

# Prayer Alert

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'I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.' (John 16:33)

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

## Praise Reports

### Hope Youth

Worship killed cancer

### British Isles

Parliamentary conflict  
Christians comment on Supreme Court's ruling  
Advocate for children at police stations  
Government urged to ban pointed domestic knives  
Northern Ireland: abortion liberalisation  
New Methodist evangelism resources  
'The choir saved my life'

## Europe

France: protests continue

Italy: glacier near collapse

## Worldwide

Algeria: churches under pressure  
Saudi Arabia / Iran: tensions  
USA: UN general assembly  
India: Christians threatened for distributing tracts  
Latin America / Caribbean: corruption  
Iraq: the last church standing  
Chad: 30 killed in landslide

## Praise Reports

### Hope Youth

Hope Youth (formally Hope Revolution), the youth arm of Hope Together, seeks to engage young people from across the church in mission and evangelism. Hope Youth has numerous partners including but not limited to the Church of England, Alpha, Limitless, Youth for Christ, Scripture Union, Message Trust and the Pais Movement. Collectively this group has facilitated the creation of various initiatives and resources including Mission Academy, Mission Academy Live, and Amplify, part of Advance 2020, an evangelistic movement to promote and stir up the gift of the evangelist building towards a cross-country outreach in 2020. Alongside this they are praying and planning together for what an intentional, strategic, and spirit-filled year of mission will look like in the UK in 2020, taking the gospel to the nation on an unprecedented scale. See <https://advance2020.org/>

Praise: God for the energy and power flowing through 11- to 17-year-old Christians; may their vision be fulfilled. (Habakkuk 2:2)  
More: [hopetogether.org.uk/Group/Group.aspx?ID=324639](http://hopetogether.org.uk/Group/Group.aspx?ID=324639)

### Worship killed cancer

Evelyn had an MRI scan and was told that she had an inoperable, benign tumour on her brain. While she went through five rounds of radiation, her husband was dying and she needed to take care of him. 'God, where are You through all of this?' she cried. She recruited a prayer group to support her. After six months, the tumour had grown and engulfed the optic nerve. She might go blind. Instead of flagging in faith, Evelyn experienced a surge of faith. She believed God wanted her to stop asking for healing and start praising Him for healing. Evelyn requested her prayer group and family members to do likewise. They reluctantly followed orders. Nine months after her initial diagnosis, the doctor said the tumour was dead. The tumour dissolved, and her husband lived long enough to know that she was well, so she is grateful for that.

Praise: God that Evelyn is able to say, 'All things are possible if you could believe.' (Psalm 106:12)  
More: [godreports.com/2019/09/brain-tumor-almost-took-out-eye-but-prayer-changed-things/](http://godreports.com/2019/09/brain-tumor-almost-took-out-eye-but-prayer-changed-things/)

## British Isles

### Parliamentary conflict

After the Supreme Court had decided that the proroguing of Parliament was illegal, MPs returned to the Commons on 25 September for an evening of inflamed rhetoric with debate resorting to a session of offensive, dangerous language. The BBC reported, 'We are seeing the raw conflict that had to play out, the fight Theresa May delayed but couldn't make disappear. Politics moves so fast, it's impossible to tell if the cries of horror in SW1 will fade to nothing, or how far they have reached beyond Westminster's bubble. The situation is ever-shifting and could transform within days. It is almost impossible to imagine this group of politicians being able to agree on much.' Let us pray according to Proverbs 15 for gentle answers to turn away wrath, for God to adorn MP's tongues with wisdom, and knowledge and for the eyes of the Lord to reach every corner of parliament, prompting calm

considerations and restraint. May the Houses of Parliament produce great treasures of domestic debate, spoken by wise lips and spreading knowledge.

Pray: for politicians to hear God's whispers of wisdom and share the wise counsel from heaven on the front benches. (Proverbs 15:22,23)

More: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-49834726](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-49834726)

### Christians comment on Supreme Court's ruling

Christian evangelist David Robertson tweeted, 'Having read the judgement, it seems to me that the court was right - although the motives of those who brought the case were more to do with stopping Brexit than asserting the sovereignty of the House of Commons - which of course they want to give away.' Christian blogger Archbishop Cranmer said, 'If the prorogation was "void and of no effect", then the Queen's Order was "void and of no effect", and so the Crown has become subject to the judgments of the Supreme Court. Her Majesty's constitutional powers to advise and warn her Prime Minister, or even "in extremis" to refuse his or her advice, are now subject to the judgments of the Supreme Court. If the Queen wills it, the Supreme Court can un-will it. This is a seismic constitutional shift in the United Kingdom, if not an inglorious revolution.' Sir Gary Streeter MP, chair of Christians in Parliament, said it was time for a general election.

Pray: for God to weave His threads through debates and decisions to establish His purposes. (Psalm 9:8)

More: [www.christiantoday.com/news/supreme-courts-ruling-on-shutdown-is-not-surprising-says-church-leader/133290.htm](http://www.christiantoday.com/news/supreme-courts-ruling-on-shutdown-is-not-surprising-says-church-leader/133290.htm)

### Advocate for children at police stations

Looked-after children, particularly those living in residential care, are disproportionately criminalised, compared to others. They are less likely to receive support from family or a trusted adult at police stations, and they should be entitled to additional protections set out in law, policy and guidance. A guide has been produced to help lawyers advocate effectively for looked-after children in custody. It offers guidance on practical steps that lawyers should take to ensure that they receive the support and assistance they need and are entitled to. There is a growing number of children coming into care, and lawyers need to know the factors that can contribute to their criminalisation. The Howard League for Penal Reform said, 'The over-representation of looked-after children in the criminal justice system is a disgrace that has been known about for years.' Pray for all children to have their care needs met in the community and in custody.

Pray: for the police as they learn to give vulnerable children the support they need, as they work with other agencies and seek to reduce the number of child prisoners. (Psalm 45:4)

More: [www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/28897](http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/28897)

### Government urged to ban pointed domestic knives

A five-year study in Edinburgh found that 94% of sharp instruments used in homicides were kitchen knives. Criminologists, MPs, and religious leaders published an open letter advising the Government to promote safe kitchen knife designs and restrict designs which are used in so many violent acts. They said, 'The UK has worked for the public good by restricting handguns, paracetamol, smoking in public, and plastic bags - now it is time to say "no bloody point".' The Bishop of Tonbridge said that there was never one victim of knife crime: 'Knife crime rips up the lives of families and friends, piercing the networks that give us life, meaning and support. Knife crime can be reduced if we follow the evidence trail, devote our resources to the right places, share knowledge smartly and value the organising power of local communities. The Church has a role to play, for it is located in most, if not all, places.'

Pray: for the Government to act on the advice given by these experts. (Proverbs 11:14)

More: [www.kentonline.co.uk/medway/news/government-urged-to-ban-pointed-kitchen-knives-212712/](http://www.kentonline.co.uk/medway/news/government-urged-to-ban-pointed-kitchen-knives-212712/)

### Northern Ireland: abortion liberalisation

800+ health professionals have written to the secretary of state opposing the Northern Ireland liberalisation of abortion laws. Doctors, nurses, and midwives say their consciences will not allow them to stay silent. They want reassurance as 'conscientious objectors' that they will not have to perform or assist abortions. Abortion restrictions will be drastically reduced unless the Stormont assembly is restored by 21 October. In July MPs passed the Executive Formation Act, placing a duty on the government to provide access to abortion in Northern Ireland. Those who signed the letter said their concern was for pregnant mothers and their unborn children. As Christians, it is their firmly held belief that abortion is the 'unjust and violent taking of human life'. There are two strands to this argument: the unborn child is a human being with value and worth, and women in crisis pregnancies need compassionate care.

Pray: for Northern Ireland to continue to have the best and most protected care for women and unborn children. (Psalm 64:1)

More: [www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/hundreds-of-northern-ireland-healthcare-workers-write-to-julian-smith-opposing-abortion-liberalisation-38536579.html](http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/hundreds-of-northern-ireland-healthcare-workers-write-to-julian-smith-opposing-abortion-liberalisation-38536579.html)

### New Methodist evangelism resources

The Methodist Church has launched a series of practical resources in a bid to equip churches more effectively for evangelistic ministry. They will focus on four key areas - a new website of online resources and information, starter grants for new outreach projects, a mission-planning guide to encourage church planting and a Church-wide strategy for growth. Trey Hall, the Methodist Church's Director of Evangelism and Growth, said, 'We heard the call to reclaim evangelism as a core dimension of our mission and identity as a Church. These resources are a direct response to the needs and hopes of the many who have engaged with us over the past year.'

Pray: for the resources to build a commitment to evangelism and growth in the church network. (Isaiah 57:14)

More: [www.premierchristianity.com/News/UK/Methodist-Church-announces-new-evangelism-resources](http://www.premierchristianity.com/News/UK/Methodist-Church-announces-new-evangelism-resources)

## **'The choir saved my life'**

When the All Woman Choir was set up in North Staffordshire eight years ago, word spread quickly and numbers grew. Now, with more than 300 members, the choir, which has groups in Stafford and Stoke-on-Trent, gives public performances. But some of the women involved say it is the impact on their personal lives that has been the most transformative. One woman, a victim of domestic violence, said it had saved her life. To see an inspiring video of a project with the people of the city telling the stories that matter to them, click the 'More' button.

Pray: for more community projects that touch lives with healing and restoration. (Psalm 96:1a)

More: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-stoke-staffordshire-49767757](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-stoke-staffordshire-49767757)

## **Europe**

### **France: protests continue**

Protests against President Macron and globalisation, neoliberalism, corruption, labour code reform and high taxes have been happening weekly by the 'yellow vest' movement since 17 November 2018. They have attracted hundreds of thousands of people across France - constructing barricades, lighting fires, breaking windows, and blocking roads in a choreography of street demonstrations amongst fumes of the various gases and car explosions / fires. Black Bloc activists added violence to the yellow-vest protest march, and 120 arrests were made by police. In January 2019 counter-demonstrators emerged, identified by their red scarves, denouncing the rebellious climate and verbal abuse created by yellow vests. Each Saturday there are also anti-Semitic expressions by extreme groups of radical Islamist or anti-Zionist and [on 20 September \(https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/sep/21/paris-on-high-alert-as-protesters-try-to-revive-gilets-jaunes-movement\)](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/sep/21/paris-on-high-alert-as-protesters-try-to-revive-gilets-jaunes-movement) climate change and pension reform caused disruption elsewhere in the French capital.

Pray: for civility to replace hostility and for talks to replace activities. (Psalm 34:14)

More: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yellow\\_vests\\_movement#Reactions\\_and\\_counter-protest](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yellow_vests_movement#Reactions_and_counter-protest)

### **Italy: glacier near collapse**

Italian authorities have closed roads and evacuated mountain huts after experts warned that part of a glacier on Mont Blanc could collapse. About 250,000 cubic metres of ice are in danger of breaking away from the Planpincieux glacier on the Grandes Jorasses peak. The mayor of the town of Courmayeur said global warming was changing the mountain. The Mont Blanc massif, with 11 peaks above 4,000m, is Western Europe's highest mountain range. Experts say it is impossible to predict when the glacier could collapse, as it goes through a period of major change due to climate factors. Earlier this month, dozens of people took part in a 'funeral march' to mark the disappearance of the Pizol glacier in north-east Switzerland. It has shrunk to a tiny fraction of its original size, losing 80% of its volume since 2006. See also 'USA: UN general assembly' in this week's world section.

Pray: for nations to unite and bring God's creation back to its original unspoilt form. (Psalm 65:9)

More: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-49820542](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-49820542)

## **Worldwide**

### **Algeria: churches under pressure**

Christians in Algeria have requested prayer as a campaign to close churches intensifies. Representatives of l'Église Protestante d'Algérie (EPA), the umbrella group of Protestant churches in Algeria, said most EPA-affiliated churches have been challenged to prove they have licences according to a 2006 ordinance regulating non-Muslim worship. However, the government, ignoring applications from churches, is not issuing licences to them under this ordinance, and several churches have received written orders to cease all activities. By the beginning of September at least seven church buildings had been sealed and services are no longer held there. Recently, after gendarmes attempted to close a church in Ighzer, the congregation occupied it, refusing to leave. However, it has now been sealed. Pray for churches and EPA leaders to know the Lord's peace, wisdom, and guidance; and for God to turn circumstances around so that closed churches are soon allowed to re-open.

Pray: for the authorities to end their systematic campaign to limit Christian worship. (Psalm 7:9)

More: [www.meconcern.org/2019/09/03/algeria-campaign-to-close-churches-continues/](http://www.meconcern.org/2019/09/03/algeria-campaign-to-close-churches-continues/)

### **Saudi Arabia / Iran: tensions**

Tensions between powerful Middle East rivals Saudi Arabia and Iran were catapulted to new levels when drones set two Saudi Arabian oil refineries ablaze on 14 September, resulting in halving the Gulf kingdom's oil output and cutting world crude oil supplies by over 5%. Yemen's Houthi rebels claimed responsibility, but the US blamed Iran for the attacks, and will now deploy troops to the region, triggering fears of Saudi retaliation. Any escalation would be dangerous for the entire region. The drone strikes follow a recent pattern: oil tankers, infrastructure and transportation hubs have been attacked, with indications that Iran and its network are responsible. The US 'maximum pressure' policy has not halted Iran's uranium development. President Rouhani said Iran would present a new Gulf peace initiative in the coming days. On 23 September Boris Johnson blamed Iran for attacks on Saudi Arabian oil facilities and declined to rule out military intervention or sanctions: [see https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-49792997](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-49792997)

Pray: for peace and wisdom for all concerned. (Hebrews 12:14)

More: [www.sat7uk.org/the-middle-east-briefing-september-2019/](http://www.sat7uk.org/the-middle-east-briefing-september-2019/)

### **USA: UN general assembly**

Ninety heads of state attended the annual UN general assembly this week. Every September kings, presidents and prime ministers fly to New York City and attend the UN headquarters. The top priority at its 74th General Assembly is the world's climate emergency. Country leaders were told not to speak without 'concrete and transformative plans' to halt rising global temperatures, achieve carbon neutrality and cut carbon emissions by 45%. But VIPs with proposals only had three minutes to speak. Then the

UN will collate speeches and brainstorm into a report. Angela Merkel attended the climate summit, but skipped the rest of the week. Donald Trump skipped the climate summit and attended different sessions. How concrete the summit results will actually be is unclear. Meanwhile an angry [Greta Thunberg](https://edition.cnn.com/2019/09/23/weather/greta-thunberg-unga-climate-speech-intl/index.html) (<https://edition.cnn.com/2019/09/23/weather/greta-thunberg-unga-climate-speech-intl/index.html>) told global leaders, 'We are in the beginning of a mass extinction and all you can talk about is money and fairy tales of eternal economic growth. How dare you?' See

Pray: for nations to respect and care for the land and the seas that God created. (Genesis 1:10)

More: [edition.cnn.com/2019/09/22/world/unga-united-nations-general-assembly-what-happens-intl/index.html](https://edition.cnn.com/2019/09/22/world/unga-united-nations-general-assembly-what-happens-intl/index.html)

### India: Christians threatened for distributing tracts

Leo and Jenifa Johnson were intimidated and threatened in a residential area of Tamil Nadu state where they had distributed Christian tracts to homes. As they were leaving the area they were stopped by a man affiliated to the far-right nationalist group, Hindu Munani. He called two other men and they threatened the couple, accusing them of compelling people in the neighbourhood to convert. Leo said, 'We did not tell people about Jesus. All we did was distribute tracts to homes. No one was forced to take the literature.' Despite this explanation, the attackers threatened them and demanded they apply holy ash from a local temple on their foreheads. Leo said, 'Jenifa was terrified and started crying. This should not have happened to us. India is supposed to be a free country where we can practise our faith.' They were told that if they returned to the area, they would be violently attacked.

Pray: for the authorities to prevent further religious persecution by extremists who have no respect for the rights of freedom of religion by fellow citizens. (Proverbs 13:13)

More: [www.csw.org.uk/2019/09/19/press/4445/article.htm](http://www.csw.org.uk/2019/09/19/press/4445/article.htm)

### Latin America / Caribbean: corruption

Bribery, vote-buying and sexual extortion are major issues of concern for citizens in Latin America and the Caribbean; a survey asked over 17,000 citizens from 18 countries about their experiences of bribery and perceptions of corruption. The survey sheds light on sexual extortion, or sextortion, one of the most gruesome gendered impacts of corruption. One in five people have experienced sextortion or know someone who has while accessing basic public services in Latin America and the Caribbean and one in four are offered bribes in exchange for votes, which highlights an alarming lack of political integrity among governments across the region. The good news is that an overwhelming majority of people are optimistic that they can make a difference in the fight against corruption. Now, more than ever, leaders urgently need to fight corruption and strengthen democracy. Pray for God to comfort those abused, give peace to those living in fear, and help NGOs and governments as they fight corruption in its various forms.

Pray: for God to empower those unmasking fraud, bribery and all forms of corruption. (Romans 12:21)

More: [www.transparency.org/gcb10/latin-america-and-the-caribbean](http://www.transparency.org/gcb10/latin-america-and-the-caribbean)

### Iraq: the last church standing

There are almost 20,000 ordained ministers in England; in Iraq there is just one, Rev Faez Jirjees, the parish priest at St George's church in Baghdad. Christians make up about 1% of Iraq's population, but most fled when IS were at their most brutal. Despite being bombed several times, St George's became a hub for interfaith relations, providing healthcare to Christians as well as Shia and Sunni Muslims at its clinic, dentists, pharmacy, laboratories, a nursery, primary school and a 'hope centre' that helps train young people with vocational skills for jobs. Rev Jirjees' parents dedicated him to become a priest as a child, and he served in the Anglican church close to his house as a boy. Pray for the congregation of 300, who worship in a church protected by concrete bollards, security gates, and armed guards. Pray for the Christians fearful of returning to war-torn Iraq.

Pray: for the work of St George's in the Baghdad communities. (Deuteronomy 2:7a)

More: [frrme.org/causes/st-georges-church/](http://frrme.org/causes/st-georges-church/)

### Chad: 30 killed in landslide

Chad's defence minister has said that a landslide at an illegal gold mine had killed about thirty people in a region near the Libyan border early on 24 September, and more victims might still be buried in the rubble. There has been rapid growth in illegal mining in recent years, often by refugees from Sudan looking for quick money to head to Europe or by rebels fighting the army. Unsafe methods and a lack of oversight mean that accidents are common at such mines across Africa, where impoverished communities seek a share of the vast resources that are usually dug up by international companies, processed and sent overseas. As gold surges, so does illegal mining across Chad, South Africa, Ghana, Zimbabwe and Nigeria - bringing crime, danger and risk to fragile environments.

Pray: for those rescued to be arrested for illegal mining and trespassing, for those still underground to be found and for the families of the dead to be comforted. (Proverbs 21:15)

More: [www.vanguardngr.com/2019/09/about-30-killed-in-landslide-at-chad-gold-mine/](http://www.vanguardngr.com/2019/09/about-30-killed-in-landslide-at-chad-gold-mine/)

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