

# Prayer Alert

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**A voice of one calling in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.'**  
(Isaiah 40:3)

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

You may like to explore our new online [Prayer Alert Prayer Wall](#) where we can add our own prayers and praise, interactively. We trust that you will find this helpful and encouraging, as we pray from our homes during lockdown.

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

### [USA: unity is Christ's priority](#)

At a time of deep racial tension, two pastors - Derrick Hawkins, middle-aged and white, and Jay Stewart, young and black - have united their culturally segregated churches. The pair are leading the journey of racial reconciliation by example. In 2014 Pastor Derrick visited Jay's church service and asked him to mentor him as he prepared to take over the role of senior pastor in his church. They began meeting and established a great friendship. In 2016, they decided to go beyond the norm and merge their completely culturally different ministries. 90% of African-American Christians worship in all-black churches. 90% of white American Christians worship in all-white churches. The pair believe God has a 'better narrative of unity', and want Christians to step out of their comfort zones and reflect the bride of Christ. Stewart said the risks of forming relationships with those who look different from you is worth the reward that comes from doing so.

Praise: for this example of racial unity to be repeated across the nations in and outside the church. (John 17:21)

More: [www.christianpost.com/news/how-a-white-church-and-a-black-church-felt-led-to-merge.html?uid=6f9e8ab413](http://www.christianpost.com/news/how-a-white-church-and-a-black-church-felt-led-to-merge.html?uid=6f9e8ab413)

### [Lebanon: Muslim convert witnesses for Jesus - despite risks](#)

14-year-old Mohammed, a Muslim street child without parental supervision, attended a local Sunday school for the entertainment and free food. Then he was challenged to receive Jesus. He said, 'I waited until I got home, then at 3:00 am I said, "Lord Jesus, please help me. I am desperate, helpless, hopeless. I cannot take it any more. I need you." Then within half an hour I slept, and I woke up in the morning excited. I took one of the many New Testaments from Sunday school and put it in my school bag and went to school and started telling people about my experience.' He was thrilled that he had found the answers to his troubling questions, not where he expected in Islam, but in Christianity, and he boldly told everyone about Jesus. This turned more than a few heads. God had a plan for his life; to read his wonderful story, click the 'More' button.

Praise: God for the supernatural ways that He changes lives and spreads salvation. (Acts 1:8)

More: [godreports.com/2020/12/muslim-convert-boldly-witnesses-for-jesus-in-middle-east-despite-risks/](http://godreports.com/2020/12/muslim-convert-boldly-witnesses-for-jesus-in-middle-east-despite-risks/)

### [USA: movie based on worship song](#)

Hollywood filmmaker DeVon Franklin and worship leader and Pastor Cory Asbury have teamed up to turn a worship song, Reckless Love, into a feature film. Based on Asbury's difficult relationship with his father, the movie explores how that vital relationship impacted the singer's personal view of God. Cory has worked with the Bethel Music Collective since 2015, and this song has been number one in Billboard's Christian Songs chart and is sung in churches globally. He was approached by Franklin, the Christian filmmaker behind

Miracles of Heaven, Breakthrough and the animated Christmas film The Star. When he was asked to share his story he was hesitant. Franklin said, 'Cory, what if this film is bigger than you and your story? What if it brings healing to your dad and dads all across the world?' That question decided it.

Praise: God for a film that will reflect the powerful love of Christ; may it bless many. (Ephesians 1:3)

More: [www.christianpost.com/entertainment/devon-franklin-cory-asbury-making-reckless-love-movie.html](http://www.christianpost.com/entertainment/devon-franklin-cory-asbury-making-reckless-love-movie.html)

## British Isles

### Vaccination programme

On 8 December a mass Covid-19 vaccination programme began, starting with the elderly, health workers, and carers. The next day, after two NHS workers suffered allergic reactions to the vaccine, a warning was issued that such people should not be given it. Both women have a significant history of allergic reactions and need to carry an adrenaline auto-injector with them. There are still many questions that the public have over the vaccine's safety: [see \(https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/vaccines-and-immunization-what-is-vaccination\)](https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/vaccines-and-immunization-what-is-vaccination) Many are asking, 'How can we be sure the vaccine is safe with such a short testing period?' Pray for the WHO, scientists, and experts on human medicine to be given enough media coverage to answer all fears and questions clearly, so that the anti-vax misinformation in social media is silenced. [See also https://www.telegraph.co.uk/global-health/science-and-disease/coronavirus-news-vaccine-pfizer-nhs-oxford-covid-uk-cases/](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/global-health/science-and-disease/coronavirus-news-vaccine-pfizer-nhs-oxford-covid-uk-cases/)

Pray: for a smooth rollout of training healthcare workers and social care staff, admin of consent records and all documentation, and guidance for what to expect after vaccination. (Colossians 4:6)

More: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-51176409](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-51176409)

### Catholic bishops comment on vaccine

Catholic leaders are encouraging people to receive Covid vaccines despite some ethical concerns regarding their creation, and fears of committing a sin by being immunised. The bishops' conference has urged people to disregard the rumours that the AstraZeneca vaccine may have been made from aborted foetal tissue, namely the lung tissue of an aborted male foetus. However, researchers at the University of Bristol said that the aborted tissue was not part of the vaccine, but only used for testing it. While the researchers said they injected the vaccine into MRC-5 cells derived from an aborted foetus to test its effectiveness, the vaccine itself does not contain MRC-5 cells.

Pray: for the church, the NHS, and virologists to reassure those with moral concerns. (Romans 14:19)

More: [www.christianpost.com/news/british-catholic-bishops-back-covid-19-vaccine-say-it-is-not-sin.html?uid=6f9e8ab413](http://www.christianpost.com/news/british-catholic-bishops-back-covid-19-vaccine-say-it-is-not-sin.html?uid=6f9e8ab413)

### Making churches vaccination centres

The Church of England says it is admirable that many churches want to be vaccination centres, but they need to think about the practical implications, such as potentially leaving the church unable to hold services for up to a year. With the Pfizer / BioNtech vaccine being rolled out already and the prospect of two more vaccines on the way, venues across the country will need to be temporarily converted into vaccination centres in order to inoculate the population. The Royal College of Nursing has said, 'Buildings with the capacity for large-scale vaccination options such as sports and leisure centres, community centres and religious venues may offer the potential to facilitate a mass throughput of people.' Vaccination centres are also decided by local NHS trusts with local authorities, GPs, and pharmacies. The Church of England has published guidance about what they need to consider before offering: [see https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/COVID%2019%20Churches%20as%20vaccination%20centres%20v1.0.pdf](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/COVID%2019%20Churches%20as%20vaccination%20centres%20v1.0.pdf)

Pray: for wise decisions to be made when considering adaptation of venues. (Ephesians 5:15)

More: [premierchristian.news/en/news/article/guidance-released-on-making-churches-vaccination-centres](http://premierchristian.news/en/news/article/guidance-released-on-making-churches-vaccination-centres)

### The pandemic and families

Year-end school vacations will be lengthened in several countries to increase the time for social distancing. Many believe this policy will create more stress for parents juggling jobs and family. A national survey of 2,559 parents in June found a positive side for families and marriages in pandemic lockdown. Couples considering divorcing dropped by a third, and another survey revealed 25% of parents were getting on better with their children, with just 4% reporting worsened relationships. The media reported these findings as 'weird but true'. However while lockdown affirmed marriage commitment, one in five cohabiting parents believed their relationship had worsened. They were more likely to be unhappy, get on each other's nerves, or quarrel. Also, when schools were closed, many children began to appreciate the privilege of going to school and enjoyed having more time with their parents, improving family closeness during the corona time.

Pray: for all parents, married or cohabiting, to be blessed with peace and appreciate families and friends when in stressful situations. (Psalm 1:1)

More: [us9.campaign-archive.com/](http://us9.campaign-archive.com/)

### Anti-semitic knife attack at M&S

A 57-year-old Muslim man has been arrested after stabbing two women in a Marks and Spencer store in Burnley. During the attack the man shouted anti-Semitic expletives. Whilst police say it is not being treated as a terror attack, a counter-terror team is investigating whether the double stabbing had a jihadist element. The injuries to the two women are serious but not life-threatening. Jewish News reports that the Community Security Trust, a charity charged with defending Jews in Britain, is working with police, but revealed few further details. The police said, 'We recognise that this incident will have caused concern in the community. We have a dedicated team of officers and staff carrying out enquiries and extra patrols.'

Pray: for God to protect communities from any further attacks. (Malachi 3:6)

More: [www.cufi.org.uk/news/uk-two-stabbed-in-apparent-anti-semitic-attack-at-burnley-ms/](http://www.cufi.org.uk/news/uk-two-stabbed-in-apparent-anti-semitic-attack-at-burnley-ms/)

## Manchester police 'failed to record 80,000 crimes in a year'

An inspection found that England's second-largest police force had failed to record over 80,000 crimes in a year, and closed cases without proper investigation. About 220 crimes a day went unrecorded in the year up to June 2020. The inspectors said their service to victims of crime was a 'serious cause of concern'. One in five of all crimes and one in four violent crimes reported were not recorded. Officers prematurely closed investigations because the victim did not support police action. Inspector Zoe Billingham said, 'In too many cases the force did not properly record evidence, particularly in domestic abuse cases: seven in 10 were closed on this basis. Despite being urged in 2016 to improve, concerns have not been addressed. In their defence the police force said the inspection coincided with a troubled computer system and challenges during the Covid lockdown'. A further inspection will take place after six months.

Pray: for the force to address issues and improve their service to victims of crime. (Isaiah 1:17)

More: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-55251366](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-55251366)

## Fighting coronavirus

On 2 December England launched a three-tier system to combat virus spread, and the Pfizer/BioNTech coronavirus vaccine was approved for use. It is hoped the tier system will help safeguard the gains made recently in containing the virus, and that the vaccines will ultimately make it possible for the nation to reclaim livelihoods and regain quality of life. However currently over 55 million people are in the strictest two tiers and cannot mix indoors with those in other households. Many feel their position in the tier system is unjust. Pray for a government review of the 'human geography' to be made sooner rather than later, so that adjustments can be made where appropriate to avoid unlawful tier crossing in the run-up to Christmas. Also pubs in tier two can only function as a restaurant and serve alcohol at the table with a substantial meal. Pray for the Government to give appropriate support to the struggling hospitality industry.

Pray: for God to bless all communication between the Government, NHS, and the army of volunteers rolling out the immunisation programme across the population. (Romans 8:31)

More: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-55153899](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-55153899)

## Europe

### Venice flooded again as new dam system fails

A massive new flood defence system called MOSE, aimed at protecting Venice's lagoon during high tide, was finally installed in October. This week St Mark's Square was again under water, after MOSE did not activate due to human error. Residents, long accustomed to perennial high water events, pulled on their rubber boots once more to deal with flooding that reached a high of 4.5 feet above sea level. Waters drowned the square and invaded the famous basilica as shopkeepers blocked their entrances with wood panels to keep the water out. The MOSE project began in 2003 but was plagued by cost overruns of \$6 billion, corruption scandals and delays.

Pray: for the government and other officials to resolve all mistakes of costing, operation and building, so that the public no longer have to cope with such flood conditions. (Luke 14:28)

More: [www.cbsnews.com/news/venice-flooded-as-new-8-billion-dam-system-fails-to-activate/](http://www.cbsnews.com/news/venice-flooded-as-new-8-billion-dam-system-fails-to-activate/)

### Spain: lions have coronavirus

Four lions at Barcelona Zoo have tested positive for coronavirus after being given Covid tests when a zookeeper noticed they were displaying suspicious symptoms. The lions were familiar enough with the zookeepers to allow them to swab their noses and mouths in the same way that humans are tested. Although it is not yet known how the lions contracted Covid, two human staff at the zoo have also tested positive. The zoo has contacted its counterparts at the Bronx Zoo in New York, where the first confirmed cases of Covid in large cats was reported. They all recovered. There have been cases of Covid in domestic dogs and cats and large outbreaks among mink around the world. It is not fully known which animals can and cannot contract Covid from contact with infected humans, and no confirmation of animals re-infecting humans.

Pray: for God to enable virologists to discover the pathway of novel viruses between species. (Proverbs 25:2)

More: [www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/lions-covid-zoo-spain-barcelona-b1768107.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/lions-covid-zoo-spain-barcelona-b1768107.html)

## Worldwide

### Brexit deal in the balance

After months of talks, the UK's vision of the future does not appear to be compatible with the EU's viewpoint. For the first time in a world of highly moveable deadlines, Boris Johnson and EU president Ursula von der Leyen announced that a final decision must be taken by 13 December. There is a chance still that a couple of frantic days could result in a change. Please continue to pray for God to be at the core of all the negotiations between Lord Frost and Michel Barnier. Meanwhile, the EU has published contingency plans - should talks collapse. The plans will aim to ensure basic UK-EU air and road connectivity, as well as allowing the possibility of fishing access to each other's waters. See also <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-55259144>

Pray: for God's will to be done here on earth as it is in heaven. (Matthew 6:10)

More: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-55255003](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-55255003)

### DR Congo: Christians murdered and raped in jihadi attacks

Between 20 November and 3 December, at least thirty Christians were killed, and ten young women and girls raped, in attacks on five villages by the extremist Allied Democratic Forces. Locals described scenes of terrified Christians flooding into the streets as the jihadists surrounded churches, armed with guns, clubs, machetes, swords and axes. Fourteen Christians with severe wounds are in hospital in a critical condition, and at least fifteen people were abducted. A survivor, hiding in the latrine, watched through a vent as his wife and three children were murdered. A pastor In Mayitike said the militants tried to force villagers to convert to Islam before killing them. When his family refused to convert, they shot his wife in the head and cut their four children into pieces with a sword.

Pray: for the army and political leaders successfully to launch strategies that will end terrorism and bring peace into the region. (Psalm 34:14)

More: [news.barnabasfund.org/At-least-30-Congolese-Christians-murdered--ten-raped-in-string-of-jihadi-attacks/](https://news.barnabasfund.org/At-least-30-Congolese-Christians-murdered--ten-raped-in-string-of-jihadi-attacks/)

### **USA: Christian geneticist urges churches to remain closed**

Famed Christian geneticist Francis Collins has urged churches to remain closed to prevent the spread of Covid-19 amongst congregations. Speaking to the Southern Baptist Convention, Collins said that churches gathering in person are a 'source of considerable concern' because of the potential for 'super-spreading'. Meanwhile the US Supreme Court ordered a federal district court to reconsider its support for restrictions on indoor religious services in California. The restrictions are being contested in several other American courts by Christians insisting their liberties are being infringed. Collins also urged Christians to reject the idea that mask requirements 'invade your personal freedom'. He said, 'This is a lifesaving device. When you put on that mask, you're protecting yourself from other people, but mostly you're protecting them from you. You're doing the unselfish, loving thing of saying, "I'm going to protect people from me". That's a Christian action if ever I've heard one.'

Pray: for the Church to set a positive example of trusting and obeying the directives of geneticists and those in positions of authority. Also, pray for Francis Collins and his vital work at the National Institutes of Health; may God be with them in all they are doing to combat Covid-19. (Isaiah 50:10b)

More: [premierchristian.news/en/news/article/francis-collins-encourages-churches-to-remain-closed](https://premierchristian.news/en/news/article/francis-collins-encourages-churches-to-remain-closed)

### **South Georgia: huge iceberg threatens wildlife**

Experts from around the world are anxiously monitoring the world's largest iceberg - the size of Devon - as it creeps close to the shores of South Georgia, putting the lives of thousands of seals, penguins and other wildlife at risk. It is travelling towards a wildlife haven, a breeding ground for over a million animals. It is estimated to weigh one trillion tons and is only 200 metres deep, so it can get much closer to land before running aground. It is travelling at 1mph. Dr Andrew Fleming from the British Antarctic Survey, which has two monitoring stations on South Georgia, said, 'The next two to three weeks are going to be key in deciding whether the berg will hit South Georgia or narrowly miss it. The fact that it is still in one piece is unusual; it is the biggest iceberg in the world right now, and probably in the top five ever.'

Pray: for experts to find a way to save 450,000 pairs of king penguins, two million yellow-crested macaroni penguins, and thousands of gentoo and chinstrap penguins. (Psalm 46:2-3)

More: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9023159/First-picture-trillion-ton-iceberg-travelling-devastating-collision-course-South-Georgia.html](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9023159/First-picture-trillion-ton-iceberg-travelling-devastating-collision-course-South-Georgia.html)

### **India / China: water war**

Beijing and New Delhi have long been at loggerheads over a disputed border in the Himalayan mountains ([see](#)) This led to massive skirmishes earlier this year. The two Asian powers are battling it out over water. China will build a hydroelectric project in one of the largest rivers in the world, which Indians call the Brahmaputra River. After Beijing announced its biggest hydropower project in history, New Delhi said that its aggressive plans could have major implications for India's food and water security, and would give China power to use waterways as a 'weapon.' Indian officials are now considering a rival water project in the same waters, from Arunachal Pradesh to Bangladesh. Analysts say that things could quickly spiral out of control because the two powers have not honoured a water-sharing agreement, which usually governs plans and discussions surrounding new water projects.

Pray: for the two governments to meet and agree on water-sharing and sensitive water projects. (Psalm 23:2)

More: [us12.campaign-archive.com/?e=2b376728db&u=7404e6dc8018f49c82e941d&id=3f2c280a8a](https://us12.campaign-archive.com/?e=2b376728db&u=7404e6dc8018f49c82e941d&id=3f2c280a8a)

### **Turkey: bogus reforms 'charm offensive'**

Last week we prayed for change and the need for reforms to alter the way Turkey polices, prosecutes, judges, and imprisons its residents. Almost all Kurdish mayors have been replaced by government-appointed administrators. Judges whose verdicts disagree with government diktats are probed and often punished. 63,014 people were prosecuted for insulting President Erdoğan between 2014 and 2019; 9,554 of them were sentenced. A political analyst said Erdoğan's reform program survived only nine days, and his charm offensive is fake and is too little too late. He wants Turkey to continue as a third-world democracy while hoping to lure foreign investment on the same terms as a Western democracy, but investors are leaving. The economy is in freefall, with double-digit inflation and central bank interest rates up to 15%, while unemployment rises sharply. Erdogan promises to democratise, hoping to reverse the economic downfall, but that will not happen without real reforms.

Pray: for Turkey's constitutional court and the European Court of Human Rights to resist Erdogan's manipulation, sanction changes and the failing political ethos. (Matthew 6:13)

More: [www.gatestoneinstitute.org/16797/erdogan-bogus-democratic-reforms](https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/16797/erdogan-bogus-democratic-reforms)

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