

Prayer Alert

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Then a shoot will grow from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him - a Spirit of wisdom and understanding, a Spirit of counsel and strength, a Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. His delight will be in the fear of the Lord. (Isaiah 11:1-5)

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

[Zambian village believed for more - and got it](#)

The villagers of Lihukwa used to fish the local rivers, but this barely provided them with enough food or income to survive. Families went hungry, there was no school or hospital, and accessing essential supplies was challenging. Pastor Teddy Chinyama visited the village and began offering Bible study. Then, as he got to know the villagers, he taught them how to use the land God had given them and trained them in growing a variety of crops. They began to hope for a better life, and transformation began. They successfully petitioned the local council to set up a health clinic and support the construction of a new school. New projects are springing up all the time. The villagers now grow their own food and sell vegetables at the market. People are now able to afford what they need, and hunger is a thing of the past.

Praise: God for Pastor Teddy's work to envision and empower this community to make positive changes and lift themselves out of poverty. May the villagers continue to thrive with successful projects. (Romans 15:13)

More: www.tearfund.org/stories/2021/12/how-a-village-in-zambia-believed-for-more-and-got-it

[Nativity plays to go ahead despite Covid restrictions](#)

Last month the head teachers' association confirmed many schools were moving their nativity plays online due to Covid concerns. But recently Boris Johnson said the move to Plan B Covid restrictions does not mean schools and churches should cancel nativity plays. He said, 'We don't want kids to be taken out of school before the end of term, we don't want nativity plays to be cancelled. We think that it is OK to keep going with Christmas parties, but everybody should exercise due caution, have ventilation, wash your hands, get a test before you go - give everybody else confidence they are going to be meeting somebody who is not contagious.'

Praise: for Christmas activities to go ahead safely so that important Christian traditions can be maintained. (Luke 1:14)

More: premierchristian.news/en/news/article/boris-johnson-says-nativity-plays-should-not-be-cancelled-despite-move-to-plan-b-covid-restrictions

British Isles

[Omicron variant: things to pray for](#)

Downing Street intended to hold a Christmas party this year, but following the renewal of compulsory mask wearing and restricted numbers allowed in venues it was cancelled. Pray that managers and leaders of councils, commerce and industry will also take practical precautions when considering Christmas celebrations. Sajid Javid warns Omicron is spreading at a rate 'that we've never seen before'. Pray for peace and safety to flow through our streets and for health and hope to be in our homes. A new target to give all eligible adults booster jabs by 1 January at hundreds more sites across the country means the PM and NHS are appealing for volunteers to help run these vaccination centres. They need tens of thousands of trained vaccinators and stewards to achieve the accelerated booster rollout. Pray for an exceptional number of qualified medics and helpers to be established on sites quickly.

Pray: for wisdom and strength as the Government and NHS resolve the challenges that the Omicron variant presents. (Exodus 31:3)
More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-59646877

Our government: things to pray for

Boris Johnson won the biggest Conservative majority since Margaret Thatcher. His popularity among Conservative MPs marked the end of Tory Brexit rebellions. Now many believe his popularity and authority is waning. When the Commons voted on new Covid regulations on 14 December, Boris was forced to rely on opposition votes to get his plans through. The Conservative party has become rebellious toward their leader. Pray for God to break the stronghold of rebellion in politics. Pray for Boris to make wise decisions that are heaven-sent, uniting the government and meeting the needs of the nation as it faces Omicron. The chancellor has raised concerns about the medium-term costs of handling the pandemic in a 'Covid O' meeting of senior ministers this week. Several billion pounds have been allocated to cover vaccines, boosters, and therapeutic drugs costs [until April \(https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-59656616\)](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-59656616). Ask God to give prudent strategies to the chancellor which cover unforeseen Covid costs while avoiding raising taxes.

Pray: for God to direct the Government on His paths so that the NHS can deal with this wave of infections. (Psalm 17:5)
More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-59661619

Needle-free coronavirus vaccine enters clinical trial

Safety trials are underway for a Cambridge-led vaccine that could be used as a booster targeting Covid variants which threaten future coronavirus pandemics. The first volunteer received the vaccine on 14 December through a needle-free 'injection' - a blast of air that delivers it into the skin. This offers a possible future alternative to people who fear needle-based jabs. If it is successful it could be scaled up and manufactured as a powder to boost global vaccination efforts, particularly in low and middle-income countries. As new variants emerge there is a need for newer technologies. It's vital that science continues to develop new generation vaccines. Pray for this new trial to lead the way for vaccines that will prime the immune system to respond with broader, stronger protection. The vaccine trial will follow up volunteers for about a year to ensure it is safe.

Pray: for a comprehensive coronavirus vaccine that is easily and inexpensively delivered worldwide to solve the pandemic problem. (Isaiah 57:18a)
More: www.cam.ac.uk/stories/DIOSCoVax_safetytrial

Covid shadow over NHS and care homes

Many Covid patients admitted to hospital are unvaccinated and then ask for the vaccine on arrival, when it is too late. Hospitals are treating unprecedented numbers of sick people at the start of what could be the toughest winter in NHS history. One doctor said, 'The recent volume of patients is higher than ever before. Everyone wants to give their best, but sometimes that is just not possible'. The treatment backlog caused by Covid has made things worse, and there are more mental health issues and alcohol abuse due to the current constraints. [See \(https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-59555468\)](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-59555468) There are currently no restrictions on the number of visitors allowed to care homes, but the government has confirmed it is considering restricting visits to homes to three named people over Christmas as a consequence of the uncertainty caused by the Omicron variant. Pray for the shadow of trauma, fear, and uncertainty caused by Covid to be lifted.

Pray: for God's strength to energise the overstretched NHS workers, and for the season of peace and joy to be reflected in care homes and hospital wards. (Isaiah 55:12)
More: www.theguardian.com/society/2021/dec/10/christmas-care-home-visits-in-england-could-be-restricted-to-three-people

Atheism, wokeism and conversion therapy

Atheism assumes various disguises, including wokeism – politically correct views on gender, race, sexuality etc. It comes in the wake of secular humanism and challenges Judeo-Christian principles in our culture. An example of wokery is Church of England's Jayne Ozanne calling for a ban on 'hate prayer', asking the government to ban consensual prayer that helps same-sex people abstain from sex. It's a reminder of Jesus' warning that there will come a time when believers will betray one another (Matthew 10:21). [See \(https://prophecytoday.uk/index.php\)](https://prophecytoday.uk/index.php) Meanwhile 1,700 church leaders and pastoral workers warned the Government over the conversion therapy ban and say they will continue to proclaim Jesus Christ's lordship even if it means [going to prison \(https://www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/cwn/2021/december/our-duty-to-god-1-000-uk-church-leaders-prepared-to-be-jailed-over-conversion-therapy-ban\)](https://www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/cwn/2021/december/our-duty-to-god-1-000-uk-church-leaders-prepared-to-be-jailed-over-conversion-therapy-ban) TalkRadio discussions on 'conversion therapy' turned into a rant about Christianity - a sad reminder of how far this culture is from discovering Jesus and his pattern for our lives. The Government's consultation on conversion therapy ends on 4 February.

Pray: for God to wake up the 'woken' to what is right and reject the politically correct opinions. (John 8:12)
More: christianconcern.com/comment/should-it-be-illegal-to-talk-to-someone-about-your-sexual-expression/

Hong Kong arrivals

Rev Dave Young (Chinese name Ho Ming Lun), vicar of two churches in London, recently took part in the launch of the Teahouse - a network of clergy and ordinands across the CofE with a Chinese heritage. It began in 2020 with a WhatsApp group and Zoom meetings. The Archbishop of York said he is 'delighted to see the formal launch of the Teahouse group'. The launch of the Teahouse comes as thousands of British overseas passport holders from Hong Kong are arriving in the UK. Rev Young said, 'With the arrival of many Hong Kongers over recent months, it is important that the Church welcomes them to our communities and churches. On 13 December he welcomed over 70 new Hong Kong arrivals to a special welcome event at his church with spreads of Chinese and British food shared [among the families \(https://premierchristian.news/en/news/article/learn-the-lessons-of-windrush-and-welcome-hong-kongers-says-vicar-in-leeds\)](https://premierchristian.news/en/news/article/learn-the-lessons-of-windrush-and-welcome-hong-kongers-says-vicar-in-leeds).

Pray: for God to bless the 80,000 people who have taken up the opportunity to relocate in the UK. May they get to know the local Christian communities and grow in Christian faith. (Psalm 21:6)
More: www.leeds.anglican.org/news/new-national-support-network-chinese-heritage-clergy

Student stalked at university calls for change

K was stalked and threatened with kidnap and torture by S, a fellow student, at Oxford Brookes University. But the university's failure to act swiftly left her terrified. S was expelled from the university this month, even though he had admitted stalking her in September and K had been reporting him to Brookes since 2020 when she first encountered him. K eventually reported the violent threats to the police, who treated the threats seriously and provided outstanding support. S admitted stalking and was given a four-month suspended sentence this week, after the court heard he would leave the UK within days. K now wants universities to overhaul policies and toughen disciplinary codes so that they can put protective measures in place or suspend students where there is clear evidence of sexual misconduct. The university said they accepted there are lessons to learn for the future where threatening student behaviour may also constitute a criminal offence.

Pray: for improved policies and processes to ensure there is zero tolerance of any form of violent, abusive, or harassing behaviours threatening university communities. (Psalm 141:9)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-59587275

Europe

France threatens UK with lawsuit over fishing dispute

France and Britain have clashed repeatedly over migrants crossing the Channel, post-Brexit trade arrangements, the sale of submarines to Australia, and fishing territories. The fishing dispute has come to a head as France threatened the UK with a lawsuit unless a few dozen fishing licences are granted as a 'gesture of goodwill' before 10 December. The deadline expired without a breakthrough in talks, despite France's threat, and 104 French boats still lack licences to operate in British and Channel Island waters. Britain earlier denied discriminating against French boats, saying many of the vessels are unable to provide the paperwork required to qualify for a licence. 'This is a technical process based on evidence rather than deadlines', a UK government spokesman said. France's Europe minister Clement Beaune said, 'If they stick to their guns, then we will ask the European Commission to begin a legal complaint'.

Pray: for France and Britain to commit to reaching a deal without legal proceedings. (Amos 3:3)

More: www.france24.com/en/europe/20211211-france-threatens-legal-action-as-uk-ignores-eu-deadline-in-post-brexit-fishing-row

Pray for Europe

Since 1960 we have witnessed a move away from traditional norms and values connected to Christianity and embraced 'new' cultural values unrelated to religious conviction regarding marriage, sexuality, family, education, beginning and end of life. It is cultural liberalism, which calls itself progressive compared to 'conservative' traditional norms and values. Cultural liberalism is to live an 'authentic' life. Church, social environment and the state should give 'me' the freedom to live and act according to what 'I' feel and desire. What was wrong yesterday is acceptable today - which is described as 'progress'. However, while cultural liberalism spreads in western Europe it meets resistance in eastern Europe, encouraging us that it may not be the inevitable future of European society. Christians are challenged to remain faithful to God's Biblical commandments and Church principles. We have good arguments to expose weaknesses in cultural liberalism. We have the enormous power of prayer.

Pray: for the Church to stand up in the public square and defend the basic structures of family, parenthood, and the dignity of human life in all its stages. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

More: mailchi.mp/59dcaa3680e9/canopyprayerletter-120

Worldwide

USA: tornadoes

Entire towns in the USA were destroyed by about 30 tornadoes causing widespread devastation on 10 December. Kentucky is a disaster area; Arkansas, Tennessee, Missouri and Illinois are in a state of emergency. One tornado flattened a candle factory with 100+ inside. An Amazon warehouse collapsed causing a 'mass casualty incident'. Churches and mission groups, including Billy Graham Rapid Response Teams <https://lp.billygraham.org/rrt/> (<https://lp.billygraham.org/rrt/>) chaplains, and mobile ministry centres are there to pray with people. Please pray for God to bind up broken hearts and for many to come to know Jesus - 'a stronghold to the poor, help to the needy in distress, a shelter from the storm'. Pray for the emergency teams offering resources and temporary housing for the homeless. Pray for the tens of thousands of people without power and water. Pray for 300+ National Guards going door to door, though many don't have doors any more. Pray for those salvaging homes [reduced to rubble](https://abcnews.go.com/Nightline/video/residents-dawson-spring-kentucky-salvage-homes-reduced-rubble-81762824) (<https://abcnews.go.com/Nightline/video/residents-dawson-spring-kentucky-salvage-homes-reduced-rubble-81762824>).

Pray: for clear communication between those organising repairs to damaged infrastructure. (Hebrews 10:35)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-59623970

Algeria: Advent - waiting for change

An Algerian message: 'Christians eagerly wait for Christmas. We wait for joyous worship services, time to gather with family and friends, presents to open, and the celebration of the hope we have in Christ. But since authorities closed our churches in 2019, we won't be able to celebrate Christmas together for the third year running. The churches are doing their best to take care of their sheep in an impossible situation and are waiting for heavenly intervention. In the midst of these hardships, Christians meet on Zoom, and watch church services on TV. We believe in a mighty God: nothing is impossible with Him.' Pray for God to renew the spiritual strength of Algerian Christians waiting on God to shift the things beyond their control. May we join with the pastors who proclaim that the best is yet to come. Pray that Algerian churches will be permanently re-opened.

Pray: for all who broadcast Christian messages through various media outlets to be equipped as they encourage the Algerian Church through these difficult times. (Romans 15:13)

More: www.sat7uk.org/pages/advent-13-december/

Lebanon: elderly in hardship and helpless

11% of Lebanon's population is over the retirement age (65), and 80% of retired people have no health care coverage. Previously Habeeb and Elham had a good life; they could eat meat, afford medicine and have the lights on. But those times are over. When Habeeb retired their income stopped and now the 80-year-olds face poverty and uncertainty. 'There is no government pension when you are old, no one is helping. How can we pay our bills?' asks Habeeb with tears in his eyes. Lebanon has one of the world's worst economic crises. The Lebanese pound has lost 90% of its value since 2019. The banking system crumbled with much of the elderly's life savings. The young are abandoning Lebanon in search of a more dignified life. Lebanese lack electricity and water, and food and medicine are difficult to import. The aid group Medonations imports medication and provides it to those who need it, and there are a few relief outlets for the vulnerable.

Pray: for the protection and growth of non-governmental distribution centres and all who provide essentials for the elderly. (Jeremiah 29:11)

More: www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/12/lebanons-elderly-population-devastated-crash

Indonesia: pray for the unreached

Some villagers thought it was just flooding, but it was searing, volcanic mud. We recently prayed for Indonesians on Java where Mount Semeru catastrophically erupted, killing dozens, burying whole communities, and making thousands homeless. Disasters are common across Indonesia's islands - displacing millions by volcanoes, earthquakes, tsunamis and floods. Indonesia has the world's largest Muslim population: most of its 260 million people face tragedies without the hope of Jesus Christ. Those who choose to follow Jesus frequently face persecution from neighbors, family, and friends. As the people grieve another natural disaster, may increasing numbers be introduced to the only Hope of the world - Jesus Christ. Pray for Christians to boldly demonstrate and proclaim the grace and salvation of Jesus Christ. Pray for peace and protection for believers amid growing Islamic momentum and expansion. Pray for entire families to put their faith in Jesus Christ.

Pray: for God supernaturally to meet with the unreached 29.1% of the population. (Hebrews 4:12)

More: www.prayercast.com/indonesia.html

USA: children's home sues government

A Christian children's home has filed a federal lawsuit against the Biden administration, challenging its rule requiring the agency to place children in the homes of unmarried, cohabitating couples, same-sex couples and non-Christian couples. Holston United Methodist Home for Children has operated in Tennessee and Virginia since 1895 and helped over 8,000 children reunite with family or find a new adoptive family through to transition into adulthood. Their core mission is facilitating relationships so children can be 'raised by families which prepare them to live the fulfilling adult lives that God intended for them.' The lawsuit argues that by forcing the home to place children with couples that do not share in its Christian statement of faith, the department of health is violating the right to free exercise of religion under the First Amendment and the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

Pray: for the home to remain free to continue placing at-risk children in loving, Christian families, according to its deeply held beliefs, without government punishment. (Proverbs 22:6)

More: decisionmagazine.com/christian-childrens-home-files-religious-liberty-suit-against-biden-administration/

Chinese government found guilty in Uyghur tribunal

On 13 December, after two years of hearings, the Uyghur tribunal found the Chinese government guilty of crimes against humanity, systematic torture, and genocide against Uyghurs and other minorities in the Xinjiang region. The founder of ChinaAid said, 'The unanimous judgment by the independent tribunal after nearly two years of extensive hearings from a number of credible witnesses and experts that the Chinese Communist government had verifiably committed systematic genocide and crime against humanity (in particular against ethnic minorities such as Uyghurs and Kazakhs inside Xinjiang) is another vindication of the same finding by the international community. It further proves the brutality of the worst human rights violations in the modern history of China in the past seventy years. It is imperative both morally and legally for all of the free countries, especially the US and EU and international organisations such as the UN, to take immediate and urgent actions to stop these atrocities from happening before they get worse.'

Pray: for this verdict to prompt other free countries to copy the USA, which passed a Uyghur Forced Labour Prevention Act last week. (Amos 5:24)

More: www.chinaaid.org/2021/12/uyghur-tribunal-reaches-unanimous.html

Global: weapons trade's record profits in 2020

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), sales of weapons and military services by the world's 100 biggest arms companies saw a record increase of 1.3% compared with the previous year - the sixth consecutive year of growth even as the global economy shrank. Some governments even accelerated payments to the arms industry in order to mitigate the impact of the Covid-19 crisis. The USA dominates the industry with about 54% of all sales. Pray for Godly design and protection over all International treaties and agreements. God is shaking nations with wars and threats of war. We can pray for them to demonstrate God's righteousness, justice, mercy and truth and to model His principles in relation to other countries. Pray for God's protection over all international treaties and agreements.

Pray: for peace-keeping attitudes to dominate military minds so that wars can decrease even though weaponry increases. (Matthew 5:9)

More: www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/12/6/weapons-trade-booms-as-profit-hits-record-531bn

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