

Prayer Alert

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In the morning, Lord, You hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before You and wait expectantly. (Psalm 5:3)

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

[South Asia prosecutor secures 100 convictions](#)

Praise God for a local public prosecutor who has just secured her 100th conviction against perpetrators of child abuse. IJM has been honoured to work closely with this courageous woman over the last five years. It is grateful to God for leaders like her, who are stepping up to protect children every day, and are very encouraged by her enduring compassion and pursuit of justice. Please continue to pray for this prosecutor's success and safety.

Praise: God for this prosecutor, and for global organisations working to protect vulnerable children from abuse. (Psalm 28:6-7)
More: www.ijm.org/vawc

[Colombia: churches' trauma healing groups](#)

Colombia is home to two million Venezuelan refugees who fled economic and political crises and now face adapting to and integrating into a foreign culture. But instead of finding support, they often find themselves isolated and discriminated against. Churches across Colombia have been reaching out to these refugees, letting them know they are not alone. Tearfund and local partners have been equipping churches to set up trauma healing groups, which have supported hundreds of women. It was at her local church's healing group that Julia finally found acceptance, community, and healing. 'It is the first support that I found here in Colombia for migrants like us. When I arrived at the church I found the peace that I previously did not have. I saw that it was like my family. I arrive and they hug me, I leave and they hug me. It really has made me think about changing my life.'

Praise: God for the trauma healing groups giving women a safe place to process their experiences, make new friends and gain a support network to help them overcome through God's word. (Philippians 4:13)
More: www.tearfund.org/stories/2021/09/making-the-church-a-safe-space-for-refugee-women

British Isles

[Seeds of prayer: the Good Shepherd](#)

At the RHS Chelsea Flower Show in September, the Bible Society's 'Psalm 23' garden attracted much attention (bit.ly/bspsalm23). Many were touched by the garden, by the psalm that inspired it, and by the Good Shepherd himself. One visitor said, 'I suffer from paranoid schizophrenia, I saw the garden and wanted to pray there. I've got a deep faith in God now, it's helping with the anxiety and voices' (bit.ly/bs23josh). Others are now creating Psalm 23 gardens in their localities. As individuals, schools and communities read the psalm and plan their own gardens, pray that they will hear the Lord speaking and come to know Him as their Shepherd and dwell with Him for ever. We can thank God that nature and gardens are attracting many different spiritualities and therapies, though some will need sifting to align with the truth.

Pray: for the Lord to lead more people to create gardens inspired by His Spirit. (John 10:14)
More: hopeforthecountryside.uk/seedsofprayer/

Tory donations disclosures

Mohamed Amersi, who partially funded Boris Johnson's campaign to become prime minister, also advised the telecoms firm Telia, which in 2010 made a controversial \$220m payment to a secretive offshore company. Oil executive Victor Fedotov, who gave £900,000 to 34 Tory MPs, made \$4bn from allegedly corrupt Russian pipeline deals, and is currently seeking government approval for a controversial energy link between the UK and France. Lubov Chernukhin has given over £1.8m to the Conservatives since 2012. The secret offshore wealth she shares with her husband, a former Russian minister, includes a London house worth £38m and a £10m Oxfordshire mansion. Mrs Chernukhin's lawyers say she is a British citizen and is entitled to do as she wishes with her money. High-profile foreign politicians and UK political donors have over 1,500 UK properties, bought secretly using offshore firms worth £4bn. See also <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2021/oct/04/major-tory-donor-advised-on-uzbekistan-deal-later-found-to-be-bribe-mohamed-amersi>

Pray: for the Government to create a public register of overseas entities who own UK real estate and create watertight laws to stamp out money laundering. (Proverbs 11:1a)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-58792393

Universal Credit and debt

The Universal Credit extra payments helping people through Covid have ended, amid fears that many lives will get worse not better this winter. 29-year-old Lynton Lockett is embarrassed to show people his kitchen. A leaking kitchen tap caused mould on the floor and walls. The dampness has brought an infestation of fruit flies. Lynton showed the kitchen to plumber James Anderson who runs a community initiative called DEPPER CIC that provides free heating and plumbing services to people who can't pay for them. James anticipates a 50% increase in calls for help this winter. He has started giving food parcels to struggling families. He said that the end of payments, the higher cost of living, a rise in gas prices and the end of furlough puts too much financial pressure on families. He added, 'You can't hide the truth. If this continues, people are going to die.' See also <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-58824121>

Pray: for the Government to repair any damage resulting from the end to additional payments and turn the tide of poverty with short-term and long-term policies that help the most needy. (Psalm 12:5)

More: news.sky.com/story/universal-credit-cut-if-this-continues-people-are-going-to-die-stark-warning-about-impact-of-uplift-payments-being-ended-12426923

Christian nurse suing NHS trust

Mary Onuoha, an operating theatre specialist at Croydon University Hospital, was bullied and pressured to remove her cross necklace while on duty. Mary says she was forced out of the job she loved after working there for 18 years. She is challenging the NHS trust for harassment, victimisation, and constructive unfair dismissal as they had breached her freedom to express her faith under the European Convention of Human Rights and the Equality Act. In August 2018 bosses ordered her to remove the cross which was a breach of NHS dress code and a 'health risk' to her and to patients. Mary argues that the dress code was applied inconsistently. Other nurses were not asked to remove jewellery, hijabs, saris, turbans or religious bracelets. Also Mary wore several lanyards at the same time with no anti-strangle clasps, yet her cross supposedly posed 'a risk of injury or infection'.

Pray: for this case to bring into question the freedom of Christians to manifest their faith in the workplace, especially in comparison to members of other faiths. (Isaiah 30:18)

More: premierchristian.news/en/news/article/christian-nurse-suing-nhs-trust-over-cross-necklace-ban

Concerns over transgender patients in hospitals

Sajid Javid, the health secretary, is to review guidance on transgender patients, following a newspaper investigation which discovered that male sex offenders who self-identify as women are placed on female-only wards. Despite instructions from the Department of Health to eliminate mixed-sex wards, guidance from hospitals states that patients should be admitted based on the gender they identify with and can choose which ward, lavatories and facilities they use. A whistleblower nurse warned, 'If patients question why there is a male-bodied person on a female-only ward, medics are told to say that there are no men present. Staff raising safeguarding concerns may be threatened with disciplinary action. The NHS is influenced by the controversial LGBT charity Stonewall.' See <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/10/05/nhs-gaslighting-patients-trans-women-female-only-wards-nurse/>

Pray: for the Department of Health to ensure all patients feel comfortable and safe in hospital. (Psalm 4:8)

More: www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/08/03/health-secretary-intervenes-nhs-issues-guidance-transgender/

National Grid power cut warning

Britain faces a greater risk of blackouts this winter after a fire on 15 September knocked out a cable importing electricity from France. National Grid's electricity system operator (ESO) believes supply will meet demand, but has cut its forecast of buffer supply. Its officials are also warning of high costs for getting power generators to fire up at short notice to help balance the grid. Those costs are ultimately passed onto household bills - a further pressure when bills are climbing due to soaring wholesale costs of natural gas and electricity. The ESO warned in July that Britain should prepare for constrained power supplies over winter, with nuclear power plants shutting down and demand bouncing back from the pandemic. Its director said, 'Our analysis shows that we expect sufficient margins over the winter and the system is within the reliability standard. Throughout the coming months the situation may change, as it does every winter.'

Pray: for the supply of power to be reliable throughout the winter, and for those struggling to meet higher costs of power supplies to receive the help they need. (Psalm 50:15)

More: www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2021/10/07/greater-risk-blackouts-winter-national-grid-warns/

Government must curb internet pornography

CARE has urged ministers to curb internet pornography, to prevent more cases of sexual violence. During proceedings at the Old Bailey this week, it emerged that rapist and murderer Wayne Couzens viewed 'brutal pornography' before committing his crimes. A former colleague noted his attraction to 'brutal sexual pornography'. The Government's own research in February found that the majority of frontline workers spontaneously mentioned pornography as an influential factor for harmful sexual behaviour towards women and girls. CARE campaigned successfully for legislation to curb porn sites and restrict access by children. However, these measures were scrapped by the Government in 2019. CARE said that the Couzens case is an example of where porn obsession can lead. If we want to avoid more such cases, the Government must stop men accessing sites which glorify rape and violence.

Pray: for the CARE campaign to trigger the Government to curb the porn industry. (1 Corinthians 6:18)

More: care.org.uk/news/2021/10/government-must-curb-internet-pornography-to-avoid-more-awful-cases-of-sexual-violence

Europe

Canary Islands volcano 'much more aggressive'

The Canary Islands volcano has blown open two more fissures, and intense activity has worsened, three weeks after the original eruption. The prompt evacuation of more than 6,000 people since the 19 September eruption helped prevent casualties. By 3 October the lava had destroyed or partially destroyed 1,000+ buildings, including homes and farming infrastructure. By 7 October it had destroyed 21 miles of roads and entombed large areas of land, with no indication of lessening.

Pray: for the Lord to be near those trying to cope with this disaster. (Nahum 1:7)

More: www.theguardian.com/world/2021/oct/03/canary-islands-volcano-much-more-aggressive-as-new-fissures-erupt

Germany: changes in leadership

On 26 September voters elected the Bundestag's parliamentary seats. The dominant political parties - SPD, CDU and CSU - finished only ten seats apart. Angela Merkel's departure has opened up a large void. Many older MPs have been replaced by people in their thirties or even twenties. This rejuvenation will bring many openings for renewal and innovation in the current technological and global transformation, but will also pose potential risks that need prayer. Will Germany manage to keep its leadership in Europe, or will France supplant it? What can the EU expect from the new Chancellor and coalition on climate change, trade, and technology? How do the elected candidates see Europe's place in the world? What will the results mean for Germany's relationships with France, the USA, Russia, or China?

Pray: for God to inspire whoever takes over Angela Merkel's leadership. Pray that the new coalition will work in unity. (1 Timothy 2:1-3)

More: www.politico.eu/event/germany-after-merkel/

France: Catholic clergy sexually abused 216,000 minors

A report has shown that the Church prioritised protecting the institution over victims who were urged to stay silent. The number of abused minors rises to an estimated 330,000 when including victims of people with other links to the Church, like Catholic schools and youth programmes. Between 2,900 and 3,200 abusers worked in the Catholic Church between 1950 and 2020, out of a total of 115,000 priests and other clerics. 'The Church is the place where the prevalence of sexual violence is at its highest, other than in family and friend circles', said the report, which found that children were also more likely to be abused within Church settings than in state-run schools or summer camps. This report follows similar ones from other countries.

Pray: for God to bring healing to the victims and their families, and for complete eradication of paedophiles so that no more children are betrayed of their innocence and trust in church leaders. (Matthew 18:6)

More: edition.cnn.com/2021/10/05/europe/france-catholic-church-abuse-report-intl/index.html

Worldwide

Ethiopia: unprecedented malnutrition

The UN warned of 'unprecedented' malnutrition among women and children as fears of mass starvation grow in Ethiopia's embattled Tigray region. Ethiopia has expelled seven senior UN officials, including the head of UNICEF, for 'meddling' in its affairs. They suspended the operations of Doctors Without Borders and the Norwegian Refugee Committee, accusing them of spreading 'misinformation' about the war. Last November the prime minister sent troops to topple the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) in response to its attacks on army camps. UN aid chief Martin Griffiths reported a three-month 'de facto blockade', restricting aid to 10% of what is needed for six million people. 400,000 people have 'crossed the threshold into famine'. Federal officials blame TPLF for obstructing deliveries, but the US State Department said access to essential supplies and services was 'being denied by the Ethiopian government' and there were 'indications of a siege'.

Pray: for the UN Charter and the privileges and protections afforded to its officials to be observed and reinstated along with humanitarian aid. (Matthew 25:35)

More: www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/10/1/un-warns-of-unprecedented-malnutrition-in-tigray

Pandora Papers

The Pandora Papers are 12 million documents revealing hidden wealth, tax avoidance, and money-laundering by the world's rich and powerful obtained by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ). They worked with 140+ media organisations in the biggest-ever global investigation. 600 journalists in 117 countries trawled through files for months to find a) the prominent Tory donor who was involved in one of Europe's biggest corruption scandals; b) the King of Jordan's £70m spending spree on properties in the UK and US through secretly-owned companies; c) Azerbaijan's leading family's hidden involvement in property deals in the UK worth more than £400m; d) the Czech prime minister's failure to declare an offshore investment company used to purchase two French villas for £12m; e) how the family of Kenyan president Uhuru Kenyatta secretly owned a network of offshore companies for decades. The files exposed over 330 politicians from 90 countries using secret offshore companies to hide their wealth. See also UK article 'Tory donations disclosures'.

Pray: for stronger international cooperation to eradicate tax haven loopholes. (Proverbs 20:17)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-58780561

Iraq: spiritual retreat for persecuted women

80 persecuted women in northern Iraq are experiencing three days in a Help The Persecuted spiritual retreat this weekend. They will have a safe place to stay, hear from Godly speakers, receive biblical counseling, and worship together. Cala has lived in a refugee camp since IS invaded in 2014. She always believed in God and tried desperately to draw near to Him, but never knew what was missing. She heard about Jesus through the internet, asked a visiting pastor about church, and accepted Christ in 2020. Her Yazidi community persecutes her, and she has been kicked out of the camp several times. Cala feels very isolated, and her heart's cry is to serve the Lord. Pray that she and her 79 companions will be encouraged as they build relationships with other Christian women, accepting each other now in unity as members of the Body of Christ.

Pray: for the women to be healed, 'arise and shine,' when they leave the retreat feeling refreshed, and equipped to live out their identity in Christ and fulfill his purposes. (Philippians 1:6)

More: <http://stories>

India: false allegations and violence against Christians

Mobs are targeting Christian households, led by aggressive Hindu vigilantes known for their hardline approach. Churches are vandalised, pastors are beaten or abused. Congregations are broken up by mobs and believers hospitalised with injuries. The police raid church services to threaten and arrest congregations. This persecution coincides with renewed attention on a longstanding claim that a string of forced conversions are taking place in Chhattisgarh. Speeches, rallies and press statements have openly attacked Christian pastors and believers for allegedly converting tens of thousands of people from tribal communities and poor, lower-caste Hindu families. They are alleged (without evidence) to have been lured into churches by proselytising pastors offering cash payments, free medical assistance, and foreign trips, funded by foreign donors. Dozens of 'anti-conversion' rallies have been held in the past month.

Pray: for the 500,000 believers in Chhattisgarh to be protected, and for the converts to be believed when they say they come to church of their own accord seeking community. (1 Peter 2:9-10)

More: www.theguardian.com/world/2021/oct/04/india-christians-living-in-fear-claims-forced-conversions

Nigeria: secular Sharia?

The idea that Nigeria is well-intentioned but under-resourced to contain religious violence is incomplete. The government may be under-resourced, but is not blameless in the matter of sectarian violence. Government forces have fought to quell the violence in some instances, but in others they exacerbated the problem if not created it in the first place according to a report by [International Christian Concern](https://www.persecution.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/secular_sharia.pdf) (https://www.persecution.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/secular_sharia.pdf). The report considers ways which Nigerian states contribute to discrimination and violence against Christians: in particular, twelve northern states which adopted Sharia criminal law, leading to problems for Christians in the region and impacting their ability to participate as equal members of society. Using Sharia to adjudicate on criminal matters has done significant real-world harm, and the departure from secularism has harmed Christians in northern Nigeria. The report recommends the US government to establish an official stance against non-secularism in northern Nigeria, rework aid delivery to Christians, and appoint a special envoy to address each region's issues.

Pray: for the USA to address the root causes of Nigeria's insecurity and Christian oppression. (Psalm 9:9)

More: www.persecution.org/2021/09/16/secular-sharia-report/

New Covid pill reduces hospitalisations by half

An antiviral pill has cut the chances of Covid-19 patients being hospitalised or dying by 50% in late-stage trials, raising hopes of a new weapon in the arsenal against the virus. The pill, Molnupiravir, was initially developed to tackle influenza but is also effective at reducing deaths and hospitalisations from Covid, the data from human trials showed. The manufacturers will now seek emergency authorisation in the United States as soon as possible and submit their data to regulators worldwide. A simple pill that can be taken at home to stop the disease in its tracks has been a key aim throughout the pandemic. Until now, Remdesivir, another existing antiviral, was the only one licensed to treat Covid - but it has to be administered intravenously and results have been modest. Other antivirals are also in development, including some specifically targeted at Covid-19, such as a pill currently being tested by Pfizer.

Pray: for God to direct the creation of medicines, cause them to be wisely tested, developed, supervised and distributed so that we achieve control over this pandemic. (Proverbs 2:6)

More: www.telegraph.co.uk/global-health/science-and-disease/covid-pill-reduces-hospitalisations-half-exciting-breakthrough/

Afghanistan: winter and fatigue threaten

Many Afghan Christians have fled from cities to remote regions to escape Taliban detection; others are hiding in communities. World Mission's Greg Kelley learned of a Christian leader caught by the Taliban, who publicly tortured and executed him. Continue to pray for Afghan believers, in hiding and meeting in secret locations. Now, with the borders to neighbouring countries closed, they have nowhere to turn. With winter approaching they face extreme difficulties. It is exceedingly difficult to get aid into Afghanistan to meet their needs. Many want to leave because they are known to the Taliban or other extremists. Ask God to protect them and help mission agencies to arrange for their safe escape. Things are changing dramatically in Afghanistan, and those who suffer the most are the weak and vulnerable. Pray for wise short-term strategies to address the needs of elderly, sick and frail refugees.

Pray: for the safety of people coming out and resources going in. Pray for the situation, which is incredibly complicated, sensitive, and dangerous. (Psalm 5:12)

More: www.mnnonline.org/news/winter-global-compassion-fatigue-threaten-vulnerable-afghans/

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