

# PRAYER ALERT...

An initiative of the Prayer Forum of the British Isles & Ireland  
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## BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

### ■ Mercy killers to face the full rigour of criminal law, says DPP

Mercy killers will face the full rigours of the criminal law under guidelines announced Thursday by the Director of Public Prosecutions. But people who answer a loved one's request to assist them in committing suicide are unlikely to be prosecuted, Keir Starmer said. He emphasised that the policy did not cover so-called mercy killing, nor murder or manslaughter. Mr Starmer said: 'Assisted suicide involves assisting the victim to take his or her own life. Someone who takes the life of another undertakes a very different act and may well be liable to a charge of murder or manslaughter.' He indicated that the decision on whether a prosecution is brought or not will now focus on the circumstances and motivation of the person who helped someone to die rather than on the individual who died.

**Pray:** [that these new guidelines will not lead to confusion but clarity over this emotive subject. \(Ps.102:24\)](#)

**More:** <http://business.timesonline.co.uk/tol/business/law/article7040138.ece>

### ■ Encourage gay couples to adopt, says top Tory

The Shadow Secretary of State for Environment said a Conservative Government would legislate to promote gay equality and should back homosexual 'rights' because support for homosexual equality is 'an essential element of modern conservatism'. He also said gay couples should be encouraged to adopt children adding there was no contradiction between David Cameron's outspoken support for marriage and his conversion to the homosexual equality agenda. He thought a future Tory government's legislation to promote 'gay equality' could involve bringing in beefed-up laws on homophobic bullying and hate crimes and hinted the Church was wrong to oppose gay marriage and should support gay adoption. Environment spokesman Mr Herbert, one of a handful of openly gay Tory MP's said, 'Whether it is given by God or set by nature homosexuality isn't nurtured by doting mothers or weak fathers. Research by theology think tank indicates voters with a religious faith could determine the outcome of the general election. (See: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/conservatives.cannot.afford.to.lose.christian.support.says.theos/25349.htm>)

**Pray:** [for Christians in our Government to speak out boldly their beliefs and for God's people to vote as His Spirit leads. \(Pr.8:15-17\)](#)

**More:** <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1251764/Nick-Herbert-Tory-stance-gays-changed.html>

### ■ Church launches Government attack

The Roman Catholic Church in Scotland has accused the Labour Government of conducting a 'systematic and unrelenting attack on family values'. The attack came as Scottish Secretary Jim Murphy, a practising Catholic, claimed religious faith had a role in British politics. Mr Murphy said in a lecture that Labour best represented people of faith. But Scotland's most senior Roman Catholic accused the Government of 'undermining religious freedom'. A spokesman for the Scottish National Party said Mr Murphy was guilty of 'crude electioneering' by trying to 'corner the market regarding people's faith'. Mr Murphy focused on the key part that 'values voters' can play in the election when he delivered the Progress lecture in London on Tuesday evening. He argued that faith values have always been 'at the very foundations of the Labour Party'. His

comments were in contrast to the stated attitude of former Labour Communications Chief Alastair Campbell who famously said: 'We don't do God'.

**Pray:** for politicians of all parties to recognise God's hand in all aspects of our lives. (Ps.37:30-31)

**More:** <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/muddled-sex-education-plans-pass-in-commons/>

#### ■ **Muddled' sex education plans passed in Commons**

The Government's controversial sex education plans were forced through the Commons, but critics slammed a faith schools amendment as an 'incoherent muddle'. Labour used its control of the chamber to rush the Children, Schools and Families Bill through, but the Tories and the Lib Dems opposed it as centralising and bureaucratic. Under the Bill, sex education will become part of the national curriculum and control over the content of lessons will be taken away from school governors and given to Whitehall officials. All publicly-funded schools will be forced to teach children how to access contraception and abortion services. The schools will also be forced to teach children that unmarried unions are equal to marriage. But the Government, concerned about a backlash from faith schools, amended its own proposals to say that while faith schools must teach these things, they may do so 'in a way' that reflects their religious convictions.

**Pray:** that this rushed Bill will not lead to confusion but that God's righteous ways would overrule. (Ps.145:17)

**More:** <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/muddled-sex-education-plans-pass-in-commons/>

#### ■ **Bishop offers salvation over Facebook**

For those in need of a prayer this Lent, a British bishop is offering salvation via an unusual source – Facebook. Bishop Robert Evens, of Crediton, Devon, also known as Bishop Bob, has invited anyone in need of prayer to send in their requests to him this Lent, by email or text or through the social networking website. A Facebook page has been set up to receive prayers through people which the Rt Rev Evens has committed to pray, every day until Saturday, March 13, when he will be in Exeter Cathedral offering up all the prayers he has received. He can be joined there for two hours in silent prayer from 11.30am to 1.30pm. Bishop Evens said: 'Prayer is hugely important for many people whether they are churchgoers or not'. By using social media the bishop hopes to make prayer more accessible to the millions of people who use social networking sites.

**Pray:** that Bishop Robert's idea will be of help to many including those new to prayer. (Jas.5:16)

**More:** <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/facebook/7297722/Bishop-offers-salvation-over-Facebook.html>

#### ■ **Christian students pray for courage and commit to activism**

Christian students from across Britain have prayed for courage to engage in activism and mission at the end of a weekend focused on living out faith. This annual conference of the Student Christian Movement (SCM) achieved its highest turnout in well over a decade, reflecting the recent revival of student activism. The event included speakers and workshops exploring 'spirituality, vocation, activism and mission'. Topics varied from non-violent direct action and interfaith campaigning to the nature of mission and what activists can learn from Jesus' example. 'Give us courage and strength when we feel overwhelmed by the tasks before us,' prayed the students in their closing worship last Saturday (21 February), which was also the worldwide Universal Day of Prayer for Students. They asked that God would 'strengthen us in our work upholding justice, peace and fullness of life for the whole of God's creation'.

**Pray:** that God will lead these students throughout their lives and strengthen them in their faith. (Zec.10:12)

**More:** <http://www.ekkleisia.co.uk/node/11320>

#### ■ **Bishop outlines Fresh Expressions vision**

Pioneering forms of church life taking shape as part of the Anglican/Methodist Fresh Expressions initiative are powering forward, Bishop Graham Cray told Anglican General Synod last week. Bishop Cray, the project's leader, said the Expressions – varying from a Cornwall surfing outreach to churches in pubs – are developing 'imagination', resources and a 'platform of experience'. Bishop Cray admitted that the work can be 'isolating' and 'costly in that the new form of church might not be the sort which has made the pioneer thrive personally before'. The tests of a project are not that it looks 'more and more like a local parish congregation'. Instead they would be 'depth of understanding', the 'practice of prayer', the 'ministry of the sacraments' and 'mature local leadership beginning to emerge'.

**Pray:** that the Church would continue exploring fresh ways to draw others closer to God and worshipping Him. (Ps.86:9)

**More:** <http://www.freshexpressions.org.uk/>

## EUROPE

#### ■ **Bulgaria: Missionaries needed**

Only a little over two percent of Bulgaria's population are evangelical believers. Perhaps it's not surprising that Bulgaria is often overlooked. Bulgarians are generally very open to new ideas and to the Gospel. One Greater Europe Mission (GEM) missionary who is serving in Bulgaria says, 'This is an incredibly crucial time right now in Bulgaria. All of the kids between ages 15 and 25 are really desiring to follow something, but they have no idea what to follow.' According to a recent census, over 80% of Bulgarians consider themselves part of the Orthodox Church. But GEM missionaries say those who call themselves Orthodox are really merely nominal. Bulgaria is also home for many ethnic and immigrant Muslims. Bulgarian believers are excited to spread the Gospel. Unfortunately, right now there simply are not enough believers to reach the masses of Bulgaria.

**Pray:** for this country whose rich harvest is so easily forgotten that God would send more missionaries into the harvest field. (Mt.9:38)

**More:** <http://www.mnnonline.org/article/13880>

### ■ **Russia: Evangelical Christians at risk from Government**

Evangelical Christians may be at risk in Russia as Orthodoxy gains more and more governmental favour. The Liberty of Conscience Institute recently discovered that the Russian government is cosyng up to the Russian Orthodox Church in ways that may inhibit religious freedom. Joel Griffith of Slavic Gospel Association says there is reason to be concerned. 'Russia's president has taken the initiative to permanently assign an orthodox priest to army units and they also want to introduce religious education classes into state schools.' The more power the Orthodox Church gains, the more risk there is to the religious freedom of all minority religions, not the least Evangelical Christianity. Griffith says history proves that evangelical Christians may well be targeted if these things are implemented. A sizeable evangelical movement could be viewed as an encroachment on Orthodox territory. If this is the case, the evangelical movement could be very much hindered in Russia.

**Pray:** for the Evangelical Church of Russia that God would protect it and allow religious freedom. (Ep.4:16)

**More:** [http://ausprayernet.org.au/newsletter/DisplayNewsletter.php?e\\_id=0000001893#st2](http://ausprayernet.org.au/newsletter/DisplayNewsletter.php?e_id=0000001893#st2)

## WORLDWIDE

### ■ **Iraq: Christians targeted and killed in Mosul**

Open Doors reported up to fifty Christian families having left Mosul in the last few days in an attempt to escape bloodshed in Mosul, one of the most violent cities in Iraq. They request prayer for Christians who are being targeted and killed inside their own homes. Several have been killed in front of the last check point before leaving Mosul while the Kurdish and Arab security forces were watching. It was also reported that Christian students were being targeted at the University in Mosul. 'Christian students are being pointed out by Muslim students - these Christians are then led away and killed. We have received an update that two more students have been kidnapped. Please ask people to pray!'

**Pray:** or Christians in Iraq to remain courageous, faithful and for a peaceful and stable run up to the March elections. (Ro.8:35-37)

**More:** <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5itmLW04ThOSfSE4XW9Gm81uJCqYQ>

### ■ **Ethiopia: Authorities concoct new charge against Christian**

Bashir Musa Ahmed an Ethiopian national has been in jail since May 23 when police found him in possession of eight Bibles in a predominantly Muslim area of Ethiopia. He was accused of providing Muslims with Bibles in the Somali-language - though Ethiopia's constitution protects such activity. A state official joined Christian leaders in stating that Islamist interests have kept Ahmed in jail in spite of the state's failure to find any legitimate charge against him. Unable to build a legal case on Islamist accusations, authorities have changed the accusations and submitted terrorism charges to prosecutors who are now asking police to find some evidence. There are reports of authorities beating Bashir in jail.

**Pray:** that charges against him would not be proven and that the Christian Faith and culture in Ethiopia would be strengthened through this incident. (Is.54:17)

**More:** <http://www.compassdirect.org/english/country/ethiopia/15414/>

### ■ **Niger: Military coup - urgent prayer needed now**

Military forces in Niger staged a coup last Thursday removing the president from power and appointing a civilian, Mahamadou Tandja, to be prime minister until new elections are held. In the overthrow soldiers dissolved every democratic institution. Niger was immediately suspended from the African Union and called to hold free elections. Observers said the coup in Niger should serve as a wake-up call about Africa's strongmen. (Strongmen are leaders who rule by force and threats of violence.) More than 10,000 people took to the streets expressing their support for the takeover; hoping the new leaders will provide relief from poverty, deception and corruption. Niger is Islam dominated with a tiny Christian minority of mainly Muslim-background believers living on the fringes of society. That means Christians are the most marginalized in any sort of unrest and the ones who will be impacted the most.

**Pray:** for the Lord to lead Niger peacefully through this period and to grant a new season of opportunities for God's Kingdom to flourish in the country. (Ps.147:14&15)

**More:** <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/8530678.stm>

### ■ **Global: The religious face of the New World Order**

A new report explores how and why the Pope's call for a 'World Political Authority' plays into the hands of those demanding a 'New World Order' and increased power and authority for the United Nations. The report examines the Vatican's abandonment of its resistance to a New World Order and states, 'When the Pope agrees with Mikhail Gorbachev, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Henry Kissinger, the new President of the European Union and financial hedge fund operators on the need for global governance and a new world order, we can know that the world has indeed experienced a 'harmonic convergence' and entered a new age.'

**Pray:** for God to bring about HIS Global Order and authority to the world. (Ps.66:7)

**More:** <http://www.christiannewswire.com/news/8748013074.html>

### ■ **Iran: Assyrian Church leader arrested**

Despite a news agency being made aware on February 2nd of the arrest of the Rev Wilson Issavi they were asked not to publicize the news 'lest the authorities are provoked into inflicting more harm'. Rev Wilson is the Assyrian leader of the Evangelical Church of Karmanshah and was arrested by local agents of state security while visiting friends in Isfahan. Since the day of the arrest it has been impossible for friends and family to find out about his whereabouts and well being. He was

arrested after the security agents called him on his mobile phone, enquiring his whereabouts. Being sure that he was not home to defend his house the security agents ransacked it taking away personal possessions. This is just one more of the many Christian persecutions and closures of churches in Iran and we are asked to continue to pray that the stronghold of false religion over the region to be broken.

**Pray:** for God's favour to be over the Christians in Iran. (Da.7:14)

**More:** [http://www.fcnn.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=721:the-arrest-of-the-assyrian-leader-of-the-kermanshah-church&catid=127:iranian-christian&Itemid=593](http://www.fcnn.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=721:the-arrest-of-the-assyrian-leader-of-the-kermanshah-church&catid=127:iranian-christian&Itemid=593)

#### ■ Israel: Strategic talks on Iran

Israel and the US held a one day strategic dialogue on Thursday focusing on sanctions aimed at halting Iran's nuclear programme. Russia has opposed 'paralyzing' sanctions proposed by Israel against Iran's energy exports and imports. US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said Wednesday 'Iran's failure to accept that the Obama administration's offers of engagement, and to prove its nuclear intentions were peaceful, had given the US and its partners new resolve in pressuring Teheran to comply with international demands through fresh penalties.' A high-level Israeli delegation, led by Strategic Affairs Minister Moshe Ya'alon and Bank of Israel Governor Stanley Fischer, left for Beijing on Wednesday to lobby on behalf of sanctions. It is also reported that the Iranian President will meet the leader of the Lebanese group Hezbollah and the Hamas leader while in Damascus on Friday.

**Pray:** for God to control all outcomes of this weeks negotiations. (Ps.76:12)

**More:** <http://www.jpost.com/International/Article.aspx?id=169599>

#### ■ China: Rise in reported persecution

There was an increase of 19% in the number of reported persecution cases against Christians in China last year according to a religious freedom group that specialises in Chinese house churches. ChinaAid Association emphasised the report is based on only a small portion of the total number of persecution cases that took place in mainland China last year because many incidents go unreported. The report defines persecution as acts involving, but not limited to, threats, inordinate fines, property confiscation, interrogation, arrest and other abuses.

**Pray:** that God would continue to build His kingdom in China and bring His life to the country. (Lk.21:19)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/watchdog.sees.rise.in.reported.persecution.cases.in.china/25261.htm>

## PRAISE REPORTS

#### ■ Police chief hails power of prayer in driving down town's crime rates

When Inspector Roger Bartlett realised his patch had one of the poorest crime detection rates in the area, he decided he needed help. So he asked churchgoers to pool their efforts in calling for back-up from God. Three years after encouraging Christians from local churches to say prayers to help policemen, detection rates have soared, road accidents have fallen and Mr Bartlett is convinced it is evidence of divine intervention. The clear-up rate for crimes in his force area of Barnstaple was 26 per cent. Since he asked for the prayers things have changed. Every quarter, the number of crimes solved has risen, so that its current figure - more than 40 per cent - shows one of the highest in the country. Mr Bartlett also asked worshippers to pray for a reduction in the number of serious or fatal road accidents - and they fell from 97 in 2007/8 to 32 in 2008/9.

**Praise:** God for the work of His Spirit in answering the prayers of the believers. Also, thank God for the influence of Christian police in society.(1Ch.5.20b)

**More:** <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1252708/Policeman-called-churchgoers-ask-God-help-fight-crime-prayers-answered.html?printingPage=true>

#### ■ Bhutan: Evangelism in refugee camps

Thrust from their homes in Bhutan after Buddhist rulers embarked on an ethnic and religious purge, Christian refugees in Nepal face hostilities from Hindus and others but God is using this persecution to bring exiles to faith. Bhutan has expelled one-eighth of its citizens for being of Nepali origin or practicing faiths other than Buddhism since the 1980's. Persecution in Bhutan led to the spread of Christianity in refugee camps in Nepal. It is estimated about 7,000-8,000 Christians are in the camps with many others having left for other countries, taking their faith with them. There are 18 churches of various denominations in the camps. An important factor in the spread of Christianity in the refugee camps is the high density of habitation. Each refugee family lives in a single-room hut, with one outdoor toilet for every two families. The Nepalese government forbids them to work for fear it will create unemployment for local residents.

**Praise:** God for His provision for those living in a hostile anti-Christian environment and ask Him to strengthen His people in every situation. (Ps.121:8)

**More:** <http://www.compassdirect.org/english/country/nepal/15590/>

## PRAYER FORUM OF THE BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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Prayer Alert is a partnership project of the Prayer Forum of the British Isles and Ireland  
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