

# Prayer Alert

ISSUE 44-2018 | Friday 02 November 2018  
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I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which He has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in His holy people. (Ephesians 1:18)

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/pa-contact/donate>

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

David Fletcher – Editor

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## Praise Reports

### Aasia Bibi acquitted

Last week we prayed again for Aasia Bibi, after she asked for Christians in the UK to intercede for her release from death row in Pakistan. In an extraordinary answer to those prayers, the supreme court has overturned her eight-year death sentence for allegedly blasphemous comments, and she is free. Christians are Pakistan's 'forgotten minority'. The laws are often used to get revenge after personal disputes, and convictions are based on thin evidence. Christians make up just 1.6% of the population. They have been targeted by numerous attacks in recent years, leaving many feeling vulnerable to a climate of intolerance. There are fears that there could be a violent response to her acquittal, and her family fear for their safety. She has been offered asylum by several countries, and will leave Pakistan. Prime minister Imran Khan has called for calm - see <https://news.sky.com/story/imran-khan-calls-for-calm-after-protests-over-asia-bibi-blasphemy-acquittal-11541390>

Praise: God for her release; may He continue to protect the family at this time. (Psalm 10:14)

More: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-46040515](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-46040515)

### Canada: high-octane faith-based children's videos

On 28 October a Catholic couple launched a children's faith-filled video adventure series called The Opus Joyous Show, featuring 3D animation, puppets, music, rockets, ships, pirates, and a time-travelling Bible. There are four 23-minute episodes featuring 'characters with character - children, their family, their friends, a priest and a nun - who work together with the grace of God to try and stop the evil villain Captain Barnacle and his shady plan for utter darkness upon the world'. Opus is the little boy hero, and Joyous is his dog. Parents have concerns about the time children spend on electronic media, and the show intends to create an authentically Catholic video series for children to enjoy.

Praise: God for all Christian electronic entertainment that draws children closer to Him. (James 4:8a)

More: [www.lifesitenews.com/news/catholics-launch-high-octane-faith-based-video-series-for-kids](http://www.lifesitenews.com/news/catholics-launch-high-octane-faith-based-video-series-for-kids)

### God's Word for persecuted Christians

'They are the most precious gifts for us. Now my Sunday School children will see them with their own eyes - praise the Lord!' said Rachel. Barnabas Fund helped supply 23,930 Bibles with hymnals to Christians from an isolated persecuted people group in South-East Asia. Some had never seen a Bible. A few villages had a single, treasured copy in their mother tongue, while some had memorised verses. They had experienced years of persecution from military and government authorities who confiscated and burnt Bibles. For nearly twenty years, they had been praying for these Bibles: now God has answered their prayers.

Praise: God for Bible researchers, translators and distributors of His precious teaching. (Hebrews 4:12)

More: [mailchi.mp/lcm/g9bvgkjin60-1729793?e=e573fef307](http://mailchi.mp/lcm/g9bvgkjin60-1729793?e=e573fef307)

## British Isles & Ireland

### Farming and the land

We praise God for a glorious autumn, a welcome respite for farmers from the difficult weather conditions of recent months. As with many of our industries, farmers are frequently frustrated by regulations, many of which are sensible and beneficial, but some less so. The recent removal of access to certain seed dressings and spray chemicals has seriously reduced the armoury of crop protection available to the agronomist, resulting in reduced yields or fields having to be re-sown. The chemical alternatives to the banned products might actually prove to be more harmful to the environment.

Pray: that the rules around food production that protect consumer, producer and our environment are based on sound science, common sense and reverence for the Creator. (Psalm 24:1)

More: [www.worldprayer.org.uk/images/PDF/Seeds-of-Prayer-November-2018.pdf](http://www.worldprayer.org.uk/images/PDF/Seeds-of-Prayer-November-2018.pdf)

### Raising voices for the voiceless

This winter cathedrals, churches, schools and community projects around the country are hosting choir concerts and carol services and raising their voices for the voiceless. There will be a huge number of amazing events, everything from sing-along spectaculars to classical choral concerts to bucket-bearing buskers, to help transform lives and communities. They will be raising money for the Church Urban Fund; a social action charity working in local communities throughout England to tackle injustice and poverty including modern slavery, the voiceless and powerless, in need of help and support. Gifts will aid work with asylum-seekers, homeless people, families facing food poverty and financial exclusion, and those feeling they are on the edge, isolated and lonely. Recruiting for and organising these events is going on now.

Pray: for many community events to be organised, and much money raised. (Leviticus 25:35)

More: [www.raiseyourvoices.org.uk/](http://www.raiseyourvoices.org.uk/)

### Christian ministry to seafarers

The Sailors' Society, an international charity based in Southampton, started a crisis response network (CRN) in South Africa in 2015, providing trauma care and counselling wherever necessary. This network provided support to its 100th case this week, with piracy, death at sea and abandonment accounting for 59% of those supported. 26% of those seeking crisis response were affected by piracy. The CRN now has 52 chaplains trained to offer crisis support to seafarers around the world. The International Maritime Bureau saw 107 actual or attempted attacks in the past six months, up from 87 in the same period of last year, with Nigeria and Indonesia the main piracy hotspots. On 31 October, eleven seafarers were seized by pirates off the Nigerian coast. Piracy, and the fear of piracy, is a massive issue for seafarers.

Pray: for Sailors' Society chaplains to experience God's presence and protection. (Psalm 16:11)

More: [www.christiantoday.com/uk/seafarers-in-crisis-how-a-christian-ministry-is-dealing-with-the-fallout-from-piracy-and-abandonment/130831.htm](http://www.christiantoday.com/uk/seafarers-in-crisis-how-a-christian-ministry-is-dealing-with-the-fallout-from-piracy-and-abandonment/130831.htm)

### Minister resigns over delayed crackdown on betting machines

Tracey Crouch, the sports minister, resigned on 1 November as a protest over the delay in cutting the maximum stakes from £100 in fixed-odds betting terminals (FOBTs). The Government had announced this plan in May 2018 ([see british-isles-ireland-pa-site/item/10593-betting-machine-stakes-cut-to-2](http://www.british-isles-ireland-pa-site/item/10593-betting-machine-stakes-cut-to-2)), and Philip Hammond announced in his Budget Day speech it would come into force in October 2019. Ms Crouch said pushing back the date was 'unjustifiable', and could cost the lives of problem gamblers. She tweeted: 'Politicians come and go, but principles stay with us forever.' Culture secretary Jeremy Wright denied Labour claims that MPs had been led to believe the cut would come into force in April 2019. But in her resignation letter, Ms Crouch said: 'Unfortunately, implementation of these changes are now being delayed until October 2019 due to commitments made by others to those with registered interests.'

Pray: that the Government will have wisdom in knowing whether it can implement this cut more speedily. (Psalm 32:8)

More: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-46057548](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-46057548)

### Education spending

Children from richer families used to benefit much more from public spending on education than those from poorer backgrounds. However, a report from the Institute of Fiscal Studies, based on research in state-funded schools between 2003 and 2010, notes a substantial shift in this pattern. Due to new policies such as 'pupil premium', which aims to help disadvantaged pupils of all abilities in publicly-funded schools to perform better, education spending is now more likely to be skewed towards poorer pupils. Also, the socio-economic gaps in higher education have narrowed. The report concludes, 'The realistic evidence suggests that focusing more education spending on poorer pupils should lead to substantial improvements in their life chances'.

Pray: for government education funding to meet the varied needs of pupils and teachers. (Philippians 4:19)

More: [www.ifs.org.uk/publications/13659](http://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/13659)

### Organised crime

As the security minister, Ben Wallace, launched a new strategy to tackle organised criminal activity that costs the UK economy £37bn a year, the National Crime Agency (NCA) revealed the impact on British citizens. 'The threat from serious and organised crime has changed rapidly, increasing in both volume and complexity. We know that it now affects more UK citizens, more often, than any other national security threat. It kills more of our citizens than terrorism, war and natural disasters combined.' The Home Office said there are around 4,600 serious and organised crime groups in the UK, using violence and intimidation in communities to operate and prey on the most vulnerable, including victims of modern slavery and human trafficking. Mr Wallace, said, 'Many serious criminals think they are above the law. They believe they can defy the British state and act with impunity against our businesses and our way of life. They are wrong.'

Pray: for wise and successful use of the extra injection of funds by law enforcement agencies. (Proverbs 1:5)

More: [www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/serious-organised-crime-uk-economy-child-abuse-trafficking-drug-dealing-nca-a8611886.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/serious-organised-crime-uk-economy-child-abuse-trafficking-drug-dealing-nca-a8611886.html)

### Boris Johnson and the Saudis

Parliamentary papers revealed that Boris Johnson had a £14,000 all-expenses-paid trip to Saudi Arabia, two weeks before the murder of

journalist Jamal Khashoggi in its Istanbul consulate. Mr Johnson flew to Jeddah for a three-day visit, where reportedly all expenses were paid by the ministry of foreign affairs. His goal was to meet regional figures to promote education for women and girls. When he was foreign secretary, he refused to back halting arms sales to Saudi Arabia, and was accused by human rights groups of blocking a UN investigation into Saudi war crimes committed in Yemen. The UK government's support of the country has not wavered. Although the USA calls for a Yemen ceasefire (see the World article 'Yemen: vision of ceasefire'), Theresa May does not support this move, telling MPs that it would only work if there is a political deal between parties. See <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/theresa-may-ceasfire-yemen-civil-war-un-saudi-arabia-uk-conflict-latest-a8610361.html>

Pray: for God to prompt the UK into making heaven-inspired decisions. (Proverbs 9:9)

More: [www.rt.com/uk/442781-boris-johnson-saudi-trip/](http://www.rt.com/uk/442781-boris-johnson-saudi-trip/)

## Europe

### Ireland votes to eject blasphemy law

Campaigners in Ireland celebrated the end of a 'medieval' ban on blasphemy after voters backed removing the offence from the constitution in a referendum. The decision is the latest in a 'quiet revolution' of seismic social and political changes in the country. Until recently, Ireland was conservative and dominated by the Catholic Church. Recently Ireland has legalised gay marriage and abortion in popular votes, and is now led by an openly gay Taoiseach. Reflecting the speed of changes, four in five voters under 35 backed the change, while over-65s only approved it by a narrow margin.

Pray: for Ireland's Catholic roots to remain in place as they realign domestic laws. (Proverbs 13:20)

More: [www.theguardian.com/world/2018/oct/27/ireland-votes-to-oust-blasphemy-ban-from-constitution](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/oct/27/ireland-votes-to-oust-blasphemy-ban-from-constitution)

### German Bible reading broadcasts

Six years after the first episode of 'Reading the Bible with Ulrich Parzany' went on air, the Christian TV station Bibel TV will broadcast a new devotional section, starting on Sunday 4 November. In it, Pastor Ulrich Parzany deals with Matthew's Gospel in 164 episodes. Viewers will get to know the clarity of the Bible and the relevance of the biblical word for us today. The programme's content and language is carefully chosen to reflect the fact that it is watched both by Christians and non-Christians. Other books available on Bibel TV's website are Luke, Acts, and Romans.

Pray: for more viewing programmes which encourage people to read the Bible. (Deut. 29:29)

More: [www.bibeltv.de/presse/pressemitteilungen/klarheit-der-bibel-und-relevanz-ihres-wortes-fuer-heute-vermitteln/](http://www.bibeltv.de/presse/pressemitteilungen/klarheit-der-bibel-und-relevanz-ihres-wortes-fuer-heute-vermitteln/)

### Wild weather across Europe

Violent storms battered Italy, killing at least 11 people. Venice's St Mark's Square was inundated and the adjacent basilica had its baptistry totally flooded and its mosaic floors covered by 35 inches (89 cm) of water. 'The basilica has aged twenty years in just one day, and perhaps I am being overly optimistic about that,' said the church's chief administrator. 'It is becoming ever more difficult for us, and indeed could become impossible for us to repair the damage, especially in an age of climate change.' Meanwhile, heavy snow in parts of Spain left two mountain hikers missing, and a tornado ravaged Menorca, leaving 38,000 people without power. See <http://www.theolivepress.es/spain-news/2018/10/29/snow-tornado-smashes-menorca-leaving-38000-residents-without-power-while-two-people-missing-in-northern-spain/>

Pray: for all affected by this violent weather to be protected and helped quickly. (Psalm 30:2)

More: [www.theguardian.com/weather/2018/oct/30/water-rises-to-three-feet-in-st-marks-basilica-after-venice-floods](http://www.theguardian.com/weather/2018/oct/30/water-rises-to-three-feet-in-st-marks-basilica-after-venice-floods)

## Worldwide

### Pittsburgh synagogue shooting: 'love, not hate'

2,500 people attended a vigil at a memorial hall and 1,500 stood outside in the rain, listening to loudspeakers, the day after an anti-Semite murdered eleven people and injured six in their place of worship on 27 October, their Shabbat. 'We need love, not hate', said the CEO of the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh. The Bishop of the Episcopal Church, Michael Curry, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and others stood by the Bishop of Pittsburgh whose response to the shooting was, 'This terror is added to the heap of such crimes we have witnessed in the past. Yet our hope is not dimmed. "Behold, I set before you this day, life and death, blessing and curse: therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live" (Deuteronomy 30:19).' See <https://www.anglicannews.org/news/2018/10/episcopal-and-anglican-leaders-respond-to-anti-semitic-mass-shooting-at-pittsburgh-synagogue.aspx>

Pray: for God's power to triumph over terrorism and tragedy. (1 Cor.15:54)

More: [pittsburgh.cbslocal.com/2018/10/28/pittsburgh-synagogue-shooting-vigil-oakland/](http://pittsburgh.cbslocal.com/2018/10/28/pittsburgh-synagogue-shooting-vigil-oakland/)

### Yemen: vision of ceasefire

Pentagon chief James Mattis said the US had been watching the conflict 'for long enough', and believes Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are ready for talks. The comments came as the military coalition deployed over 10,000 new troops towards a vital rebel-held port city in the run-up to a new assault. Mattis said, 'We have got to move toward a peace effort here, and we can't say we are going to do it sometime in the future. We need to be doing this in the next thirty days.' His comments came at the US Institute of Peace, whose president, Kevin Martin, said that the Yemen needs peace right now, and even thirty days to halt fighting is too long. He added, 'I think the Trump administration is trying to get out ahead of a stampede. Congress, public opinion and the media have all turned very much against this war.' See also the UK article 'Boris Johnson and the Saudis'.

Pray: for international pressure on the Saudis to force them to heed the calls for a ceasefire. (Luke 22:26)

More: [www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/10/defence-chief-demands-yemen-ceasefire-peace-talks-30-days-181031000853428.html](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/10/defence-chief-demands-yemen-ceasefire-peace-talks-30-days-181031000853428.html)

### Global: anti-corruption conference

The 18th International Anti-Corruption Conference brought together 1,800+ delegates from civil society, governments, multilateral agencies, and the private sector. They came from 144 countries to exchange ideas and experiences. Although there has been progress around the world, they are concerned that the foundations of democracy and the rule of law are under threat in many countries. Today, the

world is witnessing erosion of good governance, sharp increases in human rights violations and violence. The role of civil society is also being impeded by repressive governments. The rise of authoritarianism, in the guise of populist regimes, threatens all who defend social justice regardless of the regions or continents. Stealing from their own people, colluding with criminals, and distorting laws and truth to serve their own interests result in extremist movements and harsh divisions.

Pray: for improved implementation of laws and contracts to end corruption. (Proverbs 10:9)

More: [iaccseries.org/blog/the-copenhagen-declaration-stand-together-for-peace-security-and-development/](http://iaccseries.org/blog/the-copenhagen-declaration-stand-together-for-peace-security-and-development/)

### Indonesia: cause of plane crash not yet known

Indonesia has ordered inspections on all its commercial Boeing 737-Max 8 planes, after one crashed into the sea minutes after taking off from Jakarta, with 189 people on board, on 29 October. There are no known survivors. Searchers have recovered debris, bodies and personal items. The flight recorder ('black box') has now been located, which may shed light on the mystery of why it crashed, considering that it was almost brand-new. It seems that the pilot asked to return to Jakarta airport before losing contact with air traffic control. A log obtained by the BBC showed the plane had experienced technical problems on the previous day. Indonesia, a vast archipelago, is heavily reliant on air travel but many of its airlines have a poor safety record.

Pray: for God's comfort for all those bereaved and orphaned as a result of this disaster, and wisdom for those investigating the reasons for it. (2 Cor. 1:3-4)

More: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-46035609](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-46035609)

### Egypt: detention and torture

Human Rights Watch (HRW) recently published evidence suggesting that Egyptian security forces forcibly detained American taxi driver Khaled Hassan, an American-Egyptian dual citizen, and tortured him. Yet instead of supporting their call for the government to investigate, or even expressing concern, the state information service denied any wrongdoing and continues to undermine the work of HRW and similar groups. The National Security Agency seized Hassan in January and presented him to prosecutors in May. In the intervening months he was beaten, subjected to prolonged stress positions, tortured with electric shocks, and raped twice. Forensic experts reviewing photos of his wounds said they were consistent with torture. During his disappearance, Hassan's family filed many complaints with the authorities but received no information on his whereabouts. Torture and enforced disappearance are crimes under international and Egyptian law.

Pray: for an end to the torture and blanket denials by Egyptian security forces. (Proverbs 16:4)

More: [www.hrw.org/news/2018/11/01/egyptian-government-should-investigate-abuses-not-attack-messenger](http://www.hrw.org/news/2018/11/01/egyptian-government-should-investigate-abuses-not-attack-messenger)

### North Korea: worship planting in a prison toilet

It is estimated that between 50,000 and 70,000 Christians are imprisoned in horrific labour camps in North Korea. Hea Woo was held in one such camp. When she arrived, she saw a sign there saying, 'Do not try to escape, you will be killed'. She said they mercilessly kicked her and beat her. 'Death was a part of our daily life. The bodies were usually burned and the guards scattered the ashes on the path we walked down every day. I always thought, one day the other prisoners will be walking over me. God helped me to survive. He gave me a desire to evangelise among the other prisoners! He showed me whom I should approach. God used me to lead five people to faith. We met secretly, often in the toilet, because it was so disgusting that the guards never went there. I taught them Bible verses and songs. We sang noiselessly.'

Pray: for God's presence in labour camps, creating oases of heaven in their hell. (Psalm 22:11)

More: [www.opendoorsuk.org/news/stories/north-korea-180809/](http://www.opendoorsuk.org/news/stories/north-korea-180809/)

### Jordan: decline in fertility desire

49% of Jordanian mothers do not want to give birth again, according to a survey of 19,000+ households. The study results were shared on Facebook, generating mixed reactions. While some raised concern on feminist issues, most comments took a financial turn. More than often, men and women agreed that 'the challenging financial situation' is enough of a reason to stop them from having more than two children. Pray for these mothers to find the means to provide for their children (Mark 7:27). We can praise God for parents who have the heart to protect and keep them safe. Pray also that all children will receive help and assistance for their education.

Pray: for families in Jordan to allow their Heavenly Father to meet their needs. (Acts 16:31)

More: [www.windowreporter.com/ptw?day=29](http://www.windowreporter.com/ptw?day=29)

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Prayer Alert is produced in partnership with

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