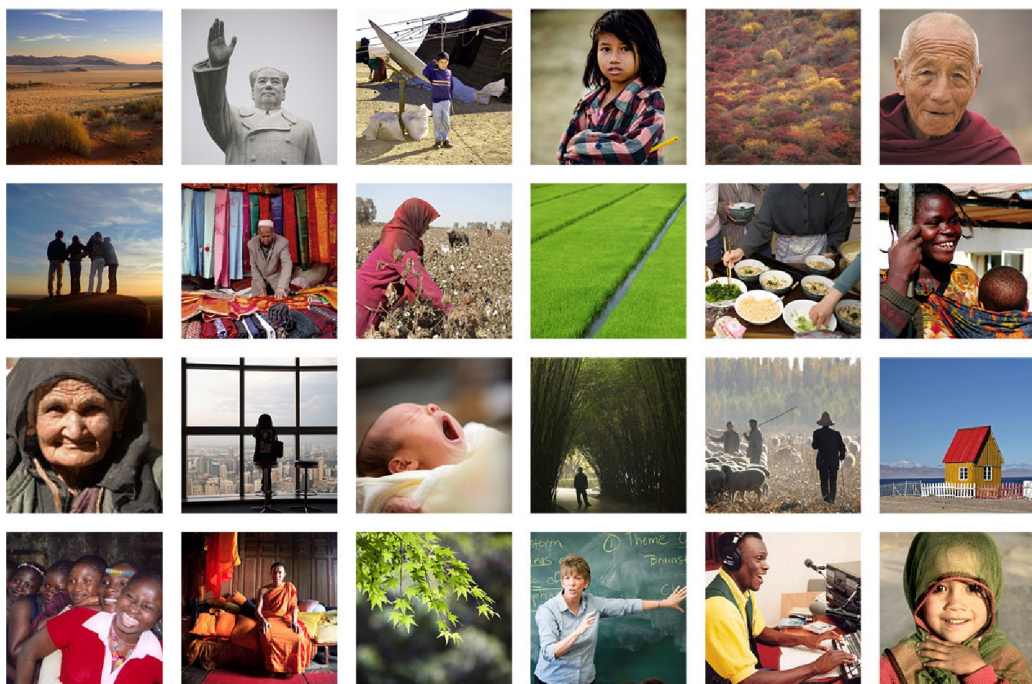




World Prayer News

A guide to help you pray for people around the world

July - August 2020



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Why should we pray?

When you come to think about it, prayer is rather strange. Let me explain myself, in case I'm coming across as slightly (or even, very) heretical. God is all knowing and all powerful, he doesn't actually need us to ask him about situations before he can act on them. I mean, it's not as though he didn't know that there was a global pandemic until someone in Basingstoke mentioned it in their prayers. We are incredibly limited in our understanding of what is going on in the world and its real needs compared to God, so why should we pray?

Let me give a few reasons.

The first thing is that the act of praying changes us. Real prayer doesn't simply involve us presenting God with a list of things that we want him to do. Prayer involves us meditating on the character of God, praising him for who he is, thanking him for what he has done as well as presenting our requests to him. Prayer to the Father, in the name of the Son, empowered and guided by the Spirit brings us to the heart of the Trinitarian mystery. You can't engage with God like this and not be shaped for the better by your encounter. It's also true that as we bring the

needs of our brothers and sisters around the world to him that our love and concern for them grows. You are unlikely to meet the people that you pray for when you spend time praying though this directory; however, as you pray, their concerns become your concerns and your love for them is deepened.

The amazing thing about prayer is that God does actually answer our prayers. To my mind, the most amazing thing in Scripture is the way that the omniscient, omnipotent God of the Bible involves people in the things he is doing. He called Adam and Eve to look after the Garden, worked through Israel and then commissioned the church to take the message of salvation to the world. It would have been far easier and far more effective for God to do this himself, but he loves us so much that he wants us to be involved in what he is doing. He doesn't need us; he wants us and he wants to hear our prayers. It's a mystery, but it is truly remarkable.

So, let's pray.

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Vol 73 No 4

Editor: Kate Hodge

The annual cost including postage for copies sent to the same address:

One copy per issue

£6.00 UK only

£9.00 Europe

£13.00 Rest of world

All subscriptions should be addressed to:

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Telephone: 01926 487755 Email: info@globalconnections.org.uk
Registered in England & Wales as Evangelical Mission Association
Company number 3886596 | Charity number 1081966

Pray for Northern Africa and the Middle East



1. Iraq

Since the 2003 invasion of Iraq the number of Christians living there has plummeted. Please pray for peace and political stability in Iraq. Please pray that Christians and those of other vulnerable communities will be treated and protected equally in society. Please pray that Iraqi Christians will draw comfort and courage from their relationship with God, and that they will be witnesses of the hope found in Christ and God's love in difficult and challenging times. **(Middle East Concern)**

2. Middle East

Pray for stamina and grace as our team builds language skills and cultural understanding; wisdom and insight for local churches, agencies and their leaders; and theological and practical training to equip leaders to build Christ's Church in unsettled and sometimes volatile circumstances. **(SIM)**

3. Arab World

Please pray for workers in the Arab world as they try to keep in communication with people around them who they have got to know and developed a relationship with. Ask God to give them creativity in how to communicate in the best way with people during lockdown. Some days go well, and on other days it is a struggle. Ask the Holy Spirit to give workers grace and help them to make the most of this time until restrictions ease. May they be ready for what God has for them. **(AWM-Pioneers)**

4. Turkey

Please pray for Christians in Turkey following an increase in attacks on church buildings and threats against Christians and minorities. The incidents, reported by SAT-7 TÜRK's Current affairs programmes, include an arson attempt on an Armenian church in Istanbul and death threats against people connected to the Hrant Dink Foundation. **(SAT-7)**

5. Algeria

The church has been growing significantly in Algeria since the 1990's. It has faced cycles of government led persecution stemming from an Ordinance enacted in 2006. The latest cycle commenced in late 2017. Numerous churches across Algeria affiliated with the Église Protestante d'Algérie, the legally recognised umbrella organisation of Protestant churches, have been closed. Please pray for the church to stand strong and grow closer to God under this persecution. Please pray for the government to cease church closures and to permit churches that have been closed to reopen and function. Please pray for the church to bear witness across society to God's love and the Good News of Jesus Christ. **(Middle East Concern)**

Pray for Europe



6. Eastern Europe

Please pray for TEN's Covid-19 Relief Fund, set up to assist partners in Eastern Europe facing serious economic consequences as a result of the closure of businesses, restricted travel and loss of employment affecting church members. Partners are bringing food to the hungry and using social media and online meetings to stay in touch with their communities. Learn more at www.ten-uk.org. **(Transform Europe Network)**

7. Europe

As governments across Europe loosen regulations due to the pandemic, please pray for wisdom for our workers. After lockdown many will be anxious to reconnect with others and return to face to face ministry where possible. Ask the Lord to give us all discernment as to how this should be handled in each of our unique situations. **(ECM)**

8. United Kingdom

Pray for final-year students who face the disappointment of having no graduation or exams, and now look for jobs in an uncertain climate. Pray that they're reminded of the sovereignty of the Lord. Pray also for the many students who are young in faith, haven't yet found a church and have returned to unbelieving homes. Let's pray that they quickly grow in their love of God and can connect with other believers. **(UCCF)**

9. United Kingdom

Galeed House volunteers have the privilege of building friendships with adults and children from many nations who have settled in Sheffield, UK. Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Somalian, Eritrean, Slovakian-Roma to name a few. The regulars find some of their social, educational and spiritual needs are being met. For example, one of our volunteers has maintained daily contact by phone with an elderly and lonely widow from Pakistan who is desperately lonely in lockdown. Activities have been severely limited by the Covid-19 pandemic. But some contact is maintained through WhatsApp groups, visiting from the street side, and craft activities and postcards sent to the children. Ask God to keep opening the hearts of those who have experienced the love and truth of Jesus through Galeed House volunteers. **(The DATIC Trust)**

10. Europe and worldwide

Please pray for Christian medical and nursing staff who are on the frontline of the global Covid-19 pandemic. Pray they have the opportunity not only to meet physical and mental health needs but to share of the love of Christ with people who are scared, vulnerable and sick. **(Christian Medical Fellowship)**

Pray for Sub-Saharan Africa



11. Tanzania

Neema Crafts, pioneered and led by Church Mission Society mission partners in Iringa, Tanzania, has joined the worldwide fight against Covid-19 by halting production of their normal popular craft items to focus on manufacturing PPE to equip the country's hospitals, medical centres and key frontline workers. Staffed exclusively by men and women with disabilities including deaf and physically disabled people, the Neema Crafts Centre officially closed its cafe and halted production in its workshops at the beginning of April and set to work doing what they can to protect the lives of frontline workers. Pray for the Neema team as they produce 800 masks, 120 face shields and 50 gowns per week from the safety of their own homes. **(Church Mission Society)**

12. Chad

Please pray for the WEC workers in Chad. There are a few workers who have health issues at this time. The language centre remains closed, but some workers are concentrating on language study. Please pray specifically for the children of a family there: that they will make friends with their neighbours. The branch council also have decisions to make about the Learning Centre following the death of a Chadian co-worker, so please pray that they would have wisdom and peace from the Lord in that task. **(WEC)**

14. Malawi

Pray for the grace of God to help the health clinic construction to be completed and to get it registered with the Malawi Medical Council so that the doors can be opened by July. Pray for the welders to complete the contract for the hand washing stand carefully and in good time. Pray for the local chiefs to mobilise the communities to use and maintain

the washstands. Pray for wisdom for our staff as they set up the washstands in strategic places around Salima town. **(Starfish Malawi)**

15. DR Congo

Give thanks that God has enabled our partners to respond swiftly to the Covid-19 pandemic. Let's especially thank him for LVLE's initiative, setting up public handwashing stations in Goma. The initiative is the outcome of a remarkable and unexpected collaboration between LVLE, civic authorities, local residents and street-living children - please pray for strong communication and positive relationships. And let's pray that God will extend this work and use it to save lives. **(Bethany Children's Trust)**

16. Central African Republic

Thank God that print and audio Scriptures can continue to reach people in the Central African Republic even as travel is restricted and progress in Bible translation is slowed down because of the pandemic! Please pray for funding and IT improvements which are now crucial in this war-torn country. This will facilitate Scripture Engagement work in several languages, and enable translators to work remotely with consultants in Europe and the USA to keep the seven ongoing New Testament translations moving towards completion. Pray for peace and security to be established across the country. **(SIL)**

13. Zambia

Give thanks for our Zambian partners, who provide education and welfare support in impoverished rural communities. Pray for them as they distribute support to vulnerable families during the current crisis. **(Global Care)**

Pray for the Americas



17. El Salvador

Many have been gravely affected by the storms and floods that took place in El Salvador last year. Pray for local organisations and churches who are working to provide help to those who suffered losses in the disasters. Salvadorians have also been suffering from hunger during the Covid-19 lockdown. Pray that organisations and local believers will be able to bring vital resources and comfort to those who are suffering. Pray for the unstable political situation and for those who have lost their jobs due to the country's economic struggles caused by the quarantine. May God be glorified, even in the midst of the most difficult struggles. **(Operation Mobilisation)**

18. Bolivia

Pray for righteousness and the implementation of true justice in a nation where the issue of corruption looms large and the tendency to manipulation by those in power is prominent. Pray for the church, where theological and denominational differences can be barriers to effective gospel proclamation. Pray also for a wholesale rejection of prosperity theology, which remains prominent, corrosive and a source of great confusion. The political upheaval in 2019 has only deepened some of the existing ethnic divisions in the country. Pray for unity. **(Latin Link)**

19. Ecuador

Ecuador is known as the 'ground zero' of the coronavirus for South America. The fall in the price of oil, the restrictions on banana exports and the closure of Ecuador to foreign tourism have radically affected the economy. We are working with local churches and

organisations to provide basic food and supplies to those most affected and helping our media partners to offer health advice and counselling on the radio and social media. With people nervous to connect with medical services for vaccinations, there is also a rise in other diseases such as dengue fever and measles. Pray for the Church in Ecuador to respond with compassion by reaching out in the name of Jesus in practical ways.

(Reach Beyond)

20. Honduras

Many more people are begging on the streets and food is being stolen from people as they leave supermarkets. Up to 80 per cent of Hondurans have lost their jobs due to lockdown, many have gone hungry and it is likely most children's education has suffered greatly during this time due to lack of, for example, internet access or stationery. Pray for God's grace on this impossibly difficult time families are facing.

(Church Mission Society)

21. Chile

The city of Santiago has been through a difficult year. Social unrest resulting in rioting and street violence was followed by the coronavirus lockdown. Pray for the Centre for Pastoral Studies, an Anglican training college. While restrictions on movements and gatherings caused disruption, we are thankful that technology has meant that no student has had to miss any classes. Please pray for the students: that the interruptions to their courses would have led to a renewed and deeper dependence on the Lord in prayer that will continue as things start to return to normal. **(Crosslinks)**

Pray for Southern and Central Asia



22. India

There are reports of many more suicides in India than usual due to the pandemic. Please pray for compassion for our ministry partner, JKPS, as they support people not just practically but also emotionally and spiritually. **(WorldShare)**

23. Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan in Central Asia has thankfully not been greatly affected by the coronavirus crisis. Many of the people living there are poor and long for genuine democratic freedoms and a better quality of life. It is a predominantly Muslim nation. The vast majority of Kazakhs are unreached with the good news and there is a great need for more gospel workers to go there. Encouragingly, new outreach initiatives are beginning to bear fruit and house church networks are increasing. Let's ask the Lord for more gospel workers in Kazakhstan and for the good news of Jesus to spread far and wide, transforming Muslim communities with the love of Christ. **(Frontiers)**

24. Pakistan

Zarephath Bible Seminary was established to train Pakistani Christians to become Christ-like servant leaders. Please pray for this initiative and its students facing many challenges in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic — food shortages, unemployment and inadequate healthcare facilities. **(Crosslinks)**

25. North Caucasus

Pray for Turkish Meskhitins - deported, expelled, and unreached. They fled to Georgia first, then under Stalin were deported to Uzbekistan, and then expelled to Kabardino-Balkaria and other republics of the Northern Caucasus. They mainly 'work the land'. They profess Islam. They are unreached - with very few evangelical believers, and no known churches. Please pray for new missionaries to go to the North Caucasus, so that the Turkish Meskhitins will find 'acceptance and belonging' through believing in Christ and experiencing church fellowship. **(People International)**

26. India

An exciting new pilot project using WhatsApp has been launched in India. Short encouraging audio messages that address the Covid-19 situation were initially sent out to three groups, each made up of 260 recipients. The audio was produced in five languages: English, Tamil, Kannada, Marathi and Hindi. Within just two weeks these messages of hope were being listened to by thousands of people, far exceeding the earlier estimates. Pray that this innovative project may expand and that the gospel will be taken to unreached places. **(Reach Beyond)**

Pray for Eastern Asia and Oceania



27. Cambodia

The IFES movement in Cambodia – SONOKO, ask us to pray with them. “Praise God that the staff and students have encouraged one another by praying together and sharing the word of God online despite the Covid-19 pandemic. As all the schools have been closed since last March, the students went back to their home town. Most of them are new believers and the only Christian in their families and face various spiritual pressures. Pray that God protects their faith and they can boldly share the gospel with their families.” (IFES)

28. Philippines

“We don’t have food on the table,” read one distressed message from a pedicab driver living near the Quezon City dump. As day labourers, no work means no pay. Emmanuel International Philippines is partnering with churches in the informal settlements of squatters around the city dump. Having been in lockdown since the start of Covid-19 in mid-March, as the Philippines starts to slowly lift restrictions, El Philippines has begun distributing food packages in these Quezon City dump settlements. The food packages are going not only to church member families but also to a neighbouring family of each church member. In this way, the churches are demonstrating practically the message of hope and life in Jesus’ gift of love.

(Emmanuel International)

29. Myanmar

Pray for an end to the underinvestment and neglect of families from ethnic minority states, pray for better access to infrastructure and necessities such as electricity and clean water for families supported through our Myanmar project. (Global Care)

30. Japan

Life in a Japanese company can be incredibly demanding, largely due to Japan’s group-oriented culture in which people feel bound by the expectations of their peers. Overworking is a serious problem in Japan; workers often feel obliged to work unsocial hours and taking annual leave, although permitted on paper, is seen as shameful and often avoided. Thankfully, it would appear that some companies are gradually beginning to change, but there is still a long way to go. Long working hours make it difficult for workers to find time for church or evangelistic events. Praise God for the Christians God has placed in these companies and also that the issue of overwork is starting to be addressed by the government and society as a whole. Please pray for working Christians to be effective witnesses to their colleagues and also that unhealthy expectations in the workplace will change, leading to a healthier balance between work and leisure time. (Japan Christian Link)

31. Solomon Islands

SIU-CF Solomon Islands, one of the new Christian student movements which affiliated to IFES in July 2019, have been hit hard by recent events. Not by Covid-19 itself, which has not touched their islands, but by preventative lockdown, university closures and very slow, expensive and unreliable internet connectivity. Student ministry is in ‘hibernation’, so please pray that God will grant wisdom to movement leaders as they seek to restart ministry. (IFES)