

# Prayer Alert

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

We are pleased to enclose this week's edition of Prayer Alert.

Pray with us for the elections in Japan and Uruguay taking place on 27 October: [Insight Guide](#).

## Invitation - to serve with the PA team!

How would you like to join our Prayer Alert team? We are a group of volunteers based in different parts of England. If you appreciate what we do and are confident with browsing the internet, discovering relevant articles and basic editing, 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.

May God bless and encourage you this year,

David Fletcher and the Prayer Alert team.

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## Praise Reports

### ‘Miraculous’ path to new Christmas film

Dallas Jenkins, creator of The Chosen, has produced a new Christmas film, an adaptation of the beloved 1972 novel The Best Christmas Pageant Ever. Jenkins describes the process of securing the rights to the novel as miraculous, crediting God and a fan of The Chosen for the breakthrough. The novel, which Jenkins calls ‘such a Jesus story’, tells the tale of six misfit children who unexpectedly take over their small town’s Christmas pageant, ultimately revealing the true meaning of the holiday. Jenkins and his wife have a personal tradition of reading the book every Christmas, and he spent years praying to obtain the rights to make the film. He was finally able to acquire them, partly due to the mother of one of the rights-holders being a fan of The Chosen. The film opens in US cinemas on 8 November, marking what Jenkins sees as a divinely timed calling fulfilled.

Pray: God for the miraculous unfolding of Dallas Jenkins' vision. May many people be reached with the message of the Gospel through this film. (Luke 1:37)

More: <https://www.faithwire.com/2024/10/21/dallas-jenkins-reveals-miraculous-path-to-new-christmas-movie/>

### NFL star reads Proverbs 31 over his newborn

Chanel Johnson, wife of New Orleans Saints player Juwan Johnson, shared a heartwarming video of her husband reading Proverbs 31 over their newborn daughter in the hospital. The video, posted on 11 October, quickly gained nearly 100,000 likes. In the clip, Juwan reads aloud the passage praising a wife of noble character, saying, “Charm is deceptive, beauty is fleeting, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.” Chanel's Instagram post highlights their deep Christian faith, which is reflected in both their lives. She captioned the video, “POV: You just gave him a baby girl and this is what he does.” In a previous post, Chanel mentioned how Juwan read Scripture to her before childbirth, easing her anxiety. Juwan's faith is also visible on his social media, where he emphasises ‘Jesus over everything else’ and encourages fellow believers to seek God’s face rather than His hand. His testimony highlights the importance of faith and surrender to God’s will.

Praise: God for the witness of this Christ-centred marriage, displaying His love and faithfulness through their testimony. (Proverbs 31:30)

More: <https://www.christianpost.com/news/nfl-player-reads-proverbs-31-over-wife-newborn-baby-girl.html>

## British Isles

### Covid XEC, flu and RSV 'triple-demic' to hit UK

As winter approaches, UK health experts are warning of a potential 'triple-demic' involving Covid, flu, and Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). The past two winters have seen high numbers of deaths due to flu or Covid, with December and January being the peak months. To mitigate the impact, the NHS is encouraging vaccinations, particularly for vulnerable groups like the elderly, pregnant women, and people with long-term health conditions. Over 2.8 million are eligible for the Covid jab, and 4.2 million for flu shots. These vaccines are essential not only for saving lives but also for reducing hospital admissions and alleviating pressure on NHS services. Symptoms of Covid, flu, and RSV can overlap, including fever, cough, and shortness of breath, making it difficult to distinguish between them. Vaccination, along with good hygiene practices and early diagnosis, is crucial in protecting against the severe impacts of these respiratory viruses this winter.

Pray: for protection over vulnerable groups this winter, and for healthcare services to remain effective and resilient amidst the seasonal pressures. (Jeremiah 30:17)

More: <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/health/covid-xec-flu-rsv-triple-demic-33954196>

### Last minute rush for ISAs before the Budget

Amid fears of changes to tax-free ISAs in the upcoming Budget, Britons are rushing to maximise their savings in these accounts. Concerns stem from remarks by Rachel Reeves, who previously suggested a cap of £500,000 on tax-free ISAs, sparking fears that she might target ISAs for a tax raid. As a result, investments in stocks and shares ISAs have surged; one provider reported a 156% increase in contributions in September compared to the same period last year. The number of ISA millionaires has tripled in three years, with over three thousand holding more than £1 million in their ISAs, and thousands more nearing that figure. Analysts credit this growth to the power of compounding and investing in stocks and shares rather than just relying on cash ISAs. Proposed changes could reduce the £20,000 annual contribution limit or introduce a cap, worrying investors seeking to save for their future amid an increasingly taxed environment.

Pray: for wisdom and guidance for individuals managing their finances, that they may plan for a secure future. (Proverbs 21:5)

More: <https://www.express.co.uk/finance/personalfinance/1965992/stampede-for-isas-budget>

### Five arrested after Birmingham airport cannabis seizure

Five men have been arrested following the seizure of cannabis worth £5 million at Birmingham Airport. National Crime Agency (NCA) investigators and police apprehended the individuals, aged between 21 and 27, in Luton and London. The arrests are linked to a smuggling attempt in August, involving over half a tonne of cannabis flown into the UK from Thailand via Paris. Eleven passengers were initially detained and released on bail pending further investigations. The NCA has warned travellers arriving from countries where cannabis is legal that they face jail time if caught smuggling the drug into the UK. Cannabis seizures in the UK have tripled from 2023 to 2024, driven by organised crime groups seeking higher profits. These gangs exploit couriers for financial gain, with little regard for their safety or freedom.

Pray: for authorities to act justly, and for vulnerable individuals to resist involvement in organised crime. (Romans 12:21)

More: <https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/birmingham-airport-breaking-cannabis-seized-30215415>

### Woman, 60, arrested on suspicion of manslaughter

A sixty-year-old woman has been arrested on suspicion of manslaughter following the deaths of three residents at a care home in Swanage, Dorset. The tragic incident unfolded on 23 October, leading to the evacuation of all 48 elderly residents, some with dementia; seven others were taken to the hospital. Emergency services responded swiftly, with fire crews and local volunteers providing temporary shelter and supplies for displaced residents, and the police have launched an investigation. The leader of the investigation team expressed condolences to the affected families, stressing that the arrest would help determine if gross negligence was involved. Local authorities are working to ensure displaced residents' care needs are met. The community is deeply impacted by the incident, and local police are on hand to offer support as investigations continue.

Pray: for the families and staff affected by this tragedy. Pray that the vulnerable residents receive compassionate care. (Psalm 23:4)

More: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/dorset-care-home-dead-hospital-hazard-swanage-latest-b2634205.html>

### Disposable vapes ban over concerns for young people 'hooked on nicotine'

The Government has confirmed that a ban on the sale of disposable vapes will take effect on 1 June 2025. There are growing concerns about the environmental impact and the rising number of young people becoming addicted to nicotine through vaping. Health officials report a significant increase in vape usage, with nearly five million being used and discarded every week. The ban aims to reduce waste, protect the environment, and curb the appeal of vapes to children. Health minister Andrew Gwynne said that a quarter of 11 to 15-year-olds used vapes last year, with disposable vapes being the most popular choice. The Government also plans to introduce a bill which will gradually raise the legal smoking age and implement stricter controls on the sale and marketing of vaping products. This is part of a broader effort to create a smoke-free future in the UK.

Pray: for the protection of young people from harmful addictions, and for wise stewardship of our environment. (Proverbs 22:6)

More: <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1966347/Disposable-vapes-ban-confirmed-concerns-young-people-nicotine>

## Carey urges bishops to back assisted dying bill

Former archbishop George Carey has urged CofE bishops in the House of Lords to support a bill on assisted dying, to give a 'dignified, compassionate' end to life for those suffering intractable pain. This stance contrasts sharply with the current CofE leadership; Justin Welby opposes the bill, warning of potential dangers and a slippery slope. The bishops in the Lords have until now resisted such legislation, calling instead for better palliative care. Support for assisted dying, however, is growing among the public and clergy alike, with polls showing a majority of Anglicans and other religious followers backing the change. Carey has urged church leaders to listen to the experiences of the dying. Meanwhile, religious leaders from other faiths, including Islam and Catholicism, oppose the bill, citing the sanctity of life and the risk of societal pressure on vulnerable individuals to opt for assisted death.

Pray: for compassionate wisdom as leaders grapple with the sanctity of life and the care of the suffering. (Psalm 116:5)

More: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2024/oct/18/george-carey-archbishop-c-of-e-bishops-lords-back-assisted-dying-bill>

## Europe

### Russia: Putin boosted by hosting summit as Modi calls for peace

Arriving for the latest BRICS summit, Narendra Modi has told Vladimir Putin that India desires peace in Ukraine and is willing to assist in achieving a ceasefire. Putin has used the BRICS platform to highlight the non-Western world's influence, despite efforts by the West to isolate Russia. BRICS is an intergovernmental organization comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. The summit, involving leaders from 22 nations, including China's president Xi Jinping, altogether represents 45% of the world's population and 35% of its economy. This showcases BRICS' growing global significance, a welcome boost for Putin. When asked about the prospects for peace, he claimed that the West had now realised that Russia would be victorious, but he was open to peace talks based on the ceasefire agreements reached in Istanbul in April 2022. One Russian source stressed that much depended on the result of the US presidential election on 5 November.

Pray: for a just peace in Ukraine, and for wisdom for global leaders. (Romans 14:19)

More: <https://www.reuters.com/world/shadow-ukraine-war-hangs-over-putins-brics-summit-russia-2024-10-21/>

### Hungary: Orbán claims EU wants to install a puppet regime

In a fiery speech commemorating the 1956 uprising, Viktor Orbán has accused the EU of plotting to topple his government and install a 'puppet regime'. He compared past occupations of Hungary by the Ottoman Empire and the Soviet Union to current tensions with the EU. He also claimed the EU is pushing Hungary into Russia's war in Ukraine, criticising Brussels' support for Kyiv. Hungary has repeatedly blocked or diluted EU sanctions on Russia and aid to Ukraine, aligning itself closer to Moscow. Also, Orbán's government has recently been fined €200 million by the European Court of Justice for 'unprecedented and exceptionally serious breach of EU law' because of the country's strong restrictions on the right to asylum.

Pray: for wisdom for leaders, and for better relations between Hungary and the EU. (Proverbs 12:5)

More: <https://www.euronews.com/2024/10/23/viktor-orban-brussels-wants-to-put-a-puppet-government-in-our-place>

## Worldwide

### Seoul vows response as North Korean troops head to Ukraine

South Korean president Yoon Suk Yeol has vowed that his government 'won't sit idle' following reports that North Korea has sent three thousand troops to support Russia in its war against Ukraine. In a meeting with the Polish president, Yoon said that this deployment violates UN resolutions and threatens global security. South Korea's spy agency says North Korea aims to send up to ten thousand troops to Russia by the end of 2024, though both Moscow and Pyongyang deny the claims. In response, Yoon indicated that South Korea is preparing diplomatic, economic, and military countermeasures in collaboration with allies, including possibly providing Ukraine with weapons systems. While South Korea has so far only supplied Ukraine with non-lethal aid, the situation may prompt a shift in policy. Tensions in the Korean peninsula have intensified as North Korea has reportedly used Russia's invasion of Ukraine as an opportunity to enhance its nuclear and missile programmes. The two leaders also discussed expanding defence cooperation, including new arms deals for Polish military upgrades. See <https://news.sky.com/story/north-korea-sending-thousands-of-troops-to-help-russia-in-war-with-ukraine-says-south-korea-13239504>

Pray: for wisdom and peace amid escalating tensions and for diplomatic efforts to resolve conflicts peacefully. (Matthew 5:9)

More: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/poland-ap-south-korea-russia-yoon-suk-yeol-b2634770.html>

### China / India: border agreement, but 'trust issues' remain

India and China have agreed to resume patrols along the disputed Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh, signalling a potential reduction in tensions following their 2020 clash in Galwan Valley in which twenty Indian soldiers were killed. Both nations have longstanding territorial claims in this region. However, a day after this agreement was announced, Indian army chief General Upendra Dwivedi stated that significant trust issues remain, and restoring confidence between the nations is crucial for further progress. He said that both nations need to be reassured before carrying out a disengagement process: patrolling along the border would help that process, as 'we will be able to see each other and check that we are not creeping into buffer zones'.

Pray: for trust and reconciliation between India and China, and that their border agreement will be honoured. (Ephesians 4:3)

More: <https://asianews.network/india-china-reach-patrolling-agreement-but-trust-issues-persist-army-chief/>

## Commonwealth leaders to challenge UK on slavery reparations

Commonwealth leaders are preparing to challenge the UK on the issue of slavery reparations at their upcoming summit, despite Downing Street's insistence that reparatory justice is not on the official agenda. Diplomatic sources say that Commonwealth officials are negotiating an agreement to begin meaningful conversations about reparations for the transatlantic slave trade. This could leave the UK facing significant financial reparations, with some estimates suggesting it owes over £18 trillion to Caribbean nations alone. Frederick Mitchell, foreign minister of the Bahamas, emphasised the need for an apology and acknowledged that reparations go beyond money, highlighting the importance of respect and recognition of past wrongs. Caribbean leaders have intensified their calls for reparations, but the UK government maintains its position against paying them, focusing instead on present-day challenges, such as climate change. King Charles has expressed regret over colonial wrongdoings but stopped short of an apology. The issue is expected to become a central focus at the next Commonwealth summit in 2026.

Pray: for healing and reconciliation between nations, acknowledging past injustices and striving for an equitable resolution. (Psalm 89:14)

More: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cd6vy79p750o>

## Idris Elba plans to move to Africa to encourage its film industry

British actor Idris Elba plans to move to Africa within the next decade to support its burgeoning film industry. He wants to develop film studios in Zanzibar and Accra, emphasising the importance of Africans telling their own stories. With his roots in Ghana and Sierra Leone, Elba feels a deep connection to the continent and wants to be directly involved in creating an environment where African film-makers can thrive. He stresses the need for better facilities, government support, and investment to showcase Africa's diverse cultures beyond the usual depictions of trauma. Elba believes the continent's film industry has great potential, but it requires an enabling environment and more infrastructure to flourish. He hopes to contribute to this transformation by being on the ground, working with local talent, and building a stronger global understanding of Africa through its storytelling.

Pray: for God's blessing on efforts by Elba and others to encourage and highlight African storytelling and creativity. (Ephesians 2:10)

More: <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c98yz7pxrlko>

## Sudan: mosque hit by airstrike, 31 deaths

A military airstrike on a mosque in Wad Madani, in the centre of Sudan, has killed 31 people, according to local activists. The attack occurred after evening prayers and was reportedly carried out using barrel bombs. Many victims have not yet been identified, as rescue teams are still working through the remains of dozens of charred and mutilated bodies. Since April 2023, Sudan has been ravaged by conflict between the military and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), resulting in widespread death and displacement. The two sides are battling for control of Al-Jazira state, a key agricultural area, currently controlled by the RSF. Both groups have been accused of war crimes, including targeting civilians and looting.

Pray: for the end of violence and protection for innocent lives. (Psalm 9:9)

More: <https://www.africanews.com/2024/10/22/sudan-31-killed-in-mosque-air-strike-in-wad-madani/>

## Christian hopes in Indonesia's new era

As Indonesia witnesses a leadership transition, its thirty million Christians are cautiously hopeful for positive change under president-elect Prabowo Subianto and vice president-elect Gibran Rakabuming Raka. Subianto, a former military general, secured 58% of the vote in this year's election. Indonesia, the second-largest Muslim country in the world, is home to a Christian minority (11% of the population). While the government allows Christians to worship freely, evangelism remains illegal, and Muslim converts often face social persecution. There are concerns about Subianto's past support from conservative Islamic groups who might influence his policies. In the past the government has not actively persecuted Christians, but it has not always defended them either, particularly in areas like Aceh, where Islamic law is enforced. Christians are praying that the new leadership will uphold religious freedoms and protect their rights in a predominantly Muslim nation.

Pray: for the protection and flourishing of Christians in Indonesia under the new leadership, and for religious freedom. (Psalm 27:1)

More: <https://www.persecution.org/2024/10/17/christian-hopes-in-indonesias-new-era-of-government/>

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