

Prayer Alert

ISSUE 42-2021 | Friday 22 October 2021
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As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him. (Psalm 103:13)

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

[Iran: Bible reading plan](#)

Iranians across the world have joined a Bible reading plan organised by the Bible Society. Nahid, a Christian worker, says it is a great way for these Christians to connect with each other. If they think they are alone, they can get depressed, but when they are reading scripture with another sister or brother, it is healing. This Bible reading plan has been especially helpful during the pandemic. Iranian Christians love Jesus with all their hearts, and seek to show His love to the world. But some in the West are still not ready to see them as Christians.

Praise: God that these faithful believers continue not only worshipping Jesus but proclaiming what He has done in their lives. (Lamentations 3:22-23a)

More: www.mnnonline.org/news/iranian-christians-join-bible-reading-plan/

[USA: human trafficking gang of 125 people arrested](#)

'Operation Round-Up' used undercover detectives to target criminals who attempted to prey upon minors, sought sex for themselves or exploited victims through human trafficking. 125 people were arrested in the trafficking sting and four females were rescued. Joel Velasco, 38, a schoolteacher and Pastor Samuel Phillips Jr of Be Limitless Church were among those arrested when detectives created undercover profiles online and chatted with men who believed they were speaking to minors. Velasco and Phillips were held in positions of trust and respect in the community but abused it as many others of the traffickers did. Police also created false advertisements for sex, and female detectives posed as streetwalkers to catch illegal activities.

Praise: God for the success of the human trafficking sting, and may God continue to prevent individuals taking advantage of others through human trafficking. (Proverbs 16:3)

More: www.christianpost.com/news/pastor-teacher-among-125-arrested-in-human-trafficking-sting.html

British Isles

[Prayers for our Government](#)

Lord, we ask you to bring comfort and healing to the family of Sir David Amess, and for peace and wisdom to reign in all our political leaders as Your protection surrounds them. May Your Kingdom's purpose for our nation thwart every strategy of the enemy. We also pray for the proposals, planning and preparation for the 27 October autumn budget that will set out the next stage of 'Building Britain Back Better'. We pray particularly for Rishi Sunak and all who work in the treasury. Father, give them heaven's wisdom. Anoint with sound judgment those making decisions on employment tax changes, and give insights to what is needed when investing in NHS, education, infrastructure and housing while delivering on Brexit plans. May all decisions made be according to Your intentions for the nation's economy as funds are appropriately injected where they are most needed and ministers steward wealth wisely.

Pray: for our nation to move forward towards a healthier economy. (Psalm 15:5)

More: mha-uk.co.uk/autumn-budget-2021/

Remembering Sir David Amess - friend of Israel

The Parliamentary Group Against Antisemitism said it was 'devastated to learn of the death of their friend and colleague Sir David Amess MP. A long-standing and active member of the group and an excellent public servant, he will be sorely missed. Our thoughts are with his friends and family.' Sir David recently spoke in Parliament on Holocaust Memorial Day saying, 'Although I am not a Jew but a Catholic, there is Jewish blood in each and every one of us. I would certainly have been proud to be born a Jew, and I stand shoulder to shoulder with our local Jewish congregations. Over recent years, these people, my friends, have felt very vulnerable. I would like the Government to continue supporting the Community Security Trust, in its vital work to keep Jewish communities safe through the protective security grant.' David also supported the genocide amendment to the Trade Bill.

Pray: for our MPs to remember and continue David's work to remove anti-Semitism from politics and society and encouraging nations to improve their human rights records. (Psalm 106:3)

More: www.cufi.org.uk/news/remembering-sir-david-amess-mp-a-friend-of-israel-and-advocate-for-holocaust-education/

Give priests last rites access?

After Father Jeffrey Woolnough was not allowed to reach Catholic MP Sir David Amess when he had been stabbed last Friday, an amendment was proposed in Parliament. In the Catholic tradition, the last rites are the final prayers said to commend a person to God's mercy. A Catholic Labour MP suggested adding the 'Amess amendment' to legislation to allow priests to reach and pray with terminally ill Catholics in the final moments of life or just after they have died. However, some professionals have argued that the proposed change could lead to the potential contamination of a crime scene.

Pray: for the police to oversee crime scenes to ensure priests do not compromise any forensic evidence. (Proverbs 21:3)

More: premierchristian.news/en/news/article/amess-amendment-proposed-to-give-priests-last-rites-access-at-crime-scenes

Covid: 'bring back rules' as cases rise

Health leaders have called for some Covid restrictions to be reintroduced immediately to avoid England stumbling into a winter crisis. They said a back-up strategy, a Plan B which includes mandatory face coverings in crowded and enclosed spaces, should be implemented. UK cases have been rising sharply. Business secretary Kwasi Kwarteng said it was not yet time for a Plan B and urged a greater uptake of booster jabs. He did not want to jeopardise the 'hard-won gains' of reopening the economy even though for a week daily Covid cases have averaged above 40,000, the worst figures since March. Overall, he said, 'the health service is right at the edge'. Meanwhile, the health secretary is telling the public to 'play their part and get a booster jab' in order to enjoy Christmas with loved ones. Cabinet Office officials are already discussing 'Plan C' proposals which would ban mixing between households. See <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/10/20/get-booster-jab-now-avoid-return-christmas-restrictions-warns/>

Pray: for the leaders to ensure saving lives takes precedence over building businesses. (Proverbs 25:26)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-58976577

Scotland: carbon-neutral churches?

The Evangelical Alliance are asking the Scottish government to open a grant for converting church buildings to become net zero in energy efficiency, ventilation and in their heat networks so that every church in Scotland is carbon-neutral by 2045. They said, 'We believe it is part of our commission as Christians to be good stewards of God's creation. After God created the earth and everything in it, He declared it very good. He invited the people to have "dominion" over it; they were to take responsibility for its care. As followers of Jesus, we should treat the earth with respect because God has entrusted us to [take care of it](https://www.eauk.org/news-and-views/cop26-helping-churches-in-scotland-to-become-net-zero) (<https://www.eauk.org/news-and-views/cop26-helping-churches-in-scotland-to-become-net-zero>).' Meanwhile seventy respected climate scientists want Boris Johnson to end new oil and gas developments off Shetland and urgently set out a concrete plan for moving from fossil fuels to low-carbon electricity sources.

Pray: for bold political action to redirect investments into church re-fits, and to refuse requests for new North Sea oil and gas licenses. (Jeremiah 2:7)

More: www.independent.co.uk/climate-change/news/cop26-oil-gas-climate-scientists-b1937749.html

'Discrimination' at Christian adoption charity

Cornerstone, a Christian adoption and fostering charity, tried to overturn earlier judgments finding it had discriminated by only accepting heterosexual evangelical Christians as potential carers. The Court of Appeal agreed that the judge had been unduly dismissive of the importance of Cornerstone's evangelical faith to its work and mission, but ruled that this did not justify sexual orientation discrimination in the furtherance of that mission. Cornerstone sought to argue it did not discriminate on the ground of sexual orientation but rather on behaviour, a distinction which was rejected by the court. However, this distinction is central to how many evangelical churches and organisations engage with issues of sexual orientation and identity within a biblical frame. As such, this highlights a growing chasm in societal and traditional evangelical approaches to human sexuality, making future challenges in this area highly likely. Cornerstone intends to appeal this latest decision.

Pray: for the law to defend the rights of religious organisations to apply boundaries based on the beliefs and doctrines of the organisation. (James 1:27)

More: ukhumanrightsblog.com/2021/10/07/court-of-appeal-rules-on-the-legality-of-christian-requirement-by-fostering-agency/

Gambling 'epidemic' and gaming addiction

Former Arsenal captain Tony Adams has said gambling is a far more common vice among football players than alcohol or drugs. The charity Sporting Chance, which helps current and retired athletes with a wide range of addictions, warned that professional football is facing a gambling 'epidemic' and predicted that gaming addiction will be one of the sport's next major issues. Alcohol and drug addictions have been eclipsed by gambling as the most prevalent addiction for footballers. In rugby league prescription drugs are quite prevalent; in other sports, cocaine. Bolton Wanderers cut all ties with betting firms after issuing a statement acknowledging that lives are being ruined by problem gambling. There is also growing concern about the increase in professional footballers having gaming addictions. There may now need to be a gaming clinic. Both Sporting Chance and the Professional Footballers' Association have said that clubs are now asking for help with controlling players' gambling problems.

Pray: for the government to honour its promise to ban betting sponsors on football shirts, and for more support for addicts and their families to overcome this issue. (Hebrews 13:5a)

More: www.telegraph.co.uk/football/2021/10/21/tony-adams-warns-football-future-gambling-epidemic-gaming-addiction/

Europe

EU strategy on combatting anti-Semitism

Last week you prayed for an end to anti-Semitism in European football matches. This week the European Commission has presented its first ever comprehensive strategy on combatting antisemitism and fostering Jewish life. The commission said, 'This is a strategy document which we as European citizens can take great pride in. Combatting antisemitism in the EU is a shared responsibility requiring joint efforts and action at every level.' Pray that EU institutions and agencies, member states, international organisations, Jewish organisations, and human rights organisations will play their part in achieving a society free of anti-Semitism.

Pray: for this strategy to succeed in making the EU free from anti-Semitism and any form of discrimination in an open, inclusive and equal society. (Genesis 12:3)

More: ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/eu-strategy-on-combating-antisemitism-and-fostering-jewish-life_october2021_en.pdf

Channel smugglers are outwitting France and UK

People-smuggling networks in migrant camps are slick and organised. It took little more than a week for Hamid to find a people-smuggler in Calais. Within a couple of days, he was hiding near the beach with 75 others, waiting to cross the Channel in a small inflatable boat. Over 18,000 people so far this year have crossed the twenty miles of sea between Britain and France in small boats. Despite significant investment on both sides of the Channel, that's more than double the number last year. France's northern coastline is covered with dunes, foliage and hundreds of old WW2 bunkers where migrants can hide. High-security fencing and surveillance cameras now successfully protect the ports and Eurotunnel terminal, but surveillance is difficult among forested dunes. Hamid's crossing cost £2,500, on top of the £7,275 he had paid to leave Afghanistan and cross Europe to France.

Pray: for better sharing between British and French intelligence to prevent humanitarian disasters. (Psalm 91:4)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-58894877

Canary Islands: a month of volcanic activity

Unfortunately, there has been no change in activity in the Canary Islands volcano; the eruption continues to feed the growing lava flow field at high effusion rates. Its northern margins continue to be active and advancing south into areas already buried under lava flows. Consequently the government has had to evacuate another adjacent area.

Pray: for ongoing protection of vulnerable communities, for the availability of generous provisions for the growing numbers of evacuees, and comfort for those who have lost everything. (Nahum 1:7)

More: www.volcanodiscovery.com/lapalma/sep2021/seismic-crisis/current-activity.html

Worldwide

Syria: poverty, but God is working

After a decade of civil war, Syria has at last begun to reconnect with its neighbouring countries, including Lebanon, Jordan, and the UAE. President Assad's grip on the country is tenuous as areas near the Turkish and Iraqi borders are controlled by rebel groups. Fighting has left Syria in economic ruins; families which used to have more than enough income to provide for themselves are now in poverty because of hyperinflation. A man with cancer did not continue with expensive treatment; it was better that one dies rather than all of them dying. Families without enough food for all their children give lunch to some children lunch and dinner to the others. But God is working. The story of Jesus is reaching new populations; there is a budding movement of the Holy Spirit and churches are forming among the Druze in the south and the Kurds in the north.

Pray: for the Holy Spirit to continue to flow through Syria and for the country to be rebuilt as Christians who fled return and strengthen the Syrian church. (Psalm 107:20)

More: www.mnnonline.org/news/syria-starts-to-reconnect-with-neighbors-amid-civil-war/

Haiti: Christian missionaries kidnapped

On 16 October a group of 17 Christian missionaries, including five children, were abducted by an armed gang in Haiti while returning from a visit to build an orphanage. Having travelled there with the US-based Christian Aid Ministries, they were seized when the gang set up roadblocks east of Port-au-Prince. The island has the worst global record for kidnapping, with gangs active in many areas. The notorious 400 Mawozo gang, known for kidnappings and killings, abducted the 16 Americans and one Canadian, as they were travelling to the airport where some were due to fly home. One of the abducted Americans sent a WhatsApp message calling for help as the kidnapping took place. It read, 'Please pray for us! We are being held hostage; they kidnapped our driver. Pray pray pray. We don't know where they are taking us.' Among those kidnapped is an 8-month-old baby: [see https://www.christianpost.com/news/8-month-old-baby-among-17-kidnapped-missionaries-in-haiti-charity-says.html](https://www.christianpost.com/news/8-month-old-baby-among-17-kidnapped-missionaries-in-haiti-charity-says.html)

Pray: for God to answer the prayers of Christian Aid Ministries, and all who are praying for the safety and return of the missionaries. (1 John 5:14)

More: barnabasfund.org/en/news/group-of-17-missionaries-and-children-kidnapped-in-haiti/

Sri Lanka: Indian fish poaching

On 17 October Sri Lankan fishermen launched a flotilla of boats from the northeastern fishing town of Mullaivu to Sri Lanka's northernmost tip, Point Pedro away. They are demanding that the government does more to protect the nation's prawn-rich northern waters from poaching by Indian fishing trawlers in the narrow Palk Strait which separates the South Asian neighbours. Bottom trawling was banned from Sri Lankan waters in 2017 because it involves dragging heavy nets across the seafloor to catch a large volume of fish, causing severe damage to the marine ecosystem. However, the authorities have failed to stop Indian poaching even though their fishing community has been complaining for years. Mass poaching takes valuable fish stocks away from Sri Lankan fishermen, so they struggle to make ends meet. Palk Strait is a rich fishing ground known for jumbo prawns. Sri Lanka regularly detains large numbers of Indian fishers and seizes their boats, but poaching continues.

Pray: for the laws passed in 2017 to be implemented so that the marine ecosystem is protected and the two countries coexist peacefully. (Matthew 5:9)

More: www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/10/17/sri-lankan-flotilla-protests-against-indian-poaching

Twelve Christians attacked by almost 300

A mob of 300 chanting 'Hail Lord Ram! Victory to Lord Ram' attacked the House of Prayer church, destroying CCTV cameras, lights, fans, musical instruments and furniture. Eva Lance, the church leader, tried to call the police but couldn't connect. The mob tried to set fire to vehicles parked outside and attacked twelve church members. One man was beaten semi-unconscious, a woman's hair was pulled out and a young boy was found lying in a pool of his own blood and vomit after having his ears cut off and being badly beaten. He was hospitalised. The police opened an investigation naming Eva's former school principal and a member of a right-wing Hindu group among those responsible. Then the mob filed a counter case against the victims, accusing them of non-bailable offences like molestation, robbery and organised crime. Christian Solidarity Worldwide said the involvement of the police and community leaders in this attack must be a wake-up call to India's lawmakers.

Pray: for the government to remove the culture of immunity that surrounds mob violence incidents and crack down on Hindu nationalist hate speech by government ministers. (1 Peter 3:14)

More: www.csw.org.uk/2021/10/15/press/5451/article.htm

Australia: missing four-year-old

On 16 October four-year-old Cleo Smith was camping with her family. During the night she woke up and asked for a drink of water. Ms Smith checked on her other daughter, Isla, who was sleeping separately, then went back to bed. A few hours later she woke up to give Isla a bottle and saw that Cleo had gone. Her red sleeping bag was also missing. It is a very harsh environment, with limited freshwater. If she wandered off and is still in the area, there are grave concerns for her survival. Investigators are now imploring people across Australia to keep their eyes peeled for her, as another scenario is abduction. Marine and sea-based searches, mounted section officers, helicopters, drones and local Aboriginal bush trackers have all been deployed to help locate Cleo. The police are determined for a positive outcome, saying that they are 'throwing everything' at the effort.

Pray: for Cleo to be found, for her family to know peace, and for the safety of the search-parties. (Psalm 12:5,6)

More: www.9news.com.au/national/search-for-missing-wa-girl-cleo-smith-enters-fifth-day-as-efforts-intensify/913c6920-cf8a-4583-8ac1-39954264098d

India: floods and landslides

Record-breaking rains and heavy flooding have killed over 150 people in India and Nepal in recent days. 77 have been killed, 22+ injured, and 26 are missing across Western Nepal; at least 46 have died in Uttarakhand, and 27 bodies have been recovered in Kerala. 11 teams from the National Disaster Response Force also evacuated 6,500 people to 184 relief camps. Crops have been destroyed, roads are waterlogged, bridges washed away, vehicles submerged, and houses reduced to rubble in Kerala, home to 33 million people. The flooding comes in the middle of a religious pilgrimage when Hindus journey to Uttarakhand. 3,000 pilgrims were evacuated from a barge on the Sarda River, which had overflowed. Meanwhile more than 200 families are currently in a further 26 evacuation camps across the state. Heavy rainfall is forecast to continue for the coming days, and residents are urged to stay indoors.

Pray: for successful rescue efforts by the Indian army, navy and air force. (Psalm 18:16)

More: edition.cnn.com/2021/10/20/india/india-uttarakhand-kerala-flood-intl-hnk/index.html

USA / UK: 'Build Back Better'

Joe Biden's Build Back Better plan has a \$3.5tn price tag that could transform millions of Americans' lives. The bipartisan senate infrastructure bill proposes \$66bn of new spending on passenger and freight rail projects over the next decade as the Democrats undertake the most ambitious and transformative domestic policy agendas since the New Deal of the 1930s. It also focuses on a long list of social policies and programmes ranging from education to healthcare to housing to climate. With Republicans unified in opposition, Democrats are using a special budgetary process known as 'reconciliation' to avoid the 60-vote filibuster threshold and pass the bill on a party-line vote. Boris Johnson's [Build Back Better](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/build-back-better-our-plan-for-growth) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/build-back-better-our-plan-for-growth>) plans to support economic growth through significant investment in infrastructure, skills and innovation, and will tackle the NHS backlog while capping social care costs for adults. Another aspect was for a Build Back Coronavirus recovery plan: [see https://www.buildbackbetteruk.org/](https://www.buildbackbetteruk.org/)

Pray: for American and British plans for building strength where there are weaknesses. May they succeed in bringing growth. (Daniel 2:21)

More: www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/oct/18/what-is-build-back-better-crash-course

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