

Prayer Alert

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I desire to do Your will, my God; Your law is within my heart. (Psalm 40:8)

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

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

David Fletcher – Editor

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Praise Reports

UK's largest Christian gathering

The Festival of Life, a bi-annual event at the ExCeL exhibition centre, follows a vision given to Pastor Adeboye to organise a Holy Ghost all-night miracle service. The format has been repeated in many different countries, gathering Christians together for a night of fellowship, praise and prayers. An estimated 40,000 attended this year - the largest gathering of believers in the UK. The festival brings together people of diverse backgrounds, nationalities and denominations.

Praise: God for the move of His Spirit that flows when His people gather in unity. (Psalm 113:4,5a)

More: www.festivaloflife.org.uk/

Follow JC Go

Finding Biblical figures and saints is the challenge posed to users of a new Catholic mobile game which echoes the Pokémon Go app. Rather than pursuing Japanese monsters, players seek out Biblical characters and recruit them to join their own 'evangelisation team' - if they correctly answer Bible-based questions. The game, which is free to download for smartphone users, incorporates augmented reality and geo-location technology, allowing users to progress through the game as they walk about in real life. It was developed ahead of a visit by Pope Francis to Panama next year for World Youth Day.

Praise: God for this latest tool that combines technology with evangelisation. (Psalm 90:17)

More: www.premierchristianradio.com/News/World/Pokemon-Go-inspired-app-lets-users-find-disciples-and-saints-in-the-street

Syria: new believers fill churches

A Syrian SAT-7 team recently found churches full of displaced people learning about Jesus for the first time. Almost a thousand children, including hundreds from non-Christian backgrounds, gathered in Tartus, Bloudan, and As-Suwayda to see 'Family of Jesus', a children's show of music, teaching biblical values and prayer. In Bloudan 200 children were so excited and happy to see the team they didn't want to leave, but church leaders made them go straight after the service for their safety. The congregation in As-Suwayda was almost entirely Druze people, most of the Christians having fled Syria. In Tartus the team sang, prayed and filmed with 300 Alawite children, hungry for the word of God. The churches are crowded with new believers.

Praise: God for the explosion of Christianity now happening in Syria. (Psalm 8:2)

More: www.sat7uk.org/new-believers-fill-syrian-churches/?bblinkid=119517643&bbemailid=10126992&bbejrid=769054744

British Isles & Ireland

Praying for the nation

These are crucial days, and God is stirring His church. As previously reported ([see https://prayer-alert.net/british-isles-ireland-pa-site/item/11000-scotland-st-andrew-s-day](https://prayer-alert.net/british-isles-ireland-pa-site/item/11000-scotland-st-andrew-s-day)), the Pray for Scotland network has introduced a 24-hour prayer rota for churches to sign

up and commit to pray for unity on 30 November (St Andrew's Day). Across the nation, spontaneous days of prayer have been happening recently. No one knows what the Brexit outcome will be - but we know the One who has the answer! This is not a time to wait until the storm blows over. It is a time to battle for our nation - on our knees, crying out for His forgiveness and mercy and calling forth a fresh move of His Spirit to revive His Church and transform our communities.

Pray: for prayer warriors to identify battle lines and be led by the Captain of the Host. (Isaiah 13:4)

More: gallery.mailchimp.com/5e115654cdf602ad2a5a7f78a/files/2101fde3-4f39-47bd-b427-5fcf75d5c4e5/18_10_15_text_for_e_letter.pdf

What do UK evangelicals believe?

The results of a survey of evangelical Christians by Ligonier Ministries show that the ongoing gospel ministry of local churches across Britain is absolutely vital. When asked whether the resurrection of Jesus actually occurred, one-third replied, 'I don't know.' Even worse, 37% of those surveyed didn't know whether God counts a person as righteous because of their own works or because of faith in Jesus Christ alone. Sinclair Ferguson, a Ligonier teaching fellow and associate preacher at St Peter's Dundee, commented: 'The results of this new survey show conclusively what we have sensed for years: the biblical teaching that once shaped British life now lies largely forgotten, ignored, or demeaned. Very few of our neighbours have ever heard about who Jesus Christ really is, and what he accomplished on the cross. This is surely a time to take every opportunity to share the gospel as the power of God for salvation.' However, doubts have been expressed about the validity of this survey, given that it was based on a sample of only 132 people.

Pray: for God to inject Holy Spirit boldness into His Church, giving evidence of Jesus' teachings in the pulpit and in our communities. (Psalm 33:4,5)

More: www.ligonier.org/blog/state-theology-united-kingdom/

Harassment 'relentless' for women and girls

MPs are saying 'women and girls across the UK face 'relentless' harassment on the streets, and not enough is being done to stop it.' The members of the Women and Equalities Committee found it had become 'normalised' for girls growing up to experience harassment. They are calling for the government to tackle it. Harassment - from being shouted at and cat-called through to sexual assaults - is happening on transport, in bars and clubs, on online spaces, at universities, in parks, on the streets, and even on school buses. One 12-year-old on her school bus experienced boys pushing her off her seat, spitting at her, and calling her a slut. Pray for schools, youth clubs, and all meeting places for young people to re-educate boys about 'how to treat girls', so that acceptable behaviour is learned and practised as they mature.

Pray: for God to give MPs workable strategies that will protect women and girls more effectively. (Psalm 116:5,6a)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-45942447

'Pray for me', says Aasia Bibi

Aasia Bibi, a Christian woman on death row in Pakistan, has urged Christians in the UK to pray for her. The message was conveyed by her husband Ashiq, who has travelled to the UK to highlight her plight. He said to Premier, 'She told me that the community must remember her in their prayers because this is an international country. I need international pressure for the release of Aasia Bibi.' He said her incarceration since 2009 has spelt nine years of suffering for the whole family. He added, 'She always has said that Jesus is her life and she is living in the name of Jesus, and trusting that he will help her.' For further information about Aasia's case, see https://www.prayer-alert.net/index.php?option=com_acymailing&ctrl=url&subid=1&urlid=1631&mailid=108

Pray: for Aasia's release. Pray that she, Ashiq, and all their family may know God's peace and protection. (Psalm 5:11)

More: www.premierchristianradio.com/News/World/EXCLUSIVE-Pray-for-me-Asia-Bibi-s-direct-appeal-to-UK-Christians-from-death-row

New housing and 'car dependency'

The scramble to build new homes in England is producing large housing estates which are being built next to bypasses and link roads. There are no shops, no pub, no doctor, no school, no church, and no jobs; they are too far out of town to walk or cycle, and they lack good local buses. Car travel is the only option. Researchers from a new green group, Transport for New Homes, backed by the RAC Foundation, visited over twenty new housing estates across England and said, 'We were appalled to find so many new housing developments built around the car, with residents driving for almost every journey. Those cars head for towns and cities clogging up existing roads. Commuter times get longer and longer. Car-based living of this kind is not good for our health or quality of life.' Also in some estates there is nowhere to park in front of houses, so owners have to park on pavements.

Pray: for new quality housing developments to include schools, churches, corner shops, community centres, and a genuine mix of transport options. (Proverbs 15:31)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-45956792

Budget Day (29 October) - relevant facts

Wages are rising and unemployment rates are at their lowest for more than 40 years, so these should be boom times for young people. However, rising rents, bills and living expenses mean that one in five aged 25-34 will spend over 60% of their pay on payday. A further 3% find themselves in the red. Meanwhile, house prices in England have risen by 173% over the last 20 years, and around a quarter of 20-34-year-olds still live with their parents - with slim chances of owning a home any time soon. Those living in rented accommodation find high rents eating up income, making it impossible to save for a deposit on a home. Pray for Philip Hammond as he prepares next week's budget. May the undetonated timebomb of Brexit have no adverse influence on his proposals, and may they give opportunities for economic growth and prosperity for young and old alike in the nation's future.

Pray: for relief from austerity, and a budget in line with what will happen on 29 March 2019. (Proverbs 23:19)

Europe

Brexit border stalemate

Karen Bradley, the Northern Ireland secretary, was challenged by British and Irish parliamentarians on the potential for violence if Brexit allowed any physical infrastructure to return to the Irish border. Senator Frank Feighan said that the people of Ireland would tear it down with their own hands, adding, 'That's what's coming from the people on the ground, not from me'. In December 2017, both sides agreed to a 'backstop' position to avoid a hard border if a wider trade deal failed to be struck. Negotiators are now unable to translate this backstop decision into a legally binding commitment. Ms Bradley also expressed the opinion that if there were a second referendum, the vote to Leave would be even stronger.

Pray: for God to inspire the UK government, the Stormont Assembly, and the EU Council. May they walk humbly in unity and agreement. (Psalm 133:1,2)

More: www.irishexaminer.com/breakingnews/world/second-eu-referendum-would-deliver-bigger-majority-for-leave-says-uk-northern-ireland-secretary-877381.html

Polish election result

Poland's electoral officials have reported that a pro-European Union opposition party has defeated the ruling conservatives in local elections in Warsaw. The 21 October national elections were a popularity test for the conservatives, whose policies have drawn street protests and prompted clashes with EU leaders. The regional elections decide the makeup of local governments and regional parliaments, including several mayoral races. These elections possibly foreshadow legislative and European elections in 2019.

Pray: for Poland's political reforms to strengthen not undermine freedom and democracy. (Psalm 2:10)

More: www.nytimes.com/aponline/2018/10/24/world/europe/ap-eu-poland-local-elections.html

Norway: NATO war games

NATO has launched its biggest military exercises since the end of the Cold War, amid rising tensions with Russia. About 50,000 soldiers from 31 countries are taking part in a mock battle in Norway, against an invading force named Trident Juncture 18. The battle is scheduled to run until 7 November. NATO secretary-general Jens Stoltenberg said the drills would send a clear message to 'any potential adversary'. Washington is contributing the biggest contingent of troops to the exercises, which are taking place just weeks after Russia staged its own largest-ever military drills.

Pray: for responsible actions by international leaders that do not lead to 'sabre-rattling'. (Psalm 66:7)

More: www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/10/nato-launches-largest-war-games-cold-war-181025062318773.html

Worldwide

India: trafficking and the Kerala floods

Huge monsoon floods have left hundreds dead and millions displaced in the southern state of Kerala. In the turmoil following a disaster of this magnitude, millions of people have lost everything and are now vulnerable to human trafficking unless they can be protected. Soon after the massive floods began, International Justice Mission started working with the Kerala chief minister's office and senior law enforcement officials on a robust, six-month anti-trafficking project to help local officials protect the most vulnerable. They initiated a top-down human trafficking intervention called Surakshita Keralam (Safe Kerala), and have now trained over 650 local government officials on how to spot signs of human trafficking and assist families in need. The next phase will be to monitor local officials' efforts to do assessments of flood-affected communities, find those at risk, and develop plans for their long-term protection. Pray for God to bring success to all aspects of these rehabilitation initiatives.

Pray: for the effective crackdown and prosecution of organised crime networks trying to exploit the tragedy. (Psalm 10:12)

More: www.ijm.org/news/disaster-response-human-trafficking-and-the-kerala-floods/

Indonesia: Christians sing despite devastation

As Open Doors workers walked through a village in Indonesia, surrounded by the rubble and destruction left behind by the recent earthquake, they could hear voices singing 'Hallelujah'. Coming round the corner they found a group of believers standing under a tent, singing their praises to God. It is incredible to see the faith of our brothers and sisters in Indonesia, even in the midst of the most difficult circumstances. The death toll following the recent earthquake and tsunami has now exceeded 2,000, and many thousands more have been left homeless, their houses destroyed. On top of that, Christians face discrimination because of their faith as aid is distributed. A Muslim-majority village is located next to a Christian-majority one. But when military tents and other relief aid were sent to the victims, only a small amount of instant noodles were given to the Christians. Discrimination is widespread.

Pray: for aid to be distributed fairly to all, regardless of religion. (Leviticus 19:15)

More: www.opendoorsuk.org/news/stories/indonesia-181011

Philippines: thousands of Christians still displaced

In May 2017, IS-linked militants took over the city of Marawi. They entered homes and set buildings on fire, including a cathedral and a Protestant-run college. They also took over a dozen Christians hostage, including a Catholic priest, as Christians were a particular target, according to Open Doors. 40% of Marawi was destroyed and 98% of the population displaced during the five-month conflict. Marking the first anniversary of the liberation of the city, local Catholic and Muslim leaders said that the war had brought the two communities closer because of the 'mutual feeling of having gone through the same struggle'. But many residents

have not yet returned home, as Marawi is still dominated by rubble. 75 Christian families are living in temporary shelters, and the prelature is currently hosting over 35,000 Catholics. The government aims to complete the rehabilitation of the city by the end of 2021.

Pray: for the government's work, beginning this month, to restore the city. May many residents be able to return soon. (Galatians 6:2)

More: www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/10/one-year-after-marawis-liberation-from-is-thousands-of-christians-still-displaced/

Canada: 'bring youth to Christ, not church'

Auxiliary Bishop Thomas Dowd of Montreal is the sixth-youngest episcopal leader taking part in this month's synod of bishops on young people. He insisted that observers will get the synod wrong if they conceive of its aim as bringing more young people into the Church. 'Something we emphasised in my small group is that it's about bringing young people to Christ. The new evangelisation is not the new ecclesialisation. If we can bring people in contact with the living Christ, and if we believe that he's actually alive and still speaking to us through the Spirit, that's what we want.'

Pray: for churches to bring Jesus to young people through their words and actions. (Romans 10:9)

More: cruxnow.com/synod-of-bishops-on-youth/2018/10/25/canadian-prelate-says-synod-is-about-bringing-youth-to-christ-not-church/

Sri Lanka: violence against Christians escalates

Attacks against Christians in Sri Lanka have escalated this year, with Hindu extremism beginning to take root along with long-time Buddhist aggression, according to rights advocates. An attorney who requested anonymity said, 'We are witnessing communities being mobilised in an increasing manner against Christians. We see the Hindu extremists influencing entire communities; then the communities lead violent mob attacks against Christian places of worship and Christians.' Among recent cases, a large mob in Southern Province gathered to protest against a church in their community. This became a violent attack, and then discrimination against the Christians and harassment of the women. When a Buddhist monk joined them it further aggravated matters and the crowd became uncontrolled, not allowing the pastor or anyone else to leave. They assaulted a Christian who tried to leave. Later 500 people, including Buddhist monks, staged a protest against the pastor and church worship.

Pray: for God to strengthen and protect His people against the rise of Hindu extremism and the ongoing Buddhist hostility. (Psalm 91:1-3)

More: morningstarnews.org/2018/10/violence-discrimination-against-christians-escalate-in-sri-lanka/

Northern Marianas: Typhoon Yutu

On 25 October the 200-mph winds of Super Typhoon Yutu were moving away from its devastating strike on Saipan and Tinian (the two largest islands in the Northern Marianas) and moving into the open waters of the western Pacific Ocean. It is the strongest typhoon on record to pass over the island, and could eventually threaten parts of southeast Asia (the Philippines, Taiwan or southern Japan) after a few days. Maximum sustained winds remain solidly at Category 5 intensity. Pray for the people of Tinian where many homes have been destroyed, critical infrastructure is compromised, and there is no power or water at this time. Several areas are inaccessible, and authorities are yet to complete a preliminary assessment of the damage. Heavy machinery has been deployed in Saipan to clear debris from roads so that first responders can reach people cut off by the storm. Many have lost their homes, and many businesses have been destroyed. See <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/10/25/us/typhoon-yutu-wxc-intl/index.html>

Pray: for God to help the islanders to recover quickly from devastation, and for wisdom and shelter to be given to those in the path of the typhoon. (Isaiah 25:4)

More: weather.com/storms/typhoon/news/2018-10-24-super-typhoon-yutu-mariana-islands-guam-western-pacific

USA: caravan of migrants

For over a week, 4,000 migrants from Central America have trudged north towards the US, fleeing poverty and violence in Honduras. Many are children, some with families, some alone. El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras have endemic levels of crime and violence. More than a third of all Latin Americans reported being victims of violent crime in 2016. The region is home to just 8% of the world's population, but 33% of its homicides. World Vision (WV) has released a statement demanding that the needs of the immigrants in the caravan, especially the health and safety of children, be looked after. It wants measures to be taken to care for children on the move. WV understands the violence and sense of hopelessness that is driving families to leave their homes. As Christians, we are called to love and serve the most vulnerable among us, to welcome the stranger, and to show hospitality to those in need.

Pray: for the US government to put the needs of vulnerable families and children first, while working on a long-term solution to its border challenges. (Matthew 25:35)

More: www.worldvision.org/about-us/media-center/world-vision-us-statement-on-central-american-migration

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