

Prayer Alert

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So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and He answered our prayer. (Ezra 8:23)

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!

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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

[UK: victory for street preachers](#)

Cancer survivor John Dunn, who had served in the Special Forces, was interviewed under caution and subsequently summonsed by the police for alleged 'homophobic' behaviour after preaching on Swindon High Street. When his case went to court, the Crown Prosecution Service argued that parts of the Bible are 'abusive' and 'no longer appropriate in modern society'. The case was thrown out of court when the women making allegations against him 'refused to engage with the case'. Another Swindon street preacher, Shaun O'Sullivan, who was arrested in March 2020, was also found not guilty of 'hate speech'. He found salvation in Christ after hearing the gospel preached by John, and has experienced radical transformation. They both said they will never give up preaching Christ on the streets. Hear how God has worked [in both men's lives](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tusNZE8L7FY) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tusNZE8L7FY>):

Praise: God for all he is doing both on the streets and in the judiciary. May He continue to bless all those he calls to evangelism and instil His justice in the law courts. (Romans 15:13)

More: mailchi.mp/christianconcern/christian-weekly-news-603916

[DR Congo: despair into joy](#)

'People were getting sick and dying a lot,' says Sango. 'One of my children died from diarrhoea. We could not afford medical care, we sold our mattresses, plates and clothes to pay for medicine and had nothing left to sell. 'Our children were often ill and couldn't go to school so we didn't have time to farm and lost the respect of our community. Our despair turned to joy when Tearfund came and taught the importance of good toilets and washing our hands to prevent diseases, including diarrhoea. We built our first family toilet with a hand washing device. It has been three months since anyone has been ill! We have time and strength to farm and we can eat three meals a day, not just one. Our children are back at school, and after we have harvested our next crop we will buy some clothes.'

Praise: God for Tearfund and all the mission agencies helping people fight sickness and poverty with wise teaching and support. (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

More: www.tearfund.org/stories/2022/11/how-clean-water-keeps-people-safe-from-crocodiles-in-the-democratic-republic-of-congo

British Isles

[MI5 issues Iran terror warning](#)

The director of MI5 says Iran has plotted the assassination and kidnapping of at least ten British residents it accuses of being 'enemies of the regime'. A Home Office statement said, 'You may have seen Ken McCallum's annual threat update, in which he said that Iran's instability is bringing real-world consequences here in the UK. It has become the state-actor which most frequently crosses into terrorism, and we see the regime resorting to more and more extreme measures to silence its critics at home. We also see Iran projecting threats directly to the UK through its aggressive intelligence services. We know, at the most extreme end, its ambitions include kidnapping and killing British or UK-based individuals they perceive to be enemies of the regime.'

Pray: for intelligence agencies and police forces as they continue to use all tools at their disposal to combat this threat. (Proverbs 16:9)
More: www.cufi.org.uk/news/uk-issues-iran-terror-warning/

Woman with Down's syndrome loses abortion law appeal

Heidi Crowter, who has Down's syndrome, lost her appeal over a law allowing abortion up to birth for a foetus with Down's. Legislation gives a 24-week time limit for abortion unless the child could suffer from physical or mental abnormalities, including Down's. That law was made in 1967, when Down's children could not even go to school because of their extra chromosome. Pray for judges to move with the times. Heidi said the rules discriminated against people with Down's and do not respect them. Her original court case against the Government was with Maire Lea-Wilson, mother of a Down's son; she will now go to the Supreme Court. BPAS argued, 'The claimants say fetuses should have human rights; this was never decided in UK law and goes against many years of legal precedent.' 90% of women whose unborn children were diagnosed with Down's terminated their pregnancies in 2022.

Pray: for society to champion the rights of disabled people before and after their birth while supporting the families facing various moral, ethical or other challenging situations. (Leviticus 19:14)
More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/disability-63744073

Women prevented from praying

Livia Tossici-Bolt was praying quietly with a friend in a public space when she was warned by prayer-patrol officers that 'their prayer could cause intimidation, harassment or distress'; they were asked to move away. Livia filed a complaint against Bournemouth Council for breaching her freedom to pray on a public street. The officers said they prayed close to the edge of a new buffer zone around an abortion clinic, where a protection order bans praying, protesting, vigils, and handing out leaflets. Ms Bolt said, 'Everyone has the freedom to pray quietly in a public place. I would never dream of doing something that causes intimidation and harassment. We complied with the new rules instituted by the council and didn't pray within the censorship zone. They tried to intimidate us out of exercising our freedom of thought and of expression in the form of prayer - which has been a foundational part of our society for generations.'

Pray: for everyone in the UK to be free to pray wherever they are. (Colossians 4:2)
More: premierchristian.news/en/news/article/woman-praying-outside-bournemouth-buffer-zone-says-she-was-told-by-council-to-move-away

Long Covid

Over two million British people have long Covid, yet almost three years into the pandemic there is still a struggle for them to be seen by specialist clinics, hampered by a lack of resources and research. Long Covid has symptoms that continue for over 12 weeks and are not explained by alternative diagnosis. Over a third of people with long Covid acquired it during the first Omicron wave. They suffer weakness, tiredness, difficulty concentrating, shortness of breath, muscle aches, pain, fatigue, brain fog, muscle twitching, sleep problems, and more. The British Medical Association has asked the Government to increase funding for long Covid clinics to deal with the ever-increasing patient numbers. NHS England's 2022 strategy, set out in July, failed to announce any new funding.

Pray: for new research, improved treatment, and kindness from others until a cure comes. (Proverbs 25:2)
More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-63546138

Pressure on GPs dangerously high

Pressure on GPs is 'dangerously close to a death spiral' as doctors leave, says Dr Paul Evans. BMA's safe working guidance states GPs should have up to 25 patient encounters a day. But on Mondays a doctor could have 40, 50, sometimes even 60 direct patient contacts. The problem worsens as the pressure leads to more GPs leaving the profession. The NHS has recruited 4,000+ trainee GPs in 2022, hitting government targets. However, while training places have increased, quite a significant number who finish training leave the system because it is so hard to work in. Rishi Sunak said the NHS was a priority and 'billions of pounds extra' would be invested, adding, 'I'm confident, because we are putting in the extra resources, we will be able to find a way to improve the services'.

Pray: for more investment into the NHS GP speciality trainee recruitment programmes. (Proverbs 17:22)
More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-63778306

Less than half the population are Christian

The latest census by the Office for National Statistics shows that 46.2% of people in England and Wales describe themselves as Christian, the lowest ever recorded. Those with no religion increased to 37.2%, up from 25%. Of those who answered under the 'any other religion' option, the largest group were pagan, with a tenfold rise identifying themselves as Shaman. Muslim rose from 4.9% to 6.5%. [The most recent faith survey \(https://faithsurvey.co.uk/uk-christianity.html\)](https://faithsurvey.co.uk/uk-christianity.html) shows that the major Christian denominations, Catholic and Presbyterian, saw membership fall. Orthodox, Pentecostal Evangelical, and Charismatic saw an increase in membership. The biggest decline in church membership is in Scotland.

Pray: for lapsed Christians and 'not yet Christians' to be touched by the Holy Spirit this Christmas, and recognise that God loves humanity and sent His Son to meet them. (2 Corinthians 5:17)
More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-63792408

M4UK: church planting and revitalising

There is no lack of UK church buildings, but less than 2% of the population are evangelical Christians, despite a strong Christian history. M4UK's vision is to engage with the people who are unreached in 2022 and beyond, by revitalising and growing churches and planting new churches that declare and demonstrate the life-changing power of Jesus Christ. Its Team Process is two years of training that helps the church planter and their team succeed in their first years. At the end of the training process, the church-planting team is fully prepared to launch a healthy reproducing church that glorifies God and impacts society. It is Christ himself who builds his church, and the authority of the Bible is essential for the content and message of the M4 process.

Pray: for God to release more evangelists and empower a multiplying movement of missional churches, led by God's Holy Spirit, to build and grow His Church. (Acts 1:8)
More: m4europe.com/m4-uk/

Worshippers left in tears

Some worshippers left the chapel of Trinity College Cambridge in tears after guest speaker Joshua Heath explained how Jesus could have been transgender. Joshua, whose PhD was supervised by former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, showed the congregation three Renaissance and medieval paintings of Jesus and the 14th-century Prayer Book of Bonne of Luxembourg to defend his point. The dean of Trinity College said such a view was 'legitimate', but US evangelist Franklin Graham said the comments were 'repulsive and shameful'. 'To insinuate that Jesus Christ, the Holy Son of God, is transgender or to sexualise in any way his sacrificial death on the Cross for the sins of mankind is utter heresy' (<https://premierchristian.news/us/news/article/franklin-graham-slams-shameful-sermon-which-suggested-jesus-might-have-been-trans>).

Pray: for universities to be wise when issuing invitations to speak at church services, and to recognise the word of God is the last word in open debate. (Colossians 2:8)

More: www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/11/26/jesus-could-have-transgender-claims-cambridge-dean/

Europe

'Turning point' prayers

In light of the Russian attack on Ukraine, many politicians have spoken of a turning point in history. 'Rarely does evil show its face so openly,' said one daily newspaper. Our society has largely ceased to reckon with the reality of evil, so how do we confront it? Do we allow ourselves to be infected with negative thoughts and feelings, even hatred? A Ukrainian brother's prayer can guide us to real prayer. He prayed that, despite the brutal war, hearts would not harden but remain soft. May the Holy Spirit transform all stony hearts. The Conference on the Future of Europe has presented its final report, containing 49 proposals about Europe's future. In the entire text of 336 pages the words 'religion', 'faith', and 'church' are not mentioned. Faith having a significance in the future of Europe is no longer considered.

Pray: for churches to raise their voice, and for Europe once again to be built on the foundation of the Christian faith as we rebuild the dimension of God in our society. (Ezekiel 36:26)

More: mcusercontent.com/ffd99da83edd4244458b59317/files/1eb58367-ae9b-64ca-8322-2b55b5fc9c47/Canopy_140_English.pdf

Germany: struggling with influx of refugees

One million Ukrainians have fled to Germany since Russia's invasion. On the outskirts of Berlin, almost 1,000 people sleep in giant heated tents on a former airport runway. The German capital is struggling to house Ukraine's refugees properly. As winter deepens and Russia continues attacking Ukraine's energy infrastructure, authorities are hastily preparing more emergency shelters in anticipation of up to 10,000 more Ukrainians. Germany initially extended a warm welcome, but there are now growing concerns about how best to accommodate such a large number of people. Around 100 Ukrainians arrive every day at the main refugee reception centre in the airport terminal. Workers in brightly coloured tabards lead them to departure halls filled with trestle tables offering food, medical aid and a bed for a 'temporary' stay. But many will stay in bunks in shared cubicles or tents for longer than a few days. Permanent accommodation is getting harder to find.

Pray: for God to bless the workers committed to making life as easy and comfortable as possible for the refugees, and for citizens to come forward with accommodation offers. (James 1:12)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-63792498

Worldwide

Worldwide: Advent traditions

China might not come to mind when considering Advent, but 5.1% of Chinese are Christians who light their homes with colourful paper lanterns and red paper pagodas placed in windows. 86% of Croatians are Roman Catholic, and some Christmas preparations begin on 25 November, St Catherine's Day. Families gather around an Advent wreath each Sunday to sing carols and light a candle. Hungarian tradition during Advent is a daily Mass, called Angelic Mass or Golden Mass, held every dawn from the first Sunday of Advent to the first day of Christmas. Mexico's Advent brings Las Posadas, a nine-day celebration from 16 to 24 December, marking Mary and Joseph's journey. Each evening a child dressed as an angel leads a procession of children visiting homes, where they are denied entry but given refreshments. Poland's Advent brings prayer, fasting and spiritual preparation for Christmas. Poles attend early-morning Masses and light candles symbolising the coming light of salvation.

Pray: for people all over the world to be blessed as they observe the four Sundays before the celebration of Christ's birth and prepare for His second coming. (Isaiah 9:6)

More: edition.cnn.com/travel/article/advent-traditions-world/index.html

China: Covid policy tipping point

On 27 November thousands protested in Shanghai against Covid restrictions, shouting slogans against the government. In Beijing, Tsinghua, and Nanjing, students were arrested. The unrest began when lockdown was blamed for ten deaths in a tower block fire. Protesters held blank white banners, symbolising defiance against censorship. Such direct criticism of the president and government could result in harsh penalties, but by 30 November protesters in Guangzhou were throwing debris and glass at police wearing hazmat suits and clutching riot shields. The government has drastically misjudged growing discontent over zero-Covid restrictions. Millions have endured three years of movement restrictions and daily Covid tests. The anger has galvanised university students, factory workers, and ordinary citizens, all calling for President Xi to step down (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-63771109>). Televised reports of the World Cup in Qatar have helped millions of Chinese to realise that Covid and social freedoms are not incompatible. On 1 December China finally shifted its stance and eased some virus restrictions as the vice-premier announced that the country was facing a 'new situation'.

Pray: for this tipping point to usher in less control, peace on the streets, and the release of prisoners who had demonstrated against the epidemic prevention laws. (Isaiah 1:17)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-63805188

Uganda: Ebola quarantine extended

Uganda has recorded 141 infections since the outbreak of Ebola was declared on 20 September. President Museveni has extended by 21 days a quarantine placed on Mubende and Kassanda districts, at the epicentre of the outbreak. Movement in and out of central Uganda is restricted up to 17 December. The aim of this extension is to sustain the gains in control of Ebola which have been made, and to protect the rest of the country from continued exposure. Mr Museveni said, 'It may be too early to celebrate any successes, but overall, I have been briefed that the picture is good.' 55 people have died since the outbreak was declared. Although it is gradually being brought under control, he said the situation is 'still fragile,' adding that the country's weak health system and circulation of misinformation about the disease were still a challenge.

Pray: for a vaccine to be discovered for this 'Sudan strain', and for the health and safety measures to succeed in eradicating it from Uganda. (Psalm 41:3)

More: www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/11/27/ugandas-president-extends-ebola-epicentres-quarantine-for-21-days

Hawaii: world's largest active volcano erupts

Mauna Loa volcano is the largest active volcano in the world. On 1 December the alert level code was upgraded to red, the highest classification. The lava flow is mostly contained within the summit, but residents have been placed on alert and warned about the risk of falling ash. The US Geological Service said the situation could change rapidly. The eruption of Mauna Loa has two active fissures feeding lava flows downslope, while other lava flows are travelling north. They are reaching a relatively flat area and beginning to slow down; as this happens, the lava will spread out and inflate. Pray for the safety of the many visitors rushing to observe the spectacle. Pray for the residents worried about emergency response and resources that may be available to assist those at risk. Updates at <https://hawaii-county-volcano-hazards-hawaiicountygis.hub.arcgis.com/>

Pray: for major population centres where volcanic gases could cause breathing problems. (Proverbs 27:12)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-63783633

Brazil: fatal landslide

At least two people have died after heavy rain caused a mudslide which engulfed the BR-376 motorway in Parana state. The whereabouts of around thirty people are unknown. Several vehicles are thought to have been buried under the rubble on the coastal road. Aerial pictures show lorries lying on their sides hanging perilously over the edge of the motorway. Social media footage showed motorists battling through muddy flood water before the landslide. Some people online have asked why the road was not closed earlier. Access to a major port for grains and sugar shipments has been cut off. About 80% of goods exported from Paranagua, the country's second-biggest port for grains and sugar, are delivered by truck. The state authority has declined to estimate the total losses.

Pray: for the dozens of lost people to be found, and for the bereaved to be comforted. (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

More: news.sky.com/story/at-least-two-dead-and-dozens-missing-after-landslide-engulfs-motorway-in-brazil-12759199

Canada: deforestation rules 'burdensome'

Ailish Campbell, Canada's ambassador to the EU, said its proposed rules to curb deforestation add 'burdensome' requirements and will hurt trade between Canada and the EU. The rules aim to limit the trade of products linked to deforestation worldwide. Climate campaigners have called Canada's resistance to the rules shocking. In a letter to the EU, Ms Campbell says Canada supports the objectives of the proposed deforestation regulation, but is greatly concerned that some elements will cause trade barriers for Canadian exporters. She asks for several revisions to the regulation, including providing a delay and a clearer definition for what falls under forest 'degradation' - a practice that climate advocates say is widely seen in Canada. In March, over 90 scientists penned an open letter to prime minister Trudeau outlining concerns about the rate of industrial logging in old-growth forests, which they said had 'unique and irreplaceable ecological values'.

Pray: for all illegal or unsustainable logging to end, and for Canada to commit to environmental policies and protect and restore nature. (Jeremiah 2:7)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-63736486

India: Modi scolds Putin

Narendra Modi, India's prime minister, has called for the Ukraine war to end. He warned that geopolitical struggles could 'lead to humanitarian crises'. In a thinly veiled swipe at the Russian president, he said, 'Our era need not be one of war. Indeed, it must not be one!' The comments echoed his previous criticism of Mr Putin in September. India has abstained from condemning Moscow's actions in Ukraine at the UN as the government balances its ties with Russia and the West, but has shifted its stance as the war intensifies and energy and food shortages pose greater global threats. Mr Modi said the world's greatest challenges 'can be solved not by fighting each other, but only by acting together'. India hosts the next G20 summit, whose theme is One Earth, One Family, One Future.

Pray: for India to successfully use the G20 presidency to depoliticise the global supply of food, fertilisers, and medical products, and avert humanitarian tragedies. (Deuteronomy 28:7)

More: www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2022/11/30/narendra-modi-calls-vladimir-putin-stop-weaponising-food-supplies/

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