

Prayer Alert

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Faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. (Hebrews 11:1)

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!

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

USA: Jesus March ministry

A handful of twenty-somethings went outside the four walls of their church to share the Gospel on the streets every Sunday night for five years. On fire with Holy Spirit power, they led their peers to Jesus - even changing the spiritual atmosphere of the area. They knew there was more for them than saving souls, and their actions led to planting a church for the new Christians led by Ivan, the son of the pastor who encouraged their outreach. He organised the United Church to disciple, train, and send followers of Jesus to proclaim His salvation. The church then birthed Jesus March, a ministry of United Revival Ministries, both under its auspices. The ministry has hosted 125 prayer and worship events, connected with 200 churches, commissioned 6,500 evangelists, and introduced thousands of people to Jesus since its formation five years ago. By 2024 United Revival will have brought Jesus March and evangelism training, worship, and prayer to nine American cities.

Praise: God for the faith-filled communities bringing thousands into His Kingdom with worship, gospel presentations, healing, deliverance and baptisms. (Galatians 2:20)

More: www.godreports.com/2023/08/jesus-march-bears-fruit-in-surprising-downtown-locations/

She is free!

Najma, a young woman from Egypt who had been taken captive by Muslim extremists, has been released. Najma was held against her will as radicals attempted to get her to recant her faith in Jesus. She refused. Authorities were able to track her down through surveillance.

Praise: God for Najma's strength of faith, fortitude, and freedom (Psalm 99:3)

More: twitter.com/GC_Relief/status/169699886262200074

British Isles

Christians and workplace discrimination

The Catholic Union, Christian Institute, and Evangelical Alliance have written to the chair of the human rights committee, asking for religious freedom to be a 'key part' of a parliamentary inquiry into human rights at work. Catholic Union director Nigel Parker says that it is becoming increasingly difficult to be a faithful Catholic in many workplaces in this country, and his concerns are shared by people from other denominations and other faiths. A Catholic Union survey found that almost five in ten workers do not feel able to talk about their faith openly with colleagues, with 41% of respondents saying they didn't believe religious discrimination was given the same weight as age, race, sex, and sexuality discrimination. Although the inquiry's focus includes 'freedom of thought, conscience, and religion', they worry this won't receive enough attention. They want a separate session discussing religious freedom at work to help shape the final recommendations for the Government.

Pray: for the committee to take these concerns seriously and make the role of faith in the workplace a central part of their inquiry into human rights at work. (Isaiah 1:17a)

More: premierchristian.news/en/news/article/christian-groups-call-on-parliament-to-tackle-workplace-discrimination

Improving or destroying water quality

Only 14% of river water bodies in England currently achieve 'good ecological status'. Pollution is the biggest problem; a quarter of rivers are not in good ecological health due to sewage pollution from water companies, homes and businesses, costing £1.2bn per year. Wildlife is threatened by poor water quality as fish spawning grounds are lost to silt building up. Too many nutrients in rivers feed algae growth, leading to streams and rivers becoming choked up with vegetation and a decrease in plant and wildlife diversity. Sadly, government ministers have proposed [scrapping the pollution rules](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-66642878) (https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-66642878) to build more homes - which will worsen sewage pollution. They propose building 100,000 new homes by 2030, loosening the rules around building near waterways in protected areas. The Wildlife Trust accused the Government of disgusting behaviour, saying that change will lead to 'lots more poo in our rivers' and 'not solve the root causes of housing problems'.

Pray: for water quality to be improved and managed as whole systems for clean rivers and safe drinking water before protected areas are built upon. (Galatians 6:7)

More: www.wildlifetrusts.org

Government not prioritising disability rights

The Government refused to attend a UN review of its treatment of disabled people after an inquiry warned of grave violations of disabled people's rights. The UN report found welfare reforms had adversely affected disabled people. The UK's delegation should have gone to the Geneva hearing on 28 August to assess their progress, but the Government pulled out, saying it would meet UN officials in March 2024 instead, sparking anger from campaigners. The UK published responses to the UN's recommendations in 2018, 2021, and 2022, and was to give a further update this year. After its no-show there were feedback sessions with British disability rights groups who complained, 'No one from the Government heard the facts and stories of increasing poverty, lack of support, inaccessible services, and an infrastructure that limited the life chances of disabled people'.

Pray: for the Government to recognise the discrimination that disabled people experience, take its human rights obligations seriously, and give the disabled the support they need. (Psalm 82:3)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-66648764

'I got into university, but had nowhere to live'

Unipol says student housing shortages will get worse in some cities. The number of new purpose-built rooms being created is tumbling, despite student numbers growing. Keira Barber, 18, says she had to switch universities because she was unable to afford accommodation at her first choice. Universities say they always try to help because housing issues are a significant worry. Some universities have struggled to provide a room near campus for new students, offering them housing in neighbouring cities instead. Most student accommodation is now built and rented by the private sector, and Unipol keeps a register of the number of rooms as part of a voluntary code of conduct. The creation of new student rooms is grinding to a halt because of high building costs. 29,048 new student rooms were created in 2020, but only 13,543 this year. Some were old buildings brought back into use.

Pray: for more affordable accommodation to be created in university cities, and rent controls to stop prices escalating. (Amos 5:24)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/newsbeat-66591376

Christian Climate Action

On 11 August Christian Climate Action (CCA) held a prayer vigil outside the headquarters of the Catholic development agency CAFOD. They prayed for and with the charity to consider their banking arrangements. The core plea of the prayers was for CAFOD to close their bank account with Barclays, the biggest funder of fossil fuels in Europe. They held up signs such as 'Praying for CAFOD to stop banking with Barclays, who fund climate chaos' and 'Barclays, the ecocide bank'. Some members of CAFOD came out and joined the vigil and other CAFOD volunteers stopped to talk. This followed a similar vigil outside Christian Aid recently, which led to that charity closing its Barclays account. There will be a series of vigils in the coming months at charities which bank with Barclays, including World Vision, BMS World Mission, Tearfund, and Leprosy Mission. CCA also spread their message [at the Greenbelt Festival](https://premierchristian.news/en/news/article/greenbelt-vigil-urges-christian-charities-to-drop-barclays-for-the-sake-of-the-planet) (https://premierchristian.news/en/news/article/greenbelt-vigil-urges-christian-charities-to-drop-barclays-for-the-sake-of-the-planet).

Pray: for people to understand that they are supporting climate chaos when they donate to charities using banks who then channel their money into fossil fuel expansion. (Jeremiah 2:7)

More: christianclimateaction.org/2023/08/14/vigil-praying-that-cafod-drop-barclays-bank/

Covid and flu vaccinations brought forward

NHS officials have reported that a new Covid mutation was discovered on 18 August, the most concerning variant since Omicron first emerged. Although BA.2.86 is not classified as a variant of concern, scientists say it carries a high number of mutations, and the rollout of flu and COVID-19 vaccines has been brought forward. Vaccinations for care home residents and those who are immunocompromised will now start on 11 September, not in October. This group will be followed by inviting carers, pregnant women, social care personnel, and individuals aged 65 and above to receive booster shots. The NHS vaccinations director said that although flu and Covid hit hardest in December and January, the new variant presents a greater risk, so they want to vaccinate as many people as possible sooner.

Pray: for the new mutation to be meticulously monitored and understood, so that accurate guidance is given to the public, without causing panic. (Jeremiah 17:14)

More: news.sky.com/story/covid-19-and-flu-autumn-vaccination-drive-brought-forward-as-new-variant-emerges-in-uk-12950935

Wilko - rescue deal or redundancies?

Wilko's 400 stores are expected to close within weeks with 12,500 redundancies unless a buyout is secured. Pray for the 12,500 families living with fear of being out of work. Wilko's assets were valued at £41m and the stock is likely to be worth tens of millions of pounds. The stores could be bought by rival bargain retailers like Poundland, Home Bargains, Primark, and B&M, who would rebrand them, possibly without retaining existing staff. The GMB union, which represents thousands of Wilko staff, said it would be 'a disgrace' if bids that could save jobs were disregarded. 12,500 jobs cannot be sacrificed for a few pence in the pound for creditors. Viable bids that protect jobs must be prioritised. M2 Capital's bid to keep the entire Wilko chain trading fell through on 31 August. [Job losses are feared \(https://news.sky.com/story/wilko-rescue-bid-collapses-placing-jobs-at-risk-sky-news-understands-12951346\)](https://news.sky.com/story/wilko-rescue-bid-collapses-placing-jobs-at-risk-sky-news-understands-12951346).

Pray: for the administrators to secure a wise and just sale to keep all staff in employment and return Wilko to profit. (Jeremiah 29:11)
More: www.theguardian.com/business/2023/aug/27/wilko-administrators-urged-to-accept-rescue-deal-after-second-bid

Europe

Ukraine: win and lose situations

On 29 August Ukraine gained a foothold less than three miles from Russia's defensive lines in the Zaporizhzhya region, and the village of Robotyne was liberated following weeks of fighting over the settlement. When Ukrainian forces split to launch another attack in-between the villages of Novodanylivka and Verbove, prominent Russian military blogger Romanov (with 135,000 followers) described the current situation for Russia as 'very dangerous.' But sadly, there has been a dramatic rise in Ukraine's death toll. The grim task of counting the dead is a daily reality, with the unknown soldiers piled high in a small brick mortuary, not far from the Donetsk front line. The figures remain classified, but US officials recently put the number at 70,000 dead and as many as 120,000 injured. It is a staggering figure, from armed forces estimated at only half a million strong. The UN has reported [9,177 civilian deaths. 9,177 civilian deaths \(https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-66581217\)](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-66581217).

Pray: for the Prince of Peace to cause weapons to be laid down. May the God of comfort come to all who fear tomorrow; pray for heaven's wisdom to fill those holding power of war or peace. (Matthew 10:16)
More: www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2023/08/29/ukraine-russia-war-latest-news-drone-jets-black-sea-putin/

Greece: largest wildfire ever in EU

In Greece, the largest wildfire ever recorded in the European Union has prompted the EU to mobilise almost half of its firefighting air wing to help tackle it. Greece's fire service told the AFP news agency that the fire is still out of control in their nature reserve, a major sanctuary for birds of prey. It is raging across a six-mile front. Fire department officials arrested two men for deliberate arson, while hundreds of firefighters battled wildfires which have killed at least 21 people. Pray for those mourning the dead, and for those who have watched fires consume their homes. Pray for those in fear as they watch vast tracts of forest blaze, and for the civilians who have been evacuated from the towns of Avra, Atarni and Plaka.

Pray: for the success of the collective fleet of 28 aircraft, 24 water-dumping planes and four helicopters supplied by member countries to help Greek firefighters battle the blazes. (Proverbs 16:3)
More: www.cbsnews.com/news/greece-europe-battling-largest-wildfire-ever-recorded-out-of-control/

Worldwide

USA: prosperity gospel on the rise

An increasing number of American Protestant churchgoers believe that financial prosperity is part of God's plan for them and that giving more money to their church and charities will result in blessings from God. Lifeway Research found that 52% of churchgoers say their church teaches that God will bless them if they donate more. Additionally, 76% believe God wants them to prosper financially, and they must do something for God to receive those material blessings. Such churchgoers are reflecting the heretical belief that material blessings are earned from God. Lifeway Research also noted that Covid and financial struggles due to inflation may have contributed to their changed beliefs. The prosperity gospel, or 'the Word of Faith Movement', teaches that believers can use God for material gain, particularly among younger and less educated churchgoers.

Pray: for those following this misguided Christian culture to realise they must (mainly) wait until they enter heaven to experience the unimaginable things that God promises. (1 Corinthians 2:9)
More: www.christianpost.com/news/prosperity-gospel-on-the-rise-among-us-churchgoers.html

India: Chandrayaan-3 moonwalk

India's space agency is the first to walk on the moon's south pole. Chandrayaan-3's rover walk means that India has joined America, the former Soviet Union and China's elite club. The rover is roaming the rocks and craters at 1 cm per second, gathering data and images to send to earth for analysis. It landed on the start of a lunar day, which equals a little over four earth weeks. The lander and rover will use these days of sunlight to charge their batteries. A major goal is to hunt for water. The craters, permanently in shadow, hold ice which could support human habitation on the Moon in future. It could also be used for supplying propellant for spacecraft headed to Mars and other distant destinations. Narendra Modi said India wants to open its space sector to foreign investment as it targets a five-fold increase in its share of the global launch market [within the next decade \(http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/102940495.cms\)](http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/102940495.cms).

Pray: for this new space race to bring prosperity to the poor without draining India's economy. (Psalm 8:3-4)
More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-66613688

North / South Korea: praying for reunification

73 years ago an armistice was signed to divide North and South Korea. Now, millions of Koreans are praying for the reunification of the country. Each night for the past 17 years, from 10:00 pm to 3:00 am, South Korean intercessors with the Esther Prayer Movement gather to pray for the liberation of North Korea. The movement's president said that North Korea has one of the world's worst qualities of life, the worst democracy, economic freedom, and freedom of speech; the most slavery, bribery and corruption. It is the worst persecutor of Christians. People in North Korea have no chance to listen to the Gospel, and they must idolise their dictator: 'So we should make them free from their bondage. We pray for them.' The North Korean underground church has 400,000 believers. South Koreans seek to spread the Gospel by floating across the water bottles filled with rice, money, and USB drives containing the Bible or Christian videos.

Pray: for more people inside and outside Korea to pray and ask the Lord to break the authority of death over North Korea and save the people. (Revelation 21:4a)

More: www2.cbn.com/news/world/after-73-years-divided-south-korean-christians-pray-fervently-reunification-freedom

South Africa: Johannesburg fire amid housing issues

On 31 August a building being used as 'informal' housing for some 200 homeless people caught fire with at least 73 people dying. They lived in a maze of shacks and makeshift structures inside the five-storey building. Seven victims were children, 52 are injured, and the death toll is expected to rise. Johannesburg has widespread poverty and joblessness, and 15,000 homeless people. The head of Human Settlements said some of the victims may have been renting from criminal gangs illegally collecting fees. Johannesburg's mayor said that the city administration is aware that many such 'hijacked' buildings exist and are rented out by cartels preying on the vulnerable. Because most of them are in the hands of cartels and the city suffers from chronic power shortages, residents resort to candles for light and wood fires for heat. This fire demonstrates a chronic criminalised housing problem.

Pray: for those still searching for relatives in the aftermath of the fire. Pray for the injured to be healed physically and emotionally. (3 John 2)

More: www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/johannesburg-fire-today-burning-building-deaths-latest-b2402366.html

Armenia: Nagorno-Karabakh blockade continues

Asmalyan eats potatoes for every meal. He lives with 120,000 other ethnic Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh, an enclave in Azerbaijan in the South Caucasus. They are cut off from Armenia by the Azerbaijani blockade of the Lachin Corridor, the only road in or out of Nagorno-Karabakh. They are under siege, with little food, essential medicines, hygiene products, baby formula, or fuel. Residents believe Azerbaijan wants to starve them into submission so that if or when the road reopens, they leave. It is a slow-motion genocide, with hunger the weapon. Asmalyan said outsiders don't care about Karabakh as they have no natural resources: 'They talk about human rights but do nothing.' However, the Archbishop of London's Coptic Orthodox Church, the Primate of the Armenian Church of the UK, the Bishop of Southwark, and other church leaders have written an open letter to Rishi Sunak urging immediate action to open the Lachin Corridor and [prevent genocide \(https://premierchristian.news/en/news/article/rishi-sunak-urged-to-act-on-the-nagorno-karabakh-blockade-in-open-letter-by-church-leaders\)](https://premierchristian.news/en/news/article/rishi-sunak-urged-to-act-on-the-nagorno-karabakh-blockade-in-open-letter-by-church-leaders). Also, Armenians will demonstrate in Yerevan on 2 September to [express unity with Nagorno-Karabakh \(https://crisis24.garda.com/alerts/2023/08/armenia-activists-from-political-opposition-to-demonstrate-at-yerevans-freedom-square-sept-2-to-express-unity-with-nagorno-karabakh\)](https://crisis24.garda.com/alerts/2023/08/armenia-activists-from-political-opposition-to-demonstrate-at-yerevans-freedom-square-sept-2-to-express-unity-with-nagorno-karabakh).

Pray: for the UK and other nations to negotiate with Azerbaijan to open the blockade and end the dispute between the two countries. (Psalm 34:14)

More: www.theguardian.com/world/2023/aug/22/inside-nagorno-karabakh-blockade-armenia-azerbaijan

Afghanistan: two years after US withdrawal

30 August was the two-year anniversary of the US withdrawal from Afghanistan. Despite promises of a more moderate rule, Taliban leaders have imposed harsh measures. 'It's not a very good time in Afghanistan because of the hopelessness, the fear. People are tired of Islam,' says Mina, an Afghan Christian working with Global Catalytic Ministries. 'At first, I was feeling sorry for myself. I cried for three weeks. Then God's grace opened my eyes.' In June, Taliban supreme leader Hibatullah Akhundzada described Afghanistan's conditions as comfortable for women according to the Islamic Shariah: 'The status of women as a free and dignified human being has been restored, and all institutions have been obliged to help women in securing marriage, inheritance and other rights.' However the Taliban removed girls from school, barred women from public spaces, and cracked down on media freedoms. Earlier this year, officials banned women like Mina from the workplace.

Pray: for an end to the Taliban policy of systematic attacks on women and girls, and for Christians to see things through God's eyes and not be wounded by the pain around them. (Isaiah 54:17)

More: www.mnnonline.org/news/how-afghan-women-fare-two-years-after-u-s-troop-withdrawal/

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