

# Prayer Alert

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You Lord, are a shield around me, my glory, the One who lifts my head high. I call out to the Lord, and He answers me from His holy mountain. (Psalm 3:3,4)

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

### God at work in Afghanistan

Christian workers report several encouraging developments in the demanding Afghanistan mission field. Seven new believers recently formed a house church after being baptised, translators are working on three new Bible projects for minority languages, and followers of Christ are now present in every one of the country's 34 provinces. As we celebrate God at work in Afghanistan, we are also asked to pray for the future success of various media projects such as films, radio, satellite TV, and social media outreach, so that every one of the currently unreached people groups is touched by the Holy Spirit.

Praise: God for the gospel growth, may there be more labourers in the rich harvest fields. (Matthew 24:14)

More: [www.icommittoprayer.com/request/1916/afghan-christians/](http://www.icommittoprayer.com/request/1916/afghan-christians/)

### Soul Survivor: new season

2019's Soul Survivor saw 2,100 become Christians. But now, after 27 years, organisers said God was calling them to 'hand over the baton'. Over 30,000 attended this year's events in Peterborough, Stafford, and Kinross. Founder Mike Pilavachi said that God has spoken to them and they were looking forward to the future. They have seen people walk out of their wheelchairs. One had not walked for five years, one for ten years. People have been set free from addictions. 'Stuff happens when you give the Holy Spirit space.' While the summer festivals end, Soul Survivor will continue to operate as a church in Watford and run events to equip church leaders across the country. Leaders are encouraging young people to attend four alternative events, similar in style, next year.

Praise: God for the many ways that He leads people into His presence. (Psalm 16:11)

More: [www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/2-100-new-Christians-this-summer-as-Soul-Survivor-comes-to-an-end](http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/2-100-new-Christians-this-summer-as-Soul-Survivor-comes-to-an-end)

## British Isles

### Praying for Parliament

The Queen will suspend Parliament in September and open a new parliamentary session on 14 October, when Boris Johnson will set out his agenda. This prorogation leaves less time for MPs to pass any new Brexit laws; the Speaker, John Bercow, called the move an outrage. There are many conflicting opinions about this move. We can pray and declare that the voices carrying godly wisdom will be heard above every other voice. May the public recognise in the melee of opinions what is true and just, discerning when a decision made on behalf of the nation is upright, wise and based on facts (see Proverbs 8:7-9). Father, may the United Kingdom be a crown of splendour in Your hand, no longer isolated from Your purposes, but united with Your Kingdom plans directing all You have called, gifted and prepared for such a time as this.

Pray: for God to bring about a turnaround so that unity replaces disunity. (Ephesians 4:1-3)  
More: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-49493632>

### Bishops' open letter on Brexit

Twenty-five CofE bishops have issued an open letter on the prospect of a 'no-deal' Brexit and the need for national reconciliation, notwithstanding the prorogation of Parliament. They are concerned about political polarisation and the use of language that appears to sanction hate crime, and the ease with which lies can be told and misrepresentation encouraged. Leaders must be honest about the costs of political choices, especially for those most vulnerable. The Irish border is not a mere political totem, and peace in Ireland is not a ball to be kicked into touch by the English: respect for the concerns on both sides of the border is essential. The levels of fear, uncertainty and marginalisation in society among poor people, EU citizens in the UK, and UK citizens in Europe must be listened to and respected. For the full text of the letter, click the 'More' button.

Pray: for the sovereignty of Parliament to be based on honour and respect. (Proverbs 3:35)  
More: [www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/news/bishops-issue-open-letter-brexit](http://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/news/bishops-issue-open-letter-brexit)

### Christian witness in politics

With Boris Johnson becoming prime minister, the likelihood of an election this autumn has increased. If this happens, many believe that more Christians should engage in politics and consider how their faith influences the way they vote. Although Christians in good conscience will support a variety of different options, how should they re-assess these options ahead of an election? We are called to be salt and light in our world - salt both to preserve what is good and to add flavour and distinctiveness, light to shine in a world that is too often too dark for goodness to be seen. Regardless of the context, this command holds firm. The more challenging the context, the more important is Christian witness. This does not disregard the problems Christians in politics are likely to face, but focuses on what they can bring. In the weeks ahead, may one person's salt as seasoning not be another's salt in the wound.

Pray: for Christians to work and witness for the good of the place where God has put them and Christian values be sovereign in political perspectives. (Jeremiah 29:7)  
More: [www.eauk.org/news-and-views/christian-witness-in-this-political-moment](http://www.eauk.org/news-and-views/christian-witness-in-this-political-moment)

### Gospel issues facing society

Jesus' command to 'make disciples of all nations' means bringing individuals to him and putting Christ at the heart of society. If Jesus Christ is Lord of Lords and King of Kings, then this must have implications for all areas of society - from the way our nations are governed to what laws are made; from what cultural traditions we follow to what we speak of in the media. When the gospel is upheld in these areas, we truly can make disciples of a nation, because society is better able to observe all that he taught us, which has the power to transform lives. This means being unashamed to speak of Jesus in public life, putting Christ back into law, media and politics, and placing the gospel at the centre of the big issues of the day. Click the 'More' button for details of two forthcoming seminars on these issues.

Pray: for bold declarations of Biblical truths to be freely shared without being persecuted. (John 8:32)  
More: [mailchi.mp/christianconcern/christian-weekly-news-599047?e=354f1ab5aa](mailto:mailchi.mp/christianconcern/christian-weekly-news-599047?e=354f1ab5aa)

### Northern Ireland: exploring conflict and peace

Northern Ireland's cold war is smouldering. Everything is political - your name, where you live, the pub you use, your accent, the football team you support, or the passport you hold. Politics are rigid and archaic, deeply rooted in the past, yet continuing to dominate the present; running deep, rooted in divisions prevalent long before the signing of the peace agreement. Brexit and a political vacuum have added a dynamic across the region that is far from peaceful. Although Northern Ireland is no longer at war, peace cannot be defined by the reduction of armed conflict. Much more is needed for peace to take hold fully. For years, in communities across the land, people have used a gentle, intricate negotiation of difference on a daily basis, using language, humour, silence - or whatever is needed to navigate challenging situations. [See https://sluggerotoole.com/2019/08/25/is-northern-ireland-spiralling-out-of-control/](https://sluggerotoole.com/2019/08/25/is-northern-ireland-spiralling-out-of-control/)

Pray: for God to heal bitter roots that violate the peace agreement and enable people to turn their lives around for good. (Isaiah 26:3)  
More: [www.tni.org/en/article/left-behind-by-northern-irelands-neoliberal-peace](http://www.tni.org/en/article/left-behind-by-northern-irelands-neoliberal-peace)

### Scotland: exploring conflict and faith

This year marks the tenth anniversary of Place for Hope, a Scottish charity responding to the need for mediators within faith groups and congregations in Scotland. In October they are hosting a three-day event, 'Gathering in Glasgow on Conflict and Faith', to explore the nature of conflict faced by churches and faith communities, and ways of working together in conflict transformation. The event, aiming to respond to the hunger for reconciliation and peace in churches and communities, will give delegates the opportunity to network while developing the art of conflict transformation, reconciliation, and peacebuilding across faith communities. Victoria Mason, part of the Archbishop of Canterbury's reconciliation team, will lead one of the workshops. 'Knowing how to transform conflict is crucial for following Jesus in a world that is ever more complex and divided,' she said.

Pray: for every person who is meant to attend to be there, and for powerful networking that will lead to even more growth of a united body of believers. (Psalm 133:1)  
More: [www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news\\_and\\_events/news/2019/gathering\\_in\\_glasgow\\_set\\_to\\_explore\\_conflict\\_and\\_faith](http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news_and_events/news/2019/gathering_in_glasgow_set_to_explore_conflict_and_faith)

### Building relationships

Most British schools reopen on 2 September. During the holidays, three million children were at risk of hunger. One in five children faced food insecurity, one of the highest rates in Europe, because they were no longer receiving a daily school meal. Because of

this, a variety of organisations and churches dotted across the nation have been providing free activities and hot and healthy meals to children and families who would otherwise have gone hungry. They have also been supporting and building relationships with the most vulnerable in our communities. Pray for these relationships to continue to grow after the 'hunger clubs' close down. Pray for the church volunteers who now have contact with some of the hidden ones in their communities to continue to give families the loving support that a compassionate church can give. Also, 37% of teachers spot malnutrition when children return to school after the holidays. Please pray for sensitive relationships to be built between families in poverty, teachers, social workers, councils, and other agencies able to support the vulnerable. See <https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/policy-and-lobbying/child-poverty>

Pray: for God to empower churches as they engage with the most disadvantaged, hardest-to-reach families. (1 Samuel 2:8)  
More: [www.tlg.org.uk/your-church/make-lunch](http://www.tlg.org.uk/your-church/make-lunch)

## Europe

### EU leaders and UK prorogation

Angela Merkel and Emmanuel Macron sounded semi-enthusiastic last week when Boris Johnson spoke about getting an agreement, even if they were sceptical that there is a different deal to be agreed. This week, they are resisting commenting on the UK suspension of Parliament. It would be difficult for them to get involved. One senior EU official said they do not want to give the impression there is a nicer withdrawal agreement in a drawer somewhere to be pulled out if the UK government's opponents could be vanquished. A French MEP, a close ally of Macron, said, 'We could see Brexit coming without agreement. Now it's a Brexit without debate that looms.' In Brussels, EU officials have vowed not to allow Mr Johnson's latest manoeuvre to cause the bloc to be blamed for a no-deal Brexit. See also <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-49494930>

Pray: for God to lead all European politicians into His way of thinking and behaving. (Psalm 119:64)  
More: [www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1170963/Brexit-news-UK-EU-Boris-Johnson-no-deal-latest-update](http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1170963/Brexit-news-UK-EU-Boris-Johnson-no-deal-latest-update)

### Italy: another volcano eruption

A volcano on the tiny Italian island of Stromboli, off the coast of Sicily, has erupted for the second time in two months, forcing tourists to flee from this popular tourist spot. On 28 August a 'high intensity' explosion erupted, spewing huge clouds of black smoke and ash high into the sky. Streams of lava were seen rolling down the hills into the sea, forcing tourists to flee. Videos posted online show visitors in small boats desperately racing out to sea to avoid clouds of hot ash, which tore down the slopes of the volcano and into the waters surrounding the island. No injuries or damage have so far been reported, although the lava flows did start several small fires, forcing the authorities to send helicopters to dump water on the conflagrations. Stromboli is a continuously active volcano, but the recent eruptions are much larger than usual.

Pray: for the situation to continue to be kept under control by the civil protection authorities. (Psalm 34:7)  
More: [www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/stromboli-volcano-eruption-italy-island-tourist-a9083161.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/stromboli-volcano-eruption-italy-island-tourist-a9083161.html)

## Worldwide

### Hong Kong: democracy cry and Beijing's threat

In 1989, the longest human chain in history (675 kilometres) was formed from north Estonia across Latvia to south Lithuania, as a moral protest against the illegal occupation of those lands by the Soviet Union. Thirty years later, thousands of protesters formed an unauthorised but peaceful human chain across Hong Kong in a movement against the erosion of liberties under Chinese rule. On 29 August, at 3 am, Hong Kong became alarmed as Chinese troops, armoured personnel carriers and trucks poured into the city in what Beijing called 'routine' troop rotation. China has made it clear recently that it considers a military intervention in the crisis a viable option, despite US warnings that this might lead to a repeat of the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre. On 30 August, three prominent protesters were arrested. See <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/hong-kong-chinese-troops-border-protests-china-beijing-latest-a9083631.html>

Pray: for the extradition bill's death, and for an end to the erosion of autonomy promised to Hong Kong in 1997. (Exodus 23:6)  
More: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=3zdiGJD-BiQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3zdiGJD-BiQ)

### Uganda: Christian persecution

Charity struggled with depression after her husband became a Muslim, abandoned her, and threatened to take their three children. 'I just couldn't let my children become Muslims, but I trusted the Lord to help us through this challenge', she said. Her prayers were answered when a mission worker gave her persecution-response support. Charity's children are now in school, and her financial burden is lightened. She asks us to pray that her husband will return to the Lord. Pray also for Sharifa, a Christian who was forced to flee home because she converted from Islam. 20-year-old Asuman needs your prayers. He was beaten and disowned by his family for becoming a Christian. In East Uganda a Christian primary school in the predominately Muslim Kabuna village was demolished because it educates Christian children who converted from Islam and whose parents remain Muslim. Christians across Uganda are experiencing death threats and chaos (<https://www.icommittoprayer.com/request/1915/charity/>).

Pray: for God to protect and support Christians living in Muslim areas. (Isaiah 41:10)  
More: [www.persecution.org/category/countries/africa/uganda/](http://www.persecution.org/category/countries/africa/uganda/)

### Iraq: who is behind attacks?

Recently there have been four attacks on weapons storage facilities belonging to Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) militia. Some factions of the PMU are believed to be Iran proxies, which might explain why there have been accusations of possible US and Israeli involvement. The latest attack took place even though prime minister Mahdi had closed Iraqi airspace to all

unauthorised flights of drones, spy planes, jets and helicopters; including the US-led coalition. With Israel being suspected of organising these attacks, some claim that the United States and Russia have allowed them to do so. Iraq's president said his country does not want to become a battleground for other countries at the expense of its people. 'Iraq's interest comes first, and the nation will not allow others to turn it into a land for competition.'

Pray: for open dialogue to replace spying and bombing between militia backed by USA/Israel and by Russia/Iran. (Psalm 83:1,2,13,16)

More: [linkst.al-monitor.com/view/59e67fa33f92a41ffc31ca3amuof.6bd/f4b9fb2e](http://linkst.al-monitor.com/view/59e67fa33f92a41ffc31ca3amuof.6bd/f4b9fb2e)

### **Lebanon: escalation of tensions**

Lebanon opened fire on Israeli surveillance drones on 28 August, heightening the conflict between the warring neighbours. Lebanon does not usually attempt to down Israel's unmanned surveillance planes, but its Hizbollah military wing said it was preparing a 'calculated strike' against Israel, in retaliation for an Israeli raid on its position near Damascus and a drone attack in Beirut on its Iranian missile-making equipment. Sources believe Lebanon will target Israeli soldiers on patrol near the border. Israeli media reported that Israel had targeted and destroyed machinery used for the production of precision-guided missiles. It is trying to disrupt the flow of weapons and technology from Iran to its proxies in Syria and Lebanon. In response to constant rocket attacks, Israel has carried out hundreds of strikes against Hizbollah and Iranian positions in Syria, so far with little response. Lebanon's president is increasingly influenced by Hizbollah, which is also represented in the country's parliament.

Pray: for these latest flare-ups to stop short of an all-out conflict. (1 Peter 3:11)

More: [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/08/28/hizbollah-threatens-calculated-strike-against-israel-attacks/](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/08/28/hizbollah-threatens-calculated-strike-against-israel-attacks/)

### **Israel: project unites settlers and Druze**

Emil Masud is an Arab Druze farmer who identifies as 'for ever Syrian', and Ofer Megged is a physics professor settler in the contested Golan Heights. The unlikely partners are working together to save the environment against Enrgix, an energy company which wants to erect dozens of turbines, some 64 storeys high, on cherry and apple orchards owned by the Druze. They promised jobs and financial incentives and about 40 Druze landowners agreed. Then news emerged of infrasound waves from the turbines that cause headaches, nausea and dizzy spells. The fertility of farmers' bountiful agricultural lands was also at risk. 'Our lands will be destroyed,' Masud said. 'We cannot allow this disaster to happen. Druze, Jews, there is no difference. We have joined hands against a common enemy to stop it.' Many farmers who signed contracts with Enrgix have reneged, so Enrgix is preparing to file lawsuits.

Pray: for health hazard truths, justice in law courts, and continued peace in the land. (Proverbs 3:9,10)

More: [www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2019/08/israel-wind-farm-project-unite-jewish-settlers-druze-golan.html](http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2019/08/israel-wind-farm-project-unite-jewish-settlers-druze-golan.html)

### **USA: military suicides highest ever**

US military suicide deaths reflect a national trend. The national suicide rate has increased by 33% since 1999, and suicide is the second leading cause of death among people 10 to 34 years old. 325 active-duty members died by suicide in 2018, the highest number since collecting data began in 2001. The defence department said suicide rates among the military population are 'devastating, unacceptable and not going in the desired direction'. Every life lost has a deeply personal story that shatters the lives of families. The defence and veterans affairs departments are working to reduce suicide in the ranks and among veterans, who die at an average rate of twenty a day. Between January and March 2019, ninety active duty service members committed suicide - 30 soldiers, 20 sailors, 26 airmen, and 14 marines.

Pray: for God to prompt the military authorities when there is a need to recognise internal crisis situations. (Psalm 72:12)

More: [www.military.com/daily-news/2019/08/01/pentagon-reports-record-number-suicides.html](http://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/08/01/pentagon-reports-record-number-suicides.html)

### **USA: Labour Day hurricane warning**

On 29 August Florida residents were being told they should 'prepare now', especially in areas along the east coast, for a growing storm currently moving in their direction. The media said they should have a plan of action, a hurricane kit ready, and 'stay tuned for updates' as this forecast comes further into focus. A strengthening Hurricane Dorian is a growing threat to Florida's Labour Day weekend. As it barrelled through the Virgin Islands and scraped eastern Puerto Rico, Dorian intensified from a tropical storm to a hurricane, with even more strengthening being predicted. Dorian is now forecast to approach the Florida coast as at least a Category 3 hurricane, with 115 to 130 mph winds and 8 to 12 inches of rain.

Pray: for residents and holidaymakers to take warnings seriously, particularly those planning to visit Disneyland. (Proverbs 12:15)

More: [www.washingtonpost.com/weather/2019/08/28/tropical-storm-dorian-intensifies-it-nears-puerto-rico-is-increasing-threat-southeast-us/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/weather/2019/08/28/tropical-storm-dorian-intensifies-it-nears-puerto-rico-is-increasing-threat-southeast-us/)

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