

Prayer Alert

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I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people - for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. (1 Tim 2:1-2)

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

[Pakistan: serving 'poorest of the poor' for 150 years](#)

An eye surgeon from the Diocese of Peshawar, Khushbakht Peters, celebrates the work of the Christian hospital at Tank in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. She writes: 'Tank is a city in the south of our province. The war against terrorism has been going on for a long time here; many people, both soldiers and civilians, have lost their lives. Yet even when things were at their worst, the dedicated staff at the Christian Hospital persisted in providing healthcare services. A few years ago, even the Taliban refused to attack the hospital, as this is where all their women and children go for treatment. For the past 150 years the hospital has been following the footsteps of the Good Samaritan, providing a healing touch for those in need. They have been helping the poorest of the poor, the underprivileged of society, giving them their only chance to better health. Following the living example of the hospital, let us be obedient to our calling to the Lord, and become a blessing for many.'

Praise: God for the fearless dedication and service of the many Christian medics at this hospital over 150 years. (Deut. 31:6)
More: www.anglicannews.org/blogs/2018/11/jesus-said-to-him-go-and-do-likewise.aspx

[Cameroon: kidnapped students freed](#)

Students kidnapped from a Christian boarding school in Cameroon's restive North-West region have been reunited with their parents amid joyful scenes. The 78 boys and girls and three others were seized early on 5 November in the region's capital, Bamenda. A driver was also freed, but the principal and a teacher are still being held. After being released, the students were taken in army vehicles back to the school, where their parents were waiting. One of those kidnapped, a 15-year-old girl, said she had been treated well, and that they had all had been given fruit, food and warm water to wash with. A separatist group which is fighting for independence for the two English-speaking regions, in a country where French is the most widely-spoken official language, has denied that it was responsible for the kidnapping.

Praise: God that the students were released so quickly. Pray for a resolution to the civil war in Cameroon. (Romans 12:18)
More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-46132093

[UK faith leaders back 'real' living wage](#)

Sixty-five religious leaders have written a letter to the Times supporting the real Living Wage. They include twenty Catholic and Anglican bishops, a Roman Catholic archbishop, thirty Jewish rabbis, the president and vice-president of the Methodist Church, and the secretary general of the Muslim Council of Britain. The letter cites concern at low pay and in-work poverty 'which is damaging family life and robbing future generations of a secure and stable home'. It comes as celebrations are planned with 4,700 employers accredited by the Living Wage Foundation, which oversees the real Living Wage (currently £8.75) and the London Living Wage (currently £10.20) - set to rise in line with the real cost of living. Research has found that one in five workers is paid less than a real Living Wage, meaning millions are struggling to stay afloat financially as their wages don't meet the real cost of living.

Praise: God that many are already benefiting from the real Living Wage, and pray that many other employers will follow suit. (Proverbs 31:8-9)

More: www.christiantoday.com/article/church-leaders-back-real-living-wage/130859.htm?

British Isles & Ireland

Shock after London's fifth knife murder in six days

A 16-year-old is reported to have been killed in front of his parents in the Tulse Hill area of London - the fifth stabbing in the city in less than a week and the 119th this year. Local vicar Rev Richard Dormandy said people in the community are struggling to come to terms with what happened. This latest victim was found unconscious in the street, but the paramedics who attended were unable to save him. 'People carry knives in the mistaken belief that it's going to help them in a time of need. It won't help them - it might actually lead them to murder someone. The police and community organisations, many Christian or church-based, are seeking to address the situation', said Rev Dormandy. It is time now for Christians to be lights in the darkness. You are invited to fight violence with prayer and to join the 'Peace on Our Streets' campaign: [see http://www.peaceonourstreets.org.uk](http://www.peaceonourstreets.org.uk)

Pray: for the families of all who suffer from these crimes, and for the mind-set of the knife-carriers to be changed. (Matthew 5:4)

More: www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Vicar-and-community-in-state-of-shock-after-teen-killed-in-London-s-fifth-knife-murder-in-six-days

21 Vietnamese found in lorry, driver arrested

A Romanian man has been charged with people trafficking after 21 Vietnamese stowaways, including children as young as 12, were found inside a refrigerated lorry at Newhaven. The eleven children were passed into the care of social services, but one has since absconded, a spokesman for East Sussex County Council said. The children were said to be 'fine' and did not require medical treatment. After the ten adults were interviewed by immigration officials, two were removed from the UK. Following his arrest, the driver was charged with assisting unlawful entry to the country, and was remanded in custody to appear at Lewes Crown Court at a later date.

Pray: that those smuggled in are dealt with in a humane way, and that the driver's punishment will fit the crime. (Hebrews 13:3b)

More: www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1042259/migrant-crisis-children-lorry-newhaven-romanian-uk-port

Patient dies after first robot-assisted heart surgery

A UK hospital is investigating a patient's death after the UK's first robot-assisted heart valve surgery. The pioneering robot-assisted operation ended in catastrophe, with a cascade of failures causing the death of retired conductor Stephen Pettitt at Freeman Hospital in Newcastle. Lead surgeon Sukumaran Nair and his assistant could hardly hear each other due to a 'tinny' sound emanating from the robot console Nair was operating. He had to shout to warn his colleague that the robot was stitching up the valve incorrectly - and then shout again when he saw the robot knock one of the surgical assistants' arms. The patient's aorta was damaged. As events spiralled out of control, the two robotics experts who should have been on hand to take over in a crisis could not be found, having already gone home. The surgeons abandoned the robot and began open chest surgery, but by this point the patient's heart was functioning 'very poorly'. He died days later of multiple organ failure. The coroner said it was 'more likely than not' that the patient would have survived conventional open-heart surgery.

Pray: for adequate care and training in the use of robotics, especially in new areas of operation. (Matthew 5:4-5)

More: www.rt.com/uk/443396-robot-surgeon-patient-death/

Prince Charles won't speak out when he becomes king

In a BBC documentary to mark his 70th birthday, Prince Charles said the idea that as king he would continue making interventions was 'nonsense'. He said he would have to operate 'within constitutional parameters'. He has campaigned on issues including the environment, wildlife preservation, architecture and the use of GM crops. When asked about what some people call his 'meddling', he said he had always tried to remain 'non-party political'. He said: 'I think it's vital to remember there's only room for one sovereign at a time, not two. So, you can't be the same as the sovereign if you're the Prince of Wales or the heir. The two situations are completely different.' Asked whether his public campaigning would continue, he said: 'No, it won't. I'm not that stupid. I do realise that it is a separate exercise being sovereign. So of course I understand entirely how that should operate.'

Pray: for Prince Charles, giving thanks for his life and asking for God's guidance in the days to come. (Acts 20:32)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-46133114

Armistice centenary celebrated

On 11 November 1918, the Armistice was signed, bringing an end to the First World War. Big Ben sounded in Parliament Square to ring in the news as thousands gathered to celebrate, sparking three days of jubilation across Britain. Prime minister Lloyd George told the House of Commons, 'I hope we may say that thus, this fateful morning, came an end to all wars.' The national mood was not exclusively joyous. Wounded veterans met the news in silence, reflecting on a victory that had cost so many lives. Over the next two years, 5,000 war memorials were erected in towns and villages, as reminders of the past and warnings to future generations not to repeat the mistakes of history. This year, appropriately, Armistice Day coincides with Remembrance Sunday. The two-minute silence will commence at precisely 11 am, marking exactly 100 years to the second since the war came to an end.

Pray: that the marking of this milestone will further encouraging thoughts of peace for the future. (1 Cor. 7:15b)

More: www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/remembrance-day-2018-sunday-armistice-ww1-war-poppy-cenotaph-100-years-a8623571.html

UK economic growth will be slowest in Europe

The UK will join Italy next year as the slowest-growing economy in Europe, before holding that title alone in 2020, according to a

European Commission forecast. These gloomy predictions are based on a soft Brexit - meaning that Britain is expected to lag behind all its EU peers even if Theresa May can reach a deal with Brussels before 29 March. The commission expects consumer spending growth to remain weak, continuing a poor performance since the June 2016 referendum. The result will be GDP growth of only 1.2% in 2019 and 2020. The forecast came as the IMF sounded the alarm over the mounting risks to the European economy from a no-deal Brexit, the escalation of trade disputes around the world, and high levels of Italian government debt.

Pray: for continued economic stability in these uncertain times, and wisdom for the Bank of England and the Government's fiscal planners. (Proverbs 21:5)

More: www.theguardian.com/business/2018/nov/08/uk-economic-growth-slowest-europe-next-year-european-commission-forecasts-brexit

Europe

Ukraine: activist dies after acid attack

Following the death of activist Kateryna Handziuk on Sunday, Ukraine's leaders face mounting demands to protect its civil society and end the impunity of powerful criminals. In August someone poured sulphuric acid over Ms Handziuk (33) outside her home in the southern city of Kherson, where she was an adviser to the mayor and campaigned against police and political corruption. From her hospital bed in Kiev, she had called for urgent action over the assaults on more than forty Ukrainian activists in the past year, and expressed doubts about whether five men arrested for the acid attack were actually responsible. Out of more than 140 attacks on journalists since the start of 2017, only 14 have gone to court; police and officials seem unable or unwilling to defend those who expose the lucrative links between politics, business, and crime in the country. The US ambassador, Marie Yovanovitch, urged Ukraine to 'bring the perpetrators to justice, including those who ordered the attack'.

Pray: that the perpetrators in this and other similar attacks will be brought to justice, and that the deep-rooted corruption in the Ukraine will be dealt with at all levels. (Amos 5:24)

More: www.irishtimes.com/news/world/europe/ukraine-s-leaders-under-pressure-as-activist-dies-after-acid-attack-1.3687183

European defence coalition launched in Paris

The European Intervention Initiative (EII), a military coalition ready to react to crises near the continent's borders, was launched in Paris on 7 November amid calls by French president Emmanuel Macron for a 'real European army'. The French-led initiative would not conflict with the almost 70-year-old US-dominated NATO alliance, proponents say, but reflects concerns about a more isolationist USA under President Trump. The EII took official shape in Paris after months of negotiations with Germany, which France wants at the centre of the force. It will see members collaborate on planning, the analysis of new military and humanitarian crises, and eventual military responses to those crises. 'In an environment where threats and upheavals nature are multiplying, the EII must send the message that Europe is ready and capable', a French defence ministry official said.

Pray: for continued peace across Europe, and that the sabre-rattling with Russia will cease. (James 3:18)

More: www.nytimes.com/reuters/2018/11/07/world/europe/07reuters-europe-defence.html

Worldwide

Aasia Bibi out of prison but not yet safe?

Pakistani Christian mother Aasia Bibi has finally been freed from prison after spending over eight years on death row for allegedly committing 'blasphemy' against Islam, but she is not yet free. Government officials confirmed on 8 November that she had been flown to Islamabad under tight security due to radical Muslim death threats against her and her family following the news of her acquittal. While some reports stated that she had left the country, a foreign ministry spokesman said that this was not true. It is unclear what might happen to her, given that Imran Khan's government has seemingly given way to the huge protests caused by her acquittal on 31 October, and made a deal with the party responsible for organising them. According to that agreement, Aasia would be re-tried by a new supreme court, not including the original three judges.

Pray: for the safety of Aasia Bibi and her family, and especially that she will be allowed to leave Pakistan rather than face yet another trial. (Zechariah 7:9)

More: www.christianpost.com/news/asia-bibi-freed-prison-reunited-family-but-stuck-pakistan-awaiting-asylum-228430/

USA: Trump and midterm elections

The Democrats took control of the US House of Representatives in the midterm elections on 6 November, dealing a blow to President Donald Trump. A Democratic majority will restrict his ability to steer his programme through Congress. However, the Republicans strengthened their grip on the Senate. The elections were seen as a referendum on a polarising president, even though he is not up for re-election till 2020. The Democrats could now launch investigations into Mr Trump's administration and business affairs; they could also block his legislative plans, notably his signature promise to build a wall along the border with Mexico. On 7 November, Trump fired his attorney general, Jeff Sessions, with whom he has been at loggerheads for over a year over the inquiry into possible Russian meddling in the 2016 election. The move was not unexpected, but nevertheless drew heavy criticism. See <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-46132348>

Pray: for all the newly-elected representatives, especially the record number of women, as they prepare to take up their new roles. (1 Timothy 2:1-2)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-46120373

Saudi officials tried to remove evidence

Members of a Saudi Arabian team sent to help Turkish authorities investigate the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi worked instead to remove evidence. A Turkish government spokesman said that two members of the team 'came for the sole purpose of

covering up evidence' before Turkish police were allowed to search the Saudi consulate, where Khashoggi was killed on 2 October. The fact that a clean-up team was dispatched suggests that his killing 'was within the knowledge of top Saudi officials'. The information was the latest in a series of leaks from Turkish officials apparently aimed at keeping up the pressure on Saudi Arabia and ensuring that the killing is not covered up. Khashoggi, who lived in exile in the United States, was strangled immediately after he entered the consulate, and his body was dismembered before being removed.

Pray: that the truth will be uncovered, and justice done. (Ecclesiastes 3:17)

More: abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/report-saudi-investigators-worked-remove-evidence-58970313

Iraq: IS left many mass graves

A UN investigation has found more than 200 mass graves in areas of Iraq once controlled by the Islamic State (IS) group. IS seized parts of Iraq in 2014 and imposed brutal rule, commonly killing anyone of whom it disapproved. The sites contain critical evidence that will not only identify the victims but also help prosecutors build cases for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and possibly genocide. Investigators estimate that between six and twelve thousand victims are buried at the sites, including women, children, the elderly, people with disabilities, foreign workers, and members of the Iraqi security forces. Ján Kubiš, the UN special representative for Iraq, said, 'The mass grave sites are a testament to harrowing human loss, profound suffering and shocking cruelty. (Analysing the evidence) will be an important step in the mourning process for families and their journey to secure their rights to truth and justice.'

Pray: that investigators will be able to obtain the information they need to identify victims and build cases against the perpetrators. (Job 12:22)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-46108248

China denies Uyghur detention camps

Western nations including the USA, France, and Germany have called on China to close down detention camps in the western region of Xinjiang which activists claim hold as many as one million Uyghurs and other Muslims. China, however, has described these criticisms as 'seriously far away from facts'. Its vice minister of foreign affairs, Le Yucheng, told UNHCR in Geneva that his country protects the freedoms of its 55 ethnic minorities. China has said Xinjiang faces a threat from Islamist militants and separatists, and rejects all accusations of mistreatment and denies mass internment, although it states that some citizens guilty of minor offences are being sent to vocational centres to work. Mr Le, referring to Xinjiang, said: 'Stability is most important, prevention should be put first. Setting up the training centres is a preventative measure to combat terrorism.'

Pray: that the Chinese government will genuinely respect the rights of all its minorities and agree to be more transparent in its dealings with them. (Psalm 9:9)

More: www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/china-detention-camps-uyghur-muslims-xinjiang-human-rights-united-nations-a8620471.html

USA: another shooting tragedy

Twelve people, including a police officer, were killed on 7 November at a bar in Thousand Oaks, California. When the shooting began at 23:20 local time, at least 200 people were enjoying a country music night at the Borderline Bar and Grill. David Long, an ex-Marine suffering from PTSD, entered the bar and opened fire. He may have also used smoke grenades. People reportedly escaped by using chairs to break windows, while others sheltered inside the toilets. The local sheriff described the scene inside the bar as 'horrific' and said there was 'blood everywhere'. Long ended the bloodbath by turning his gun on himself. His motive for the attack is currently unknown.

Pray: for the many organisations, such as the Children's Defence Fund, which continue to campaign for gun control even though President Trump refuses to countenance it. (Psalm 11:5)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-46135459

India: nuclear submarine's first voyage

Prime minister Narendra Modi says the first successful voyage by India's home-built nuclear submarine is a 'warning for the country's enemies'. The INS Arihant recently completed a month-long 'deterrence patrol', meaning India now has the capability to fire nuclear weapons from land, air and sea. Mr Modi, a Hindu nationalist, tweeted it was a 'fitting response to those who indulge in nuclear blackmail'. In a speech televised nationwide, he told the submarine's crew, 'Amid an increase in the number of nuclear weapons in our surroundings, a credible nuclear deterrence is extremely important for our country's security'. His words are a thinly-veiled reference to India's neighbours, China to its north and its traditional enemy, Pakistan, to the west. The often volatile relationship with Pakistan has cooled even more noticeably since Mr Modi took office in 2017 and adopted a more assertive strategy towards its arch-rival.

Pray: that this addition to India's nuclear arsenal will not exacerbate the tensions in the region. (Romans 12:18)

More: news.sky.com/story/india-has-nuclear-triad-and-submarine-ins-arihant-is-warning-to-enemies-says-pm-modi-11546308

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