

Prayer Alert

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Blessed are all who fear the LORD, who walk in His ways. (Psalm 128:1)

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!

Join the Team!

Prayer Alert is produced by a voluntary online team spread across England. If you appreciate what we do and are computer confident, with researching news, writing, editing and / or proofing skills, we would love to hear from you! Please hit reply, introduce yourself, and we will be in touch.

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

Boys' Brigade celebrates its 140th anniversary

The Boys' Brigade, founded in Glasgow in 1883 by Sir William Alexander Smith, marks its 140th anniversary as the world's first uniformed youth organisation. With a presence in sixty countries and over half a million members, it has remained committed to instilling Christian values in young lives. Regular gatherings involve Bible studies, prayer sessions, church services, and recreational pursuits. The late Queen Elizabeth II was their patron, a testament to the organisation's royal support. In honour of this milestone, the Boys' Brigade will plant an oak tree to commemorate its founder's legacy in a Heroes of the Faith woodland near Birmingham. This gesture symbolises the growth and steadfastness of the organisation over the years.

Praise: God for the Boys' Brigade, and may all who serve in it be beacons of hope and inspiration. Pray that the oak tree they plant will be a symbol of strength, growth, and enduring faith. (Hebrews 6:19)

More: premierchristian.news/us/news/article/boys-brigade-celebrates-140-years-of-christian-centred-youth-work

China: transformation through Bible outreach

In the turbulent period of the Cultural Revolution in China, Bibles were confiscated, and churches forcibly closed. However, the Bible's journey has now evolved from being an underground rarity to becoming a cherished bestseller. Since 1987, the presence of the Bible Society's Amity Press in Nanjing has been nothing short of remarkable. This facility, the largest Bible factory in the world, has produced an astounding 90 million Bibles for dissemination within China, and 140 million copies in various languages for global distribution. The open availability of the Bible through authorised channels has played a pivotal role in the astonishing growth of the Chinese Church. Lay leaders and devoted volunteers often step forward to bridge the leadership gap, particularly in less affluent regions where a single ordained pastor may serve more than six thousand Christians. The Chinese Church's ongoing growth reflects the abundant harvest that Jesus spoke of in Matthew 9:37, where the workers are indeed few but filled with boundless devotion.

Praise: and thank God for the positive transformations in China's Bible outreach. (Psalm 119:105)

More: www.christiantoday.com/article/in.china.the.harvest.is.plentiful.but.the.workers.are.few/140808.htm

British Isles

HS2 northern leg cancelled

Rishi Sunak has faced sharp criticism for cancelling the northern leg of HS2, but he refuses to apologise. The PM defended the decision, stating that the cost had doubled, and he believes the new plan will benefit more people and places. He emphasised that the £36 billion saved from this project would be reinvested in various forms of transportation and across the country. While some expressed concerns about the impact on investors and the stop-start approach to infrastructure projects, Sunak disagreed and believed that it wouldn't deter investments. In his speech, Sunak positioned himself as a leader of change despite his party's long tenure in power. His decision to cancel the northern leg of HS2 has met with mixed reactions, with some northern leaders feeling left out of the process and others questioning the funding and strategic planning of alternative transport schemes.

Pray: for wisdom and guidance for our leaders as they make choices that impact our nation's future. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

More: www.msn.com/en-gb/news/uknews/sunak-refuses-to-apologise-for-axing-hs2-amid-backlash-from-former-pms/ar-AA1hJfwM

Plan to make smoking less accessible for teenagers

Rishi Sunak has unveiled a plan to increase the legal smoking age by one year every year, describing it as the 'most significant public health intervention in a generation'. This initiative has the potential to substantially reduce smoking among young people by as early as 2040. Sunak emphasised the critical importance of addressing smoking, stating that it is the leading preventable cause of death, disability, and illness in society. He argued that there is 'no safe level of smoking' and defended the move against concerns about individual choice. The Government anticipates that these measures could result in up to 1.7 million fewer people smoking by 2075. Sunak stressed the need to prevent teenagers from taking up smoking, as the majority of smokers start before the age of 20. In addition to cracking down on smoking, the Government also plans to examine and regulate the availability and marketing of vaping products, especially to children. The goal is to reduce the attractiveness of vaping to young people while providing an alternative to smoking for current smokers.

Pray: for wisdom and success in the efforts to reduce smoking's impact on public health. God, guide us in making choices that honour life. (1 Corinthians 6:19)

More: www.standard.co.uk/business/business-news/smoking-plan-biggest-public-health-intervention-in-a-generation-says-sunak-b1111491.html

Hottest September on record

The UK has experienced its joint-warmest September since record-keeping began nearly 150 years ago. The record-breaking month was characterised by an exceptionally warm first half, featuring the year's hottest day and seven consecutive days with temperatures above 30°C in parts of the UK, an unprecedented occurrence for September. Scientists attribute this heatwave primarily to climate change, though natural factors like El Niño and ocean circulation changes have also played a role. The rise in greenhouse gas emissions, primarily from burning fossil fuels, is a major contributor to this record-breaking heat. As we confront these alarming climate trends, the need for urgent ambitious climate action becomes even more critical. With global climate talks (COP28) scheduled for December, the necessity of addressing climate change's devastating effects is paramount. This record-breaking heat serves as a stark reminder that climate change is a global crisis that demands immediate attention and action.

Pray: for wisdom and urgent action as we face the consequences of global warming. May we protect our planet and address the climate crisis with diligence and compassion. (Genesis 2:15)

More: news.sky.com/story/september-2023-was-worlds-hottest-september-on-record-by-extraordinary-margin-new-data-confirms-with-scientists-blaming-not-only-climate-change-12976750

Homes and house building in England

According to a damning report by the Home Builders Federation (HBF), homes in England and Wales are the lowest quality yet among the most expensive, in the developed world. The UK's housing market is 'reaching a state of crisis' as the country falls even further behind other developed nations in terms of condition, affordability, and age of its housing stock. England's homes are of poorer quality than those in eastern European nations such as Lithuania, with fewer new homes than Bulgaria. UK residents spend "exceptionally high proportions" of their post-tax income on housing. Alongside this, In September, the UK witnessed a significant decline in new home construction, leading to the largest drop in construction activity since May 2020. Overall, the construction sector is experiencing difficulties, but there are signs of resilience and potential for improvement in the near future. For further information, [see](https://www.theguardian.com/business/2023/oct/05/uk-construction-activity-sector-housebuilding-survey) <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2023/oct/05/uk-construction-activity-sector-housebuilding-survey>

Pray: for those struggling without homes available to them, those living in poor conditions, and those who see hopelessness in the housing industry. (Isaiah 32:18)

More: www.hbf.co.uk/news/housing-horizons-new-analysis-shows-true-scale-of-how-uk-housing-is-falling-behind-international-counterparts/

Metro Bank seeks to raise capital

When Metro Bank was launched in 2010, it was the first new high street bank in 150 years. Now, there are concerns about its future. The bank, which has around 2.7 million customers, is reportedly in discussions with investors about securing £250 million in equity funding and refinancing £350 million in debt to strengthen its balance sheet. The issue is that it is operating at the edges of its capital requirements, meaning the amount of assets held by the bank that can be sold off at short notice if it faces unexpected losses. This move has rattled investors, causing the bank's share prices to plummet by over 25%. Despite these challenges, the bank stated that customer deposits are secure, and there is no indication of imminent collapse. In any case, the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) ensures that customers' funds would be returned within seven working days in the event of the bank's dissolution. While the bank has faced difficulties in the past, it hopes to secure the necessary funding to navigate its current financial situation and continue serving its customers.

Pray: for Metro Bank and its customers during this challenging time. Pray for the bank's leaders to act wisely and reassure customers of the safety of their deposits. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

More: news.co.uk/news/metro-bank-trouble-why-share-price-plummeting-what-fundraising-plans-mean-customers-2665996?ico=above_article_ticker

Northern Ireland: holiday pay ruling may have a wider impact

After a recent landmark legal ruling, taxpayers in Northern Ireland may be facing additional expenses to cover holiday pay for public sector workers. The Supreme Court ruled that the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) must compensate its officers and civilian employees with approximately £30 million due to inaccuracies in holiday pay calculations. The ruling determined that holiday pay should reflect an employee's normal pay, including overtime and other additional payments beyond basic salary. The case originated from a 2018 industrial tribunal ruling in favour of a group representing over 3,700 PSNI officers and civilian staff, which was upheld by the Court of Appeal in 2019. Similar cases are expected in both the public and private sectors. As a result, there may be an increase in holiday pay claims as businesses are compelled to address past or ongoing miscalculations. Public employers, who may lack substantial cash reserves, could face difficulties meeting these liabilities. The PSNI is currently considering how to cover these costs while ensuring fair compensation for its officers.

Pray: for those affected by this ruling. Pray for wisdom for leaders and provision for those facing financial challenges. May justice and fairness prevail. (Amos 5:24)

More: www.telegraph.co.uk/money/tax/income/taxpayers-face-footing-extra-holiday-pay-bill-for-civil-ser/

Europe

Canary Islands: wildfire forces 3,000 to evacuate

Almost 3,000 people have had to evacuate their homes in Tenerife as a wildfire, caused by embers left smouldering from an August blaze, re-ignited on the Spanish island. Unseasonably hot weather (up to 39°C) sparked the flames, which engulfed the north east of the island on 5 October. About 2,400 people have been evacuated from the town of Santa Ursula and another 600 from La Orotava. Teams of firefighters and six water-dropping helicopters worked to battle the fire overnight. The August fire had been brought under control but was never completely extinguished, with embers still burning in the forest. The firefighters have requested support from the army's military emergency unit. The island's councillor in charge of emergencies, Blanca Perez, told local radio this fire 'has been stabilised, we are seeing how it evolves to determine if in a few hours residents can return to their homes'.

Pray: for safety for everyone on the island, and for the firefighters as they battle this blaze. (Psalm 4:8)

More: inews.co.uk/news/world/tenerife-wildfire-thousands-evacuated-blaze-rages-holiday-island-2665083

Russia: proposal to nuke Siberia strongly criticised

The editor-in-chief of RT, formerly Russia Today, has threatened legal action against critics after a backlash to her comments proposing a nuclear strike on Siberia. 'Slanderers get ready', Margarita Simonyan wrote on her Telegram channel, announcing that she had filed a defamation complaint against parliamentary aide Nikolai Korolev and warning of action against others. The often-controversial executive, among the most powerful in Russian media, has drawn criticism over a bizarre video monologue in which she appeared to propose a nuclear detonation in Russia as a deterrent against the West. The video triggered an avalanche of criticism from pundits and politicians. Mr Korolev said, 'Such statements are a violation of the legislation of the Russian Federation, not to mention the wildness and absurdity'. Other critics noted that the history of Soviet nuclear tests in Siberia has left a legacy of contamination. The Kremlin moved to distance itself from Ms Simonyan, who has a close relationship with Vladimir Putin.

Pray: that this wild proposal will receive the treatment which it deserves. (Proverbs 10:32)

More: www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/10/04/rts-simonyan-faces-backlash-over-call-to-detonate-nuke-over-siberia-a82658

Russia: many more soldiers accused of murder

Independent news outlet Vyorstka has reported a huge uptick in the number of Russian soldiers facing trial for murders committed outside the conflict zone in Ukraine. At least 147 soldiers went on trial for murder between January and September, compared to the 15 murder cases heard against soldiers in military courts in all of 2022. Court verdicts from this year indicate that most soldiers facing trial committed murders under the influence of alcohol. In one case an intoxicated soldier killed a woman with a Kalashnikov assault rifle after learning that she did not support Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. He was sentenced to nine years in prison in March. It is unclear whether the figures cited by Vyorstka include members of the Wagner mercenary outfit, which recruited prison inmates to fight in Ukraine in exchange for pardons. Among the weapons used in the murders were knives, axes, pistols, and Kalashnikovs.

Pray: that justice will be done in each of these cases, and the root causes of this increase in violence will be identified and nullified. (Hebrews 10:30-31)

More: www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/10/05/number-of-russian-soldiers-tried-for-murder-surges-in-2023-vyorstka-a82666

Worldwide

Australia: historic referendum on aboriginal rights

On 14 October, Australia will vote in a historic referendum that cuts to the core of how it sees itself as a nation. If successful, the proposal - known as the Voice - will recognise aboriginal people in the constitution, while creating a body for them to advise governments on the issues affecting their communities. Advocates say it is a 'modest yet profound' change that will allow Indigenous Australians to take a rightful place in their own country - which has often dragged its heels confronting its past. But those campaigning against it describe it as a 'radical' proposal that will 'permanently divide' the country by giving First Nations people greater rights than other Australians - a claim legal experts reject. Australia is unusual among settler nations to have never made a treaty with its indigenous peoples. It first voted on whether to acknowledge them in the preamble of the constitution back in 1999. The reform - which was one of two amendments tied to the referendum over whether to become a republic - failed.

Pray: that these rights will finally be recognised, and that every possible means of combating racism in Australia will be implemented. (Psalm 11:4)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-australia-66944609

Uganda: opposition leader detained?

Uganda's main opposition party, the NUP, has said its leader Bobi Wine was detained upon returning from a trip abroad. The singer-turned-politician arrived at Entebbe airport on 5 October after visiting several countries, including South Africa. A photo appeared to show two men seizing him by the arms on the tarmac. However, the police said he was 'successfully escorted by our security team', and urged people to disregard rumours of his arrest by 'propagandists'. In September the police announced they were banning rallies being organised by the NUP across the country because of public order issues. There is a long history of authorities using so-called 'preventative arrest' to detain opposition leaders, often holding them for several hours before returning them to their homes so as to stymie mass demonstrations. Bobi Wine, whose real name is Robert Kyagulanyi, is a prominent critic of President Museveni's government. He ran unsuccessfully for the presidency in 2021 against Museveni, who is serving a sixth term in power.

Pray: that Bobi Wine will be released, and that democratic procedures will be properly observed in Uganda. (Ezekiel 45:9a)

More: www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/5/uganda-arrests-opposition-leader-bobi-wine-upon-return-to-country

Canada: first premier from an indigenous background

Wab Kinew has been elected as the premier of the Canadian province of Manitoba, becoming the first First Nations leader to hold the post. This comes after his left-of-centre New Democratic Party (NDP) won 34 seats out of 57 in elections held this week. Kinew is the son of a chief from First Nations land in the neighbouring province of Ontario. His father was a professor at the University of Winnipeg. Becoming leader of Manitoba is especially significant because indigenous Canadians were not allowed to vote until 1960, and some rights were not fully recognised until 1982. In his victory speech, Kinew said: 'That is a testament to our province and country moving forward. Long way to go, but you cannot tell me that we haven't made progress.' He has promised to fix healthcare, make people's lives more affordable, and invest in more social housing.

Pray: for Mr Kinew and his government, as he seeks to carry out his election pledges. (Proverbs 28:2)

More: www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/5/who-is-wab-kinew-canadas-first-first-nations-premier-of-manitoba

USA: Biden to build section of wall to curb migration

US president Joe Biden's administration is to build a section of border wall in southern Texas in an effort to stop rising levels of immigration. Around 20 miles (32 km) will be built in Starr County, where officials report high numbers of crossings. Building a border wall, a signature policy of Donald Trump, was fiercely opposed by Democrats. In 2020, Mr Biden promised he would not build another foot of wall if elected. The US Customs and Border Protection defended the latest move, saying it was using funds already allocated for a border barrier. The rising number of illegal border crossings has made the issue a vulnerable one for the president. More than 245,000 crossings have been made this year in the Rio Grande Valley area alone. Several US cities say they are feeling the strain of the influx. New York City mayor Eric Adams predicted the cost of housing the more than 100,000 new arrivals since last year will rise to \$12bn over the next three years. 'We are at capacity', he said.

Pray: that a way will be found of curbing illegal immigration without the need to build a wall. (James 1:5)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-67015137

Syria: drone attack kills over 100

Over a hundred people, including ten civilians, were killed and another 125 were injured when drones carrying explosives targeted a graduation ceremony at a military academy in Homs. The army blamed 'terrorist groups backed by known international forces', and said it would respond with full force and determination against these terrorist groups 'wherever they are'. There was no immediate claim from the rebels and jihadists battling the government in the country's civil war. The attack is believed to have been launched from opposition-held areas north-west of Homs. An eye-witness said, 'After the ceremony, people went down to the courtyard and the explosives hit. We don't know where it came from, and corpses littered the ground.' Syria's defence minister attended the graduation ceremony, but left minutes before the attack.

Pray: for comfort for the bereaved families, and for a way forward to ending the civil war. ((Psalm 11:5)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-67017010

Ecuador: last debate before run-off presidential election

Left-leaning Luisa González and centrist Daniel Noboa have faced each other in the last debate before the run-off election on 15 October. The debate gave both candidates a platform to address long-simmering issues in the country. The economy remains Ecuador's Achilles heel: at the end of 2022, debt alone accounted for 57 percent of the GDP. The other major issue facing the candidates is crime. Ecuador, once one of the most peaceful countries in Latin America, is now on track to become the third-most violent country in the region. In August, that violence spilled over with the assassination of presidential candidate Fernando Villavicencio in Quito. Since then, candidates have been wearing bullet-proof vests. Noboa is ahead in the polls, but many Ecuadorians have not yet made up their minds about who to vote for.

Pray: that whoever wins the election will be able to tackle the country's major problems successfully. (Psalm 32:8)

More: www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/3/in-final-debate-ecuadors-presidential-candidates-tackle-crime-economy

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