

Prayer Alert

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The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. (Psalm 18: 2)

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

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Praise Reports

Women leading fastest-growing church

'The fastest-growing church in the world has taken root in one of the most unexpected and radicalised nations on earth,' according to *Sheep Among Wolves*, a two-hour documentary about Iran's revival that is reproducing discipleship movements that own no property or buildings, have no central leadership, and are predominantly led by women. Many of the ruling class still follow Islam, 'because that's where the high paying jobs are', according to the film; but the majority of the ordinary people love God and recognise that Islam is the problem. The most powerful Christian leaders are very gentle, courageous women going out on the highways and byways sharing with prostitutes, drug addicts and everybody they come into contact with. Praise God for the abundance of Bibles in Farsi being distributed, and pray for those still translating His word into various Persian ethnic languages.

Praise: God for the many disciple-making teams targeting the unreached and unengaged people groups. (Matthew 28:19)

More: godreports.com/2019/09/fastest-growing-church-has-no-buildings-no-central-leadership-and-is-mostly-led-by-women/

Surgeon general finds strength in God

Dr Jerome Adams grew up poor in rural Maryland on a family farm. Government assistance sustained the family. His mother recently had a major stroke. His brother struggles with substance abuse. All four grandparents died prematurely of chronic disease. An uncomfortable childhood prepared him for an 'uncomfortable' tenure as US surgeon general. He said, 'I'm a Christian and I believe God doesn't put you where you'll be comfortable, He puts you where He needs you.' He has been criticised for recommending the use of masks and for working with a president who some believe is 'insensitive to people of colour', saying, 'Our issues as people of colour are too important to go four years without representation in the highest levels of government. I personally have faith that I am put where I am most needed. I spent my life fighting and will keep fighting for the poor, the disadvantaged, the people of colour.'

Praise: God for Dr Adams, the 20th US surgeon general, who is proclaiming justice and righteousness from the White House task force fighting Covid-19. (Romans 1:16)

More: godreports.com/2020/08/surgeon-general-fends-off-critics-finds-strength-in-god/

British Isles

Hope for the countryside

Late summer has seen our hedgerows laden with fruits and berries, and ancient oaks bowed under the weight of acorns. Their deep roots have stood the test of time and enabled them to remain fruitful through drought and storm. Give thanks for this sign of the Lord's steadfast faithfulness in uncertain times and His promise of future growth and harvest, material and spiritual. Covid-19

has led to businesses closing and job losses nationally. Rural pubs can't trade under the new regulations. Many rural communities are heavily dependent on tourism, hospitality, and seasonal work, and coronavirus has further exposed the weaknesses of this narrow economic base: yet those communities also have great potential to contribute to the recovery of the nation's economy. Pray for all who have lost jobs and businesses, asking especially that they will find a hope and a future in the One whose plans for us are for our welfare and peace (Jeremiah 29:11).

Pray: for Christians and churches to play a part in creating new local economies in rural areas. (Psalm 1:1-3)

More: villagehope.uk/hftc/october-2020/

Churches call for 'urgency and generosity' in Brexit negotiations

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the Church of Ireland, the Methodist Church in Ireland, the Irish Council of Churches, and the Roman Catholic Church have insisted it is in everyone's interests to achieve the clarity and security a Brexit agreement will provide. They have also reaffirmed their commitment to protect the 1998 Good Friday Agreement - which established a new era of non-violence in Northern Ireland following 30 years of brutal sectarian conflict. The group stated, 'We do not underestimate the challenges faced by the negotiating parties in terms of the complexity and the significance of what is at stake. As church leaders on the island of Ireland, we have welcomed the important commitment of both parties in the negotiations to the protection of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement in all its parts. We hope that the agreement will serve as a source of inspiration and a foundation to build upon, as we continue to work through the Brexit process.'

Pray: for negotiators to develop positive relationships, and overcome all political, social, religious and economic barriers to achieve Brexit on God's agenda. (1 Corinthians 1:10)

More: premierchristian.news/en/news/article/churches-across-island-of-ireland-call-for-urgency-and-generosity-in-final-brexit-negotiations

Mother of autistic daughter challenges gender clinic

A mother is taking a gender clinic to court to prevent it giving sex-change drugs to her autistic daughter. She wants to prevent youngsters making 'catastrophic' decisions that they live to regret. The woman, called 'Mrs A' for legal reasons, fears her 16-year-old daughter will be fast-tracked for transgender medical treatment once she is seen by clinicians at the Gender Identity Development Service in London. She says they will simply 'affirm' the girl's belief - mistaken in her mother's opinion - that she is really a boy. In reality, Mrs A believes her daughter's desire to be male is driven by having Asperger's syndrome, a form of autism. She said, 'This is bigger than just my child. The whole narrative is that if your child is confused about their gender, then transition is the only course of action. There doesn't seem to be any discussion of other possibilities. That's frightening.'

Pray: for an end to the practice of prescribing hormone blockers to under-18s or those lacking maturity or cognitive ability to give their consent. (Romans 1:26b)

More: www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8802181/Mother-gender-clinic-court-fight-says-wants-stop-children-making-catastrophic-decisions.html

PM's 'New Jerusalem' party speech

In a virtual Conservative conference speech in which Boris Johnson's gaze extended over the horizon, to the time when our national conversation is no longer dominated by coronavirus. He said he wanted to build a 'new Jerusalem', with opportunity for all and improved housing and healthcare. He warned the UK could not return to normal after the pandemic, which would be a 'catalyst' for major change; and rejected suggestions he had 'lost his mojo' as 'drivel'. He wants to see the back of coronavirus and the 'erosion of liberties' it had led to. He wants to see the country flourishing again. He said, 'Even in the darkest moments we can see the bright future ahead, and we can see how to build it and we will build it together.'

Pray: for Boris's declaration, 'we must build back better', to become a reality. (Proverbs 27:17)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-54435175

'Big Winter Sleepout' is back

You may be apart but you can sleep out together. London City Mission are inviting people to spend the night of Saturday 21 November sleeping outside to raise money and awareness of those in London facing this winter without a home. The 2020 Sleepout event is in support of the Webber Street Homeless Day Centre, which offers practical help and the hope of Christ to the homeless. This year it will be a virtual, fun activity with online talks from those working at Webber Street with other people joining you from all over the country live via Zoom. The organisers say, 'There's loads of exciting ways to jump into a sleeping bag and make heaps of difference. It's an exciting and challenging way to get others to support you and raise money together for people living on the streets in London. For more information go to <https://www.lcm.org.uk/sleepout>

Pray: for more people to catch the vision and become involved in helping the homeless. (2 Thessalonians 3:13)

More: mailchi.mp/lcm/its-backthe-big-winter-sleepout

New Covid-19 restrictions likely next week

Covid restrictions will be tightened with pub and restaurant closures in some areas. Overnight stays away from home in these areas could also be banned. A three-tier lockdown system is being planned. The NHS is worried about the disease's spread and patients losing out on other treatments. No 11 is fearful about the impact on the economy. It's No 10's job to worry about all of it, then reach a conclusion. Pray for the leaders and their advisors as they face a complicated equation. The Academy of Medical Colleges called on people to abide 'strictly' to coronavirus measures to prevent NHS services from becoming overwhelmed. It says we could soon be back to where we were in April if we are not all extremely careful. Meanwhile the MP Margaret Ferrier caught coronavirus but then attended church. See <https://premierchristian.news/en/news/article/margaret-ferrier-attended-church-service-after-developing-coronavirus-symptoms> Northern England currently has growing numbers of hospital admissions and more elderly in intensive care.

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-54457377

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-54435638

Elisa arrived home just in time to see Islamists murder her father and her husband, who was a pastor. Her uncle had already been beheaded. Grief-stricken and fearing for their lives, Elisa and 18 family members joined 200,000 others fleeing the Islamists' advance. This year the insurgents, who have been active in northern Mozambique for three years, have pledged allegiance to the self-proclaimed Islamic State (IS). The thousands displaced by the repeated, devastating attacks have fled to other parts of the country where conditions are crowded and resources are stretched. Front-line workers have reported burnt and destroyed churches, schools, clinics and police stations. As Christian workers provide comfort and food to the displaced, they are also offering Bibles to give hurting people the hope of Jesus Christ. Pray for an end to the ongoing violence. Pray also that the many enduring this trauma will gain hope and eternal life through faith in Christ.

Pray: for God to anoint the Voice of the Martyrs workers with wisdom and protection as they help the persecuted in Mozambique. (Psalm 91:1)

More: etools.vomusa.org/a/vombm/viewasweb/vom_bulk_email_202010_02_web.html

Israel: Haredi Jews flout pandemic lockdown

Haredi Jews are more conservative and reclusive than modern orthodox Jews. Some Haredi are ignoring lockdown laws and embarrassing their peers who are socially distancing and wearing masks. Recently Rabbi Mordechai Leifer died of Covid-19 complications. Ashdod, his city, is one of the 'red' cities where infection is especially high. However neither the rampant virus spread that led to the nationwide lockdown, nor the fact that the virus was spreading especially quickly through Ashdod's Haredi community prevented thousands of them from crowding together for his funeral, ignoring coronavirus restrictions and violating the law. A handful of police tried to hold the crowd at bay, but the mourners formed a tight-knit ring beyond the reach of the officers. When the funeral dispersed, some mourners resisted police efforts to scatter the crowd and even began rioting. Haredi make up 12% of the population but their morbidity rates are four times those of the general population.

Pray: for respect of the virus to replace indifference and obeying the law to replace contempt. (Exodus 23:2a)

More: www.timesofisrael.com/embarrassed-and-pummeled-by-outside-criticism-haredim-despair-of-virus-fight/

USA: Donald Trump's pandemic message

Donald Trump took off his face mask to enter the White House after being hospitalised with coronavirus. This dismissive message - 'don't be afraid of Covid, don't let it dominate your life' - immediately met with angry statements saying he was putting Americans at risk. The American Medical Association warned that 'the only thing we have to fear is complacency'. Meanwhile the 74-year-old tweeted that he was feeling 'better than I did 20 years ago!' On 7 October Trump described his Covid-19 illness as a blessing from God. He wants all Americans to have access to the treatment he was given, even though the drug has not been approved by federal regulators and its use is known to carry a risk affecting behaviour and judgment. Coronavirus has claimed over 210,000 American lives, and many are saying his message was 'a slap in the face' to bereaved families. He has refused to take part in a TV debate with Joe Biden because it would have to take place virtually.

Pray: for God to give Americans the wisdom to avoid worsening the pandemic. (Proverbs 2:6)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-54455040

USA: Hurricane Delta

On 6 October Louisiana's governor warned, 'It is time to prepare for Hurricane Delta as it intensifies in the Caribbean. It is common for people to experience hurricane fatigue during a busy season, but we need everyone to take this threat seriously.' Delta is the 10th named storm in America this season. After tearing down trees and power lines across Mexico's Yucatan peninsula, Delta grew in size as it approached the northern Gulf Coast on 9 October. Life-threatening storm surges and hurricane-force winds are expected in the Louisiana coast, with as much as 12 inches of rain in places. State and local officials are shoring up levees, sandbagging and taking other protection measures in areas still recovering from Hurricane Laura, which roared ashore in August. Over 6,600 Laura evacuees remain in hotels around the state, mainly in New Orleans, because their homes are too heavily damaged to return. Pray for their peace of mind.

Pray: for all who are preparing for, experiencing and cleaning up after flash floods. (Psalm 91:11)

More: eu.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2020/10/07/hurricane-delta-track-louisiana-mississippi-mexico-path/5907236002/

Kyrgyzstan: days of unrest, no clear leadership

As Kyrgyzstan slides into a political crisis Russia described the current situation, with the country lacking clear leadership, as 'chaotic'. Border guards were given a list of people barred from leaving the country, ostensibly to ensure security amid the unrest that has toppled the government. Russia's Tass news agency described the people in that list as 'high-ranking' officials. The former Soviet republic has seen thousands protest against the results of the 4 October parliamentary election which handed victory to establishment parties. The results were annulled after demonstrators seized government buildings and freed jailed ex-president Almazbek Atambayev. Rallies forced the Kyrgyz cabinet to resign, leaving the country with no clear leadership. Three opposition groups have each proposed candidates for an interim prime minister who would need to oversee a repeat vote in the coming months, local media said. Meanwhile, the outgoing parliament has split into two groups, which have been meeting separately outside the headquarters ransacked by protesters.

Pray: for a parliament to convene and install a legitimate cabinet that would prevent further destabilisation of the country. (James 3:13)

More: www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/10/8/kremlin-says-kyrgyzstan-is-in-chaos-and-needs-stabilising

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