

Prayer Alert

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I call out to the Lord, and He answers me from His holy mountain. (Psalm 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

Large-scale money laundering exposed

Iceland's largest fishing company, Samherji, exploited legal loopholes and secrecy jurisdictions to enable corruption and environmental exploitation on a global scale. It used an anonymous shell company to launder and transfer 70 million dollars' worth of illegal fishing activities off the coasts of West Africa, and bribed members of the Namibian government. Two Namibian ministers have already resigned over allegedly giving preferential access to fishing grounds. Samherji used shell companies in Dubai, Mauritius and Cyprus. Most of the money was traced to a bank account at a state-owned bank: the bank's largest shareholder is the Norwegian state, which holds a 34% stake.

Praise: God for the exposure of foreign bribery and money laundering. (Proverbs 21:15)

More: stundin.is/grein/9920/?sfns=mo

Jesus stopped honour killing

In Middle East's honour-shame culture, a raped woman brings her family shame and they have a duty to kill her. Three Yazidi girls were taken as slaves by IS. Later, while their father was asleep, he saw Jesus. He recognised Him by His nail-pierced hands. Jesus said, 'You don't need to kill your daughters. I paid for everyone, so go and get them.' The man woke and thought this can't be real. He went back to sleep and had exactly the same dream. He woke up again, went back to sleep, and had the same dream for a third time - one dream for each daughter. He gathered the Yazidi elders and told them what happened. 'Jesus showed up in my tent, I'm going to get my girls and not kill them.' Because of Jesus, he welcomed his girls home and persuaded other Yazidi men to take back their daughters without harming them.

Praise: God for visions and dreams telling us that Jesus, not murder, restores honour to slave victims. (Acts 2:17-21)

More: godreports.com/2019/11/jesus-stopped-honor-killing-of-girls-raped-by-isis/

British Isles

An election prayer

Lord, we pray for peace in this election season. We pray for peace between divided communities and within families; we pray for peace between political opponents. We pray that You will be our refuge and our strength, our mighty fortress in times of need. Lord, keep our focus on you, and as we hear and think about politics we would seek to serve and worship you. 'I lift my eyes to you, to you who sit enthroned in heaven' (Psalm 123:1). We pray for political journalists who are reporting on the election and Brexit, that they will work with integrity and maintain professionalism; and for young people under the age of 18, who cannot vote, still to be engaged in politics and voice their concerns.

Pray: for Christians working in the civil service under immense pressure. May they lay their burdens down before the Lord and remain focussed on God's plans. (Exodus 33:13)

More: www.eauk.org/what-we-do/prayer-centre/praying-ahead-of-the-general-election/general-election-prayer-series

Cleanup after floods

Please continue to pray for the owners of over 1,750 properties that have been flooded in recent weeks. Ask God to support them as they go through the painful process of assessing damage, claiming insurance, and discarding much that was not salvageable. Pray particularly that those who did not have insurance will receive appropriate help to rebuild their lives. Pray for God to comfort those who have lost sentimental and irreplaceable possessions. The Environment Agency (EA) has warned that some older properties could be contaminated with anthrax or other dangerous pollutants after the floods, so the fire brigade might say they are not safe for re-occupation. Pray for wise and effective reviews by the EA of the flood defences required for the future. [See also https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/nov/20/uk-flood-victims-criticise-government-for-belated-response](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/nov/20/uk-flood-victims-criticise-government-for-belated-response)

Pray: for God to give peace of mind to families in temporary accommodation, and courage to those who will rebuild their lives. (Psalm 29:11)

More: www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/housing/flooding/flooding/re-entering-your-home-and-cleaning-up-after-a-flood/

Christian banned from Speakers' Corner

On 10 November Rev Roland Parson was told by police officers he could not show his 'Blood of Jesus Christ' banner which was fixed with rope to the side of his preaching stand while he preached the Gospel. He has displayed his Christian banners and preached at Speakers' Corner for over twenty years. Now the police informed him he was violating the Royal Parks regulations - banning the display of printed material. However, they didn't do anything about other large banners displayed in the area. Mr Parsons is now taking legal advice to fight the ban, 'not least because of the undue effect it has on evangelical Christians'. Mike Phillips, legal adviser to Christian Concern, added, 'If you are doing something which has been allowed for many years, and suddenly the authorities prohibit it, then arguably they are acting outside their powers.'

Pray: for Roland's freedom of expression as a Christian to be allowed at Speakers' Corner. (Psalm 120:7,1)

More: www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7693963/Christian-banned-displaying-banner-proclaiming-beliefs-vows-challenge-court.html

Designer babies in two years?

New research by bioethicist Dr Kevin Smith claims that the risks of gene editing are now low enough to warrant its use with human embryos, arguing that 'creating designer babies is ethically justifiable and highly desirable'. He said it could kick-start a revolution in producing genetically-modified (GM) people, offering hope to parents at risk of transmitting serious genetic disease to their future children. He said, 'The human germline is not perfect. Evolution furnished us with minimal protection from diseases including cardiovascular disease, cancer and dementia. GM can protect future people against these and other common disorders.' Producing GM babies in China last year was criticised by geneticists and ethicists. Smith compared GM people to the advancement of IVF, stating that if such negative attitudes to biomedical innovation had prevailed in the 1970s, the development of IVF would have been delayed and might never have come to fruition. His paper is published in the medical ethics journal Bioethics.

Pray: for this research to continue to be illegal in the UK. May we never have designer babies to order. (Psalm 119:1)

More: www.independent.co.uk/life-style/designer-baby-gene-editing-disease-risk-kevin-smith-a9208591.html

Homelessness: the Vagrancy Act

Homelessness is not a crime. The 1824 Vagrancy Act, which makes rough sleeping and begging illegal in England, is needlessly pushing vulnerable people further from help, according to a report from Crisis. The Government is reviewing the act as part of its rough sleeping strategy. Leading figures from across the political spectrum and the police, including former Met Commissioner Lord Hogan-Howe, have called for the repeal of the act, branding it out of date, inhumane and unfit to deal with the modern challenges of addressing rough sleeping and begging. Although some changes came into force on 7 November and further changes are being considered, this outdated and damaging act has not been repealed. Please pray for it to be completely abolished, and soon. [See http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo4/5/83/section/4](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo4/5/83/section/4)

Pray: for an end to criminalising people for sleeping rough, and for Government funding to be made available for night shelters. (Exodus 22:27)

More: www.homeless.org.uk/connect/blogs/2019/nov/01/london-winter-shelters-list-201920-published

Homelessness at Christmas

A note left in a postbox at the L6 Community Centre was written by a seven-year-old to Santa. She wrote, 'Dear Father Christmas, can you help? Can we have a home for Christmas? Mam wants us to be all together. Can you give us some food, and can I have just a nice doll for Christmas? Thank you.' Dr Maynard, from a Christian charity tackling hunger, said, 'When I read it I almost wasn't surprised. This is a day-to-day reality for many who regularly ask where food is coming from, and if they are going to have breakfast this morning.' She suggested that we could all be generous to someone and help them celebrate Christ's birth. Could we invite a lonely neighbour for Christmas lunch or make a Christmas hamper for someone in need? The L6 centre team is helping the family, and may put them up in a hotel on Christmas Day.

Pray: for people, not just Christians, to be motivated to help those less fortunate than themselves this Christmas. (Psalm 112:4)

More: www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Christian-campaigner-heartbroken-by-child-s-letter-to-Santa-asking-for-a-home-and-food

Prince Andrew and Jeffrey Epstein

Lawyers representing victims of the convicted child sex offender Jeffrey Epstein have signalled they are willing to serve a subpoena on Prince Andrew to ensure he cooperates with their investigations. Meanwhile, he announced he was standing down from public duties and was willing to help 'any appropriate law enforcement agency' with their investigations after what he accepted was his 'ill-judged association' with Epstein. Lisa Bloom, a lawyer representing five of the victims, said that Prince Andrew was simply not credible in his recent BBC interview. 'He and his staff must cooperate with all investigations, show up for civil depositions and trials, and produce all documents about his contact with Epstein. We are just getting started.' [See also https://twitter.com/RoyalFamily/status/1197213153852977153](https://twitter.com/RoyalFamily/status/1197213153852977153)

Pray: for honesty and transparency to prevail. May justice be done, in such a way as to deter future offenders. (Proverbs 2:9)
More: www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/nov/21/prince-andrew-lawyers-for-jeffrey-epstein-victims-hint-at-subpoena

Europe

Europe and Brexit

Could Brexit be a symptom of issues facing Europe? When society turns away from God's principles we risk making our desires our idols. For decades many of our nations have sought to make individualism a priority, whether pursuing selfish desires or not taking responsibility for the consequences of our actions, or sexually immoral expressions, or perhaps as a nation we think we are better than others or have some given right to be great. There is nothing new in these attitudes but we give in to them at our peril. The Old Testament is full of warnings to society as we seek to follow our own desires. Many observers from across the channel cannot understand how a nation known as the 'mother of democracy' could be in this mess. The UK and the rest of the EU need an answer to the Brexit question. For the UK it is about repairing division; for the EU, it is about protecting the integrity of a trading block that faces the complexities of a changing world of competing global powers.

Pray: for God to lead us to plans that heal divisions and restore His values to the heart of societies broken by self-interest. (Ecclesiastes 5:10)

More: gallery.mailchimp.com/ffd99da83edd4244458b59317/files/ecd3a51b-1a76-4eec-96d4-8fef989cd279/Canopy_76_English.pdf

Italy: Vatican City - child abuse allegations

The historical child abuse allegations against the Vatican continue after three former altar boys who were at a seminary in the Vatican in the 1980s have now accused two priests of sexually abusing them. They said they were between the ages of 10 and 14 at the time. The allegations will be explored in an investigative Italian TV show on 24 November.

Pray: for this TV programme not to turn into a media circus, and for the situation to be sensitively handled. (Psalm 37:37)

More: www.premier.org.uk/News/World/Altar-boys-say-they-were-sexually-abused-by-priests-in-the-Vatican

Worldwide

Africa: false prophets

Ever since the missionary era, Christianity has had a positive impact on Africa. In addition to evangelism and discipleship, Christian communities were behind the founding and growth of educational institutions, health facilities, poverty alleviation projects, children's homes, and even civic initiatives. As a result, Christianity not only continues to grow, but has also achieved significant acceptance as a force for social good. Now, however, false prophets are chipping away at its moral credibility and public strength. Among these self-proclaimed 'servants of God', the values that have traditionally distinguished Christian ministry are increasingly absent. Humility, compassion, selfless service, and servant leadership are replaced by a preoccupation with image consciousness, self-aggrandisement, and enlargement of personal influence. This is in sad contrast to the faithful pastoral care and preaching of countless African Christians who are not motivated by self-promotion and gain. For truths supporting the above, click the 'More' button.

Pray: for God to remove such false prophets and reinstate His prophets, teachers and evangelists. (Daniel 5:14)

More: www.lausanne.org/content/lga/2019-11/problem-false-prophets-africa

Just Transition: a framework for change

After centuries of global plunder, the industrial economy is severely undermining the life support systems of the planet. Just Transition believes we must build visionary economies different from the ones we are now in. This requires stopping the bad while at the same time building the new: changing the rules to redistribute resources and power to local communities, shifting from incinerators and landfills to zero waste, from dirty energy like coal to energy democracy. Burning coal is a huge driver of climate change. Coal mining employs six million people globally, and is the linchpin of many communities. Nuclear energy, fracking, and 'clean coal' are offered as economic solutions, but they harm the health of people and the planet. The path of extracting, transporting, processing, and consuming these technologies is paved with cancer and respiratory disease, among other devastating health impacts. These 'solutions' turn low-income communities into sacrifice zones.

Pray: for greater development of alternative sources of energy which help protect our climate. (Psalm 24:1)

More: climatejusticealliance.org/just-transition/

Antibiotic Awareness Week

'I only spent one week in Mosul, but I'll never forget what I saw. The scars of war there are not just destroyed buildings, closed hospitals, and empty streets; they are also adults and children in severe pain, injured first by war and then infected by bacteria that defy treatment by most available antibiotics. People wonder if they will ever walk, play football with their friends, or even lift a cup of tea again. I've been working as an epidemiologist with Médecins Sans Frontières for eight years, focussing on measles, malaria, cholera, malnutrition, and other major health crises. I witnessed children, severely underweight, needing immediate treatment to survive. We understand how to treat life-threatening situations, but now antibiotic-resistant infections are in Gaza, Aden, and Mosul. They are incredibly complex to manage and difficult to explain, and can take a huge psychological toll on patients. This is World Antibiotic Awareness Week, but one week is not enough.'

Pray: for God to inspire infectious disease specialists, infection control nurses and microbiologists to see that aggressive infections are suitably treated. (Psalm 103:3b)

More: www.thenewhumanitarian.org/opinion/2019/11/18/Antibiotic-resistant-infections-humanitarian-workers-Iraq

Hong Kong: threat to religious freedom

A Christian activist says the religious freedoms of Hong Kong citizens could be at risk if the government continues to ignore the demands of protesters. The violence is some of the worst seen in the territory since anti-government demonstrations began almost six months ago. Co-founder and chair of human rights charity Hong Kong Watch, Ben Rogers, says, 'It's worth remembering that the violence really was started by the police. If general freedoms are further eroded, sooner or later religious freedom will be affected. If Hong Kong's way of life is dismantled, then the church will be directly affected, and so pray specifically for the Hong Kong church at this time.' May the global Church hear Rogers' concern for the potential implications this conflict could have on religious rights in Hong Kong, and pray accordingly.

Pray: for an end to violence on both sides, and for a peaceful political solution to this crisis. (Leviticus 19:15)

More: www.premier.org.uk/News/World/Hong-Kong-Christian-activist-warns-of-threat-to-religious-freedom-as-protests-escalate

Pakistan: Christian's murder is covered up

The family of 18-year-old Akash, a Christian working at a bakery, claim their son was murdered by Muslim co-workers. 'My son was an expert at baking and his expertise was liked by the customers, but he faced religious discrimination and jealousy at work', says Sarwar, Akash's father. On 24 September, the bakery informed Sarwar that his son was not well and had been taken to hospital. When he arrived there, his son was already dead. He attempted to investigate, but the bakery said, 'We will teach you a lesson if you go for legal course against us.' The police claim that Akash committed suicide. A video of his body was released on Facebook, showing signs of torture on his back and neck. The video has gone viral. Sarwar's application to exhume Akash's body for investigation has been denied by the court - delaying tactics to nullify evidence.

Pray: for the case to be taken seriously, and for the Lord to give Sarwar spiritual encouragement and comfort in his grief. (Psalm 7:6)

More: vom.com.au/pakistan-christian-family-claims-their-sons-murder-is-being-covered-up/

Vietnam: Christian teacher and alleged Facebook posts

Last year Vietnam passed a cybersecurity law requiring social media sites to remove any content requested by the government. Of the 128 political prisoners in jail, approximately 10% were jailed over alleged Facebook posts. Nguyen Nang Tinh, a 43-year-old Christian music teacher, has been sentenced to eleven years in prison on charges of propaganda against the state in Facebook posts. On 17 September, police officially closed the investigation and set a court date. On 17 November he was sentenced by the courts, a month later than originally scheduled. He was charged with 'fabricated, preserved and disseminated information, materials and objects with the aim of opposing the Socialist Republic of Vietnam'. The posts in question were made under a Facebook account with the same name, though Tinh has repeatedly claimed that it is not his.

Pray: for God to comfort and protect Tinh and his family, along with the Christian communities in Vietnam. (Psalm 11:7)

More: www.persecution.org/2019/11/18/christian-teacher-sentenced-11-years-alleged-facebook-post/

Iraq: protests and scandals

Anti-government protests over corruption and lack of jobs and public services have continued since early October. On 21 November, force by security guards failed to unblock Baghdad bridges and al-Tahrir Square where hundreds of protesters held their ground against bullets and teargas. They also have blocked roads around Basra. Road closures lead to large losses for the Iraqi economy and negatively affect the daily life of citizens by preventing the flow of food, medical supplies and other goods. Demonstrators demand comprehensive political reform, accountability for corruption, improvement of public services, and job opportunities. But protests are not reshaping the country's politics. They are affecting the entire region as new scandals against the government are revealed almost daily. The most recent exposed Tehran's growing influence in Iraq.

Pray: for the Prince of Peace to remove the competition between Iran and the USA to shape Iraq's future. (Psalm 33:5)

More: www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2019/11/iraq-protests-sistani-us-iran.html

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