplomatic-Conference/Katz-World-must-endorse-Trumps-move-on-Jerusalem-517152>

Pray: for the peace of Jerusalem and the surrounding territories now and forever. (Psalm 2:8)

More: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/politics/wp/2017/12/06/in-1995-congress-reached-a-compromise-on-the-issue-of-jerusalem-trump-is-poised-to-end-it/?utm_term=.ed5273db01e3

■ Global: do Mormons know Jesus?

Jesus is the central character in the Christmas story. But 15 million Mormons have a false understanding of Him, believing that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three gods. They believe the lie that salvation depends on their works instead of on the work of Jesus Christ; and the Heavenly Father began as a spirit child, came to earth to gain a body, and earned his way to godhood. Many good works are required for Mormons to earn the privilege of living with the Heavenly Father in the next life. One 'good work' is temple work for the dead - a person can be saved after they have died when temple works are completed by those still living. Mormonism teaches that man is not born in sin and cannot sin until the age of eight; and Eve's disobedience was 'a fall upward, a necessity for eternal progression toward godhood'.

Pray: for Mormons around the world to come to know and accept the truth of Christmas and to recognise Jesus for who He really is and what He came to do. (Ephesians 2:8,9)

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

■ Global: freedom of thought regressing

Asia Bibi, a Pakistani Christian woman who has been on death row for blasphemy since 2010, has been nominated for this year's Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought. The 2017 report by the International Humanist and Ethical Union, presented on 5 December, should be alarming to all who care about freedom of thought and expression, as it shows 'a pattern of regression on a global scale'. It shows that 85 countries have at least one law or symptom of 'severe discrimination' against those who think or believe differently; the free thinkers. Thirty countries are guilty of 'grave violations' such as prescribing the death penalty for apostasy, or 'religious instruction in a significant number of schools, of a coercive fundamentalist or extremist variety'. See also the next article, about Canada's religious freedom in schools.

Pray: for an end to laws that invite hatred, for the UNHRC to implement its human rights laws more effectively, and for

secure freedom of religion where it is most difficult to be Christian. (Psalm 138:7)

More: <http://www.christiansincrisis.net/all-latest-news-headlines/7186-freedom-of-thought-regressing-on-a-global-scale.html>

▣ **Canada: religious freedom denied**

Canadian father Steve Tourloukis - who featured in television commercials for the Coalition for Marriage - has been fighting a legal battle since 2012 to protect his parental rights and religious freedom. The legal battle has just come to an end, but not in the favour of Mr Tourloukis - or Canadian religious freedom. He initially sent a letter to the school board asking that his children be opted out of the sexual education programme, since many of the messages in the class directly conflicted with his religious beliefs. He specifically mentioned that he was concerned about the 'discussions or portrayals of homosexual/bisexual conduct and relationships and/or transgenderism as natural, healthy or acceptable'. When they refused his request, he took them to court, but Ontario's appeal court has ruled against him, and against the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Pray: for this fight not to end here but to continue until Ontario respects the rights of parents to have the authority over their children's moral education. (Proverbs 22:6)

More: http://www.marriagealliance.com.au/canadian_public_schools_religious_freedom

▣ **Syria: Putin vows to rebuild Syria's faith communities**

President Putin told representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church: 'Over the past few years the Russian state, alongside the Russian Orthodox Church and other religious organisations, has provided humanitarian aid to Syria. It is very important that peaceful life is re-established as soon as possible, so that people can return and begin rebuilding churches and temples.' Putin also stressed that most of the historically Christian areas have been liberated. Syria's Christian community, one of the oldest in the world, has shrunk from 30% to an estimated 10% of the population, after being driven from their homes or forced to convert to Islam. Syrian Christians lived in Syria for centuries before Assad, but only reached the highest levels of government when Syria was democratic. Despite being a minority they have long belonged to Syria's elite, and joined prominent political groups.

Pray: for God to use Putin, as He used Darius in ancient Israel, to rebuild faith communities in the land. (Ezra 6:12)

More: <https://www.worthynews.com/29236-putin-vows-rebuild-christian-syria-restoring-churches-bringing-refugees-home>

▣ **USA: southern California's explosive fires**

Hundreds of firefighters are working around the clock to battle fast-moving wildfires in southern California, and wind gusts of 80mph are expected to make matters worse. Wildfires across hillsides quickly incinerated neighbourhoods; over 110,000 people were evacuated in one county on 6 December. Prayer is needed for the overworked firefighters coping with explosive fire growth; for the crews from other states and the National Guard giving assistance; for the thousands of families now sheltering in community buildings, and the provisions needed for their comfort; for those who have had their homes destroyed; and those mourning lost families and friends. Ecologist Alexandra Syphard said, 'Canyons cutting through the hills align diagonally with the direction of the Santa Ana winds and turn into fire funnels. Fire is part of life for the cities spread across the hills. At the end of a summer of droughts, with Santa Ana blowing, we have ideal conditions for the type of wildfires we're experiencing every year.' See <https://www.wired.com/story/losangeles-wildfire-science/>

Pray: for all those who will be returning to burned-out homes. (Psalm 34:18)

More: <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/12/07/us/ventura-fire-california/index.html>

▣ **Global: the power of leaders' words**

There is huge power in the words we speak. The ambitious crown prince Mohammed bin Salman of Saudi Arabia called Iran's supreme leader 'the Hitler of the Middle East.' An Iranian foreign ministry spokesman accused the 'adventurist' prince of 'immature, inconsiderate, and baseless remarks and behaviour.' Rivals for control of the Middle East, Shi'ite Iran and Sunni Saudi Arabia are presently engaged in proxy wars in Yemen, Iraq, and Syria. Kim Jong-Un's ballistic bluster and President Trump's 'fire and fury' has created more tension in Asia, while Pope Francis was cautioned not to utter the word 'Rohingya' in Myanmar. We are asked to pray for the world's leaders to understand fully the power that their words have to hurt or to build up, to cause conflict or to ease tension. May they heed the advice of many seasoned and wise counsellors.

Pray: for all world leaders to make decisions only on well-vetted research, discretion and good judgment. (Proverbs 25:11)

More: <http://win1040.com/post.php?id=3207&cat=EPA>

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE WORLD PRAYER CENTRE, BIRMINGHAM, UK

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