

# Prayer Alert

ISSUE 37-2018 | Friday 14 September 2018  
[www.prayer-alert.net](http://www.prayer-alert.net) | [editor@prayer-alert.net](mailto:editor@prayer-alert.net)

-----

Pray like this: 'Our Father, dwelling in the heavenly realms, may the glory of Your name be the centre on which our lives turn.'  
(Matthew 6:9, The Passion Translation)

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

Can you help? - Prayer Alert is brought to your inbox without charge thanks largely to the generosity of individuals and organisations that freely provide most of the resources we need to operate. However, we would be grateful for donations from appreciative subscribers towards our costs. Please go to the 'Donations' link that follows to make a contribution: <http://www.prayer-alert.net/contact/donate>

Thank you again for standing with us in prayer over the nations.

David Fletcher – Editor

## Praise Reports

[Mission Academy Live](#)

[Ghana: rescued from slavery](#)

## British Isles and Ireland

[Brexit and 'a leadership challenge'](#)

[Response on religious education](#)

[Response to draft sex education guidance](#)

[Christians in Politics](#)

[Parent power and cheating](#)

[Northern Ireland: Brexit and borders](#)

[Scotland's children: mental health problems](#)

## Europe

[Vatican City: C-9 and sexual abuse](#)

[Poland will block EU sanctions against Hungary](#)

[Putin: Novichok suspects not criminals](#)

## Worldwide

[China: relentless destruction of crosses](#)

[Nigeria: massacres shatter peace efforts](#)

[USA: Hurricane Florence](#)

[USA: faith-based disaster relief](#)

[Israel / USA: special relationship under God's authority](#)

[Global: ensuring climate funds reach those in need](#)

[Iran: people told to economise](#)

## Praise Reports

### Mission Academy Live

HOPE are delighted by the number of churches using Mission Academy Live with their young people, and they are excited by the opportunity to recruit and train 60 more young evangelists in the coming year. Mission Academy Live, in ten innovative video-based sessions, aims to empower young people as missional disciples within a small group context. With a focus on peer-to-peer evangelism, each session provides an understanding of today's contemporary context, with teaching, discussion, and testimony, all leading to a practical response. Through accountable relationships, this first-of-its-kind evangelism and discipleship tool encourages young people to be intentional, authentic, united, and obedient to the call and command of Christ to 'go, and make disciples'.

Praise: God for the pioneering ways being used to help youth become Christ-like. (Matthew 28:20)

More: [hopetogether.org.uk/Groups/290576/Mission\\_Academy\\_Live.aspx](http://hopetogether.org.uk/Groups/290576/Mission_Academy_Live.aspx)

### Ghana: rescued from slavery

Kofi was eight years old when his mother introduced him to a nice man who told them he would take Kofi to live with him and enrol him in school, giving him the future his mother couldn't give him. It was all a lie. For two years, Kofi was a slave to a boatmaster on Lake Volta in east Ghana. He woke at dawn to dive deep into the lake, holding his breath as he used his small fingers to untangle the nets caught on underwater tree stumps. He knew some boys drowned doing this. One day a strange boat pulled near. He knew it was different from others he'd been on when someone handed him a lifejacket to ensure he was safe. The boat was filled with police and IJM workers. Pray that IJM fulfils its plan to 'eliminate the slave trade everywhere'.

Praise: God for the rescue of Kofi and nine other boys that day. (Psalm 18:6)

More: [www.ijm.org/stories/kofi/](http://www.ijm.org/stories/kofi/)

## British Isles & Ireland

### Brexit and 'a leadership challenge'

The worst thing our journalists could do would be to distort the truth, and it would be appalling if MPs acted in their own interests, or the interests of louder tempting voices, rather than their constituents' interests. However, according to the media, there have been discussions in Westminster around bringing down the Prime Minister. The Independent 'reported' that Theresa May faces a leadership challenge within days, and fifty hard Brexiteers are in 'open revolt' against her while 'Boris Johnson prowls the Palace of Westminster'. Robert Peston reported that rebel MPs in the European Research Group, led by Jacob Rees-Mogg and Steve Baker, were having detailed discussions around leadership election rules. We can pray for the Holy Spirit to cool the heated atmosphere in Westminster and for refreshing currents of Godly wisdom and truth to flow through media comments. Pray for Jesus to remove all confusion and divisive conversations, and lead MPs in the direction that best serves their constituents.

Pray: for God to establish His Kingdom purposes for the people of this nation. (Matthew 6:10)

More: [www.independent.co.uk/voices/leadership-challenge-theresa-may-hard-brexit-european-research-group-a8533776.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/leadership-challenge-theresa-may-hard-brexit-european-research-group-a8533776.html)

### Response on religious education

Responding to the final report by the Commission on Religious Education, the CofE's education officer said, 'This report calls for a new vision for religious education, which is vital if we are to equip children for life in the modern world where religion and belief play such important roles. It is also timely, given the falling numbers of students taking RE at GCSE and A level since the introduction of the English Baccalaureat.' The CofE's education vision is deeply Christian, with Jesus' promise of 'life in all its fullness' at its heart. It was good to see the commission endorsing an approach already being used in church schools. However, further work is needed to ensure children develop religious and theological literacy as part of their understanding. The Secular Society's response was that they were in broad agreement with the suggestions, but wanted the last say to be from educationalists, not the pre-existing religious education community. See <https://www.secularism.org.uk/uploads/nss-response-to-core-consultation-on-interim-report.pdf>

Pray: for wise recruitment and training of teachers, so that children can make sense of religion. (Psalm 78:6)

More: [www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/news/response-religious-education-commission](http://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/news/response-religious-education-commission)

### Response to draft sex education guidance

Guidance for teaching about relationships and sex in schools is being drafted, and will soon be put before Parliament. It is an important time in the development of sex and relationships resources. Sex education is intended to influence attitudes and behaviours and improve sexual health. Whether or not improvements occur depends on the curriculum. It is currently driven by STIs concerns, the adequacy of consent, and teenage pregnancy (the UK has the highest rate in Western Europe). Advice given by leading campaigners is devoid of references to morality, marriage, or family life. It talks about sex as a normal and pleasurable fact of life for youngsters, stressing contraception as most important. It has nothing to say about the moral context in which sex is to be enjoyed; no reference to fidelity and exclusivity. For the full report from the Christian Medical Fellowship, click the 'More' button.

Pray: for young people to be taught morals and be encouraged to live out what is good. (Psalm 119:66)

More: [www.cmfblog.org.uk/2018/08/30/sex-education-and-the-myth-of-neutrality/](http://www.cmfblog.org.uk/2018/08/30/sex-education-and-the-myth-of-neutrality/)

### Christians in Politics

Christians in Politics is an all-party, non-denominational organisation which encourages and inspires Christians to get involved in politics and public life. Emphasis is placed on membership of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, as opposed to the earthly allegiances which may separate us. Their vision is for Christians to respond to God's call to engage in party politics and government. Their mission is to make the biblical case for participating in party politics heard by Christians, and then to connect them and their churches to people or organisations which can help them engage politically. At this time of Brexit debates and disputes, we can pray that more Christians participate in decision-making, rather than criticising or commenting from the sidelines. May there also be a growing movement of wise, informed prayers for all our leaders in the coming months.

Pray: for God to inspire prayer for, and wise honourable action by, all involved in politics. (Psalm 33:12)

More: [www.christiansinpolitics.org.uk/about-us/what-is-christians-in-politics/](http://www.christiansinpolitics.org.uk/about-us/what-is-christians-in-politics/)

### Parent power and cheating

A YouGov poll for the Sutton Trust indicates widespread cheating among middle-class families to win a place at the school of their choice. One in three parents know families who have used 'ethically dubious' tactics, though they are less likely to admit to fraudulent tactics themselves. 16% from all social groups personally knew families who used a relative's address to secure a place. 20% from the highest social group knew someone who had either bought or rented a second home in the catchment area of a good school. The most commonly used tactic to get into more desirable schools is to develop a newfound faith and attend religious services to meet school admissions criteria where pupils are selected on the basis of church attendance.

Pray: for an end to children being refused places at local schools because others lie. (Psalm 52:1a, 5a)

More: [www.theguardian.com/education/2018/sep/13/uk-parents-using-dubious-tactics-beat-school-admissions-criteria-buying-renting-second-homes](http://www.theguardian.com/education/2018/sep/13/uk-parents-using-dubious-tactics-beat-school-admissions-criteria-buying-renting-second-homes)

### Northern Ireland: Brexit and borders

Brexit Tory MPs say a hard border on the island of Ireland can be avoided by using 'established' technology and 'modifying' existing arrangements. They called for streamlined customs checks and closer working between Belfast and Dublin, to allay compliance and smuggling fears. The Democratic Unionist Party welcomed the 'positive and timely' report, Sinn Fein said it was 'pure fantasy', and the EU insists on a 'backstop' to ensure the single market is protected. After two years of debating the border issue, the Chequers blueprint envisages a free trade zone for goods moving between the UK and the EU, backed up by a 'facilitated customs arrangement', as the only credible and negotiable option. However Ireland's foreign minister Simon Coveney said the proposals were an 'unworkable distraction'.

Pray: for the UK and the EU to agree on how to achieve workable border checks. (Proverbs 9:12)

More: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-45495960](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-45495960)

### Scotland's children: mental health problems

Child mental health has been a key priority for the Scottish government. But specialist services are struggling to cope with increasing demand, and mental health minister Clare Haughey said the situation was 'unacceptable'. The target of 90% of children and young people starting treatment or having referral to specialist services within 18 weeks has never been met. Instead, waiting times have increased since the target was set. About one in ten Scottish children aged between 5 and 16 have a clinically diagnosable mental illness, and there has been a 22% increase in the number being referred for specialist treatment in recent years. Children may receive little or no support or advice while waiting for treatment, causing conditions to deteriorate or make it more likely they will drop out of the system during the process. Early intervention services are patchy across Scotland.

Pray: for teachers, youth workers and analysts to have adequate mental health training. (Daniel 2:21)

More: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-45500266](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-45500266)

## Europe

### Vatican City: C-9 and sexual abuse

The 'C-9' are nine cardinals from around the world who meet four times a year to advise the Pope. At the end of their most recent meeting they announced that he had summoned senior bishops from around the world to the Vatican to discuss the protection of minors. The heads of the national bishops' conferences will meet in February 2019 to try to come to grips with a spreading sexual abuse crisis in the USA, Chile, Australia, Germany, and elsewhere. It was recently revealed that 1,670 German priests had sexually abused 3,677 minors, mostly males, over a seventy-year period. A US grand jury found 301 priests in Pennsylvania guilty of sexually abusing minors over a similar period. In August, Italian archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò accused the Pope of knowing about sexual misconduct by a US cardinal and doing nothing about it.

Pray: for all that is hidden to be revealed and dealt with appropriately. (Psalm 19:11,12a)

More: [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/09/12/pope-summons-bishops-sex-abuse-scandal-meeting-thousands-cases/](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/09/12/pope-summons-bishops-sex-abuse-scandal-meeting-thousands-cases/)

### Poland will block EU sanctions against Hungary

The European parliament voted to sanction Hungary for neglecting norms on democracy, civil rights and corruption. Since 2010, Hungarian prime minister Viktor Orban has pressurised courts, media and non-government groups to prevent migrants entering Hungary. He has also led opposition to Angela Merkel and others who want Europe to take in more Muslim refugees. Poland, the biggest former communist country in the EU, will oppose any sanctions imposed by the bloc on Hungary. Its prime minister, Mateusz Morawiecki, said, 'Every country has its sovereign right to make internal reforms it deems appropriate, and actions aimed against member states serve only to deepen divides in the EU and increase citizens' current lack of confidence to European institutions.' A BBC report says that Mr Orban appears increasingly isolated among European conservatives, but is being applauded by nationalist parties.

Pray: for God to watch over Hungary. May Orban be used to develop a Godly nation. (Job 12:23)

More: [www.reuters.com/article/us-eu-hungary-poland/poland-says-it-will-block-any-eu-sanctions-against-hungary-idUSKCN1LT0ND](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-eu-hungary-poland/poland-says-it-will-block-any-eu-sanctions-against-hungary-idUSKCN1LT0ND)

### Putin: Novichok suspects not criminals

Many believe the Russian government hopes that a TV interview with the two men suspected of being spies and using Novichok in the UK will generate sympathy at home (see ). Putin says they are sports nutrition salesmen, not assassins. But the risk for Russia is that the interview raises more questions than it answers and offers more details for sceptics to unpick and challenge. The two suspects accused of carrying out the nerve agent attack claimed they had travelled to Salisbury to see its famous cathedral. The BBC reported that one of them said, 'Maybe we did approach Skripal's house, but we don't know where it is located.'

Pray: for Moscow's media melee not to do further damage to political relationships between nations. May God's purposes for the nations stand firm. (Psalm 66:7)

More: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-45509697](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-45509697)

## Worldwide

### China: relentless destruction of crosses

Authorities continue to tear down and demolish crosses in Zhengzhou, Nanyang, and Yuzhou. The Chinese Gospel Fellowship in Nanyang sang hymns to encourage each other in their empty church after the cross was demolished. Eight house churches were shut down in one district alone. Local Christians said that it was hard to estimate how many churches had been closed. In Zhongmo County, local government told each church to remove their cross, but nobody responded. Some were afraid the government would demolish the cross, so they covered it with a black veil to conceal it. Religious persecution has been escalating since the government issued new regulations in February. In Henan, which has a large Christian population, authorities are forcing churches to display the national flag and the president's portrait. To read about the many measures to restrict pastors, click the 'More' button. All of these actions are in violation of the Chinese Christians' freedom of religion.

Pray: for God to encourage, protect and continue to grow His Chinese Church. (Psalm 128:1,2)

More: [www.chinaaid.org/2018/09/chinese-government-relentlessly.html](http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/09/chinese-government-relentlessly.html)

### Nigeria: massacres shatter peace efforts

Christian leaders in the central Plateau State argue that there is a religious dimension to Fulani attacks on villages; unless politicians acknowledge this, they cannot properly address the conflict. On 28 August in Jos, a Christian peace summit for the northern regions was ending. 100 miles away, at the same time, Fulani militants set ablaze Rev Adamu Wurim Gyang and his three children. They were burnt beyond recognition. His wife Jummai was left to die in a pool of blood. 95 houses were torched, 225 crops awaiting harvest were destroyed, at least 14 were killed, and many wounded. CSW said that after the perpetrators had gone the military arrived, killing a woman who tried to stop them detaining local youths who wanted them to go after the Fulani militia instead. A video verified by World Watch Monitor shows people holding up her body, and Rev Ezekiel Dachomo appealing for assistance from the US, UK, and the UN, saying, 'An Islamic agenda is taking over the nation'.

Pray: for God to prompt the nations to stand with and for the persecuted in Nigeria. (Isaiah 14: 24, 25b)

More: [www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/09/nigeria-pastor-and-three-sons-burned-alive-among-at-least-20-killed-in-latest-plateau-massacre/](http://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/09/nigeria-pastor-and-three-sons-burned-alive-among-at-least-20-killed-in-latest-plateau-massacre/)

### USA: Hurricane Florence

Hurricane Florence reached the Carolinas on 14 September. For days the president has been tweeting, 'Be prepared, be careful, be SAFE'. Two years ago a category 1 storm caused \$10.6 billion in flood damage and killed 25 people in the Carolinas. Florence is a category 2 storm with expected category 4 storm surges. It is moving slowly, and coastal areas could experience hurricane-force winds and hurricane conditions for 24 hours or more. Once it moves inland, flooding risk increases, with up to 25 inches of rain forecast (more in some areas). Residents were warned to evacuate not only for their safety, but for the safety of first responders. Pray for homeowners,

farmers and businesses contending with a major flooding event; for the safety of first responders; for reliable electricity supplies to hospitals and emergency stations; and for the frail, vulnerable and elderly to be cared for, reassured, and made comfortable.

Pray: for all to be protected during deadly storm surges, colossal coastal flooding and historic rainfall expected far inland. (Psalm 88:1-3)  
More: [edition.cnn.com/2018/09/13/us/hurricane-florence-south-east-coast-wxc/index.html](https://edition.cnn.com/2018/09/13/us/hurricane-florence-south-east-coast-wxc/index.html)

#### **USA: faith-based disaster relief**

North Carolina Baptists on Mission and the North Carolina conference of the United Methodist Church have made a name for themselves during previous hurricanes and disasters by feeding people, clearing debris, gutting uninhabitable homes and rebuilding them. On 12 September, in preparation for Hurricane Florence, they were deciding how to deploy their volunteer armies and equipment. 'God has opened a lot of doors and given us a lot of opportunity,' said the Baptists. 'We are thankful for that. We want to glorify God if we have opportunities to, and we're looking for the best way to do that right now.'

Pray: for God to anoint the Red Cross, Salvation Army and all those giving hot meals from mobile kitchen units, providing counsel, prayer and spiritual support to victims. (1 Peter 3:8)  
More: [www.christianheadlines.com/blog/faith-based-disaster-relief-teams-on-standby-as-florence-nears.html](http://www.christianheadlines.com/blog/faith-based-disaster-relief-teams-on-standby-as-florence-nears.html)

#### **Israel / USA: special relationship under God's authority**

Most Israeli Jews believe in God. The US is the most God-fearing country in the West. The figures for faith in God are almost identical for the two nations, leaving other 'Christian' countries far behind. At a time when Jewish settlers and evangelical Christians appear to run foreign policies in both Jerusalem and Washington, it is hard to escape the conclusion that religion has a pivotal role in the special relationship between them. Also the tense political relations between Israel and the EU and between the EU and Washington are defined by religious beliefs. Israelis and Americans view Europe as godless and decadent, while Brussels believes Israel and the USA are drifting into fundamentalist crazy-land. These specifics come from a recent poll by the Dialogue Institute that surmised, 'Religious beliefs are also a reliable marker for political views'.

Pray: for God to direct all whom He has chosen to lead nations. May the fragrance of Jesus cover all those who trust him. (2 Corinthians 2:14)  
More: [www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-for-rosh-hashanah-a-picture-of-israel-s-muddled-jewish-soul-1.6462847?v=E23BD050364A8695F7B04962F59305A5](http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-for-rosh-hashanah-a-picture-of-israel-s-muddled-jewish-soul-1.6462847?v=E23BD050364A8695F7B04962F59305A5)

#### **Global: ensuring climate funds reach those in need**

As climate change creates huge ecological and economic damage, more and more money is being given to at-risk countries to help them prevent it and adapt to its effects. But these grants can be diverted into private bank accounts and vanity projects. Senior staff at Kenya's geothermal energy company went on compulsory leave after trying to embezzle US\$19 million, and a Bangladesh fishing community cannot reach their cyclone shelter that was built on the other side of a river which isn't crossable during bad weather. The contractor built the shelter next to his own house. Also 52 Maldivian families were relocated from islands vulnerable to erosion and sea surges. The government raised funds to house them. Construction never began; they were still homeless eight years after the relocation. Transparency International works to safeguard climate change funding from corruption, by monitoring and exposing corruption risks and supporting communities.

Pray: for God to promote community involvement in climate projects and eliminate risks of abuse of climate funds. (Proverbs 11:1)  
More: [www.transparency.org/news/feature/ensuring\\_that\\_climate\\_funds\\_reach\\_those\\_in\\_need](http://www.transparency.org/news/feature/ensuring_that_climate_funds_reach_those_in_need)

#### **Iran: people told to economise**

President Hassan Rouhani's chief of staff has called upon people, in the current economic situation, to avoid buying more goods than they require. He urged merchants and shopkeepers to respect fairness in pricing commodities. Since the USA re-imposed sanctions, Iran is experiencing skyrocketing prices and shortages of essential commodities. People are hoarding medicines, foodstuffs, and baby nappies in large quantities, even in warehouses. Iran's currency fell to a record low (140% drop), and Iranians are now using money-changers in fear of further drops. The second stage of US sanctions, targeting oil exports and banking, will begin on 4 November. Experts believe ongoing political and economic challenges are fuelling widespread anger against the regime. But as the regime's popularity decreases, the influence of the gospel increases. World Mission reported that Iran's underground church is one of the fastest-growing in the world.

Pray: for Iran's bleak economic situation to drive leaders into God's presence. May He change their hearts and may He continue growing the Iranian underground churches. (Psalm 119:11)  
More: [www.payvand.com/news/18/sep/1023.html](http://www.payvand.com/news/18/sep/1023.html)

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, Cornerstone House, 5 Ethel Street, Birmingham, B2 4BG, 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.