

Prayer Alert

ISSUE 42-2023 | Friday 20 October 2023
www.prayer-alert.net | editor@prayer-alert.net

But You, God, see the trouble of the afflicted; You consider their grief and take it in hand. The victims commit themselves to You; You are the helper of the fatherless. (Psalm 10:14)

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

Praise Reports

[Mexico: people hear Gospel for first time](#)
[Arkansas: 'God is on the Move'](#)

Europe

[Germany: petrol bombs thrown at Berlin synagogue](#)
[EU countries welcome Polish election result](#)
[Italy: evangelical group condemns Vatican ecumenical meeting](#)

British Isles

[Rishi Sunak embarks on 'de-escalation' trip to Middle East](#)
[Bibby Stockholm: migrants return](#)
[Up to 167,000 people caught Covid in hospital in second wave](#)
[Councils call for rethink over 'failing' support for economically inactive](#)
[Ordinands urge bishops to 'preserve church doctrine'](#)
[Nationwide Christmas campaign launched](#)

Worldwide

[Israel / Gaza: Al Ahli hospital's Christian ethic](#)
[Egypt: hopes of reopening border crossing to Gaza](#)
[USA: healthcare clinic challenging pro-abortion law](#)
[Sudan: UK describes 'ethnic cleansing' in Darfur](#)
[Pakistan: jail sentence for murdering a Christian woman](#)
[USA: another failure to elect a House speaker](#)
[Venezuela / USA: sanctions to be eased](#)

Praise Reports

[Mexico: people hear Gospel for first time](#)

Two indigenous families in rural Mexico, previously unaware of God's existence, were profoundly impacted by audio recordings of the Gospel of Mark in their tribal language. This led them to embrace Christianity and attend church services. They said that listening to the audios helped them understand Jesus' purpose on Earth, inspiring them to accept God into their hearts. Some members had been suffering from an incurable disease but attributed their complete healing to their newfound faith. Despite a history of tribal beliefs, one family member thanked God for His Word in their language and the worker who shared the recordings. This success reinforces the importance of continuing translation efforts to bring the message of redemption and salvation to people in their native languages. Pray that everyone can access and be transformed by God's Word in the language of their hearts. Various projects, including translating the Book of Jonah, have contributed to this mission, promoting literacy and understanding in indigenous communities.

Praise: You, Lord, for revealing Your truth to these indigenous families. May Your Word continue to transform hearts. (Psalm 119:105)

More: www.christianaid.org/missions-insider/2023-people-in-mexico-hear-gospel-for-the-first-time/

[Arkansas: 'God is on the Move'](#)

The Fellowship of Christian Athletes organised a Fields of Faith event at a high school football stadium in Hot Springs, Arkansas, which drew over 3,000 attendees, mainly students. This gathering, part of a global movement, featured a pre-rally with free food, games, live music, and student testimonies of faith. Micah May, FCA South Central Arkansas's multi-area director, noted a special presence of the Holy Spirit at the event, with hundreds of students praying and lives being transformed. He mentioned a sense of revival stirring in the world and expressed gratitude for being a part of it. Similar revival gatherings for high school and college students have been occurring throughout 2023, reflecting a growing spiritual awakening. May concluded by giving glory to God, emphasising His role in these transformative experiences.

Praise: You, Heavenly Father, for the powerful work of Your Spirit at this event. To You be the glory! (Luke 1:37)

More: www.christianheadlines.com/contributors/milton-quintanilla/god-is-on-the-move-revival-at-arkansas-high-school-football-stadium-draws-over-3000.html

British Isles

Rishi Sunak embarks on 'de-escalation' trip to Middle East

Prime minister Rishi Sunak is on a two-day trip to Israel and other Middle East countries, planning to urge leaders in the region to prevent further escalation of conflict. On 19 October he met prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and then flew on to Saudi Arabia. This trip, following on from Joe Biden's visit, comes after the recent missile strike on Al Ahli Hospital, which resulted in the deaths of hundreds of Palestinian civilians. The UK is also pushing for the opening of the route into Gaza to allow humanitarian aid and the safe passage of British nationals out of Gaza. Meanwhile, foreign secretary James Cleverly travelled to Egypt, Turkey, and Qatar to seek humanitarian access to Gaza and the release of British hostages. The UK government has announced a £10 million aid package to support vulnerable civilians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, with half of the funding going to the UN to address critical needs in Gaza. Defence secretary Grant Shapps also met with his US counterpart to coordinate responses to the crisis.

Pray: for peace and compassion in the Middle East. Pray that our Heavenly Father will guide leaders to seek reconciliation and aid the suffering. (Psalm 34:14)

More: www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2023/10/18/rishi-sunak-embarks-trip-middle-east-avoid-escalation/

Bibby Stockholm: migrants return

Migrants have returned to the accommodation barge Bibby Stockholm, which can house up to 500 individuals awaiting asylum decisions, after it was evacuated in August due to Legionella bacteria in the water supply. The Home Office has declared it 'safe and secure' following remediation efforts. Using it is part of a government policy to reduce the costs of housing migrants in hotels. Critics have raised concerns about the conditions on the barge, with Amnesty International likening it to 'prison hulks from the Victorian era'. This comes after a legal challenge against housing asylum seekers on the vessel was dismissed in court. A further judicial review challenge regarding planning jurisdiction has been initiated. The Archbishop of Canterbury had previously called for a pause in the scheme for further consultation.

Pray: for the safety and well-being of migrants returning to Bibby Stockholm. May justice and compassion prevail. (Matthew 25:35)

More: www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-dorset-67147277

Up to 167,000 people caught Covid in hospital in second wave

A study suggests that 95,000 to 167,000 people in England may have contracted Covid-19 in hospitals during the second wave of the pandemic, from June 2020 to March 2021. Researchers from Oxford University analysed data from 145 English NHS acute hospital trusts, considering factors like the availability of single rooms and vaccination of healthcare workers. The study found that 1% to 2% of all hospital admissions during this period led to hospital-acquired infections. The highest infection rates were observed in the north-west regions of England. The research underscores the importance of improving hospital design to limit the transmission of future pathogens and the need for measures to reduce hospital transmissions. Vaccination of healthcare workers was associated with lower infection rates. The findings are significant for protecting vulnerable patients, healthcare workers, and communities.

Pray: for the safety of all in hospitals. May God grant wisdom to improve healthcare settings and protect the vulnerable. (Psalm 41:3)

More: www.independent.co.uk/news/health/data-nhs-english-university-of-oxford-england-b2431909.html

Councils call for rethink over 'failing' support for economically inactive

The Local Government Association (LGA) has warned that the various schemes designed to support economically inactive individuals back into work are failing to meet their needs. A study commissioned by the LGA revealed that 51 national job support programmes are not coordinated and only a few specifically address economic inactivity. According to the Office of National Statistics, around 8.7 million people aged 16 to 64 in the UK were economically inactive between May and September. The LGA argues that many individuals who are fit for work and want a job do not receive support from job centres because they do not claim out-of-work benefits, resulting in unfilled vacancies. It called for better collaboration between Whitehall departments and local councils to address the complex reasons why people are economically inactive, such as health conditions or a lack of skills.

Pray: for God to guide leaders to create effective support systems for those seeking employment. May they find hope and opportunities. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

More: www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/councils-government-local-government-association-office-of-national-statistics-labour-b1113952.html

Ordinands urge bishops to 'preserve church doctrine'

78 ordinands and clergy in training within the Church of England sent a letter to the House of Bishops expressing concern over the potential introduction of same-sex blessing prayers and accompanying pastoral guidance, which they believe would depart from historic Christian teaching. This was before the bishops' recent decision to commend 'in principle' same-sex blessing prayers and announce that draft pastoral guidance will be presented to the General Synod next month. The ordinands and clergy fear that these developments will lead to fracturing within the Church of England and leave them feeling 'vulnerable and concerned'. They requested that the prayers should not be implemented, arguing that previous decisions during the 'Living in Love and Faith' process have already reduced the number of ordinands and created uncertainty for those who adhere to orthodox beliefs within the church.

Pray: that God will guide the CofE to uphold its historic teachings and unite its members in faith. (1 Corinthians 1:10)

More: premierchristian.news/en/news/article/orthodox-ordinands-urge-church-of-england-bishops-to-preserve-church-doctrine-amidst-anticipated-approval-of-same-sex-blessings

Nationwide Christmas campaign launched

The nationwide Christmas campaign 'Shine Your Light' encourages Christians across the UK to unite and share the Gospel during the holiday season. Led by the National Day of Prayer and Worship, the initiative involves collaboration with a number of different denominations and ministries. 'Shine Your Light' aims to have the entire church in England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and the Republic come together to brighten the countries like a Christmas tree, emphasising community events and activities such as nativities and family-focused gatherings. Churches are encouraged to take their message outside their buildings, sing carols, pray, share testimonies, and follow up with attendees, inviting them to other Christmas events. The campaign will run on 16 and 17 December, with an online map highlighting all participating events and resources available for local churches.

Pray: that as we prepare for the Christmas season, God will help us shine His light and share the Gospel in our communities. (Matthew 5:16)

More: www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/673134/Nationwide_Christmas_campaign.aspx

Europe

Germany: petrol bombs thrown at Berlin synagogue

On 18 October two people threw Molotov cocktails at a synagogue in Berlin, as anti-Semitic violence escalated in Europe. The attacks came after Hezbollah called for a 'day of rage' over the explosion at a hospital in the Gaza Strip, where hundreds of people are feared dead. The Central Council of Jews said that 'day of rage' was not just a phrase but 'psychological terror that leads to concrete attacks'. The synagogue also houses a community centre, a kindergarten and high school for 130 children. One local said, 'We knew it was only a matter of time and it's not the end.' Jewish institutions typically have ongoing police protection in Germany, and reports suggest officers were at the scene when the attack happened. Hours later, police briefly detained a man who approached the building on a scooter, then ran towards the synagogue shouting anti-Israel slogans.

Pray: for protection for Jews in different countries as anti-Semitic protests escalate. (Galatians 6:16)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-67145473

EU countries welcome Polish election result

Politicians across Europe have been encouraged by the result of the Polish election on 15 October - especially in Germany, the favourite target of the ousted Law and Justice (PiS) party. A German MEP said, 'I expect that Poland will become a constructive partner and that the change in government will strengthen its standing in Europe'; and Katja Leikert, a Christian Democrat MP who sits on its foreign relations committee, said the election results 'give hope' to Europe. German-Polish relations have suffered in recent years. Foreign minister Annalena Baerbock had sought to improve relations last year, travelling to Warsaw on Germany's national day as a sign of respect for an important ally and neighbour. Instead of welcoming the gesture, however, the PiS leaders formally demanded that Germany pay €1.3 trillion in war reparations. Russia's reactions to the election results were less enthusiastic: see <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/10/17/russia-says-polish-vote-results-unlikely-to-improve-strained-ties-a82789>

Pray: that this election result will lead to improved relationships in Europe. (1 Thess. 5:11)

More: www.politico.eu/article/welcome-back-donald-tusk-eu-sigh-relief-poland-election-results/

Italy: evangelical group condemns Vatican ecumenical meeting

Italian evangelical Christians have protested against the 'active and public' participation of Thomas Schirrmacher, secretary-general of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) in a large ecumenical prayer vigil organised in the Vatican on 30 September. This featured prayers led by the heads of twenty Christian confessions, including Mr Schirrmacher. The Italian Evangelical Alliance (AEI) said, 'We are confused and disappointed. Once you pray publicly with the Pope, in St. Peter's Square, in front of a Marian portrait, embracing the message of spiritual unity with liberals and orthodox leaders, your alleged distinction becomes secondary.' Pope Francis said the event would help to sow unity among Christian confessions. According to the event's website, he shared 'personal memories of his ecumenical journey'. The Spanish Evangelical Alliance has also criticised WEA's participation: see <https://evangelicalfocus.com/europe/23880/the-spanish-evangelical-alliance-criticises-schirrmachers-participation-in-the-vatican-ecumenical-vigil-in-this-case-he-does-not-represent-us>

Pray: for wisdom in the WEA's leadership about how to balance its members' beliefs with the desire for closer contact and fellowship with Christians of different traditions. (Exodus 35:31)

More: evangelicalfocus.com/world/23833/italian-evangelicals-confused-and-disappointed-at-weas-leader-participation-in-vatican-ecumenical-prayers-before-roman-catholic-synod

Worldwide

Israel / Gaza: Al Ahli hospital's Christian ethic

Founded by CMS, Al Ahli hospital was run by the Baptist Church until 1982 when it became part of the Episcopal diocese of Jerusalem, offering care to all, regardless of ethnicity, religion, or political affiliation. The hospital is a partner of Embrace the Middle East, who described the hospital's deaths as 'utterly heartbreaking: not only the immediate loss of innocent lives but also the loss of a vital institution that provides healthcare for the people of Gaza regardless of background. It is a Christian Anglican hospital that has no connection whatsoever with Hamas. This is the destruction of the very institutions that maintain a vestige of hope for people in desperate need. The Christian population in Gaza is tiny. We, and for sure, they, have every reason to fear for its very survival.' The hospital's aim is to 'plant hope in the heart of the people of Gaza'.

Pray: that the hospital will be rebuilt and once again be a beacon of Christian witness. (Matthew 5:14)

More: www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2023/20-october/news/world/israelis-deny-causing-deadly-explosion-at-anglican-hospital-in-gaza

Egypt: hopes of reopening border crossing to Gaza

Machinery to repair roads has been sent through the Rafah border crossing from Egypt into the Gaza Strip in preparation for the delivery of some of the aid stockpiled in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, two security sources said on Thursday. Rafah is the only crossing not controlled by Israel but has been out of operation since the first days of the conflict in Gaza following Israeli bombardments on the Palestinian side of the border. The USA and Egypt have been pushing for a deal with Israel to get aid delivered to Gaza, and on 18 October the White House said that it had been agreed for up to 20 trucks to pass through, with hopes for more later. Most of Gaza's 2.3 million residents depended on aid before the current conflict started on 7 October, and about 100 trucks daily were providing humanitarian relief to the enclave, according to the UN. At least that number are waiting close to the crossing, though it was not expected that aid would enter before 20 October. More aid is being held in the Egyptian city of Al Arish, some 45 km away. Benjamin Netanyahu's office has said Israel would not block aid for civilians entering Gaza from Egypt, as long as those supplies do not reach Hamas.

Pray: that the border will be reopened and aid reach all those who desperately need it. (Matthew 5:9)

More: www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/egypt-repairing-roads-gaza-crossing-ahead-aid-delivery-2023-10-19/

USA: healthcare clinic challenging pro-abortion law

A Catholic healthcare clinic is challenging a Colorado law that forbids giving women a natural hormone to reverse the effects of the abortion pill and save a baby's life. Mother and daughter nurse practitioners Dede Chism and Abby Sinnett founded Bella Health and Wellness, a 'life-affirming, dignified healthcare' facility for men, women, and children. It is one of many healthcare clinics across the nation which offer progesterone, a naturally occurring hormone essential for maintaining a healthy pregnancy, to women at risk of miscarriage. But Colorado has now passed a law that prohibits clinics from offering progesterone in order to reverse the effects of the abortion pill, in spite of evidence of its safety and efficacy. Now, Chism and Sinnett say they run the risk of losing their medical licences and being liable to pay \$20,000 per violation if they continue their ministry to pregnant women who seek their help. In September California's attorney general filed a lawsuit against two major pro-life pregnancy centres to stop them from advertising abortion pill reversal services, claiming that the natural hormone used to reverse the abortion pill is risky and 'has no credible scientific backing'. However, the Abortion Pill Rescue Network (APRN) website says that there is a 64-68% success rate for women who follow their protocol, adding that 'thousands of lives have been saved'.

Pray: for this law to be repealed or modified, so that more babies may be saved. (Psalm 127:3)

More: www2.cbn.com/news/us/catholic-health-clinic-challenges-colorado-abortion-reversal-pill-ban-life-worth-protecting

Sudan: UK describes 'ethnic cleansing' in Darfur

Recent analysis of satellite and social media data reveals that at least 68 villages in Darfur have been set on fire by Sudanese armed militias since the civil war began in April. The UK minister for Africa, Andrew Mitchell, said this bore 'all the hallmarks of ethnic cleansing' - the first time the government has used the term to describe what is happening in Sudan. General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, who leads the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), said that he would cooperate with the International Criminal Court (ICC) to bring those guilty to justice. Much of the ethnic violence is blamed on militias which are part of - or affiliated to - the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), the paramilitary group fighting the SAF for control of the country. The RSF has repeatedly denied any involvement in the violence in the region and has called for an independent international investigation. The analysis has been carried out by the Centre for Information Resilience (CIR), which uses Nasa heat-recognition technology and satellite images to identify fires and matches them with images on social media.

Pray: that the truth will be revealed for all to see, and the perpetrators brought to justice. (Amos 5:24)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-67020154

Pakistan: jail sentence for murdering a Christian woman

A court in Pakistan has sentenced a Muslim man to 25 years in prison for killing a Christian woman who rejected his marriage proposal. Muhammad Shahzad, also known as Shani, was sentenced in Islamabad for killing Sonia Allah Rakha, a 24-year-old Christian woman. The judge commended the police for their thorough investigation, which led to Shani's conviction while acquitting three other accused individuals, the group said. Shani shot Sonia on 30 November 2020, after her family declined his marriage proposal due to religious differences. He initially fled the scene but was later apprehended by the police. The victim's family said that the accused had been harassing Sonia for the previous six months and had tried to force a physical relationship with her.

Pray: for this court case to set a firm precedent for any such crimes in the future. Praise God that justice has been done. (Isaiah 30:18)

More: www.christianpost.com/news/pakistan-muslim-man-sentenced-for-killing-christian-woman.html

USA: another failure to elect a House speaker

On 18 October Jim Jordan, a hard-line conservative and staunch ally of former president Donald Trump, lost a second bid to be elected as speaker of the House of Representatives. Jordan, a nine-term lawmaker from the midwestern state of Ohio, won only 199 Republican votes in the second round of voting, as 22 Republican colleagues voted for other lawmakers for the top position in the lower chamber of Congress. He also trailed Democratic minority leader Hakeem Jeffries, who won the votes of all 212 Democrats, although he has no chance of becoming speaker of the chamber that is narrowly led by Republicans. Since Kevin McCarthy was ousted as speaker two weeks ago, the House has been rudderless. It has been unable to consider any legislation, such as a spending measure to avert a partial government shutdown when current funding runs out on 17 November, or a straightforward, bipartisan resolution to support Israel after the attack by Hamas militants. With Jordan's defeat, it is not immediately clear what steps the House might take next to fill the speakership.

Pray: for this standoff to be resolved so that democratic procedures can be resumed. (Deut. 1:13)

More: www.voanews.com/a/republican-jim-jordan-fails-to-win-2nd-vote-to-become-house-speaker/7316319.html

Venezuela / USA: sanctions to be eased

The USA is easing sanctions on Venezuela after the government and opposition agreed on 17 October to have next year's election monitored by international observers. They also promised to give all candidates access to public and private media, and to guarantee their free and safe movement throughout the country. In addition, the two sides have agreed to update the voter registries, to ensure that the millions of Venezuelans who have emigrated can exercise their right to vote. But the opposition and the government still disagree on whether the agreement allows for the exclusion of opposition frontrunner María Corina Machado. US sanctions will be eased on Venezuela's oil, gas and gold sectors, but other sanctions imposed over the suppression of protests and the erosion of democracy remain in place. Secretary of State Antony Blinken also called for the release of 'all wrongfully detained US nationals and Venezuelan political prisoners'.

Pray: that this agreement will lead to further improvements in Venezuela. Praise God for the progress! (Psalm 133:1)

More: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-67153460>

Please feel free to distribute Prayer Alert to anyone you feel will benefit from its ministry. All we ask is that you do not edit or change it in any way or charge for its use without contacting us first for written permission

Prayer Alert is produced in partnership with

The World Prayer Centre, PO Box 17971, Birmingham, B2 2NY, England.

The views expressed in Prayer Alert and on our website are those of the authors, organisations and websites named, and are not necessarily those of the Prayer Alert Editorial Team, the Prayer Alert Steering Group or the World Prayer Centre or any of its employees or trustees. While we try to ensure that the information we provide is correct, mistakes do occur and we cannot guarantee the accuracy of our material. If you do notice any mistakes then please let us know.