

# Prayer Alert

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I have cried out to you, Yahweh, from your holy presence. You send me a Father's help: Pause in his presence (Psalm 3:4, The Passion Translation)

We are pleased to enclose this week's edition of Prayer Alert.

Can you help? - Prayer Alert is brought to your inbox without charge thanks largely to the generosity of individuals and organisations that freely provide most of the resources we need to operate. However, we would be grateful for donations from appreciative subscribers towards our costs. Please go to the 'Donations' link that follows to make a contribution: <http://www.prayer-alert.net/contact/donate>

Thank you again for standing with us in prayer over the nations.

David Fletcher – Editor

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## Praise Reports

### Answered prayer - loan sharks

In July 2013 you were asked to pray for measures to be taken to end Wonga-style loans, after the Archbishop of Canterbury boldly stated he would tackle the scourge of high-cost payday lending and work towards expanding credit unions. On 30 August Wonga, the payday lender with extortionate interest rates, collapsed into administration after it was brought down by a welter of compensation claims. On 1 September the Guardian reported, 'Credit unions on the rise'. Credit unions, not-for-profit cooperatives, are owned and controlled by their members and traditionally specialise in loans and savings for the less well-off. In a credit union, members pay in small sums to their account and can then access loans. Justin Welby's prophetic statement that he would 'compete' Wonga out of existence appears to becoming a reality as loansharking is shrinking. [See https://www.theguardian.com/money/2018/aug/31/credit-union-members-exceed-2m-as-alternatives-to-payday-lenders-sought](https://www.theguardian.com/money/2018/aug/31/credit-union-members-exceed-2m-as-alternatives-to-payday-lenders-sought)

Praise: God for the decline of loan sharks and the growth of credit unions. (Psalm 82:3)

More: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-45359395](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-45359395)

### Answered prayer - children spending online

A few weeks ago you were asked to pray for laws to be passed to stop companies producing online internet games that look more like gambling. Other European countries already have far stricter rules in place to protect children from racking up huge gaming bills. Belgium and the Netherlands consider some in-game spending as gambling and have made them illegal. Last December a teenager accidentally spent his mother's entire monthly wage on line because her debit card was registered to his PlayStation account. But from December, a new icon will appear on video games boxes, warning parents of the potential for extra purchases, in a bid to avoid similar instances.

Praise: God that parents will be made aware of the existence of optional in-game purchases upfront on games intended for children. (Psalm 72:4)

More: [news.sky.com/story/video-games-boxes-to-warn-parents-about-extra-purchases-11485534](http://news.sky.com/story/video-games-boxes-to-warn-parents-about-extra-purchases-11485534)

## British Isles & Ireland

### Brexit: Raab v Barnier

Addressing the European scrutiny committee, Brexit secretary Dominic Raab said, 'We're not going to roll over just because there is some traction static on what we think is not just a good deal for the UK; it would be a good deal for the EU equally.' He warned the EU that failing to match the 'ambition and energy' of the British Government in the last phase of Brexit talks could have serious repercussions for the bloc, and the UK would be prepared for a no-deal scenario. He was responding to criticism from Michel Barnier, who reportedly branded Theresa May's Chequers deal as 'rubbish' and repeatedly dismissed her proposals. We can

continue to pray for God to be the author of every Brexit agreement, asking Him to demolish and destroy every proposal that is made outside his purposes. Pray again for the negotiators and their advisors to have the wisdom of Solomon.

Pray: for this 'Land of Hope and Glory' to have all boundaries set by God and move forward mightily in His power on His pathways. (Psalm 50:1)

More: [www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1013516/Brexit-news-Dominic-Raab-UK-EU-withdrawal-no-deal-latest-Germany-breakthrough-latest](http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1013516/Brexit-news-Dominic-Raab-UK-EU-withdrawal-no-deal-latest-Germany-breakthrough-latest)

### Prayers for our parliament

Parliament is sitting again, and the following are some general pointers to guide you in praying for our national life together. Pray for our MPs - their faith, the pressure of being away from home, their workload as they serve their local communities. Thank God for freedom to pray and worship together, and pray that this precious freedom is protected by our politicians. Pray that Christian MPs, peers, policy staff and house staff will grow in numbers and in the depth of their faith, and also that they will be a positive and gracious influence in Parliament. Pray for politics of wisdom, integrity, self-sacrifice and policymaking for the good of all, and for effective and gracious Christian presence and influence in political debate. Pray that the Christian groups in each of the main parties will grow in influence and the positive contribution that they can make.

Pray: for our politicians to give wise explanations of God's truth across all policy areas. (Exodus 31:3)

More: [www.christiansinparliament.org.uk/prayer-points/](http://www.christiansinparliament.org.uk/prayer-points/)

### Archbishop: tax wealthy families to help the poor

Justin Welby recently said, 'We need profound change so that our economy works for everyone. The UK has plenty to be proud about. But work no longer keeps some people from poverty. Young people are struggling. We have deep regional divides. We want everyone to flourish in a cohesive, strong and resilient society. As a Christian, I'm speaking about economic justice today, because Jesus calls us to work for the common good and seek the welfare of everyone in society, especially the most vulnerable.' On 5 September a report which was co-written by the Archbishop stated that Britain's economy is broken and radical action is needed to reduce 'damaging wealth inequality'. He wants to rake in an extra £9 billion a year by shaking up inheritance tax and making multinationals like Starbucks and Amazon pay more tax on their profits, as well as other innovative proposals to fund a higher minimum wage and pay handouts to help the young buy homes.

Pray: for Justin Welby's proposals to be considered carefully by government strategists. (Psalm 45:4)

More: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6132509/Archbishop-Canterbury-declares-wealthy-families-pay-tax-help-poor.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6132509/Archbishop-Canterbury-declares-wealthy-families-pay-tax-help-poor.html)

### Intercessor Focus: reaching people on the edge

There are many vicars reaching 'the unreached people groups' in the UK. There is Nigel Rostock, a vicar with a Harley-Davidson who says that being a biker makes it easier to minister to people on the edge of society. He is part of the 'God's Squad' motorbikes club - touching the lives of addicts and outsiders who would never step inside a church. Another vicar, Gavin Tyte, is called Snoop Doggy Dog Collar because he is a British beatbox vicar. He was chosen to judge the World Beatboxing Championships in Berlin. Also across the nations café-churches are springing up - churches in the community where all are welcome and coffee and cakes are served along with faith-based ad hoc conversations. There are many outreach activities like Street Angels and Street Pastors who do what they can to help and counsel people on the streets after pubs and clubs turn out, or Causeway Prospects who promote and help churches to reach and teach people with learning disabilities. (Linda Digby – Prayer Alert Team)

Pray: for 'unreached peoples' to be reached with God's Word and love. (John 14: 23)

More: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-england-leicestershire-45425842/god-s-squad-vicar-reaches-guys-on-the-edge?utm\\_source=Daily+Media+Digest&utm\\_campaign=c1fe14000f](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-england-leicestershire-45425842/god-s-squad-vicar-reaches-guys-on-the-edge?utm_source=Daily+Media+Digest&utm_campaign=c1fe14000f)

### Reaching the young

Bursting with energy and faith, Phil Knox, the Evangelical Alliance's first 'head of mission to young adults', cannot wait to make more friends and disciples. 'For the last twelve years I have worked at Youth for Christ, sharing the good news about Jesus with tens of thousands of young people, and in that time, I have personally seen thousands of lives changed before my eyes. It was the best job in the world. It was always going to take a huge wrench to wrestle me from it, but that wrench came: a new day is here, and this week I joined the Evangelical Alliance. I am an evangelical because I am a good news person and loved by the Creator of the universe. 2018 is described by some global sociologists as VUCA: volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous. Most of us will experience a VUCA world as we are confronted by disconcerting news headlines and navigate personal suffering.'

Pray: for Phil to nurture teams that inspire churches reaching out to young adults. (John 14:12a)

More: [www.eauk.org/news-and-views/let-the-mission-to-reach-young-adults-begin](http://www.eauk.org/news-and-views/let-the-mission-to-reach-young-adults-begin)

### Armed forces abroad

4,000 British personnel from all three services will be training alongside the Omani military in October. Amongst them there will probably be practising Christians. Pray for the chaplains who will be travelling with their unit as they give spiritual support, both publicly and privately, providing pastoral care for those away from home for the first time and offering moral guidance to young men. Oman is characterised by pride, diversity, rapid development and a people clinging to traditional Islamic values and customs. Recently technology has opened avenues into the world. 50% of the population is under 16. Although there is resistance to the Gospel, God's Spirit is drawing Omanis into a saving relationship with Him. Pray that the Christian military will demonstrate to their Omani colleagues, in actions and conversations, their faith and dependence on Jesus Christ. Pray for the chaplains in the group to have God's wisdom in all their counselling. See also <https://www.pray-ap.info/oman.html>

Pray: for God to reach Omani individuals who have never met a Christian and who are completely untouched with the Gospel

message. (Acts 16:14b)

More: [www.army.mod.uk/news-and-events/news/2018/08/apaches-on-target-for-oman-exercise/](http://www.army.mod.uk/news-and-events/news/2018/08/apaches-on-target-for-oman-exercise/)

### Prison service - chaos

Chaos in the wings, lack of respect from management, and absence of support are among the reasons for the surge in prison officers resigning. 33% of outgoing officers in the past 12 months had been in the service for less than a year, prompting concerns that the crisis in UK jails is being exacerbated by dwindling retention rates. Critics of the system say that the new officers are not adequately trained and are forced into challenging and sometimes dangerous situations before they are prepared or equipped to do so, leading to them quitting within months. Rory Stewart, the minister of state for justice, said recently that 'drug-fuelled prison violence is affecting up to 20 jails': [see](#) Also a recent BBC report stated that hundreds of prison staff have been caught smuggling banned items into prisons. The Prison Officers Association said the value of the drug market in jail is around £100m. Low-paid staff are enticed and paid handsomely to smuggle drugs. [See https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-45386076](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-45386076)

Pray: for the hardworking public servants in daily danger to be honoured with adequate training and remuneration. (Psalm 14:19)

More: [www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/uk-prison-jail-crisis-officers-quit-violence-harassment-a8507951.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/uk-prison-jail-crisis-officers-quit-violence-harassment-a8507951.html)

## Europe

### Russia ready to be cut off from internet

If Western sanctions go as far as excluding Russia from the World Wide Web, the country's own internet is ready, according to Russia's presidential aide on the internet. 'Technically, we are ready for anything now,' he said. However, the shutdown will not be painless. Failures always occur when moving from one technology to another, and those keeping data abroad will experience difficulties. Russia has a data privacy law. All companies processing personal data of Russian citizens are obliged to store it on servers within the country's borders. The professional network website LinkedIn has already been banned in Russia for refusing to comply. Twitter and other social networks have agreed to move data about Russians to the country.

Pray: for rules not to isolate Russian citizens from the wider world. (Proverbs 16:32)

More: [www.rt.com/business/420508-russia-internet-shutdown-sanctions/](http://www.rt.com/business/420508-russia-internet-shutdown-sanctions/)

### Nominals: Europe's mission field

How do you persuade someone who already thinks they're a Christian to become one? The largest mission field in Western Europe is not self-identifying atheists or Muslim immigrants; it is people who call themselves Christians but exhibit few, if any, signs of faith. A Pew Research Centre report stated that people who identify with Christianity, but rarely or never attend church services, make up the biggest segment of the region's population. 46% of Western Europeans are non-practising Christians, 18% are regular church attendees, 24% are religiously unaffiliated, and 5% follow other faiths.

Pray: for God to intervene, halt the secularism and turn people back to saving faith. (Psalm 18:28)

More: [www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2018/september/europe-nominal-christians-evangelism-missions-lausanne-pew.html](http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2018/september/europe-nominal-christians-evangelism-missions-lausanne-pew.html)

## Worldwide

### Eritrea: potential for change

Eritrea could be on the verge of major change. For 20+ years, it has battled with Ethiopia and Somalia. President Afewerki's regime conscripts citizens indefinitely into fighting its wars, and represses opposition. Much of Eritrea's money has gone to defence against enemies, resulting in it being one of the poorest countries, with a mass exodus of Eritreans to Europe part of the biggest global migration crisis since World War II. However, Ethiopia now has a new prime minister, Abiy Ahmed. He has already made a number of significant changes to government policy, including freeing thousands of political prisoners and amending a harsh anti-terrorism law. He has extended a hand of peace to Eritrea and agreed to a peace deal. Thousands of people celebrated, the border is open, embassies will open, and the countries will work together to strengthen ports, resume air flights, open telephone lines, and more. Afewerki's regime has made Christians suffer as the 6th worst persecuted in the world, but Abiy has recently released 35 Christians from prison. Pray for Islamic extremists in the region to lose their power due to his influence.

Pray: for President Afewerki's heart and mind to continue to be open to change as the new Ethiopian PM sets an example. (Isaiah 48:17)

More: [windowreporter.com/windowwatchman](http://windowreporter.com/windowwatchman)

### Colombia: Christians suffering

Formerly, Colombia was a democratic country with guaranteed religious freedom. However, large areas are now under the control of criminal organisations, drug cartels, revolutionaries, and corrupt paramilitary groups. Christians are extremely vulnerable. Guerrilla groups force them to pay a 'protection tax' as an insurance against assault or murder. They issue death threats to those involved in evangelism, fearing that believers will continue to stand in opposition to the reign of terror they use to maintain power. In indigenous communities, violence is employed to frighten Christians whom they see as threats to ethnic customs and different worldviews. In all of these situations, Christians are prevented from freely congregating and sharing their faith. Pray for peace and hope for these Christians, and that they will stand strong in the face of persecution.

Pray: for God to comfort His people and give them grace to forgive their persecutors. (Jeremiah 8:18,19)

More: [www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/world-watch-list/colombia/](http://www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/world-watch-list/colombia/)

### Myanmar: religious persecution

Myanmar has 100+ ethnic groups, and over 2,200 Buddhist temples. It is rich in natural resources such as gems, oil, and natural

gas. The military holds great influence in the government, forcibly repressing popular democratic movements and exploiting the country's rich natural resources, leaving the nation's economy in shambles. Many are in poverty. Additionally, Myanmar suffers the second highest HIV/AIDS rate in southeast Asia, with a reported 54% of adults and 78% of children receiving treatment. The creation and use of illegal drugs is a contributing factor to this epidemic. It has been reported that at least 200,000 households are involved in the production of poppies, the source of illegal opiates. Recently, the largest human exodus since the Vietnam War began as Rohingya Muslims were driven out in what the UN described as 'ethnic cleansing at the hands of the military'. Myanmar is 80% Buddhist, 8% Christian, and 7% Muslim. 84% remain unreached with the Gospel. Freedom of religion is restricted. The military actively promote Buddhism.

Pray: for protection for the indigenous believers sharing their faith, for the Buddhist monks who have become Christians, and all who face harassment and persecution for their faith. (Psalm 91:9,10)

More: [prayercast.com/myanmar-\(burma\).html](http://prayercast.com/myanmar-(burma).html)

### Philippines and Thailand: Bible translations

Praise God for the initiative of the Asi people in forming the 'Asi Bible Association,' to oversee New Testament distribution. Pray for good decisions and the finances needed to distribute the Scriptures in written, audio and digital formats, including the Jesus film, DVDs, CDs, and hymn books. Pray that people of the Philippines will be eager to engage with the Scriptures available to them. Praise God also for the hundreds of followers of the Northern Thai Facebook group formed when the New Testament was dedicated in early 2018. Pray for the scripture engagement team as they put out an updated version of the phone app. There will be a meeting of churches in September to encourage support for translation of the Old Testament. Ask God to bring many to the meeting, and that funds will be found to pay the salary for a scripture engagement coordinator for another year.

Pray: for everyone translating God's Word for unreached people groups. (Psalm 91:1,2)

More: [www.wycliffe.org.uk/get-involved/pray/weekly/](http://www.wycliffe.org.uk/get-involved/pray/weekly/)

### Tunisia: Muslim leader calls for conquest of nations

Recently, at an Islamic Caliphate conference, Said Khecharem, who is affiliated with the pro-Sharia, pro-caliphate organisation Hizb- ut-Tahrir, declared that the 'establishment of an Islamic state requires the conquest of America, Britain, Russia, France, and Italy. Other infidel lands will be conquered, Allah willing.' According to the Middle East Media Research Institute, he also said, 'The most important thing is to restore the rule of the Muslims, through the Quran and the Sunna, in order to renew Islamic life and to deliver the Islamic message to the world. My brothers, the implication of this today should be the establishment of an Islamic state over all the lands of the infidels.' Some in the west are noting that even now relatively few mosques or Islamic schools teach young Muslims why they should reject the violent understanding of Islam taught by al-Qaeda, IS, and other terror groups.

Pray: for more imams to speak out against jihad warfare and the rule of Islamic law. (Psalm 143:12)

More: [metrovoicenews.com/muslim-leader-calls-for-conquest-of-america-britain-russia-france-and-italy/](http://metrovoicenews.com/muslim-leader-calls-for-conquest-of-america-britain-russia-france-and-italy/)

### Korea: a 'kairos' time

On 15 August North and South Korea celebrated their liberation from Japanese occupation in 1948, South Korea celebrated its 70th anniversary as a state founded purposefully as a Christian state, and North Korea also celebrated its formation. Seventy years is a significant time period for God: [see](#) A process towards reunification of the north and south was started by a joint declaration in June 2000, which was reaffirmed in April 2018 by the Panmunjom Declaration for peace, prosperity and unification of the Korean Peninsula. The two countries agreed to work towards a peaceful reunification in the future.

Pray: for a new era of unity to begin, and for the reunification of the Korean Peninsula. (Isaiah 43:19)

More: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korean\\_reunification](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korean_reunification)

### Syria: options for Idlib

The future of Syria is being debated between Iran, Russia and Turkey. Prominent on the agenda at a leaders' meeting in Tehran on 7 Sept is Idlib, the remaining rebel-held province in Syria (population 1.5 million). Turkey, fearing a mass exodus of civilians towards its border, is trying to ensure the offensive will be as limited as possible. Most believe there are three scenarios. First, Turkey and Russia could agree to uphold the Idlib de-escalation zone if Turkey deals with the al-Qaeda-affiliated Hay'et Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) and persuades them to relocate elsewhere. This could avert a Russian attack on Idlib as long as a lasting peace is achieved in Syria. The second scenario would allow for a limited Russian-led military action in Idlib against HTS. Given the high population density, Russia and Syria seem to be trying to avoid massive military attacks. The most feared scenario is Iran's preference - an all-out offensive against Idlib. [See https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/09/iran-foreign-minister-javad-zarif-damascus-assad-talks-180903064412069.html](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/09/iran-foreign-minister-javad-zarif-damascus-assad-talks-180903064412069.html)

Pray: for any planned offensives to be derailed through groundbreaking dialogues. (Isaiah 10:13)

More: [www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/09/syrias-idlib-faces-humanitarian-disaster-offensive-looms-180906075118182.html](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/09/syrias-idlib-faces-humanitarian-disaster-offensive-looms-180906075118182.html)

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