

Prayer Alert

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This is what the Lord says - your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: 'I am the Lord your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go.' (Isaiah 48:17)

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

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

Blessings,

David Fletcher and the Prayer Alert Team

Praise Reports

[Global prayer initiatives and invitation](#)

[Sudan signs peace deal with rebel coalition](#)

British Isles

[Petition for national day of prayer](#)

[Back to school - mental health](#)

[Farming and the land](#)

[Pandemic legacy: serious household debt](#)

[Christians arrested at Extinction Rebellion protests](#)

[What tasks lie ahead for Westminster?](#)

[Scotland's coronavirus update](#)

Europe

[Montenegro: ruling party could lose power after 30 years](#)

[Germany: far-right protesters storm parliament building](#)

Worldwide

[Global: prayer movements, houses of prayer](#)

[UAE / Israel: Palestine fears birth of 'Arab Zionists'](#)

[Ethiopia: at least 500 Christians slaughtered](#)

[Iran: legal system an obstacle to MeToo justice](#)

[Lebanon: mental health of survivors](#)

[Egypt: women struggling to survive pandemic](#)

[USA: Trump unpopular with military](#)

Praise Reports

Global prayer initiatives and invitation

There has been a sensing among prayer leaders around the world of a significant corporate calling to identificational repentance for our nations. Christians have been led simultaneously to draw the Church together to pray concertedly in the spirit of 'If my people...' (2 Chron 7:14) for the healing and renewing of each of our lands. This has culminated in a number of online events and initiatives that are taking place over the next two months. Some of these are detailed in [International Prayer Connections](https://www.ipcprayer.org/ipc-home) (<https://www.ipcprayer.org/ipc-home>) Prayer-Alert intercessors are invited to join the first of these united prayer events, which will be a World Prayer Together call on 19 September. See also UK article on National Day of Prayer.

Praise: God for the united prayer movement that is growing globally. (John 17:23b)

More: worldprayertogether.com/en/home/

Sudan signs peace deal with rebel coalition

Sudan's government has reached a peace agreement with a coalition of rebel groups from Darfur and other regions in the country. The agreement, which should end a civil war that has raged since 2003 and has killed 300,000 people in Darfur alone, covers land ownership, power-sharing between all parties involved, and the return of people who have fled their homes in the civil war. Rebel forces will be dismantled, but fighters will have the opportunity to join the Sudanese military. There is hope for the future. Todd Nettleton of Voice of the Martyrs says, 'This agreement should, at least in theory, pave the way for peaceful coexistence within Sudan. Hopefully, a nation that is not focused on fighting against others within its borders can focus instead on development and on moving forward to what we hope will be a civilian rule.'

Praise: God that Sudan has recently removed oppressive apostasy laws, female genital mutilation, and recognised religious freedom and human rights goals and now potential peace. (Psalm 4:8)

More: www.mnnonline.org/news/sudan-signs-peace-deal-with-rebel-coalition/

British Isles

Petition for national day of prayer

A petition launched by evangelist David Hathaway calls on the Prime Minister to hold a national day of prayer in response to the pandemic. For details, see (https://citizengo.org/en-gb/181873-prime-minister-call-national-day-prayer?m=6&utm_campaign=&cid=77470153&fb=0&nid=181873) David said, 'Historically, only prayer has delivered this nation in a time of crisis, as seen both in WW1 in 1918 and even more so in WW2. When we have no human answer to the coronavirus which has devastated both health and our economy, we must seek God's answer.' The petition's opening statement asks for churches to be open for prayer and worship without restriction for the day: 'We ask you to remember and recognise the strong Christian heritage of this nation and the power of prayer, which is greater than any other power on earth.' A separate petition, launched by Susan Hawkes in

March and also calling for a national day of prayer, has received over 65,600 signatures.

Pray: for the petition to be discussed in parliament. (2 Chronicles 7:14)

More: premierchristian.news/en/news/article/petition-launched-for-prime-minister-to-call-for-national-day-of-prayer

Back to school - mental health

As schools across the UK reopen, teachers could face an influx of children facing an emotional and mental health crisis. Pray for teachers, parents, churches, and agencies who will be working to alleviate an expected emotional health crisis. Pray for the teachers, who will already be aware of the specific challenges that their community faces. May God anoint each one as they draw on their skills to provide emotional and academic guidance. Some children may not have held a pen or got up at 7am since March; consequently different pupils in the same class will have had different experiences of the lockdown period. They will also have varying levels of coping skills and resilience in dealing with those experiences. Teachers attempting to help these children may feel overwhelmed themselves. Pray that they are wisely supported by outside agencies and community groups. Pray for children displaying challenging behaviour to receive appropriate extra mental health support.

Pray: for pupils and teachers adapting to new structured learning times while observing coronavirus health and safety regulations. (Psalm 32:8)

More: www.mentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus/returning-school-after-lockdown/support-pupils-return-to-school

Farming and the land

Most crops will get harvested. But yields are low, and many farmers will feel they have 'sown much, but reaped little' (Haggai 1:6). Yet, given the weather conditions earlier this year, farmers are glad to have a crop at all, while many fruit trees have yielded well. Give thanks for this sign of the Lord's continuing mercy and faithfulness. Pray for better conditions this autumn and next spring, so that crops can make a good start and yield well next year. Pray for farmers to recognise their dependence on the One who causes the crops to grow (Psalm 104:14 and 64:9-13) and reach out to seek and know Him as their Saviour and Lord. The Agriculture Bill will continue its progress towards royal assent. Pray for the Government, the NFU, and for all involved in shaping the future of farming and food production (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

Pray: for farmers, landowners and all affected by illegal rural raves, increased fly tipping and staycation antisocial behaviour. (Psalm 125:3a)

More: www.worldprayer.org.uk/hope-for-the-countryside

Pandemic legacy: serious household debt

Data from the Bank of England released on 1 September show an increase in mortgage and household borrowing. StepChange debt charity says this may point to the financial pressures many households face, which will crystallise into serious debt problems when unemployment support and payment holidays end. Since May, StepChange has published a monthly breakdown of trends to understand how the pandemic is affecting household debt, and to focus on the best ways of helping people. In July it gave advice to 14,000 clients, but this number is artificially suppressed by government support mechanisms still in place. However, a notable feature in July is the trend toward greater unemployment worries. Not only has the proportion of unemployed clients increased, but searches about redundancy on the charity's website saw a massive 1,800% increase in July compared with June. StepChange said, 'It's absolutely vital that we see ongoing support to help people get through the next period, whether they are in employment or not, if we are to avoid entrenching problem debt as a long-term legacy of the pandemic.'

Pray: for the Government to provide safety nets for young people, single parents and those already on low incomes in the next phase of crisis management. (Job 5:11)

More: www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/29926

Christians arrested at Extinction Rebellion protests

Dr Rowan Williams joined with Extinction Rebellion for their 'September Uprising' climate change protests. The march resulted in the arrest of several Christians including Friar Martin Newell. Dr Williams said, 'People of faith should be here because they can make a difference. We are at a moment of opportunity. People are talking about building back better., not just recovering what's been lost but building again something that is genuinely more sustainable. Recently we have seen alternatives that might work and I think people of faith ought to be on board with making those alternatives work, taking that moment of opportunity.' Bishops Olivia Graham and Paul Hendricks also joined the Christian Climate Action group. Dr Williams held a banner declaring 'CREATION CRIES OUT', and before his arrest Friar Newell said, 'The Christian faith is not an easy one; we are constantly called to step outside our comfort zone.'

Pray: for a global-heating catastrophe to be avoided by initiating change now. Also continue to pray for these protests to be peaceful. (Psalm 24:1,7)

More: premierchristian.news/en/news/article/christians-arrested-as-former-archbishop-joins-extinction-rebellion-protesters

What tasks lie ahead for Westminster?

MPs are returning to Westminster with very full inboxes. Coronavirus challenges will be at the forefront of ministers' minds. Jeremy Hunt warned, 'The situation coming into winter is potentially very perilous'. Pray for the Government to succeed in encouraging a return to something approaching normal while keeping the virus under control. The UK and EU must reach a Brexit agreement by 31 December 2020. But at the end of every round of negotiations, the messages are 'little progress' and 'considerable gaps remain'. Pray for God's resolution to come to the surface. The furlough programme is winding down, but opposition parties want the scheme to be extended. While furlough was one of the largest schemes, others are also due to come to an end soon, with disagreement between the parties over their ongoing value. Pray for parliament to agree on wise provisions for the 9.6 million who were furloughed.

Pray: for God to be with our politicians as they make life changing decisions. (Psalm 119:98)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-53920140

Scotland's coronavirus update

On 3 September Nicola Sturgeon said there were 101 new positive cases, 53 in the Greater Glasgow area. Also the R number is probably now above one, and could be as high as 1.4. Health officials have found evidence of coronavirus spreading in Glasgow schools, but it is not affecting very young children. Most affected are families and young adults, generally mixed households by gender and mixed age groups. Meanwhile Home Farm care home on Skye had 10 residents die from Covid-19 and it will now be taken into NHS ownership. A reporter asked for more detail on the targeted restrictions brought in for the Glasgow area. The first minister said the outbreak is still ongoing and the Test and Protect work continues. The government will try to give people a fuller picture as it develops; the outbreak is more desperate than they have seen, which requires targeted measures.

Pray: for all decisions to be made based on informed judgements. (Proverbs 16:2,3)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/live/uk-scotland-53997552

Europe

Montenegro: ruling party could lose power after 30 years

Montenegro's election campaign was dominated by divisions over the powerful Serbian Orthodox Church. There have been months of protests since a law was adopted in December allowing the state to seize religious assets when their historical ownership cannot be proved. Consequently the Church urged people to vote against the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS). The DPS secured 35% of votes in a tight and bitterly-contested parliamentary election, its worst result since the country won independence from Serbia. Official results show the pro-Serbian opposition alliance on 32.5%, meaning that it could feasibly form a government if it can reach consensus with Montenegro's other two opposition parties. That would see the DPS lose control of power in the Balkan nation for the first time in 30 years. The leader of the pro-Serbian coalition, Zdravko Krivokapic, told supporters, 'The regime has fallen'. The majority of Montenegrins are members of the Church, while President Djukanovic and his party are accused of having links to organised crime and running the country as an autocracy.

Pray: for the country's independence and Christian values to be reflected after a slender victory for the opposition. (Isaiah 1:26)

More: www.euronews.com/2020/08/30/montenegro-parliamentary-election-kicks-off-with-high-turnout

Germany: far-right protesters storm parliament building

Germany's lockdown measures and Covid-19 restrictions provoked a protest march by around 38,000 people. Hundreds of demonstrators breached a security barrier and raced up the steps outside Berlin's parliament building. They were dispersed by police with pepper spray. Some of them held the flag of former imperial Germany, which is used by the Reichsbürger far-right group. President Steinmeier said the use of Reich flags and right-wing provocations was 'an unbearable attack on the heart of our democracy'. He said people had the right to express their anger about the restrictions and to question them publicly, including demonstrations, but his sympathy ends when protesters allow themselves to be used by enemies of democracy and political agitators. Police arrested about 300 people. Pray that Nazi imperial war flags that recall the darkest period in Germany history will be prevented from ever flying again.

Pray: for people to support government measures to overcome the pandemic. (Hebrews 13:17)

More: www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8679211/Fury-Germany-far-right-protesters-storm-parliament-building.html

Worldwide

Global: prayer movements, houses of prayer

In 1727 the Moravian community in Herrnhut, Germany started a 24/7 unbroken prayer watch, which continued for over 100 years. Moravian influence on John Wesley helped start the Wesleyan revival. Their vision of sending missionaries (they sent hundreds) helped spark the 19th-century Protestant mission movement which took the gospel to most of the world. 26 years of the annual '30 Days of Prayer for the Muslim World' publications 'coincided' with 26 years of unprecedented numbers of Muslims encountering Jesus. Today, movements of Christians praying together to pray are bigger, wider and deeper than at any time in history. 24/7 Prayer (www.24-7prayer.com) and Ihop (International House of Prayer) draw thousands of people into a worldwide, unbroken stream of prayer and worship. But more prayer is needed in this season of global pandemic, recession, fear, poverty and wars.

Pray: for Christians to recover the centrality of prayer in all they think, say and do. (Psalm 86:9)

More: drive.google.com/drive/folders/1DQAIBAB2iEZMg37mlt1P2yrzUf6jllFV

UAE / Israel: Palestine fears birth of 'Arab Zionists'

The PLO's chief negotiator and executive secretary expressed concern that the UAE's peace agreement with Israel will lead to other Arab states reaching similar 'normalisation' agreements. The PA sees such agreements as disregarding their demand that Palestinian 'self-determination and independence' must precede any formation of Arab friendly relations with Israel. The PLO said, 'It is 'a public birth for the Arab Zionists', and admiration or support for Israel is forbidden. There are Arab groups that say, 'Palestine is not my cause'. Groups say, 'The Palestinians are ungrateful and we are employing them. We've helped them, but Israel is a beautiful, successful state.'

Pray: for God to establish peace across the region and protect Israel. (Psalm 29:11)

More: palwatch.org/page/18194

Ethiopia: at least 500 Christians slaughtered

An Ethiopian Christian leader called for an international inquiry into over 500 Christians killed since the end of June - including pregnant women, children and whole families. The coordinated slaughter was by the Muslim Oromo ethnic group who are members of Qeerroo (meaning bachelors), a male youth movement. In door-to-door attacks, they arrived in cars and, armed with guns, machetes, swords and spears, sought out and slaughtered Christians. Children were forced to witness their parents being brutally murdered with

machetes. Some militants held lists of Christians and were helped by local authorities, often run by Muslims, to find individuals, particularly those actively involved in supporting the Church. Oromo ethnic Christians were also targeted. One was beheaded for refusing to deny his faith by tearing off the thread around his neck (worn as a sign of his baptism).

Pray: for the thousands of traumatised survivors now sheltering in churches and community centres. May God give them peace, justice, and hope for the future. (Jeremiah 29:11)

More: news.barnabasfund.org/At-least-500-Ethiopian-Christians-reported-slaughtered-in-relentless-door-to-door-attacks/

Iran: legal system an obstacle to MeToo justice

While an increasing number of rape and sexual assault victims are speaking out in Iran, the legal code often prevents justice and puts some victims at risk of punishment. The #MeToo movement has finally emerged among Iranians, sending shockwaves across Persian language social media. Over the past week many women and men have come forward to talk about their experiences of rape and sexual assault by dozens of high-profile figures in the country. Although the official media remain indifferent to the stories, they have stirred public uproar to the point that the police in Tehran arrested a well-known bookshop owner accused of rape by several women. No one can doubt the bravery and courage of individuals who break the taboos and talk about their personal experiences of sexual harassment in a country where patriarchal values are reproduced and reinforced by the state.

Pray: for changes in Iran's legal infrastructure so that all challenges to justice are removed. (Psalm 45:4)

More: www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2020/08/iran-metoo-movement-accusations-rape-legal-reform-justice.html

Lebanon: mental health of survivors

Lebanon faces a humanitarian emergency following the 4 August blast in Beirut port, and the psychological effects will not end once the dust settles, said Dr Ahmed Hankir, a psychiatrist. Some of the initial reactions to traumatic events include sadness, agitation, dissociation, and survivor's guilt. While most ongoing reactions are normal responses to the incident, residents are being told that seeking help from a mental health professional is advised should they persist for more than a month after the blast. Help should also be immediately sought if someone is having severe reactions, such as suicidal ideas. Mental health services are expensive in Lebanon, but several organisations are providing services for individuals affected by the blast either at a reduced price or free. Pray for God's strength and wisdom to pour through NGOs raising awareness around mental health, for those manning suicide prevention helplines and walk-in clinics.

Pray: for those needing psychological help to receive suitable intervention and support. (Psalm 30:2)

More: beirut-today.com/2020/08/27/mental-health-where-help-after-beirut-blast/

Egypt: women struggling to survive pandemic

Maria, an Egyptian widow, was in tears when telling a local ministry leader that she had lost her job as a housecleaner due to coronavirus lockdown. She supports seven family members, including a daughter with two infants who is separated from her drug-addicted husband and a married son with two children who has lost his job and home due to coronavirus. She sold her kitchen appliances to meet their basic needs. Many widowed women in Egypt have lost their jobs to the pandemic and have no other sources of income, as the government has also suspended disbursement of pensions due to the crowds gathering at offices. Most widows are without a fixed monthly income or a fixed pension. Some have coronavirus, and some have lost a family member to it. Christian Aid has created WhatsApp groups for women and children and supports them spiritually by making prayer times and sharing sermons and songs.

Pray: for mission agencies throughout Egypt helping those needing spiritual, financial and medical help. (Psalm 118:7a)

More: www.christianaid.org/missions-insider/2020-pandemic-strikes-women-struggling-to-survive-in-egypt/

USA: Trump unpopular with military

A poll shows a continued decline in active-duty service members' views of President Donald Trump and a slight but significant preference for former vice president Joe Biden in the upcoming November election. The results, collected before the political conventions earlier this month, appear to undercut claims from the president that his support among military members is strong thanks to big defence budget increases in recent years and promised moves to draw down troops from overseas conflict zones. But active-duty troops and the Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF) have seen a steady drop in troops' opinion of the commander-in-chief since his election four years ago. The dipping popularity among troops - considered by Republican Party leaders to be part of the base of Trump's support - could prove problematic for him, as there is significant disagreement among active-duty respondents about several recent controversial presidential policy statements.

Pray: for bogus electioneering statements to be overthrown by truth and humility. (Psalm 34:13)

More: www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2020/08/31/as-trumps-popularity-slips-in-latest-military-times-poll-more-troops-say-theyll-vote-for-biden/

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