

Prayer Alert

ISSUE 34-2020 | Friday 21 August 2020
www.prayer-alert.net | editor@prayer-alert.net

Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. (Ephesians 3:20, 21)

We are pleased to enclose this week's edition of Prayer Alert.

Can you help? - Prayer Alert is brought to your inbox without charge thanks largely to the generosity of individuals and organisations that freely provide most of the resources we need to operate. However, we would be grateful for donations from appreciative subscribers towards our costs. Please click the 'Donations' button above to make a contribution.

Thank you for partnering with us in praying for the nations.

Blessings,

David Fletcher and the Prayer Alert Team

Praise Reports

[Faith rises from the rubble](#)

[Delivery man calls pastor](#)

British Isles

[Buy British](#)

[Christian charity wants funds released](#)

[UK and EU negotiating teams resume talks](#)

[Bishop calls for action over death of 16-year-old migrant](#)

[Coronavirus - job or health?](#)

[Live performance of Jesus Christ Superstar](#)

[Northern Ireland: churches call for face coverings](#)

Europe

[Belarus: winds of change?](#)

[Migrant boy found dead on Calais beach](#)

[Russia: persecution of missionaries](#)

Worldwide

[South Africa: community organises Covid-19 healthcare system](#)

[Lebanon: Christians defy land grabbers](#)

[USA: 10,849 lightning strikes, 367 fires](#)

[Cameroon: Bible translator killed](#)

[Israel: more Gaza balloons](#)

[A race for diversity in coronavirus vaccine trials](#)

[USA: former Trump adviser in custody on fraud charge](#)

Praise Reports

Faith rises from the rubble

The nations have been devastated to see the destruction in Beirut, but also inspired by the response of the help and support from church, communities, charities and media broadcasts from SAT-7. Presenter Marianne Awaraji Daou said, 'Thank you for your prayers and support. We feel the unity of the body of Christ during these hard times, and this lifts us and blesses our hearts.' One survivor speaking on a SAT-7 programme said, 'The Lord is merciful and compassionate. Jesus protected me, my family, and the people I love. I thank Him every moment. I want to say that evil is increasing, but I believe that the Lord will use everyone who went through this disaster to be His witness. I believe that God works through our prayers and through those who help. My hope is in You, Lord.'

Praise: God for the messages of faith and hope being broadcast across the airwaves over Beirut. (Hebrews 11:1)

More: sat7.org/post/tag/lebanon

Delivery man calls pastor

Jim answered the phone, 'Hello'. The caller responded, 'Are you a pastor?' 'Yes, can I help you?' 'My name is Jacob, we delivered an appliance to your home and you shared about missions. I was interested in going on a short-term mission.' Jim said, 'Yes, I remember you.' 'We wanted to go to the Philippines but the virus shut down the mission trip. My wife flew to Ohio to visit family and was killed in an accident. I had her phone that day and I placed your number in it, my pastor told me to call everyone that she had talked to.' 'I was overwhelmed, I said to Jacob, 'Let's pray'. People are hurting everywhere and we have the answer, Jesus Christ. So the question is, will we share our faith more aggressively? This is what we need to do during this virus fear. Be bold, pray and speak up to everyone, now is the time.'

Praise: God for the way he encourages us to be the people he has created us to be. (Isaiah 30:21)

More: godreports.com/2020/08/surprising-call-to-pastor-from-appliance-delivery-man/

British Isles

Buy British

The National Farmers Union (NFU) says Britons would run out of food in five days if the nation was solely reliant on home-grown produce. New research shows the proportion of the food that we consume that is produced in the UK has plummeted from 80% per cent in 1980 to just 64% now. Experts say the alarming statistics should be a wake-up call for the Government to prioritise food supply and for the public to buy more British produce. City University's Centre for Food Policy said that a country with low self-sufficiency is at risk of negative geopolitics and we are in exactly that sort of uncertainty now. The world is facing extreme pressures from people, food, climate and landmass. Britain is still acting as though we have an empire. It doesn't and Britain is assuming others will feed us.' NFU research states that Britain now imports 93% of its fruit and 47% of its vegetables.

Pray: for more UK agricultural land to be used to grow crops for human consumption and for supermarkets to begin to source more food locally. (Genesis 1:12)

More: www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8631679/Britons-run-food-Friday-country-solely-reliant-homegrown-produce.html

Christian charity wants funds released

On 17 August the Assyrian Church of the East Relief Organisation (ACERO) applied to Westminster magistrates court to have its funds released, so that it can send money to victims of the Beirut explosion and a Covid-19 relief project in Armenia. ACERO's accounts were frozen in 2019 after a judge ruled that the police should be allowed to look into allegations that it funded Islamic terrorism by paying ransom money for the release of 223 Christian hostages held by IS. The charity claims money was sent to help rehabilitate Christian Assyrian hostages following their release. Lawyers argued that there is no longer reason to suspect funds were or will be used for terrorist financing, and it is unconscionable to prevent them any longer from being put to humanitarian use.'

Pray: for ACERO to be free to continue its partnership with the Assyrian Church to support disaster relief across the world. (Psalm 15:5)

More: premierchristian.news/en/news/article/christian-charity-appeals-to-have-funds-released

UK and EU negotiating teams resume talks

On 18 August, 48 hours of Brexit talks resumed in Brussels. A source close to British negotiators said it would not accept any deal that 'constrains' the UK to the EU's rules and infringes sovereignty. They reiterated that the UK was still seeking a free trade deal with the EU, similar to its agreement with Canada. The source said, 'We remain committed to working hard to find the outlines of a balanced agreement. Our priority throughout the process has always been the return of our sovereignty.' Former Brexit secretary David Davis said that fifty civil servants going to Brussels to negotiate was not enough. It ought to be a couple of hundred because there are so many things going on in parallel. We are also negotiating trade with America, Japan, New Zealand and Australia. The Americans and the New Zealanders are complaining we're not moving fast enough.

Pray: for the negotiators to discern and agree to God's plans for the United Kingdom. (Jeremiah 29:11)

More: www.pressreader.com/uk/daily-mail/20200817/281818581194929

Bishop calls for action over death of 16-year-old migrant

The Bishop of Dover has expressed her deep sadness over the death of a 16-year-old migrant who drowned after attempting to reach the UK in a small boat (see Europe article below). Rt Rev Rose Hudson-Wilkin said, 'People who try to cross the Channel seeking safety and security are not criminals, they are like you and I. Human beings who should be afforded the dignity and respect and rights that so many of us take for granted. It is a travesty that this young man will never see his hoped-for future, that his family has been deprived of seeing him grow up.' She said she 'would like our government to take the initiative' in solving the root causes of the migrant crisis. 'I'd like them to sit down with other governments, not just when someone dies but in the long term.' She also urged the Church to continue to help with the resettling of refugee families and stop joining in with negative rhetoric.

Pray: for the incident to serve as a wake-up call for positive compassionate change. (Psalm 119:77)

More: premierchristian.news/en/news/article/bishop-of-dover-calls-for-action-over-death-of-16-year-old-migrant

Coronavirus - job or health?

Thousands of clinically vulnerable people have been shielding for health reasons. This guidance was gradually relaxed, and now the government has told them that they no longer needed to shield. They now face returning to work in the autumn. One of them, Kate, lives in Leicester and is currently locally locked down, but expects to return to work in September. This is daunting for her, especially as trips which used to be mundane now seem very risky. She has gone out twice since March. 'It's quite nerve-wracking,' she said. 'I've been to the dentist and it's absolutely fraught with danger.' Many are like her - nervous about how to go about daily life, unsure about the reality of wearing masks in shops and using customer one-way systems while their immune system is still severely depressed. Eleven charities have called for the Government to introduce furloughing for high-risk workers in this situation to avoid job losses.

Pray: for peace of mind and continued protection for those returning to work. (Psalm 16:8)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-53826719

Live performance of Jesus Christ Superstar

The concert version of the 2016 production made a virtue of distancing on stage. 'Could we start again please?' asks Mary Magdalene in the lustrous 1970 rock opera by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice. Theatres have waited months for the same question to be answered since they closed in March amid the coronavirus outbreak. So it's tempting to sing out your own 'hosanna' when a company of performers assemble on stage, two metres apart, and triumphantly rip off their masks at the top of this rainswept open-air revival to be performed until 27 September. Seating capacity was reduced by 2/3rds for a 90-minute concert-style version of the musical, leaving audiences to luxuriate in extra space, while requiring the strictly socially distanced actors to still convey intimacy on stage.

Pray: for many to enjoy the return of theatre; may they be touched by the theme. (Acts 28:31)

More: www.theguardian.com/stage/2020/aug/20/jesus-christ-superstar-review-regents-park-open-air-theatre

Northern Ireland: churches call for face coverings

Currently, under the rules in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, face coverings are not mandatory at worship services. The heads of the Church of Ireland, Methodist Church, Catholic and Presbyterian Churches said it was their responsibility 'to ensure that our services of worship are safe places', so they have asked parishioners to wear face coverings during services. The move comes following consultations with health authorities. The face coverings should be used alongside two-metre social distancing. Earlier in lockdown drive-in services were used to facilitate parishioners. Although shops, restaurants and businesses are restricted to six people, religious services are allowed to have up to fifty attendees.

Pray: for God's people to worship in freedom and truth, together or apart, with health and safety precautions. (John 4:24)
More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-53841142

Europe

Belarus: winds of change?

Belarus is known as 'Europe's last dictatorship'. After being elected on an anti-corruption platform President Lukashenko ruled for 26 years, betraying his mandate and the trust of his people. When citizens cast their ballots recently they hoped their vote would move the country forward. But Lukashenko claimed an improbable landslide victory over his opponent, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya. Sviatlana was forced to leave Belarus, and her husband is believed to be under arrest. Her return could inject fresh energy into the protests and create a character for people to rally behind as temporary national leader. She said she would release political prisoners, return Belarus to a pre-Lukashenko constitution, and hold fair elections without Lukashenko [in six months](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/18/belarus-protests-who-are-the-key-players-and-what-do-they-want) (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/18/belarus-protests-who-are-the-key-players-and-what-do-they-want>). Thousands have been peacefully protesting for Lukashenko to go. The EU has not recognised the election results and is drawing up new sanctions lists against Belarus. Russia is preparing for a controlled succession there and protecting its influence over its long-time client state.

Pray: for the international community to support Belarus so that the rights and freedoms of the nation can be established in a peaceful transition to a democracy. (Isaiah 1:26)

More: www.ft.com/content/53c4f8ec-c2da-48db-9459-6dc717e79b9c

Migrant boy found dead on Calais beach

Two teenagers unsuccessfully tried to cross the Channel in a three-foot dinghy using shovels as oars. They wanted to cross by themselves, bypassing people smugglers who charge high prices. One was a 16-year-old Sudanese boy who was found dead on the beach near the former 'Jungle' camp; his friend was found on the same beach suffering from hypothermia. Detention Action described the death as horrifying but wholly expected, saying, 'We have repeatedly warned Priti Patel it was only a matter of time before her toxic policy to deny safe and legal routes to the UK would cost lives. This death lies firmly at her door. She should consider her position.' Clare Moseley, founder of Care4Calais, said the boy's death demonstrates the 'total failure of our government' to help children in such desperate straits.

Pray: for the French and British governments to agree to a viable channel route for desperate refugees while blocking and prosecuting people smugglers. (1 Corinthians 8:9)

More: news.sky.com/story/sudanese-migrant-16-found-dead-on-beach-in-calais-12052342

Russia: persecution of missionaries

Individuals of almost every religious affiliation continue to face prosecution under Russia's 'anti-missionary legislation' for exercising their right to freedom of religion and belief. Despite a 2018 constitutional court decision which offered some clarification of what 'missionary activity' means, police and prosecutors continue to initiate cases to punish a wide range of activities, from advertising events online to holding ordinary worship services for fellow believers. 142 prosecutions reached courts in the last six months.

Pray: for an end to unjustified laws against people practising their faith. (Psalm 103:6)

More: godreports.com/2020/08/russia-persecution-of-missionaries-on-the-increase/

Worldwide

South Africa: community organises Covid-19 healthcare system

South Africa's pandemic infections seem to have reached a ceiling. However, with the fifth highest total in the world, no one is celebrating. The government had months to prepare, but there is a critical shortage of beds, staff and equipment. There are allegations of corruption by public officials ordering coronavirus-related supplies. As chaos and uncertainty swirled around official responses to the virus, a group of Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and Christians living and working in Lenasia decided to construct their own response as thousands of locals fell ill. Aboobaker Sayed started a community healthcare system in the middle of the raging pandemic with a community-run ambulance service; he secured advanced medical equipment and oxygen concentrators, and has turned ordinary bedrooms into critical care beds. He said, 'We make plans, but God has another plan and He is the best of planners, so we leave it to Him'.

Pray: for God to protect those making a difference in the midst of coronavirus, corruption and bereavement. (Psalm 5:11)

More: news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-south-african-community-starts-own-covid-19-healthcare-system-as-government-response-falters-12049062

Lebanon: Christians defy land grabbers

Christians in Beirut have responded with defiance amid reports that groups seeking to profit from the devastating explosion are trying to persuade them to sell up and leave. 300,000 families were displaced by the 4 August blast. Monsignor Toufic Bou-Hadir, who works with the Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need (ACN), described how people are opting to keep their damaged homes rather than accept offers to sell their properties. ACN is providing emergency aid for victims of the blast. He said, 'There are people trying to profit from this catastrophe by buying land and homes from the Christians. Christians want to stay in their close Christian community. Old and young are staying in their homes, even ones that are damaged.' Beirut's Christian districts bore the brunt of the explosion, and church leaders are working with politicians to frustrate land-grabbers by passing legislation preventing the faithful from selling their homes.

Pray: for honesty and Christian values to be the atmosphere over the region. (Genesis 28:15a)

More: acnuk.org/news/lebanon-christians-defy-land-grabbers/

USA: 10,849 lightning strikes, 367 fires

Californian firefighters are battling hundreds of wildfires across California amid the hottest temperatures ever recorded (130 °F, 54.4°C in Death Valley). The fires have burned 649,054 acres in 14 states. More than 16,700 wildland firefighters and support personnel are assigned to fight the fires ([see https://www.nifc.gov/fireInfo/nfn.htm](https://www.nifc.gov/fireInfo/nfn.htm)). In 72 hours, 10,849 lightning strikes hit California, starting 367 new fires. Rescue and firefighting resources are depleted as new fires continue to ignite. The deputy fire chief said this was not a normal situation; 'We are doing as much as we can with the resources that we have'. Mandatory evacuations have been ordered, whole communities destroyed, and thousands more homes are threatened. Pray for firefighters and emergency teams to be protected; for co-ordinated relief accommodation for the homeless; comfort for those who have lost everything and healing for the injured. May God bring rain and cool weather into the region.

Pray: for peace of mind to be given to those whose homes and business are threatened. (Psalm 46:2)

More: abcnews.go.com/US/11000-lightning-strikes-72-hours-ignite-300-fires/story?id=72467148

Cameroon: Bible translator killed

Bible translator and literacy teacher Pastor Christopher Tanjoh was killed on 7 August following an attack in his village. Last year two other Bible translators in Cameroon died in similar incidents. He bled to death after being shot in the leg, leaving behind a wife and seven children. Wycliffe's executive director said, 'This tragic news reminds us how much the gospel message is urgently needed in Cameroon. Until people are transformed by Jesus, there will be no lasting peace. We continue to work with local partners to translate the Bible so that every Cameroonian can read the Bible in the language that speaks to them best.'

Pray: for Bible translation work in dangerous regions giving the life-giving message of Jesus. (Matthew 24:14)

More: www.wycliffe.org.uk/resources/press-releases/bible-translator-killed-in-cameroon/

Israel: more Gaza balloons

Palestinians have resumed launching incendiary and explosive balloons towards Israel. Israel has responded by bombing Hamas military sites in the Gaza Strip, closed the Kerem Shalom commercial crossing, stopped all fuel imports into Gaza, and reduced the fishing zone off the Gaza Strip from 15 to 8 nautical miles. Pray for the safety of innocent Palestinians living in the vicinity of Hamas military bases, underground infrastructures, and observation posts that are being targeted. Hamas said the latest Israeli actions amount to 'a dangerous act of aggression and an uncalculated step for which the occupation will not be able to bear the consequences.' Many believe fire balloon tactics are a way to force Israel to implement truce understandings reached through Egyptian, Qatari and UN mediation in 2018.

Pray: for the safety of the southern Israel settlements where the balloons are starting fires. (Psalm 147:14)

More: www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2020/08/hamas-gaza-balloons-israel-truce-understandings.html#ixzz6VTI2GhKF

A race for diversity in coronavirus vaccine trials

In the frantic race for a Covid-19 vaccine, one issue in clinical trials is the lack of diversity. Experts are saying that the long history of abusive research practices has left many people of colour distrustful of the medical establishment, making it difficult to recruit them for clinical trials. Since black people are dying of Covid-19 at almost 2.5 times the rate of whites, recruiting a balanced cohort is essential. Pray for extra community outreach, childcare and transportation to testing and trial stations.

Pray: for God to help science create varieties of protection according to needs and ages, ethnicity and frailty. (Matthew 10:29)

More: jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2769611

USA: former Trump adviser in custody on fraud charge

Steve Bannon, Donald Trump's former chief strategist, has been arrested and charged with conspiracy to commit fraud related to We Build the Wall, a fundraising campaign to support the building of a border wall between the US and Mexico. Federal prosecutors allege that Bannon and three others 'orchestrated a scheme to defraud hundreds of thousands of donors' in connection with the online crowdfunding campaign that raised more than £19m. Bannon promised that 100% of the money donated would be used for the project, but the defendants allegedly used hundreds of thousands of dollars in a manner inconsistent with the organisation's public representations. The trio faked invoices and sham 'vendor' arrangements in a bid to hide what was really happening.

Pray: for in-depth investigations that reveal all inconsistencies in the administration. (Isaiah 56:1a)

More: news.sky.com/story/steve-bannon-former-trump-adviser-in-custody-on-fraud-charge-over-mexico-wall-12053200

Please feel free to distribute Prayer Alert to anyone you feel will benefit from its ministry. All we ask is that you do not edit or change it in any way or charge for its use without contacting us first for written permission

Prayer Alert is produced in partnership with

The World Prayer Centre, Cornerstone House, 5 Ethel Street, Birmingham, B2 4BG, England.

The views expressed in Prayer Alert and on our website are those of the authors, organisations and websites named, and are not necessarily those of the Prayer Alert Editorial Team, the Prayer Alert Steering Group or the World Prayer Centre or any of its employees or trustees. While we try to ensure that the information we provide is correct, mistakes do occur and we cannot guarantee the accuracy of our material. If you do notice any mistakes then please let us know.