

# Prayer Alert

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Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let Your glory be over all the earth. (Psalm 57:5)

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

### [Bible spared from Trump tariffs](#)

Christian publishers are rejoicing because the Bible has been exempted from President Trump's looming tariffs on Chinese goods. The 10% increase on \$300 billion worth of other Chinese goods will go into effect on 1 September. With China being the world's largest Bible publisher, it had been feared that the tariffs would have made some translations too costly to produce.

Praise: God that the Bibles will continue to be sent from China without extra cost. Pray that they will reach those who need them most. (1 Peter 1:24)

More: [www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/us/2019/august/christians-celebrate-as-bible-spared-from-trump-tariffs-on-chinese-goods](http://www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/us/2019/august/christians-celebrate-as-bible-spared-from-trump-tariffs-on-chinese-goods)

### [Florida court overturns abortion ruling](#)

Florida's supreme court historically backed abortion rights, but now has more conservative justices. In a victory for abortion opponents, an appeals court overturned a judge's ruling from January 2018 stating there was no need to make a person wait 24 hours before having an abortion. They argued that the law violates privacy rights and places roadblocks in the way of women seeking abortions. The 24-hour time gap will now give the person time to consider more deeply the act of abortion and ensure they give 'informed consent'. This case could become a key test for anti-abortion lobbyists.

Praise: God for the changed attitudes towards abortions in this court. (Psalm 42:8)

More: [www.miamiherald.com/news/state/florida/article233392627.html](http://www.miamiherald.com/news/state/florida/article233392627.html)

### [Christ and refugees](#)

Syrian refugees usually don't see beyond their own needs, but Turkey's missionaries have seen a change. When food trucks arrive at settlements, the predominantly Muslim Syrians clamour for distribution to begin. But recently women went straight to the director and said, 'First we want prayer. This child is crippled, he's an orphan, please pray for him. We don't want food, just prayer.' A great awakening has begun among camp refugees; they knew Jesus as a prophet, but now realise that he is the God of Christians and he heals and works miracles today.

Praise: God that attitudes are changing; people are hungry for prayer before flour or rice. (Mark 16:20)

More: [www.christianaid.org/missions-insider/2019-christ-begins-to-rule-among-refugees/](http://www.christianaid.org/missions-insider/2019-christ-begins-to-rule-among-refugees/)

### [Sudan: deposed president facing corruption charges](#)

Sudan's ruling military council and civilian opposition alliance have signed a landmark power-sharing deal and Khartoum civilians have

celebrated in the streets, dancing and waving their national flag. Omar al-Bashir, the former president of Sudan, will now face a long jail term if his high profile corruption trial finds him guilty of possessing foreign currency, corruption, receiving gifts illegally, and systematic human rights abuses.

Praise: God for the power-sharing agreement; may all Bashir's regime be brought to justice. (Proverbs 18:5)

More: [www.theguardian.com/world/2019/aug/18/omar-al-bashir-corruption-charges-sudan-court](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/aug/18/omar-al-bashir-corruption-charges-sudan-court)

## British Isles

### Calling for little ships of hope

In 1940 Britain faced her darkest hour with troops trapped at Dunkirk. Then a call for help went out, prayers were offered and 338,000 men lived to fight another day - ten times more than Churchill and the generals expected. It was a miracle. The sea was becalmed. Hitler uncharacteristically ordered his troops to halt, even though they surrounded the British in a pincer-like movement. Cloud covered Spitfire pilots, and 800 fishing and pleasure boats mounted an extraordinary rescue. Today we're in a Dunkirk-like dark hour: Christ's light is dim in the chaos of our nation. But prayer changes things. Intercessors are the 'little ships' crossing the currents of secular culture to rescue Britain. We must remember that it is not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit' (Zech. 4:6) that the enemies of God will be defeated. For the source of these thoughts click the 'More' button.

Pray: for intercessors to trim their sails to the wind of the Spirit, seeking God's victory for their lives and the nation. (Psalm 51:10)

More: [www.prophecytoday.uk/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=1549:our-darkest-hour&Itemid=185](http://www.prophecytoday.uk/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=1549:our-darkest-hour&Itemid=185)

### Students and faith

University students are attending chapel services (<https://www.christiantoday.com/article/student-chapel-numbers-beat-regular-sunday-worship-figures/133072.htm>) at a higher rate than the rest of the population, challenging the notion that young people aren't interested in church. When 54 college chapels in Durham, Oxford and Cambridge universities were surveyed, the figures showed that there were twice as many students making their way to church on Sunday than there were adults in the rest of the population attending services at regular churches. Meanwhile a separate study showed that from 2017 to 2018, the total number of young people sitting the Religious Studies GCSE fell from 282,193 to 253,618, and 701 schools in England stopped entering students into the subject altogether. However, GCSE reforms now state that pupils must study at least two religions, so the subject has a more secular ethos and is not particularly relevant to Biblical Christian study.

Pray: for students to discover Christ in the maze of world views and cultural diversity. (Psalm 78:1)

More: [www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2019/08/22/news/fears-gcse-religious-studies-becoming-niche-subject-1690922/](http://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2019/08/22/news/fears-gcse-religious-studies-becoming-niche-subject-1690922/)

### Northern Ireland: calls for the protection of churches

There have been calls for protection for churches in Northern Ireland after 445 incidences of criminal damage to religious buildings, churchyards, or cemeteries in the last three years. Belfast's synagogue and Islamic centre have also been damaged in the last ten years. The leaders of all the political parties have been urged to make more support available to religious buildings and to commit to setting up an initiative like the 'Place Of Worship Fund', which helps to protect religious buildings in England and Wales. Ulster Unionist MLA Robbie Butler said, 'Places of worship, no matter what faith or denomination, should be a cherished place of peace and sanctuary. Attacking a church is an attack against its entire congregation.'

Pray: for government initiatives to protect churches from further attacks. (Psalm 140:1)

More: [www.premierchristianradio.com/News/UK/Calls-for-protection-for-NI-churches-following-450-attacks-in-three-years](http://www.premierchristianradio.com/News/UK/Calls-for-protection-for-NI-churches-following-450-attacks-in-three-years)

### Scotland: asylum-seekers and deportation

Two teenage asylum-seekers have won their battle to escape deportation to Pakistan. Brothers Somer Bakhsh and Areeb have spent most of their lives fearing that they could be forced to leave Glasgow and sent back to the country of their birth where Christians are persecuted. They now have some certainty in their lives, but they have only been granted 'limited leave to remain' until February 2022. Somer, who got four As and a B in his Highers and aspires to be an astrophysicist, said, 'Scotland is my home. I have grown up here, all my friends are here, and I feel like a Scottish boy.' First minister Nicola Sturgeon described the brothers as a 'credit' to Scotland, and Jeremy Corbyn urged the Home Office to grant the family leave to remain.

Pray: for the authorities to review their case and allow them to stay permanently. (Psalm 140:4)

More: [www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news\\_and\\_events/news/2019/Joy\\_as\\_teenage\\_asylum\\_seekers\\_win\\_battle\\_against\\_deportation](http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news_and_events/news/2019/Joy_as_teenage_asylum_seekers_win_battle_against_deportation)

### Homeless children in shipping containers

More than 210,000 children are estimated to be homeless. The Children's Commissioner for England says that, as well as the 124,000 children officially classed as homeless, a further 90,000 are estimated to be 'sofa-surfing'. Her report tells of families housed in repurposed shipping containers and office blocks, and whole families living in tiny spaces. Councils blamed a £159m funding gap. The report, entitled Bleak Houses, found office-block conversions in Harlow in which over 1,000 whole families live in single rooms barely bigger than a parking space, and shipping containers which are blisteringly hot in summer and freezing in the winter months being used in Bristol, Cardiff and London. The report warns that a further 375,000 children in England are in households that have fallen behind on rent or mortgage payments. This means that thousands more are at financial risk of becoming homeless in the future.

Pray: for the Government to find or build appropriate accommodation for the homeless. (Leviticus 25:35)

More: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-49412835](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-49412835)

### Farming: five facts

1) The fatal accident rate (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-49421235>) on farms is higher than any other sector. 2) Theft from British farmers hit a seven-year high of £50m in 2018, with a 26% rise in stolen farm vehicles and a 3.7% rise in animal theft. 3) As a result of the crimes, farmers are reporting increased levels of anxiety and isolation. 4) Farmers fear they could go out of business following the post-

Brexit trade deal with the USA that is being publicised as a way to boost the UK economy. They need reassurance that their high standards will not drop to compete with US chlorinated chicken, gamma radiation to eliminate microorganisms, and genetically modified crops. 5) Suicide rates in farming are reported to be among the highest of any occupational group, with more than one farmer a week in the UK taking their own life. See also <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-49209710>

Pray: for practical and pastoral support for farmers facing personal and financial challenges. (Galatians 6:2)

More: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-49418461?intlink\\_from\\_url=https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/topics/cjn0p6j54lzt/nfu&link\\_location=live-reporting-story](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-49418461?intlink_from_url=https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/topics/cjn0p6j54lzt/nfu&link_location=live-reporting-story)

### **Saving lives against all odds**

Jennie Powell was 22 weeks pregnant when she went into labour while on holiday. She was taken to a specialist neonatal unit 190 miles away. Despite being given tiny chances of survival, Ruben and Jenson Powell were born, and cared for extensively, and are alive today - a wonderful example of protecting the most vulnerable in our society. The inspiring story demonstrates the humanity of very young children - before they even have meaningful protection in law - at least within England and Wales. Last year, thousands of children were aborted after 20 weeks of pregnancy in England and Wales alone. Nearly 1 in 4 pregnancies ended in abortion (excluding miscarriages and stillbirths). All these children didn't get a chance. Pro-life advocacy has fought against the culture of abortion for over 50 years in the UK, and now the culture of death could spread to Northern Ireland.

Pray: for Godly pregnancy counselling, and for more people to become foster and adoption parents. (Exodus 20:13)

More: [mailchi.mp/christianconcern/christian-weekly-news-599028?e=354f1ab5aa](mailto:mailchi.mp/christianconcern/christian-weekly-news-599028?e=354f1ab5aa)

## **Europe**

### **France: G7 summit (24-26 August)**

The 2019 G7 summit in Biarritz will focus on fighting inequality. The following five objectives will be discussed, and we can pray that they will be acted on: a) inequality of opportunity, promoting in particular gender equality, access to education, and high quality health services; b) reducing environmental inequality by protecting our planet through climate finance and a fair ecological transition, preserving biodiversity and the oceans; c) strengthening social dimensions of globalisation through more equitable trade, tax and development policies; d) action for peace against security threats and terrorism; e) tapping into the opportunities created by digital technology and artificial intelligence. Pray for all those participating in the summit: may God rule and reign in every discussion and decision made. See also the article on African wildlife and timber in the world section.

Pray: for every item on the agenda to have a clear conclusion after far-sighted examination. (Psalm 33:12)

More: [sdg.iisd.org/events/g7-leaders-summit-2019/](https://sdg.iisd.org/events/g7-leaders-summit-2019/)

### **Switzerland: UN summit on extinction threats**

Amid growing alarm over accelerating extinctions, a major two-week international conference opened in Geneva on 17 August. 183 member states aim to tighten rules on trade in elephant ivory and other endangered animal and plant species. One million species are now at risk of extinction due to human activities. One of the 56 proposals on the agenda aims to prevent traffickers from passing off illegal elephant ivory as coming from mammoths, by listing the long-extinct mammals as a threatened species and thus subject to regulated trade. White rhinos, the American crocodile, and a range of shark and ray species are also on the agenda, as is the giraffe. The future of biodiversity is at stake, and we have a unique opportunity to change its course. WWF reported that Earth's animal population has plummeted 60% in 44 years.

Pray: for the conference to agree on proposals which will end the decline of species through poaching and illegal wildlife trade. (Daniel 2:21)

More: [www.france24.com/en/20190817-un-cites-summit-geneva-threat-mass-extinction-wildlife](https://www.france24.com/en/20190817-un-cites-summit-geneva-threat-mass-extinction-wildlife)

## **Worldwide**

### **Global Church: confess and pray**

A third of the world call themselves 'Christians', but many are missing from our churches; others are present, but don't have the joy of knowing and following Christ. Something has to change! Mission to nominal Christians is missing from the global church agenda. We need to confess and pray: 'Father, we confess that we have overlooked nominal Christians in society and in our churches. We confess faltering witness, defective discipleship, and lack of concern for those who bear the name of Christ but through ignorance, sin, or rejection are far from the way of Christ and his church. We are quick to judge and slow to listen - especially when they come from a different church tradition. We ask you, Father, to touch the lives of nominal Christians with your powerful Holy Spirit so that they will come to a saving faith in Christ.'

Pray: for a spiritual awakening of nominal Christians, a strengthening of the weary and struggling, and a renewal of our commitment to disciple all those who bear the Name. (1 John 5:4)

More: [www.lausanne.org/content/statement/missing-christians-global-call](https://www.lausanne.org/content/statement/missing-christians-global-call)

### **Mexico: pastor killed during church service**

Pastor Cruz Canseco was in the pulpit of his church when he was shot at point-blank range. His attacker was prevented from escaping, and was subsequently handed over to the authorities. The pastor died on the way to hospital. His murder follows a series of attacks targeting religious leaders, including the kidnapping of Pastor Méndez Ruiz, who had prevented Cuban migrants from being abducted from a shelter on 3 August. The expansion of violent criminal groups and the pervading climate of impunity surrounding such crimes has led to increased violence against religious leaders. Criminals view church leaders as a threat to their power, so they are threatened, kidnapped and killed. Lack of proper investigation means perpetrators are not brought to justice. Pray for the family and congregation of Pastor Cruz Canseco and for the wellbeing and return of Pastor Ruiz <https://www.christiantoday.com/world/mexican-priest-kidnapped-while-saving-cuban-migrants-from-abduction/133036.htm>.

Pray: for the government to support religious leaders who are under threat. (Psalm 91:1-4)

More: [www.csw.org.uk/2019/08/19/press/4432/article.htm](http://www.csw.org.uk/2019/08/19/press/4432/article.htm)

### Pray for justice

Violence is an everyday threat to the poor. It is as much a part of daily life as hunger, homelessness or disease. Established laws are rarely enforced in the developing world - so criminals continue to rape, enslave, traffick, and abuse the poor without fear. Children and young women are forced into the sex industry, generating billions for those who exploit them. Millions of children and families are held as slaves in abusive and often violent conditions. Globally, 1 in 5 women is a victim of rape or attempted rape, and the poor are most vulnerable. Vulnerable widows and orphans are chased from their homes, leaving them destitute. Corrupt police officers extort bribes from the poor and throw the innocent in jail. Minority families are denied legal rights, leaving them open to trafficking and abuse. Pray for justice in all these situations.

Pray: for God to empower police, social workers, and churches who rescue victims. (Psalm 82:3-4)

More: [www.ijm.org/sites/default/files/factsheets/IJM\\_Factsheet\\_General.pdf](http://www.ijm.org/sites/default/files/factsheets/IJM_Factsheet_General.pdf)

### India: four million stateless people?

On 31 August four million Indians could become stateless. In Bangladesh's war of independence from Pakistan fifty years ago, millions of Bengali Muslims fled to Hindu Assam, giving it the second largest Muslim population of any Indian state after Kashmir. Last year, the Assam government published a national registry of citizens, listing everyone who is legally resident. Four million Muslim people who have lived there for decades were not on the list. Unless they can prove a pre-1971 claim to residence, they will be deemed illegal. Bangladesh will not accept the deportation of millions of people who have lived in India since the 70s. Many of these people were born inside India after 1971. Should they be 'returned' to a country they have never known? The Assam authorities are building detention camps which could constitute a horrific human rights violation.

Pray: that this Hindu discrimination against Muslims will not proceed. (Galatians 5:14)

More: [us12.campaign-archive.com/?e=2b376728db&u=7404e6dc8018f49c82e941d&id=83b6d08b39](https://us12.campaign-archive.com/?e=2b376728db&u=7404e6dc8018f49c82e941d&id=83b6d08b39)

### Nepal: praying for Hindu people

84% of Nepal's people are Hindus, striving to attain freedom for their souls by good works. 90% remain untouched by the Gospel. Hinduism is not just a religion for these millions, it is their culture - their way of life. Christianity is seen as foreign and as a threat to their culture. Those who choose to follow Jesus often pay a high price, yet the Church is growing. Though it is a small portion of the population, there are now believers in nearly all peoples and castes, but the tragic reality remains that over 25 million Nepalese have never yet heard of Jesus, the only one who can bring true freedom. Please pray for him to be made known among unreached peoples in hard-to-access locations; for biblical training and Christlikeness for a rising generation of church leaders; and for the help they need to win the daily poverty battle.

Pray: for the Living God to free the Nepalese from false religion and idols. (John 8:32)

More: [www.prayercast.com/nepal.html](http://www.prayercast.com/nepal.html)

### Africa: protecting wildlife and timber

Ending the illegal timber trade in Africa should be the first order of business at the G7 summit (see the article in Europe section). There is no wildlife sustainability when timber traffickers and their powerful backers get away with their crimes. Gambia, Madagascar and Senegal all have new governments, who must take steps against impunity for illegal timber trading. Before any new trade proposals can move forward, these countries must start holding perpetrators of past crimes to account. In the Gambia, US\$325 million worth of illegal timber went through its ports from 2010 to 2016. Its former president took advantage of poverty and instability at the border to gain control of the illegal rosewood trade from neighbouring Senegal.

Pray: for the UN to address corrupt governments and illegal raping of the landscape. (Romans 8:21)

More: [www.transparency.org/news/feature/cites\\_cop18\\_ending\\_impunity\\_for\\_illegal\\_timber\\_trade\\_in\\_africa](http://www.transparency.org/news/feature/cites_cop18_ending_impunity_for_illegal_timber_trade_in_africa)

### USA: Hollywood Christians

Hollywood might seem like a spiritual wasteland, but faith is not absent from Tinseltown. Two-time Oscar winner Denzel Washington lends his voice to 'The Bible Experience,' an audio Bible featuring top African-American stars. Tyler Perry, Hollywood's current golden boy writer and actor, is against filmmakers who keep their faith 'in the closet'. Patricia Heaton, a winner of two Emmys, is not shy about making her faith or her opinions heard, including advocating on behalf of an anti-abortion group. Mel Gibson's film 'Passion of the Christ' changed Hollywood attitudes, waking up producers to the box-office potential of Christian audiences. Multibillionaire oilman Philip Anschutz bankrolls some of the most critically-acclaimed and financially successful Christian ethos films of recent years, including 'Ray' and 'The Chronicles of Narnia'.

Pray: for all believers shining a Christian light on and in the media and film industry. (Isaiah 52:7)

More: [www.beliefnet.com/faiths/christianity/2008/09/the-12-most-powerful-christians-in-hollywood.aspx](http://www.beliefnet.com/faiths/christianity/2008/09/the-12-most-powerful-christians-in-hollywood.aspx)

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