

Prayer Alert

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You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast because they trust in You. (Isaiah 26:3)

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.

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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

[Injured MP to walk marathon for 'amazing charity'](#)

Rehman Chishti, former PM's special envoy for freedom of belief, heard of Action for the Church in Need when it brought Asia Bibi's husband and daughter to see him. He became more familiar with how ACN aims to make the lives of persecuted people better, and decided to run the London marathon in October on its behalf. However, he slipped a disk, causing serious injury that initially left him barely able to stand. Now he will do the 26 miles walking five kilometres every other day. It is the most he can do due to pain. He said, 'I will do the walk in segments as I can't risk injuring myself any more. To me, politics is about fulfilling your commitments. On that basis I am adamant I will do that by walking the duration of the marathon.'

Praise: God for Rehman's commitment to religious freedom. (Proverbs 3:26)

More: acnuk.org/news/uk-injured-mp-to-walk-marathon-for-amazing-charity/

[David Suchet: total faith in Jesus](#)

Agatha Christie's detective Hercule Poirot was played by David Suchet who, in 13 series, made the part very much his own. Coming from a Jewish/Christian background he was agnostic until he was in the bath thinking about the afterlife and resurrection. His thoughts puzzled him, so he decided to investigate further by purchasing a New Testament. He was fascinated by the Roman Empire and started reading the book of Romans. Much was not understood until a passage spoke of a way of life he'd been searching for through most of his adult life - a coherent philosophy he could relate to. He said, 'The Christian worldview is love.' He added that his Christianity has stood him in good stead in his profession and private life: 'I wouldn't claim for a moment I've always succeeded in following the way of love. But I know what's right and wrong. God is in control and knows what's going on.'

Praise: God for the wide-ranging, wonderful ways that He calls people into His Kingdom. (Romans 8:28)

More: www.newlifepublishing.co.uk/articles/david-suchet-my-total-faith-in-jesus/

British Isles

[One million more Covid internet gamblers](#)

Online betting rose significantly during the pandemic, the Gambling Commission has confirmed. Figures from the industry watchdog show a 12% rise in the number of adults gambling on the web between 2019 and 2020. Half of those did so using a mobile device, such as a smartphone. Matt Zarb-Cousin of Clean Up Gambling said, 'Online gambling exploded in lockdown, with firms posting record profits. At least 60% come from those experiencing gambling problems, and online slots provide most of the revenue.' He added, 'Consumer protections, such as limits to stakes on slots, as on fixed-odds betting terminals, are badly needed in the gambling review.' Researchers discovered that 21% of the 10,000 gambling premises in Britain are in the most deprived areas of the country, with only 2% in the least deprived areas.

Pray: for the Government to recognise the financial, social and health problems affecting not just the gambler but many of those closest to them, and to revise the 2005 Gambling Act. (Ecclesiastes 5:10)

More: www.christian.org.uk/news/one-million-more-covid-internet-gamblers/?e270821

Refugees in UK need so much

A Brighton doctor helping recently-arrived Afghan refugees in the UK said it was 'very emotional' witnessing children beginning to play and smile again. 'Many arrived dehydrated, malnourished and exhausted after days waiting outside the airport in Kabul,' said 27-year-old Dr Luke Tester. 'I can't imagine the suffering they must have gone through.' He praised the resilience of the refugees, with many arriving unwell and without any possessions. 'People are exhausted and ill, having gone through the unimaginable, but are still comforting each other. Children who are realising they're safe are beginning to play and smile again. There's been such amazing support for these people from the public; I just hope it continues,' he said. The British Red Cross said that over £1m had been raised so far to help provide the refugees with essentials such as food, warm clothing, blankets and wash stuff.

Pray: for the churches, aid agencies, social services, NHS and others to have all the manpower and provisions they need to enable them to bring relief to every refugee. (Proverbs 19:17)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/live/world-58279900

School uniforms unaffordable

The average cost of uniform for a primary school child is £315, £337 for a secondary pupil, according to the Children's Society. Sadly, a law to make schools place affordability at the centre of their uniform policy will not be in place in time for the start of this school year, meaning that parents will not benefit from the changes until September 2022. The rules will limit the number of logos on uniforms, allowing parents to buy more items from supermarkets and shops other than a school's main supplier. Meanwhile clothes banks like Cradley Heath Community Link are offering school uniforms and PE kits which have been donated. They are providing uniforms for nine schools in the area at no cost, and are inundated with requests. One visitor, Darren Wright, said that if he had to buy it he's looking at £300 for one child, impossible for people on Universal Credit. See <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-birmingham-58335307>

Pray: for more clothes banks and uniform swap shops to be launched, and for the Government to prevent any further delays to the introduction of school uniform legislation. (Luke 3:11)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-58359541

BBC's admission of bias

Last week, Ofcom publicly withdrew from Stonewall's Diversity Champions programme, citing as the reason a need to avoid conflict or a risk of perceived bias. They are the latest in a growing list of government departments and public bodies to acknowledge that the advice given by Stonewall is highly partisan, often factually inaccurate, and sometimes misleading. None of this, however, appears to have impacted on the BBC. In a statement issued on 26 August, the corporation defiantly repeated its commitment to workplace inclusion, saying it would remain associated with Stonewall's LGBTQ+ Diversity Champions' programme (<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/bbc-defends-its-support-for-stonewall-programme-pdk3hhzxd>). A sizeable number of BBC staff are deeply unhappy with this. Senior presenters have complained that continuing support for the controversial programme indicates clear bias and partiality, with one commenting, 'if we're all being lectured about impartiality, and quite rightly so, why are we signed up to a scheme that is obviously partial?'

Pray: for Tim Davie, the director-general of the BBC, to recognise that they are prioritising the views and behaviours of a group that is only 2.2% of the population. (1 John 1:8)

More: www.msn.com/en-gb/news/uknews/ofcom-withdraws-from-stonewall-lgbt-diversity-scheme/ar-AANK8Jn

NHS needs extra £10bn next year

Health bosses say that patients will be put at risk unless the NHS receives an extra £10bn next year to recover from the pandemic. A five-year settlement will see the funding increase by £33bn by 2023-24, but Covid has added to costs in a way that could not have been envisaged when Theresa May's government agreed the settlement in 2019. NHS leaders say the pandemic has led to pressures never seen in the history of the health service. Hospital layouts have had to be overhauled, services moved off site into new buildings, extra infection control procedures have been brought in, and the scale of sickness being seen means extra staff are needed to care for patients. At the same time, there is a growing backlog of traditional care such as hip and knee operations. Instead of budget growth by £4bn under the existing settlement, NHS leaders need almost £15bn.

Pray: for God to urge the Government to find the resources needed to meet the increasing costs of healing and saving lives. (Philippians 4:19)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/live/uk-58418535

HGV driver shortages

Many businesses are complaining about the UK's shortage of lorry drivers causing serious supply chain problems. The coronavirus pandemic, Brexit, and tax changes have contributed to a lack of qualified drivers. The shortfall is 100,000 workers. Tom Reddy has driven lorries for over 15 years. His pay recently increased from £17.50 an hour to £24.50 - a 40% jump. 'I've never known anything like it,' he said. 'But they could pay me £80,000 a year and it wouldn't be enough. I want to leave.' While Brexit is a factor, it is the shifts, regularly sleeping in a lay-by and the rude way in which members of the public talk to him that make him no longer want to continue in the job. He also blames gender imbalance in the workplace, racism, and xenophobia. While he welcomes moves by the industry to give attention to drivers' mental health, this isn't enough for him.

Pray: for the Road Haulage Association and the government to iron out the many challenges now facing the haulage industry. (Luke 6:38)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-58394903

The Good Childhood Report

The Children's Society said modern life continues to erode young people's happiness and children deserve drastic changes. 306,000 10- to 15-year-olds are unhappy with their lives: in 2010 it was 173,000. ¼ million children did not cope with changes during the pandemic. 1 in 7 girls and 1 in 8 boys are unhappy with their looks, and 1 in 9 children are unhappy with school. Society is tragically failing our children. At school they are pressurised to wear make-up and have the right figure. Children unhappy with their lives at 14 are most likely to have mental health issues by age 17, including self-harm and suicide attempts. Pray for those suffering with mental health issues to come up out of the pit into the light of life.

Pray: for social media to be more body positive and represent people's appearance truthfully without digital enhancement. (Psalm 101:3)

More: www.childrenssociety.org.uk/good-childhood

Europe

Italy: overcrowded boat with 539 migrants

The Italian coastguard rescued 539 migrants crammed onto a decrepit fishing boat off the tiny southern Italian island of Lampedusa. A Médecins Sans Frontières nurse said the passengers included three women and several unaccompanied minors in the dangerously packed boat which would have travelled about 300 kilometres from the Libyan coast to Lampedusa. At least twenty of the migrants who were examined by medical personnel had scars from torture. 'They had burn wounds, firearms wounds. They were very worn down, some were dehydrated.' Local reports suggest some of them had been falsely imprisoned in Libya. Italian prosecutors have opened an inquiry into what may have happened. The nurse said she didn't know how long the fishing boat had been at sea, but they had spent weeks or even months in Libya awaiting passage in traffickers' boats in hopes of reaching Europe.

Pray: for the migrants to be healed physically and emotionally and given safe passage to a place to call home. (3 John 2)

More: www.smh.com.au/world/europe/decrepit-smuggling-boat-packed-with-539-migrants-found-off-italy-20210829-p58muy.html

Belarus: criminal charges for church's outdoor worship?

At a meeting in Parliament and in two letters, officials warned New Life Pentecostal Church that continuing to meet for worship in the car park of their seized church in Minsk could lead to administrative or criminal prosecution (maximum punishment four years' imprisonment). The church vowed to continue its worship. 'The authorities may initiate criminal charges,' Pastor Vyacheslav Goncharenko said. 'This is possible, given that they have gone as far as throwing us out of the building without compensation and imposing debts.' City and state religious affairs officials refused to discuss the threats. The church has held services outdoors every Sunday - in snow, rain, or hot sunshine - since officials evicted the congregation from its building on 17 February. Pray for God continually to reassure Pastor Goncharenko of His presence with him as he stands for freedom of religion in Minsk.

Pray: for the responsible officials - Anna Koronevskaya and Andrei Aryaev - to decide not to proceed with further persecution. (Isaiah 61:8)

More: www.forum18.org/archive.php

Worldwide

USA: Hurricane Ida

Ida, the strongest hurricane ever to make landfall in Louisiana, hit as Category 4 while the region's hospitals were under siege from rising Covid cases. Debbie and her family cowered on a stairway landing while four feet of muddy water rushed into her home. She and her son had earlier safely rescued her elderly parents from their home, but now they prayed the roof would not collapse on them all. 'God blessed us that we all survived,' she said after they were rescued. Her experience is just one of the tens of thousands rescued by crews in high-water trucks, helicopters and swamp boats desperately searching for survivors. Pray for Louisiana communities beginning the huge task of clearing debris and repairing damage. They are facing the depressing prospect of weeks without electricity in the stifling, late-summer heat because the region's power grid is down. On 2 September, New York City declared a state of emergency after flash flooding:
[see https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/world-us-canada-58418627](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/world-us-canada-58418627)

Pray: for those who have lost so much and are starting to build their lives all over again, for the resources to build homes, hospitals, schools and businesses, and for those without electricity. (Matthew 25:35-36)

More: abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/ida-inundates-areas-orleans-sparing-city-79739253

Pakistan to Afghanistan: Christian convoy

A convoy of 100+ Christians, including at least fifteen families, will leave Afghanistan to make a new life in Pakistan. It is not a hospitable country for Christians, but Afghanistan has become much worse with the Taliban in charge. Leaders of house churches have already received threatening letters from the Taliban, warning them that they know where they are and what they are doing. They are 'on a list.' The convoy is being led by a pastor who serves ten Afghan house churches. He was a Muslim until his life was turned around when someone shared the Gospel with him. The ages of the people in this convoy range from three months to 70 years. There are no buses, no trains running between Afghanistan and Pakistan: so this convoy will be taking, for lack of a better word, taxis. Ask God to give them strength and ask Him to frustrate the plans of any wanting to stop them.

Pray: for the provision of transport, food and lodging costs, for settlement assistance and for Taliban hearts to be changed just as God's light broke into the pastor's life. (Isaiah 55:1)

More: www.mnnonline.org/news/afghan-christian-convoy-heading-to-pakistan/

Burkina Faso: Islamic extremists attack Christians

Pastor Samuel lived in the north of Burkina Faso but had to flee from extremist attacks on his church and members of the Christian community. 'We don't know who the attackers are, nor do we know who is sponsoring them,' he said. 'All we know is that they attack Christians. These attacks have shattered the lives of our people. We are troubled and filled with pain over the deaths of our family members.' There are no open churches in parts of the northeast. Pastor Samuel lives in a camp for internally displaced people, praying with others there and encouraging them to not lose hope. Open Doors estimates there are over a million internally displaced people, and many are Christians. Believers who have converted from Islam also face significant pressure and opposition from their communities. Families may reject Christian converts, and new believers may be pressured to renounce their new faith.

Pray: for God to provide homes for those forced to flee, restore what has been taken from them, bring peace to the nation, and create an atmosphere where churches can open again. (Isaiah 30:15)

More: www.opendoorsuk.org/persecution/world-watch-list/burkina-faso/

Israel: US reopening consulate a 'bad idea'

Israel's foreign minister, Yair Lapid, has called the Biden administration's plan to reopen the US consulate in Jerusalem a 'bad idea' that could 'destabilize' Israel's new government. He said it would send the wrong message not only to the region or to the Palestinians, but also to other countries, adding, 'We don't want this to happen'. His comments come after Biden reportedly discussed the issue with Israel's ultraconservative prime minister, Naftali Bennett, last week at the White House. The Times of Israel cited unnamed officials as saying the Biden administration agreed to wait to open the consulate until after Bennett's fragile new government passes a budget in November.

Pray: for Israel's delicate structure of government to remain secure and constant, and for God to preserve the peace of Jerusalem. (Romans 15:13)

More: www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/09/israel-calls-us-plan-reopen-consulate-palestinians-bad-idea

Afghanistan: Illegal drug trafficking

As the Taliban secures its grip on Afghanistan, UN Security Council officials are warning that the militant group is reliant on drug trafficking as its primary sources of financing, and opium poppy production has increased significantly. They also said the problem of production of poppy-based drugs and methamphetamine was 'unaddressed' by the Afghan peace process, even though it remains the Taliban's largest single source of income. Opium has a destabilising and corrupting effect within Afghanistan and contributes significantly to the narcotics challenges facing the wider international community. Taliban financing is also sourced by other criminal activities including extortion, kidnapping for ransom, mineral exploitation, and revenues from tax collection in areas under their control or influence. The UN office of drugs and crime estimates that taxes collected from drug farmers alone were about \$14.5 million, while another \$46 to \$98 million comes in from heroin manufacturing and trafficking.

Pray: for God to protect the vulnerable from the Taliban's financial power. (2 Thessalonians 3:3)

More: vfinews.com/news/aug-27-2021/according-to-un-taliban-reliant-on-illegal-drug-trafficking

India: new wave of persecution

At least 30 Christians in India's Uttar Pradesh have recently been falsely accused of forced religious conversions. This was triggered after Hindu nationalists, including members of the BJP party, claimed two Muslim men forcefully converted 1,000 people. BJP politicians publicly praised the arrests and warned against fraudulent conversions of Hindus to other faiths. Now Christians in Uttar Pradesh are being attacked by radical Hindu nationalists justifying their assaults by falsely accusing the Christians of illegal conversions. Similar anti-conversion laws and abuse of Christians are being enacted in eight other states. 'This is a grave situation for Christians. There is zero response from the Yogi administration. The attacks are mainly perpetrated by hardcore Hindutva activists who enjoy the support of the politicians', said a church leader, who requested anonymity.

Pray: for God to protect His people from police and district officials who are demonising them for 'accepting a foreign religion' Pray for the surge in persecution to end. (Isaiah 41:10)

More: www.persecution.org/2021/07/23/new-wave-persecution-sweeps-across-indias-uttar-pradesh-state/

Japan: huge army of under-employed ex-housewives

There are many smart, educated women who could drive Japan out of its economic slump to a stunning economic recovery, but the rigid hiring system and male-dominated leadership block women from the best-paid jobs. Japan risks becoming a nation of bored housewives with university degrees. Parliament declared it would significantly increase the number of women in leadership by 2020, but the deadline quietly came and went without getting close to its target. Critics believe the aim had little to do with women thriving at work and more to do with an acute need for workers. The working-age population has been rapidly shrinking since the 1990s. Many women are stuck in part-time or dead-end roles which pay 40% lower than men. Companies are reluctant to have more women in their workforces, but the drive for change could come from international companies hiring graduates with gender equality.

Pray: for companies to change hiring practices so that there will be economic growth for Japan and equality for women. (Proverbs 31:26)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-58301604

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