

# Prayer Alert

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[www.prayer-alert.net](http://www.prayer-alert.net) | [editor@prayer-alert.net](mailto:editor@prayer-alert.net)

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A voice of one calling in the wilderness: Prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it together. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken. (Isaiah 40:3-5)

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

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

David Fletcher – Editor

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## Praise Reports

### [Netherlands: non-stop church service protects family](#)

Preachers at the Bethel Church in the Hague have been holding a round-the-clock service for over a month to stop a family of Armenian asylum seekers being deported. The family has lived in the Netherlands for nine years, integrated into the community, and made friends. But a court ruled on 25 October that they must return to Armenia. A centuries-old tradition states that authorities cannot enter a church while a service is taking place, so a service has continued since 26 October. The Tamrazyan family - mother, father, two daughters and a son - are staying inside the church, and therefore avoiding immigration authorities. The family's asylum issue is still unresolved. The Dutch 'children's pardon' grants asylum to children who have lived there for over five years while their asylum application is processed. This action also calls attention to the fate of 400 children in similar circumstances.

Praise: God for the actions of this church on behalf of the vulnerable. May they successfully achieve a pardon for the family. (Psalm 37:18)

More: [armenpress.am/eng/news/956575.html](http://armenpress.am/eng/news/956575.html)

### [‘I’m not afraid of anything now’](#)

Sami, a young boy from Aleppo, told his story during a day of filming for the SAT-7 children's show Family of Jesus. 'We came to Tartous for a vacation seven years ago, and then the war erupted. We had to remain here because our home was flattened to the ground. Many homes in Aleppo suffered the same fate. We've been here for seven years now. Thank you (SAT-7) so much for this day, I enjoyed it so much. We had so much fun. We learned about Jesus. He is with us wherever we go. He answers our prayers. We mustn't be afraid because He is with us. When we face problems, we ask Jesus to calm the storm. He can silence all the storms, even the war. I'm not afraid of anything now with Jesus.'

Praise: God for the workers bringing hope, peace, and (most of all) salvation to nations. (Psalm 131:3)

More: [www.sat7uk.org/our-work/where-we-work/](http://www.sat7uk.org/our-work/where-we-work/)

## British Isles & Ireland

### [Child homelessness at Christmas](#)

Shelter, a Christian charity ministering to vulnerable young people, says it is 'scandalous' that over 130,000 youngsters across Britain are expected to be homeless this Christmas season. Alastair Welford, the founder of Nicodemus, a Christian charity in Warwickshire with similar aims, said the figure could be an underestimate. He added, 'When you think of the number of churches in this country, if 20% of them started little homeless projects - little marginalised youth projects with some support from us - it

would be incredible'. 9,500 children will spend their Christmas in a hostel or bed and breakfast; others will be in local authority emergency accommodation. London is worst affected by child homelessness.

Pray: for more churches to help tackle homelessness. (Colossians 3:12)

More: [www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Child-homelessness-at-Christmas-forecast-scandalous-says-Christian-charity](http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Child-homelessness-at-Christmas-forecast-scandalous-says-Christian-charity)

### LGBT, 'gay pride', and the Church

As the media increasingly report LGBT and 'gay pride' issues, the Christian response has been unclear. A Christian Concern article presents six reasons why LGBT is not biblical. The authors believe the church must boldly and clearly tell the truth. They explain why the practice of different sexualities and same-sex unions are in direct conflict with God's intended purpose for marriage and sexuality, and quote many Bible passages confirming this. They remind us that 'Gay pride' conflicts with 2000 years of the Church's teaching, and changing our teaching on marriage and sexuality is something that should worry us - especially if what is being taught is false (Jeremiah 23:16-17). Also, by partaking in 'pride' events, we are 'doing an injustice to our brothers and sisters in Christ who experience same-sex attraction, and leading them to believe God blesses such intimacy'. For the full article, click the 'More' button.

Pray: for Churches to recognise unhelpful ideology and live according to God's word. (1 John 2:16)

More: [www.christianconcern.com/our-issues/same-sex-marriage/6-reasons-christians-dont-support-pride](http://www.christianconcern.com/our-issues/same-sex-marriage/6-reasons-christians-dont-support-pride)

### Ties with Israel strengthened ahead of Brexit

Britain is Israel's largest trade partner in Europe; that relationship seems to be going from strength to strength. Exports from the UK to Israel increased by 75% in the first half of 2018, with more than £7 billion in trade between the two countries in 2017. Trade minister Liam Fox, on a visit to Israel to strengthen trade relationships, told prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, 'As we leave the EU and Britain takes its place as an independent state of the World Trade Organization, we want to push our concept of free trade even further. In a world where the siren calls of protectionism are rising, two free-trade nations like ours need to make the case for global free trade because trade spreads prosperity.' Netanyahu said, 'Britain is one of our most important trading partners in the world, and we value the friendship.'

Pray: for further development of free trade that spreads prosperity, social cohesion and political stability at home and abroad. (Habakkuk 1:5)

More: [www.gov.uk/government/news/readout-of-liam-fox-meeting-with-prime-minister-netanyahu](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/readout-of-liam-fox-meeting-with-prime-minister-netanyahu)

### Foodbanks and the poor

Foodbanks expect more people than ever to need their help this Christmas. 'Cold parcels' are being given to people who have neither food nor the means to heat it. Many more may well be needed as the impact of Universal Credit rolls out. The charity Crisis tweeted, 'Dealing with local authority homeless decisions, where one reason to find someone "non-priority" is the fact they have shown capacity and ability to even make the application. Frustratingly bizarre logic. "Your application would have been stronger had you been unable to make it".' Someone replied, 'We see exactly the same thing with disability benefit assessments. If you turn up for assessment and/or an appeal hearing, they find you have no problems with mobility. If you don't turn up, they refuse your claim.' Meanwhile, in one of the richest countries in the world, it is only charity that prevents some people starving.

Pray: for fundamental changes that will prevent hunger and injustice. (Psalm 140:12)

More: [www.ekkleisia.co.uk/node/27296](http://www.ekkleisia.co.uk/node/27296)

### Confident Christianity conference

A recent Confident Christianity conference in Dundee's Central Baptist Church saw around three hundred people considering how to share the gospel in our age of tough questions. Pastor Jim Turrent started proceedings with a call for the Church to embrace the Biblical call to unashamed proclamation. He suggested that lack of confidence in the gospel is the main factor inhibiting our effective witness today. Evangelists suggested how to open up deeper, more fruitful conversations around Jesus and the gospels, and Dr Ben Thomas gave his testimony of conversion to Christ when he was sharing his life with his same-sex partner. He explained that deep wrestling with scripture led him to conclude that this could not continue, and therefore he has chosen a single, celibate life. Reactions to the conference were positive. Organisers are praying that its fruit will be more 'Confident Christians', because they are the key to the re-evangelisation of Scotland and the North.

Pray: for God to equip His Church to reach this generation of 'not yet Christians'. (Romans 10:14)

More: [evangelicalfocus.com/cities/4018/solas\\_cpc\\_confident\\_christianity\\_conference\\_dundee\\_scotland](http://evangelicalfocus.com/cities/4018/solas_cpc_confident_christianity_conference_dundee_scotland)

### Hope for the countryside

Chronic food poverty exists in Britain, even in rural communities, exacerbated by higher food, transport, and fuel costs. Research shows that these additional costs average £3,000 per year – the 'premium' for living in rural areas. Pray for churches both to help and speak up for those without sufficient income to feed themselves or their families (see [endhungeruk.org](http://endhungeruk.org)). Village primary schools are often at the heart of their communities, but many face closure due to falling numbers. A Church of England summit took place in November to consider how to deal with this problem, especially as it affects the CofE's 2,000 rural schools. Pray that the solutions proposed will be effective in securing a future for village schools and in providing focuses for community life.

Pray: that God will powerfully use churches in rural communities to bring fresh awareness of the meaning of Christmas this month. (John 1:14)

More: [www.worldprayer.org.uk/call-to-action/hope-for-the-countryside](http://www.worldprayer.org.uk/call-to-action/hope-for-the-countryside)

### UK justice systems

Part of a declaration by Passion for the Nation: 'Father, We thank You for the call on the UK to display Your righteousness and justice. We praise You for our heritage of godly justice, and we decree, this is a time for a reawakening of Kingdom values within

our justice system. May the God-given sovereignty and order of governmental authority for this nation, judicial and legislative, be restored for the United Kingdom. In the Name of Jesus, we speak godly design over every aspect of the Brexit settlement in relation to the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice, Criminal Justice, Civil Law and Legal Services and for Heaven's schedule in every aspect of the transitional period, so that no plan of man or of the enemy will alter either Your timing or Your purpose.'

Pray: for decisions made at this time to be according to God's purposes and plans. (Proverbs 16:3)

More: [mailchi.mp/776b2833d4bf/emergency-debate-on-abortion-in-parliament-today-1661097?e=be117c6125](mailto:mailchi.mp/776b2833d4bf/emergency-debate-on-abortion-in-parliament-today-1661097?e=be117c6125)

### Archbishop's wife speaks about AIDS

On 1 December, to mark World AIDS Day, Margaret Sentamu, wife of the Archbishop of York, joined NHS staff from York's sexual health services and charity Yorkshire MESMAC to highlight the importance of taking a HIV test. Demonstrating how simple it can be, Margaret took a finger prick test where the result can be given within twenty minutes. She said: 'It's important to raise awareness - not just for one day, but all year round - of the importance of getting tested. There have been fantastic advances in medication which means people can now live a completely normal life, particularly when they get an early diagnosis.' Margaret recalled the devastating impact of losing family and friends to AIDS in her home country of Uganda. While the HIV epidemic is slowing in the UK, nearly half of people who test positive are finding out they have HIV very late, meaning that it virus may already have damaged their health permanently. Over 100,000 people live with HIV, and around a quarter of them don't know they're HIV positive.

Pray: that Margaret's example will spur many to take this relatively simple, but potentially life-changing, test. (3 John 2)

More: [www.archbishopofyork.org/news/news-2018/taking-test-world-aids-day](http://www.archbishopofyork.org/news/news-2018/taking-test-world-aids-day)

## Europe

### Poland: climate change conference

Participants at the UN climate talks in Poland have discussed how they will keep promises made in 2015 to reduce their climate footprint by 2020. Global warming occurs when carbon dioxide and methane emissions increase, trapping solar energy. As more gases enter the atmosphere, earth's temperature rises; changing the timing and length of seasons and the amount and frequency of rainfall - rising sea levels, flooding, droughts and a range of ecosystem changes affecting life on earth. Two years ago, research found ([see https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/mar/21/eat-less-meat-vegetarianism-dangerous-global-warming](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/mar/21/eat-less-meat-vegetarianism-dangerous-global-warming)) that widespread adoption of vegetarian diets would cut food-related emissions by 63%. There are 3.6 billion sheep, cattle, goats and buffalo on the planet, 50% more than fifty years ago. Methane from their digestive systems is the single biggest human-related source of greenhouse gas. This is a great concern to the livestock industry worldwide. [See also http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/media/chap-2-eng.pdf](http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/media/chap-2-eng.pdf)

Pray: for governments to address the need to balance agriculture and methane emissions. (James 3:13)

More: [unfccc.int/katowice](http://unfccc.int/katowice)

### France: deep-rooted anger

In Florian Dou's shopping cart there was a packet of sausages and not much else. He had spent all his salary ten days before the end of the month. To survive when the money runs out before the next payday is a monthly challenge for him and many others in provincial French towns. Mr Dou was angry, and used what money he had left to drive 250 miles to join fiery protests in Paris, where police moved in with teargas, water cannon and rubber bullets against those protesting against fuel tax and price rises. Dou vowed the protesters are not going anywhere: [see https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/02/world/europe/france-yellow-vest-protests.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/02/world/europe/france-yellow-vest-protests.html) The gilets jaunes ('yellow vests') protests have come to embody widespread disillusionment with President Macron and are gaining intensity. Macron has now abandoned fuel tax increases. Some protesters said his surrender came too late, and does nothing to quell the mounting anger at a government they consider out of touch with the problems of ordinary people.

Pray: for God to give Macron the insight needed to address the rising inequalities in people's lives and the strategy to calm the unrest. (1 Kings 3:28b)

More: [www.france24.com/en/20181205-france-macron-abandons-fuel-tax-hike-fears-violence-new-yellow-vest-protests](http://www.france24.com/en/20181205-france-macron-abandons-fuel-tax-hike-fears-violence-new-yellow-vest-protests)

## Worldwide

### Mexico/USA: faith leaders to take action

On 10 December over two hundred faith leaders from different traditions will converge on the US-Mexico border in support of the migrant caravans and all those who seek refuge in the US. The event, organised by a Quaker organisation which has worked with migrants and refugees for over a hundred years, will begin a nation-wide week of mass action called Love Knows No Borders, between Human Rights Day (10 December) and International Migrants' Day (18 December). Participants are calling on the US government to end the detention and deportation of immigrants, respect the human right to migrate, and end the militarisation of border communities. A volunteer helping the migrants said, 'I met a Mexican family so scared for their lives that they took the next bus out of town, leaving everything else behind.' The majority of people were fleeing violence or wanting to earn enough to care for their children. [See https://www.afsc.org/blogs/news-and-commentary/what-i-learned-helping-migrants-us-mexico-border](https://www.afsc.org/blogs/news-and-commentary/what-i-learned-helping-migrants-us-mexico-border)

Pray: for this moral witness to inspire all Americans to stand with those seeking safety. (Psalm 72:4)

More: [www.ekkleisia.co.uk/node/27320](http://www.ekkleisia.co.uk/node/27320)

### Pray for Israel

The precarious situation with Iran and Hezbollah on Israel's northern border has intensified greatly recently ([see](#)). The risk of an all-out war in that area was one reason why prime minister Netanyahu pushed for a cease-fire in the south with Hamas in Gaza. Ask God to give the Israeli air force all it needs to defend the nation. Pray that Israel may obtain accurate, actionable intelligence

concerning all their enemies' plans, and that it will know how to deal with the Russian equipment in Syria (eg anti-aircraft missiles). Pray for God to infuse the IDF soldiers along the Syrian border with alertness, wisdom, and courage. Ask Him also to impart insight to all security leaders in Israel - especially Benjamin Netanyahu, who is currently both prime minister and defence minister.

Pray: for God to encourage the Israelis to recognise God's hand of protection through all these years of low-level warfare. Also ask God to bless and direct the leaders of Israel's neighbours into regional paths of reconciliation. (Psalm 121:4)

More: [mailchi.mp/ifi/friday-prayer-points-date\\_here-2cicawndh3-315641?e=209798d81f](mailto:mailchi.mp/ifi/friday-prayer-points-date_here-2cicawndh3-315641?e=209798d81f)

### Yemen: peace talks begin

On 6 December, delegations from both the Yemeni government and the Houthi rebels began peace talks near Stockholm. Abdullah al-Alimi, a representative of the Yemeni government, tweeted that the conference was 'a true opportunity for peace'. Mohamed Abdelsalam, who heads the Houthi delegation, promised to 'spare no effort to make a success of the talks'. Pray for God to quell the scepticism of observers. Pray for the Yemeni government to resist launching an all-out attack on the key port city of Hodaydah, currently controlled by the rebels. The talks began encouragingly, with an agreement to exchange 5,000 prisoners: [see https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/06/world/middleeast/yemen-peace-talks.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/06/world/middleeast/yemen-peace-talks.html)

Pray: for the positive words of Alimi and Abdelsalam to become a reality. (1 Chronicles 16:12)

More: [www.forces.net/news/world/un-peace-talks-yemen-begin](http://www.forces.net/news/world/un-peace-talks-yemen-begin)

### Persecution of minority Christian women

Five new reports - about Egypt, Ethiopia, Iraq, Colombia and the Central African Republic - unmask the multiple domestic, societal and state dynamics used in the persecution of Christian women and girls in each country. When viewed individually, the tactics used - from subtle discrimination surrounding access to education, through to extreme violence - appear unrelated. But now each of these reports, by Open Doors International, catalogues the inter-related web of dynamics and tactics, and highlights the 'domino' impact of simultaneous persecuting events. The resulting picture is akin to the anguish caused by a thousand paper cuts, plus (all too often) much deeper wounds. While men often face much more obvious and public forms of pressure and persecution for their faith, women's suffering is often in daily life. For further information from these reports, click the 'More' button.

Pray: for liberty and religious freedom for all women who experience lifelong 'invisible' hardships. (Psalm 119:45)

More: [www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/11/persecution-of-minority-christian-women-hidden-complex-and-interwoven-with-everyday-discrimination/](http://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/11/persecution-of-minority-christian-women-hidden-complex-and-interwoven-with-everyday-discrimination/)

### USA: Trump criticised over Saudi arms sales

Politicians are challenging Donald Trump's relationship with Saudi Arabia. Senator Elizabeth Warren said that the president has refused to halt weapons sales because he is more interested in appeasing US defence contractors than in holding the Saudis accountable for Jamal Khashoggi's murder or for thousands of Yemeni civilians killed by those weapons. Senator Bernie Sanders is equally critical of Trump's relationship with the Saudis, citing it as an example of his liking of foreign dictators. The Senate voted 63-37 to run with Sanders' resolution to force Trump to end US support for the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen. That same day, it emerged that Riyadh had confirmed a \$15 billion deal with defence contractor Lockheed Martin for a missile defence system. One observer said Trump's determination to preserve Saudi arms sales was an example of the 'stranglehold of defence contractors on our military policy'.

Pray: for defence contractors and lobbyists working for foreign rulers not to be accepted any longer in Washington's foreign policy establishment. (Job 14:20)

More: [www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/11/intel-saudi-arabia-problems-boost-democratic-president.html](http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/11/intel-saudi-arabia-problems-boost-democratic-president.html)

### Turkey: Christian persecution

The high degree of Turkey's religious nationalism places incredible pressure on Christians. The government doesn't target Christians directly, but its nationalistic bias leaves little room for Christians to preach the gospel, which is considered an opposing message. Converts from Islam face social opposition, and often lead double lives to keep their faith hidden from family and community. If found out, they might be threatened with divorce and loss of inheritance rights, and all Christians face employment discrimination. Pray for Muslim-background converts to minister graciously and wisely to their families, especially if they are labelled and treated as traitors. Pray for evangelist David Byle who was refused re-entry into Turkey to be with his family. He had lived and preached there for 19 years and had experienced increasing harassment. [See https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/11/turkey-refuses-entry-to-n-american-christian-evangelist/](https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/11/turkey-refuses-entry-to-n-american-christian-evangelist/)

Pray: for God to strengthen those facing increased Islamic influence and discrimination. (Psalm 9:9)

More: [www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/world-watch-list/turkey/](http://www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/world-watch-list/turkey/)

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