

Prayer Alert

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**My heart rejoices in the Lord; in the Lord my horn is lifted high. My mouth boasts over my enemies, for I delight in Your deliverance.
(1 Samuel 2:1)**

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!

A nationwide Christmas campaign 'Shine Your Light' has being announced to call hundreds of thousands to unite in towns, villages and cities this Christmas to take the message outdoors.

Whether you are an individual, a church a network or organisation, we'd encourage you to find out more and consider registering online today! WWW.SHINEYOURLIGHT.ORG.UK



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

Muslims in Gaza come to Christ after seeing Jesus in dreams

In Gaza, a significant number of Muslim men have recently converted to Christianity after reportedly seeing visions of Jesus in their dreams, an event described as miraculous by underground Christian communities in the area. This phenomenon was first reported online by Michael Licona, a Christian apologist and professor at Houston Christian University. The report by the underground Christian ministries detailed their efforts to aid hundreds of fathers who had lost their children in the war. These men were moved to safety, fed, clothed, and introduced to the Bible, which led to over 200 of them experiencing visions of Jesus in their dreams. Licona, while expressing his stance on the Israel-Hamas conflict, highlighted the importance of this event for Christians worldwide. He noted the small Christian population in Gaza, which is less than 1% and potentially as low as 1,000 individuals.

Praise: You, Lord, for this news. We marvel at Your works, drawing hearts in miraculous ways. (Psalm 96:3)

More: www.christianheadlines.com/contributors/michael-foust/muslims-in-gaza-come-to-christ-after-seeing-jesus-in-dreams-report-says-it-was-a-miracle.html

Michael J Fox praises his wife for her support after Parkinson's diagnosis

Michael J Fox, known for his roles in 'Back to the Future' and 'Family Ties', has lived with Parkinson's disease since the age of 29. Now 62, he has emphasised his wife Tracy Pollan's unwavering support through the challenges of his condition. Fox acknowledges her enduring commitment to their marriage vows of 'in sickness and in health'. In interviews, the couple highlighted the importance of communication and mutual support in their relationship. They have four children, and credit the strength of their family to Pollan's influence.

Praise: God for this example of enduring love. Bless theirs and many others whose enduring love mirrors Your faithfulness, a beacon in life's storms. (Ecclesiastes 4:12)

More: www.faithpot.com/michael-j-fox-marriage/

Scotland: new guidelines on pre-death grief for dementia patients and families

Marion Ritchie's life was altered for ever when her husband Dave was diagnosed with dementia at 65. A former Navy pilot, his unrelenting decline over nine years turned their lives into a nightmare. Marion and her daughters were left to cope with the emotional toll of Dave's transformation and grieving for lost futures. In Scotland, about 90,000 people live with dementia, experiencing similar challenges. Despite the need for emotional support, healthcare services offered little assistance. Recognising this gap, Healthcare Improvement Scotland has introduced new guidelines for healthcare professionals, focusing on 'pre-death grief' in dementia patients and their families. These guidelines, the first in nearly two decades, aim to address such emotional impacts, including better training for healthcare staff. Marion welcomes these guidelines, hoping they provide accessible support and information for caregivers facing similar struggles.

Praise: God for these much-needed guidelines. Pray for those researching a cure. Pray for comfort for those living with dementia, as God's love endures for ever. (Psalm 136:1)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-67431634

British Isles

Rishi Sunak vows emergency legislation after Rwanda ruling

Rishi Sunak has pledged to enact emergency legislation and forge a new treaty with Rwanda to ensure the continuation of his key asylum policy, despite the Supreme Court's ruling against it. The plan had been to deport illegal asylum seekers to Rwanda, but the court expressed concerns that they might face the risk of being returned to their countries of origin, violating international law. Sunak now plans to convert the Rwanda agreement into a treaty to guarantee that relocated asylum seekers remain there. Controversially, he also wants to designate Rwanda as 'safe,' which would not be challengeable in UK courts. However, this legislation would not supersede the European Court of Human Rights, which could still block the flights. The PM's stance raises significant questions about the UK's adherence to human rights laws.

Pray: for guidance for leaders to uphold justice and mercy for all, reflecting biblical righteousness. (Micah 6:8)

More: news.sky.com/story/rishi-sunak-says-he-will-not-allow-foreign-court-to-block-flights-after-rwanda-ruling-13008917

Addressing food and spiritual poverty

From Hope for the Countryside: 'The Lord is the source of our provision, and His kindness and faithfulness are honoured by all those who look to him. Many Christians are involved in running foodbanks and pantries, offering some hope, helping to meet the very real material needs of people and showing the love of Christ in action. However, as important as this is, there is a deeper and more urgent need, to address the spiritual poverty in this land. God is not lacking nor unwilling to extend an invitation to his table and share his bounty. Pray for many to recognise their spiritual poverty and to hunger after the Lord. Pray that we can work together to bring spiritual food to those in need, to tell them of the hope that lasts for ever and of the food and drink freely offered that will satisfy for a lifetime and into eternity. Give thanks for the many outreach and discipleship materials already available.' For the full article, see <https://hopeforthecountryside.uk/seedsofprayer/>

Pray: that the discipleship resources get into the minds and hearts of those who need them, and for the development of good digital resources. (Revelation 21:6)

More: hopeforthecountryside.uk/seedsofprayer

Cabinet reshuffle: ex-PM David Cameron walks into No 10

In a major reshuffle by Rishi Sunak, James Cleverly has been appointed as the new Home Secretary (after Suella Braverman's dismissal), and former prime minister David Cameron as Foreign Secretary. Braverman accepted her dismissal, which came after a series of controversies, as mentioned [last week https://www.prayer-alert.net/en/pa-pray/regions/british-isles/item/52535-home-secretary-facing-backlash-for-criticising-police](https://www.prayer-alert.net/en/pa-pray/regions/british-isles/item/52535-home-secretary-facing-backlash-for-criticising-police) However, her sacking by Sunak has not been universally welcomed within the Conservative Party. MP Andrea Jenkyns, a right-wing party member, criticised the decision, suggesting that she had been dismissed for 'speaking the truth' and accusing Sunak of yielding to left-wing pressure.

Pray: for guidance, wisdom and integrity for our leaders, for the nation's good. (Proverbs 11:14)

More: www.politicshome.com/news/article/rishi-sunak-sacks-suella-braverman-cabinet-reshuffle

Labour ceasefire vote - Starmer hit by frontbench resignations

In a significant upheaval within the Labour Party, high-profile MP Jess Phillips and nine other frontbenchers either resigned or were sacked following party leader Keir Starmer's refusal to support a ceasefire in Gaza. This was in response to a parliamentary vote on an SNP amendment to the King's Speech, which proposed an immediate ceasefire in Gaza but was rejected by a majority of 168 votes. A total of 56 Labour MPs voted in favour of the amendment, marking the largest rebellion against Starmer's leadership so far. Shadow defence secretary John Healey commented on the situation within the Labour Party, expressing regret over the loss of frontbenchers and reaffirming their support for Starmer's prime ministerial bid. He emphasised the importance of collective responsibility and discipline in parliamentary decisions, defending Starmer's stance on the Gaza conflict.

Pray: for guidance for world leaders towards establishing lasting peace in Israel and Gaza, as Christ is peace itself. (John 14:27)

More: www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/uk-ceasefire-vote-result-mps-israel-gaza-b2448207.html

BBC accused of 'airbrushing Jesus from language'

The BBC's decision to replace the traditional terms BC (Before Christ) and AD (Anno Domini) with BCE (Before Common Era) and CE (Common Era) in some of its programmes has sparked controversy. Gavin Ashenden, former chaplain to the Queen and now associate editor of the Catholic Herald, criticised the move as part of a broader attempt to 'airbrush Jesus out of the language.' He called on Christians to actively defend the traditional terms and use these changes as opportunities for evangelism, and dismissed the notion that Christians were being over-sensitive about the issue. The BBC, defending its decision, stated that both date systems are widely accepted, and the choice of terms is left to individual production and editorial teams. The debate highlights a cultural and religious tension over the representation of Christianity in public broadcasting.

Pray: for God's truth to endure through all times, unchanging as His word. (Matthew 24:35)

More: premierchristian.news/en/news/article/the-bbc-erasing-bc-and-ad-are-thin-end-of-the-wedge-commentator-claims?

Church of England votes for blessings for same-sex unions

The CofE's General Synod has voted to offer blessings to same-sex couples in civil partnerships and marriages, marking a significant shift in its approach to LGBTQI+ issues. After a marathon debate, the Synod overwhelmingly approved the motion, which includes an acknowledgement and repentance for the Church's failure to adequately welcome LGBTQI+ people. This decision, however, does not alter the CofE's stance on gay marriage, as same-sex couples still cannot marry in church. Anglican churches will now be allowed to provide prayers of dedication or thanksgiving and blessings for same-sex couples after their legal marriage ceremonies. The Bishop of London, Sarah Mullally, described the vote as a hopeful moment for the Church, but Archbishop Stephen Cottrell recognised the persistent divisions, emphasising the goal of walking together despite deep disagreements.

Pray: that we may embrace compassion, respect, and understanding, following Jesus's command to love one another. (John 13:34)

More: amp.theguardian.com/world/2023/feb/09/church-of-england-votes-in-favour-of-blessings-for-same-sex-unions

UK inflation falls to two-year low

In October, UK inflation significantly decreased to 4.6% from 6.7%, marking the lowest rate in two years and a major easing of price pressures. This represents the most substantial monthly drop in the annual Consumer Price Index (CPI) rate since April 1992. The Bank of England (BoE) has kept interest rates unchanged at 5.25% and expects a challenging journey to bring inflation down to its 2% target by late 2025. Rishi Sunak acknowledged this as progress towards his goal of halving inflation within the year, bearing in mind the anticipated election in 2024. Chancellor Jeremy Hunt views this as a step toward long-term economic growth. Despite this positive trend, Britain still maintains the highest consumer price growth among G7 nations and has seen a 21% increase in consumer prices since late 2020. The BoE and economists anticipate further interest rate cuts by December 2024.

Pray: that God will grant our Government wisdom in economic management and support for those in need. (Matthew 6:26)

More: www.ft.com/content/99e37b2b-e69c-4275-9045-69486a351d48

Europe

Sweden told to apologise for mistreating ethnic minority

A 'truth and reconciliation' commission has recommended an official apology and reparations for historic injustices against the Tornedalian minority. The commission found that assimilation policies in the 19th and 20th centuries damaged them, affecting their language, culture, and traditional industries. Tornedalians, originally from the Torne River valley near the Finnish border, are descendants of Finns who settled in the area in the 1800s. They speak Meänkieli, a language closely related to Finnish. In the 1880s, Sweden enforced a policy of 'Swedishisation', including banning their language and traditional clothing in schools and sending thousands of children to boarding schools to enforce Swedish language use. Today's Tornedalian population is about 50,000; they rely on agriculture, hunting, fishing, and reindeer herding. Although they were recognised as a national minority in 2000, with Meänkieli as an official language, the commission suggests further measures to strengthen their language and culture, including its inclusion in public broadcasting and education. This report coincides with another ongoing investigation into policies against the indigenous Sámi people: [see https://www.euronews.com/2023/04/21/europes-indigenous-sami-people-take-fight-for-rights-to-united-nations](https://www.euronews.com/2023/04/21/europes-indigenous-sami-people-take-fight-for-rights-to-united-nations)

Pray: for God to heal and reconcile all cultures, honouring diverse heritages in unity. (Colossians 3:11)

More: www.euronews.com/2023/11/16/sweden-ordered-to-apologise-to-tornedalian-minority-community-for-historical-abuses

Iceland: residents evacuated amid fears of volcanic eruption

Experts have warned of a potential volcanic eruption near the town of Grindavik, which could lead to extensive destruction or ash clouds. This concern follows over 800 small earthquakes in the region, indicating possible activity from a volcano on the Reykjanes peninsula in southwest Iceland. Nearly 4,000 residents of the town were evacuated amid fears that molten rock could surface, threatening the town and a nearby geothermal power station. Scientists from the Icelandic Met Office have warned of a prolonged period of volcanic instability on the peninsula, possibly lasting decades, with eruptions expected in various locations. On 15 November, Thorvaldur Thordarson, a volcanology professor, assessed the probability of an eruption at 30%, a decrease from earlier higher estimates. Despite fears of an impending volcanic eruption, flights in and out of Keflavik international airport, only ten miles from the eruption site, are continuing as usual. In 2010 another volcano in Iceland grabbed the world's attention by spewing ash into the atmosphere and bringing European air travel to a halt.

Pray: 'Lord, protect those in harm's way, grant peace amidst the storm.' (Psalm 46:1)

More: www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/iceland-volcano-eruption-2023-earthquakes-grindavik-b2447970.html

Worldwide

Hamas weapons and command HQ found in Al-Shifa hospital

Israel claims it discovered an operational command center, along with guns and ammunition belonging to Hamas, at Gaza's largest hospital, Al-Shifa. This discovery reportedly includes weapons found inside the hospital's MRI building. The Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) have long maintained that Hamas uses hospitals as cover for its fighters, with Al-Shifa alleged to house their main command. Both Hamas and Al-Shifa staff refute these allegations. About two and a half weeks after Israeli forces entered northern Gaza, they accessed the hospital. The IDF states they found technological assets and military equipment in the hospital, transferring these items for further examination. During this operation, IDF soldiers reportedly engaged and killed a number of Hamas militants. Footage from Al-Shifa shows soldiers carrying boxes and equipment from the hospital. Mohammed Zaqout, director of hospitals in Gaza, noted that Israeli tanks were inside the medical compound, and soldiers had entered key departments including emergency and surgery, which contain intensive care units. Al-Shifa hospital has become a symbol of Palestinian civilian suffering during the Israel-Hamas conflict, which escalated following a surprise attack into southern Israel on October 7.

Pray: for peace in these troubled lands, as in Psalm 34:14: 'Seek peace, and pursue it.'

More: <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/world/hamas-weapons-command-centre-equipment-found-in-al-shifa-hospital-israel-joe-biden-b1120662.html>

Kenya: surprise public holiday to plant trees

On 13 November a government-led initiative saw citizens planting seedlings in Nairobi, even under heavy rain, following the declaration of a public holiday dedicated to tree planting. This effort, part of president William Ruto's pledge to plant 15 billion trees by 2032, aims to increase forest cover and combat the effects of a severe drought in the Horn of Africa. The tree planting day was intended as a patriotic contribution to national climate change efforts. However, Ruto's environmental commitment is under scrutiny due to his controversial decision to end a nearly six-year moratorium on logging. This move, which he argues is necessary for job creation and practical use of mature trees, has met criticism from environmentalists. Despite the environmental impact, the forestry and logging sector is significant for Kenya's economy, employing many people directly and indirectly. The decision to lift the ban reflects the government's struggle to balance environmental conservation with economic and employment challenges amidst high inflation and unemployment.

Pray: for similar action to be taken by other countries, to counteract the effects of global warming. Pray that the trees which have been planted will be tended carefully. (Genesis 2:15)

More: www.news24.com/news24/africa/news/kenyans-brave-heavy-rain-to-plant-trees-towards-15-billion-target-20231113

USA / China: Biden optimistic after four-hour meeting with Xi

On 15 November, after concluding a four-hour meeting with Chinese leader Xi Jinping, Joe Biden expressed optimism about improving US-China relations. Key agreements were reached on reducing fentanyl production and restoring military communication. Biden described the talks as constructive and productive. The primary aim was to stabilise US-China relationships and prevent conflict through open communication, especially in the military domain. Biden emphasised the importance of China's commitment to control precursor chemicals for fentanyl, which has been causing a drug crisis in the US. Agreement on military communication and addressing potential miscalculations was seen as a significant step forward, a need highlighted by incidents like the Chinese 'spy balloon' over the USA in January. The talks were part of Biden's effort to make the relationship with China rational and manageable, avoiding conflict. However, he still maintains his opinion of Xi as a dictator.

Pray: for the leaders of both countries to build on the agreements made during this meeting. Pray for wisdom and openness. (Proverbs 3:13-14)

More: edition.cnn.com/2023/11/15/politics/biden-xi-meeting/index.html

Pakistan: agreement with IMF on continuing bailout

On 15 November, Pakistan reached an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for the release of a \$700 million tranche, part of a larger \$3 billion bailout package agreed in July. This announcement constitutes a significant relief for the struggling economy, as Pakistan is facing a severe balance of payments crisis and dwindling foreign exchange reserves. The leader of the IMF team noted several causes for encouragement; he said that inflation is expected to decline over the coming months amid receding supply constraints and modest demand, together with aid from international partners, leading to improved economic confidence. However, he warned that Pakistan remains vulnerable to global risks like geopolitical tensions, commodity price fluctuations, and tightening global financial conditions. This agreement comes as Pakistan prepares for general elections in February 2024 and aims to stabilise its economy, which has been in free fall for years, leading to rampant inflation and widespread financial hardship.

Pray: that Pakistan's leaders will have wisdom and provision to uplift and sustain their people. (Psalm 72:12)

More: www.bqprime.com/world/imf-reaches-staff-level-agreement-with-pakistan-on-700-million-bailout-review

Liberia: close race in presidential election

Votes are being counted in the presidential run-off election between incumbent George Weah and ex-vice president Joseph Boakai. The election, held peacefully on 14 November, saw more than 2.4 million voters choosing between Weah, 57, seeking a second term, and Boakai, 78. Weah, formerly a famous footballer (World Player of the Year in 1996), is popular among young people but must defend his record in office, while Boakai is an old hand who has worked in both the public and private sectors. At the time of writing results showed Boakai in the lead with 50.6% of the votes, but the final result is still uncertain. The first-round vote in October was close, with Weah leading Boakai by only 7,126 votes: in 2017 he had defeated him easily. The elections are the first since the UN ended its peacekeeping mission, created after more than 250,000 people died in two civil wars between 1989 and 2003. ECOWAS, which monitored the election, highlighted the peaceful conduct but expressed concerns about premature victory claims and potential post-election violence.

Pray: that whoever wins this election will bring good leadership to the country. (Proverbs 28:2)

More: www.france24.com/en/live-news/20231115-weah-and-boakai-in-close-race-for-liberian-presidency-as-vote-count-begins

Myanmar: intense attacks from opposition forces

Myanmar's military has acknowledged facing intense attacks from anti-coup forces, who claim to have seized several towns and military outposts in various states. The military is responding with drone bomb attacks and has evacuated some sites. The military mounted a coup d'état in February 2021, overthrowing the government led by Aung San Suu Kyi. This led to widespread protests and subsequent violent military crackdowns, resulting in civilian armed resistance. Over 4,000 civilians have been killed in the conflict, and more than 200,000 displaced. The UN has expressed deep concern over the expanding conflict and Rohingya genocide. Although the generals claim to be the unifying force of the country, they have largely ignored ASEAN efforts for peace, and Myanmar is barred from ASEAN's top summits due to non-compliance with a previous agreement to end violence.

Pray: 'Lord, bring peace to Myanmar, protect the innocent, and guide leaders towards reconciliation.' (Psalm 34:14)

More: www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/11/16/myanmar-military-admits-facing-heavy-assaults-from-anti-coup-forces

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