

Prayer Alert

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Deep calls to deep in the roar of Your waterfalls; all Your waves and breakers have swept over me. (Psalm 42:7)

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

Pray for the elections in Ireland (29 November) and Mauritius (30 November): [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

Startling contrasts between North and South Korea

The church in North Korea is growing at a remarkable 6% a year, far higher than the South Korean church's 0.7% growth rate, despite severe persecution under the Kim regime. With 400,000 Christians, North Korean believers face imprisonment or death for their faith, yet they persevere, using secret prayer codes and worshipping in hidden mountain sanctuaries. Miraculous healings often lead to conversions, highlighting God's power amidst oppression. In contrast, South Korea, renowned for its vibrant Christianity, faces a decline in faith among the younger generation. Nonetheless, South Korean churches remain a global force, with extensive missionary outreach, including efforts in countries like Afghanistan and North Korea. Initiatives such as Operation Dandelion, which sends Bibles into North Korea via balloons, demonstrate their dedication. Persecution in the North has ignited revival, while prosperity in the South has dulled spiritual fervour: but faithful witness continues to bring people to Christ across both Koreas.

Praise: God for His sustaining power amidst persecution, and pray for spiritual revival in both Koreas. (James 1:12)

More: www.godreports.com/2024/11/startling-contrasts-between-the-church-in-north-and-south-korea/

Greg Laurie presents the Gospel to Jordan Peterson

Pastor Greg Laurie recently shared the Gospel with Jordan Peterson on the psychologist's podcast, addressing life, eternity, and hope in Christ. Laurie emphasised that heaven is not for 'good people' but for 'forgiven people'. Reflecting on Genesis 22, he paralleled Isaac's willing sacrifice with Jesus' ultimate sacrifice for humanity, stating, 'There was no other way we could reach God.' Laurie shared his personal story of loss, recounting the tragic death of his son Christopher in 2008. Despite the pain, he expressed hope in God's promises and confidence in seeing his son again, explaining that faith in Christ, not familial ties, secures eternity. Peterson admitted struggling with reconciling Christian teachings about perfecting the world with the eternal focus of the faith. Laurie responded with Scripture, highlighting how trials have drawn him closer to God's promises. He affirmed God's faithfulness, saying, 'I've put His promises to the test, and He's come through for me'.

Praise: God for the power of the Gospel to transform lives and for His promises that sustain us. (John 11:25)

More: www.faithwire.com/2024/11/20/christ-laid-his-life-down-for-me-greg-laurie-gives-powerful-gospel-presentation-to-jordan-peterson/

British Isles

Biggest overhaul in a generation to children's social care

The Government has unveiled significant reforms to the children's social care system to prioritise early intervention, tackle profiteering in care provision, and improve outcomes for vulnerable children. Spending on looked-after children has surged from £3.1 billion in 2009/10 to £7 billion in 2022/23, while private care providers have been criticised for substandard care and excessive profits (as much as 23% in some cases). Key reforms include granting Ofsted new powers to fine exploitative care providers, requiring financial transparency from large placement providers, and capping profits if necessary. Local councils will be mandated to create multi-agency safeguarding teams and extend support to care leavers up to age 21 through the Staying Close programme. The reforms also aim to shift focus to early intervention, ensuring families are involved in decisions about their children. Education secretary Bridget Phillipson said that these changes aim to end the neglect within the system and give every child a chance to thrive.

Pray: for the success of these reforms, so that vulnerable children will experience love, care, and protection. (Psalm 82:3)

More: www.gov.uk/government/news/biggest-overhaul-in-a-generation-to-childrens-social-care

Ukraine fires UK-supplied missiles at Russia

Ukraine has reportedly used British-supplied Storm Shadow missiles to strike targets in Russia's Kursk region. These long-range missiles, capable of striking targets nearly 200 miles away, mark a significant escalation in Ukraine's defence capabilities. The missiles were supplied under a policy shift allowing the use of British and US military equipment within Russian territory. However, experts warn their impact may be limited due to Ukraine's small stockpile. Military analysts suggest the missiles have already been used for strategic strikes on logistics hubs and ammunition depots. Meanwhile, tensions escalate as Russia lowered its threshold for using nuclear weapons following the US's similar policy shift. Critics fear this could spark wider conflict. On the one thousandth day of Putin's invasion, the UK announced extra support for Ukraine with funding to provide new drone capabilities. [See also \(https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-marks-1000th-day-of-full-scale-invasion-of-ukraine-as-training-programme-hits-50000\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-marks-1000th-day-of-full-scale-invasion-of-ukraine-as-training-programme-hits-50000) and Europe article 'Biden's decision on missiles'.

Pray: for peace, wisdom for leaders, and protection for innocent lives amid escalating tensions and warfare. (Matthew 5:9)

More: news.sky.com/story/ukraine-fires-uk-supplied-missiles-at-targets-inside-russia-13256037

Inflation creeps above UK target

UK inflation rose by more than expected to 2.3% for October, exceeding the official 2% target. This rise, up from 1.7% in September, reflects increased energy costs following a 10% hike in the energy price cap and higher prices for food and products like stamps. This news comes amid concerns about inflationary pressures, potentially influenced by global factors such as Donald Trump's trade policies. The Bank of England's monetary policy committee (MPC) will weigh these figures in December to decide whether to adjust interest rates further. In early November, the MPC cut the base rate to 4.75%. Additional government spending and tax adjustments from chancellor Rachel Reeves' recent budget may also drive up short-term inflation. One commentator thinks that the impact of Trump's policies will likely have limited effects on UK GDP and inflation, even under extreme scenarios. Analysts predict the UK base rate could drop to 3.75% by late 2025.

Pray: for economic stability, and that leaders will make decisions aligning with justice, fairness, and sustainability. (1 Corinthians 4:2)

More: www.thetimes.com/business-money/economics/article/inflation-poised-to-have-risen-to-22-percent-in-october-m2g87739x

Ford to cut 800 jobs as it reacts to EV challenges

Ford plans to eliminate 800 jobs in the UK as part of a broader restructuring of its European operations, citing 'lower-than-expected' demand for electric vehicles (EVs). Ford has to meet the Government's zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) mandate, which requires 22% of car production to be zero-emission in 2024, rising to 80% by 2030. A ban on new petrol and diesel car sales will follow that year, with hybrids allowed until 2035. The financial penalties for exceeding non-ZEV limits - £15,000 per car - are adding pressure on manufacturers. Ford's EV chief had already warned of challenges in meeting these targets; and now workforce reductions have become part of the response. The cuts are part of 4,000 job losses across Europe, including significant layoffs in Germany. Ford's European vice president said that the decision is aimed at securing the company's future competitiveness in the region.

Pray: for those affected by these layoffs, that they find new opportunities and provision in this transition. (Colossians 3:23)

More: www.thesun.ie/motors/14224211/ford-cut-jobs-uk-ev-demand/

Journalists strike over planned sale of Observer

Journalists at The Guardian and The Observer will stage two 48-hour strikes in December to protest the proposed sale of The Observer to Tortoise Media. The National Union of Journalists (NUJ) announced the industrial action after members overwhelmingly voted in favour of striking. The NUJ has criticised the Guardian Media Group (GMG) for acting in 'poor faith', revealing during negotiations that the sale recommendation had already been agreed upon despite earlier assurances to the contrary. The NUJ general secretary said that members had no choice but to act in defence of The Observer's heritage and its commitment to public-interest journalism. A Guardian spokesperson acknowledged the concerns but defended their approach, stating that talks with the NUJ continue and emphasising their priority to sustain liberal journalism amidst a challenging media landscape. The union insists GMG must pause the sale and address journalists' and readers' concerns.

Pray: for integrity and wisdom in decisions impacting journalism, ensuring that truth and public interest remain central. (Zechariah 8:16)

More: www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/guardian-journalists-to-strike-over-planned-sale-of-observer-b1195274.html

Britain soars to third in climate change action league table

The UK has surged to third place globally in the Climate Change Performance Index, up from eighth last year. Experts at the COP29 conference in Baku attribute this leap to Labour's plans to ban new oil and gas projects, promote onshore wind turbines, and close the country's last coal power station. Britain now trails only Denmark and the Netherlands, with analysts calling it a 'winner this year'. The NewClimate Institute praised Labour leader Keir Starmer's commitment to an 81% emissions cut by 2035. Meanwhile, energy secretary Ed Miliband has played a pivotal role at COP29, urging nations to halt new coal power projects and building alliances with countries like Brazil. Despite the UK's progress, challenges remain as the success of COP29 hinges on a finalised climate finance plan for developing nations. Britain's tangible influence at the conference has revitalised its global leadership on climate change, with hopes high for lasting impact.

Pray: for nations to embrace bold environmental stewardship, prioritising care for creation and justice for all people. (Psalm 24:1)
More: www.thetimes.com/uk/environment/article/britain-soars-to-third-in-climate-change-action-league-table-w9q2s73cp

Europe

Ukraine: Biden's decision on missiles, Russian territorial gains

Joe Biden's long-awaited decision to allow Ukraine to use American missiles [against Russian territory](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/11/20/biden-has-pivoted-to-allow-ukraine-to-use-us-missiles-in-russia-why-now) (<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/11/20/biden-has-pivoted-to-allow-ukraine-to-use-us-missiles-in-russia-why-now>) comes amid significant Russian territorial gains in 2024. One study shows that Russia has captured nearly 2,700 sq km of Ukrainian land this year - six times its 2023 gains. This aggressive push has strained Ukraine's defences, despite Kyiv's efforts to repel attacks. The destruction is immense, and Ukraine's stretched defensive lines are increasingly vulnerable. The surprise incursion into Russia's Kursk region initially boosted morale but is now faltering, with Russian forces reclaiming nearly 50% of lost territory. Analysts suggest that the incursion may have led to a broader strategic miscalculation, tying down its best troops and advanced equipment without significantly slowing Russia's eastern advances. Meanwhile, the approaching second Trump administration casts uncertainty over US military support for Ukraine, raising fears of reduced aid as the war continues.

Pray: for peace, protection of lives, and the strength to uphold justice. (Psalm 33:10-11)
More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cn0dpdx420lo

Greece: nationwide general strike

On 20 November a nationwide general strike disrupted Greece as workers demanded better pay and improved living standards. Doctors, teachers, transport workers, and trade union members were among those who joined the protest. In Athens, demonstrators chanted for workers' rights and decried the high cost of living, with inflation in energy, food, and housing outpacing salary increases. The strike reflects frustration over the lingering effects of Greece's 2009–2018 debt crisis, which required severe wage and pension cuts in exchange for €280 billion in bailouts. Though the economy has rebounded, wages remain low compared to the EU average, and many workers report a 50% reduction in purchasing power. The government has raised the minimum wage four times, now at €830, with a target of €950 by 2027, but protesters argue these measures fall short. The strike coincides with the submission of Greece's 2025 budget, which includes plans for modest economic growth and increased spending on wages and pensions.

Pray: for economic justice in Greece, and for provision for struggling workers and families. (1 Timothy 5:18)
More: www.reuters.com/world/europe/ships-docked-transport-services-disrupted-greeks-walk-out-higher-pay-2024-11-20/

Worldwide

USA: Trump's shocking cabinet appointments

Donald Trump has initiated a bold and controversial strategy for his return to power, unveiling cabinet appointments which embody his disregard for traditional governance. These selections, including individuals with histories of legal trouble, extremist ideologies, and controversial actions, aim to dismantle governmental structures Trump perceives as obstacles. Key appointments, such as Pete Hegseth as secretary of defence, reflect his intent to politicise institutions like the military, while figures like Robert F Kennedy Jr as health secretary highlight his disdain for scientific consensus. Others, such as Vivek Ramaswamy and Elon Musk, are to downsize federal agencies radically under a vaguely defined 'department of government efficiency'. Trump's intent to bypass Senate confirmation through recess appointments signals his push for one-man rule. His nominations seem to be not only instruments of policy but tools of intimidation and revenge, targeting perceived enemies and undermining traditional checks and balances in favour of centralised authority.

Pray: for God's justice and discernment to guide national leaders and policies. Pray that Trump's appointees will act honestly and within the law. (Isaiah 5:20)
More: www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2024/nov/20/trump-cabinet-picks-contempt-rage-vengeance

Hong Kong: pro-democracy activists jailed

A group of 47 prominent pro-democracy figures in Hong Kong, including activists, journalists, and former lawmakers, have been sentenced to prison terms of up to ten years on subversion charges. This marks the largest prosecution under the national security law imposed by Beijing in 2020. Among the defendants was Joshua Wong, a well-known student leader, who shouted 'I love Hong Kong' before he left the dock. The group had been involved in organising an unofficial primary election in 2020, which the government labelled a subversive attempt to undermine Hong Kong's autonomy. The crackdown, which follows the violent 2019 pro-democracy protests, shows the severe erosion of political freedoms in the city. Western governments and human rights groups condemned the trials as politically motivated. With many opposition leaders either imprisoned or in exile, Hong Kong's once vibrant pro-democracy movement is all but silenced. This transformation has prompted widespread international concern over Hong Kong's future autonomy.

Pray: that those convicted will have strength and perseverance. Pray for international pressure on China to reverse its harsh policy. (Amos 5:24)

More: edition.cnn.com/2024/11/18/world/hong-kong-democracy-leaders-sentencing-intl-hnk/index.html

Nicaragua: prominent bishop forced into exile

Daniel Ortega's government has forced Bishop Carlos Enrique Herrera Gutiérrez, president of Nicaragua's bishops' conference, to go into exile in Guatemala. He had complained about government officials placing loudspeakers outside a church during Sunday Mass, and also called the actions of the local mayor sacrilegious. CSW sources report that the authorities frequently play loud music outside churches to disturb religious activities, particularly on Sundays and holy days. After the bishop was arrested, his diocese's Facebook page was deleted. Religious leaders in Nicaragua face growing hostility, with priests under surveillance and Protestant pastors receiving threats: the government has also seized a prominent Jesuit-run university in Managua. CSW has strongly criticised Ortega's continued repression of religious freedom, calling for the international community to hold him and his regime to account for their 'ongoing and systematic violation of human rights'.

Pray: for the protection of religious leaders in Nicaragua, and for freedom to worship for all Christians. (Matthew 5:10)

More: www.csw.org.uk/2024/11/19/press/6355/article.htm

Sri Lanka: sweeping victory for president's party

The National People's Power (NPP) party, led by president Anura Kumara Dissanayake, has achieved a historic election victory, securing 159 seats. This was the most dominant result since the proportional representation system was introduced in 1978. The NPP won in nearly all districts, signalling a major political shift. The victory symbolises a rejection of the long-standing patronage-based politics which have dominated Sri Lanka since independence, particularly the influence of family dynasties such as the Rajapaksas and Bandaranaiques. Dissanayake's campaign focused on transparency, equity, and public service, appealing to voters disillusioned by past inefficiencies, which were exposed during the 2022 economic crisis. The defeat of the traditional parties underscores the changing political landscape and growing support for the NPP.

Pray: for integrity and justice in Sri Lanka's new political leadership. (Luke 12:48b)

More: thedi diplomat.com/2024/11/leftist-coalitions-seismic-victory-reshapes-sri-lankas-political-landscape/

Mali: former police chief sentenced by ICC

The International Criminal Court (ICC) has sentenced Al-Hassan Mahmoud to ten years in prison for war crimes committed during his tenure as head of the Islamic police in Timbuktu, Mali. He was found guilty of torture, overseeing public amputations, and organising brutal floggings, including of children, under the al-Qaeda-linked Ansar Dine group, which seized the city in 2012. The presiding judge described the sentence as 'proportionate to the gravity of the crimes', acknowledging the harm caused to victims. However, Al-Hassan was acquitted of charges of rape and sexual slavery: the ICC acknowledged that sexual violence had occurred, but said he was not directly responsible. Rights groups expressed disappointment, noting testimonies of women being raped in detention. In 2016 the ICC sentenced another Ansar Dine member to nine years for destroying Timbuktu's ancient shrines.

Pray: for justice, healing for victims, and restoration for the war-torn community. (Psalm 82:3)

More: www.africanews.com/2024/11/20/former-mali-police-chief-sentenced-to-10-years-for-war-crimes/

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