

# PRAYER ALERT...

An initiative of the Prayer Forum of the British Isles & Ireland  
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## ■ Praise Reports

- [Egypt: Turning to Christ amid violence](#)
- [6000 Churches of African ex-Muslims](#)

## ■ British Isles & Ireland

- [Children of 4 shown cartoon pics of adults watching porn](#)
- [Lack of support for learning difficulties 'sets offenders up to fail'](#)
- [Cardinal warns against intolerance](#)
- [New project provides food for those in need at Christmas](#)
- [Atheist 'church' in bid to raise £500,000](#)
- [Number of children seeking a sex change rises by 50% in a year](#)
- [New report highlights war trauma among young soldiers](#)

## ■ Europe

- [Belgium to vote on extending euthanasia to children](#)
- [Relationship between Europe and Israel](#)

## ■ Worldwide

- [Global: Anti-Semitism](#)
- [Tibet: Prayer requests](#)
- [Iran: 80 lashes for drinking communion wine](#)
- [USA: Methodist court sidesteps gay policy changes](#)
- [Egypt: Muslim Brotherhood trial judges resign](#)
- [Nigeria: President's visit to Israel pilgrimage sites](#)
- [Tunisia: Suicide attack at resort town](#)

## PRaise REPORTS

### ■ Egypt: Turning to Christ amid violence

When the Muslim Brotherhood took power Christians became targets of violence. Once the government was sacked Christians hoped that would change but it didn't. More than 80 churches have been burned with many Christians killed. Winter is approaching and Christian families don't have enough clothes or blankets. However through hardship and violence Churches are united in a spirit of prayer everywhere. Christians are giving out a message of forgiveness to their Muslim neighbours. One Christian said, 'This forgiveness makes many Muslims discover the reality of Christianity and many of them come to know Jesus.' The new converts had a security problem. It is not safe to join local churches so they meet underground in secret. They worship the Lord together and they're growing. As Muslims come to Christ, they're uniquely qualified to share the Gospel with other Muslims.

**Praise:** for the Holy Spirit to continue to spread His power and grace through the Church and the nation and for many thousands to come to know Jesus as Saviour. (Is.43:2)

**More:** [http://www.breakingchristiannews.com/articles/display\\_art.html?ID=12689](http://www.breakingchristiannews.com/articles/display_art.html?ID=12689)

### ■ 6000 Churches of African ex-Muslims

Over 6,000 new churches were planted among Muslims in 18 different countries in Africa over the last seven years, and hundreds of former sheikhs and imams becoming followers of Jesus Christ over that period. Jerry Trousdale, author of the book Miraculous Movements (Thomas Nelson, 2012) says: 'These are peoples who have been Islamic for well over a hundred years, some hundreds of years, and so we have seen some dramatic transformation. Interestingly more than half of the churches have been planted in those groups that are 99 to 100 percent Muslims.' On one occasion a delegation of Muslim civic leaders arrived from a distant region. They said: 'We have not come to harm you, but we beg you – could you please send us the storytellers?' They meant the Christian workers who were making disciples by telling stories from the Bible.

**Praise:** God for the dramatic changes in people's lives as they hear His story. (Ps.35:18)

**More:** <http://revivalmedia.org/2013/10/27/6000-churches-for-african-muslims-320-report-28/>

## BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

### ■ Children of 4 shown cartoon pics of adults watching porn

Children as young as four are being shown cartoon pictures of adults watching pornography during sex education classes, a BBC News feature has revealed. Sex education consultant Lynnette Smith runs sessions for primary schools, in which children give a thumbs up or down to different cartoon scenarios, such as grabbing a woman's breasts or pulling at a boy's underwear. One teaching union has warned that such sessions may not be suitable for all primary schools because 'Innocence is precious'. Lynnette Smith runs the same presentation for children between the ages of four and eleven. Parents at the school were said to be horrified when first informed that the presentation would take place. Sex and relationships education is not compulsory in primary schools, despite pressure from various campaign groups. David

Cameron said in September this year that children can be warned about the dangers of online pornography without an overhaul of sex education. See: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/cameron-no-need-to-overhaul-sex-education/>

**Pray:** for sex education to be appropriate to the age group and an understanding that the needs of 4 and 7 and 11 year olds are quite different. Pray for David Cameron to stand by his September statement. (2Jn.1:9)

**More:** <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/kids-4-shown-cartoon-pics-of-adults-watching-porn-in-sex-ed/>

#### ■ Lack of support for learning difficulties 'sets offenders up to fail'

People with learning disabilities and difficulties in the justice system are not getting equal access to the law or support to successfully complete prison or community sentences because information presented to them is not made accessible, says the Prison Reform Trust. At a meeting in the House of Lords, former prisoners and people working in the justice system called for an expansion in the use of Easy Read materials. Currently, up to a third of people in prison have either a learning disability or learning difficulty which can affect their ability to read and to understand information. Seven per cent of prisoners have an IQ of less than 70 and a further 25 per cent have an IQ between 70 – 79. Documents and guidance throughout the criminal justice system are often very formal and include legal and technical terms that are not commonly used. People with learning disabilities or difficulties can find it hard to follow court proceedings.

**Pray:** for a fresh approach to supporting offenders with limited reading skills in the criminal justice system. (Col.2:8)

**More:** <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/19303>

#### ■ Cardinal warns against intolerance

Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, the former Archbishop of Westminster said that governments must be wary of the impact that laws enshrining 'freedom and tolerance' have on the Church. He said the Church should remain a part of public life despite attempts by some to 'privatise religion and put it on the periphery'. He added that the majority of Britons were happy for churches to have a role in public debate, 'there are some who would say they don't need the church's voice at all. I don't agree,' he said. 'I think that governments have to be very careful how they legislate, so that freedom and tolerance does not become intolerance for some sections.' He spoke in the wake of a row over legislation that forced Catholic adoption agencies to close because they would have had to offer their services to same-sex couples, in breach of the Church's teachings.

**Pray:** for a wider understanding of the part the Church plays in the life of our nation. (Mt.28:19-20a)

**More:** <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/gibraltar/10406927/Cardinal-warns-against-intolerance.html>

#### ■ New project provides food for those in need at Christmas

Premier Christian Media has joined forces with hunger relief charity Feed the Hungry to provide food aid ahead of Christmas. Churches across the UK are being encouraged by Premier and Feed the Hungry to give non-perishable food items to food banks and similar community projects in the lead up to Christmas. The project was inspired by Matthew 25:35 which reads: 'For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you invited me in.' Participating churches will be supplied with special bags containing a check list suggesting the sort of non-perishable food items which could be donated to local food banks. They are also being asked to collect food at their main Christmas carol service before passing it on to food banks.

**Pray:** for a great response to this campaign and for its success. (1Jn.3:17)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/new.project.provides.food.for.those.in.need.at.christmas/34473.htm>

#### ■ Atheist 'church' in bid to raise £500,000

An atheist 'church' has launched a half-a-million pound fundraising drive to enable people to set up 'Godless congregations' around the world. The Sunday Assembly, which says its services are 'all the best bits of church, but with no religion', currently hosts gatherings where people listen to talks and sing songs. It wants to raise £500,000 to set up and run a website helping people to organise their own assemblies around the world. The group says the new site will 'allow us to help thousands of communities, and millions of people, live this one life as fully as possible'. It wants to 'provide specially commissioned marketing materials, comprehensive documentation, web support, and a network of people helping'. The Sunday Assembly are offering rewards to people who donate, such as mugs, tea towels and 'three lovely collectables containing earth, air and water'.

**Pray:** that God will enable people to sense the emptiness of such a gathering, and thus thwart the plans of the Sunday Assembly and may His Sunday be honoured. (Gen.2:3)

**More:** <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/atheist-church-in-bid-to-raise-500000/>

#### ■ Number of children seeking a sex change rises by 50% in a year

The number of children wanting a sex change in 2012 saw an increase of 50 per cent compared to the previous year, according to The Times newspaper. This comes as the Royal College of Psychiatrists urged services to work better so that children can have the operation quickly when they turn 18. It came in guidelines for treating adults who are seeking a sex change. Figures reported in The Times show that last year 208 children were referred to specialist clinics, up from 139 in the previous year. Research shows that a high number of people who undergo sex change surgery go on to commit suicide. Professor Chris Hyde, a medical professor from the University of Exeter, said that though his findings were from a decade ago it is 'likely' the same issues remain today.

**Pray:** for the young people who are seeking changes in their sexuality that God will reveal His truth for them. (Is.30:1)

**More:** <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/number-of-kids-seeking-a-sex-change-rises-by-50-in-a-year/>

#### ■ New report highlights war trauma among young soldiers

Young soldiers recruited from disadvantaged backgrounds are substantially more likely than others to return from war experiencing problems with their mental health, says a wide-ranging report published today (28 October 2013) by human rights group ForcesWatch. The report, 'The Last Ambush? Aspects of mental health in the British armed forces', draws on

over 150 sources, including 41 British military mental health studies, as well as testimonies from veterans. It shows that, compared with older personnel, younger recruits are significantly more likely to suffer post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), to drink at levels harmful to health, and to behave violently on their return from war. Young recruits from disadvantaged backgrounds are at greatest risk. Over the past 20 years, the suicide rate has been 82 per cent higher among male soldiers under 20 than among civilian men of the same age.

**Pray:** for health and wellbeing of our soldiers as they face the trauma of war. (1Sam.25:6)

**More:** <http://www.ekkleisia.co.uk/node/19319>

## EUROPE

### ■ Belgium to vote on extending euthanasia to children

Belgian MPs are set to vote on whether to extend the country's euthanasia laws to children and patients suffering from Alzheimer's disease, reports Christian Concern for our Nation. Legislation to permit euthanasia was introduced in the country in 2002, but restricted the procedure to people aged 18 or over. A bill to permit under 18s to access euthanasia was introduced by the Socialist Party in December, with MPs expected to vote on the controversial legislation this week. If the law passes, Belgium will become the first country to introduce euthanasia for minors. The bill also proposes to allow the procedure to be accessed by those suffering from Alzheimer's and other diseases leading to advanced dementia.

**Pray:** that the Belgian Government will be granted real wisdom as they vote on this legislation. (Pr.3:21)

**More:** <http://www.christiantelegraph.com/issue21350.html>

### ■ Relationship between Europe and Israel

German intercessors ask us to stand with them. Relationship of the EU with Israel is very tense as a result of restricted trade between the EU and the disputed territories of the West Bank. Germany is divided on this issue. The foreign ministry has so far supported Israel but how the new government will respond is still open and a matter for prayer. This issue highlights the work of the European Coalition for Israel (ECI) a Christian lobby network in the political arena of the EU standing for Israel's interests. This network is gaining influence and celebrates its 10th anniversary conference in November with leading members of the European Parliament and the EU Commission. A letter from ECI to the EU concerning the above policy is being prepared, asking for clarification of the role of Israel at the political level and also in the churches. A Church-Israel-Congress from 7-9th November in Berlin addresses this need. There will be a supporting prayer chain throughout the event.

**Pray:** for constructive relationships to be forged and strengthened between European nations and Israel and for God to encourage and lead the November prayer chain in Germany. (1Ki.3:9)

## WORLDWIDE

### ■ Global: Anti-Semitism

On October 27th Sydney experienced the worst Anti-Semitic attack in Australia's recent history when a group of eight men attacked families which were walking home from a synagogue on Friday after pre-Shabbat services. The group yelled racial slurs at the families before the confrontation turned into a physical fight. Four men and a woman were taken to hospital for treatment. One man in his 60s suffered a bleed on the brain, others suffered broken bones. This month American members of the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn Party of Greece created two new Chapters in the United States. They established a New York Chapter last year. In September the Greek government arrested some leaders of the anti-Semitic, racist and anti-immigrant Golden Dawn party in Greece. See <http://blog.adl.org/international/neo-nazi-golden-dawn-party-expands-presence-in-u-s> Hungary's Prime Minister told an international assembly of Jews that Anti-Semitism was on the rise both in Europe and Hungary, attributing it partly to the economic crisis affecting the region. See:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/hungary/10039580/Anti-Semitism-on-the-rise-across-Europe.html>

**Pray:** against the rise of Anti-Semitism across Europe, Australia and America; pray for anti-racism strategies to be strengthened globally. (Dt.20:4)

**More:** [http://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/news/14069/australia\\_five\\_injured\\_in\\_worst\\_anti\\_semitic\\_attack\\_in\\_australia\\_s\\_recent\\_history](http://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/news/14069/australia_five_injured_in_worst_anti_semitic_attack_in_australia_s_recent_history)

### ■ Tibet: Prayer requests

The following is from Windows International day 30, 'Christian workers in Tibet are distributing Bible portions, Christian literature, the Jesus Film and other forms of Christian media. Pray for the Lord to use these methods to bring many Tibetans to Him. (Ps. 40:3). Since 2009 over 120 Tibetans self-immolated in protest at Chinese rule. Pray for an end to self-immolations and Chinese oppression. Pray for Tibetans to find hope and relief in a saving relationship with Jesus Christ (Is.40:31). Chinese authorities use surveillance on cell phones and the Internet to digitally monitor Tibetans. Pray for peace between Tibetans and Chinese. Pray for an end to China's oppression of Tibet (Ps.34:18)'. In spite of this, the churches have recently developed in several key Tibetan areas with the total number of Tibetan Christians in all three major dialect groups now numbering in the hundreds.

**Pray:** for God to protect the many new Christian believers. Ask God to continue to increase the spread of His word and purposes throughout the region. (Ac 2:47)

**More:** <http://www.win1040.com/>

### ■ Iran: 80 lashes for drinking communion wine

A court in the Iranian city of Rasht has sentenced four members of the Church of Iran to 80 lashes each for drinking wine during a communion service. The charge on 6th October charged Behzad Taalipasand, Mehdi Reza Omid (Youhan), Mehdi Dadkhah (Danial) and Amir Hatemi (Youhanna) were charged with drinking alcohol and possession of a receiver and satellite antenna. They received the verdict on 20th October and had ten days to appeal the sentence. At the time of going

to press the outcome had not been publicized. The incidents go back to December 31st 2012 when Behzad Taalipasand and Mehdi Reza Omid (Youhan) were detained during a crackdown on house churches by the Iranian government. Mervyn Thomas, Chief Executive of CSW said, 'The sentences handed down to these members of the Church of Iran effectively criminalise the Christian sacrament of sharing in the Lord's Supper and constitute an unacceptable infringement on the right to practice faith freely and peaceably.'

**Pray:** that President Hassan Rouhani would make good his promises to the U N by releasing the 42 Christians known to be in jail and the 45 awaiting trial. Pray for freedom of religion or belief in Iran. (Ps.25:15)

**More:** <http://dynamic.csw.org.uk/article.asp?t=news&id=1892&search=>

#### USA: Methodist court sidesteps gay policy changes

The United Methodist Church's highest court issued three rulings that do not change church policy toward gays and lesbians but allow bishops to accept resolutions expressing dissent from the Church teachings. The Judicial Council affirmed a resolution celebrating congregations and individuals that 'provide for pastoral needs of same-sex couples'. The resolution doesn't call for action that contradicts the United Methodist Book of Doctrine and laws which defines homosexual conduct as 'incompatible with Christian teaching.' The court also affirmed a California-Pacific Annual Conference resolution calling for congregations to operate as if church law regarding homosexuality does not exist. The ruling noted that members might disagree on issues such as health care, gun control and other matters. Rulings were published on the same day a retired bishop directed a same-sex marriage in Alabama. The Rev Frank Schafer of Lebanon, Pa. will be tried Nov 18th for officiating at a same-sex wedding and several other trials are expected soon.

**Pray:** that God would have the last word on the Judicial Council rulings, procedural arguments and the deeper argument underlying recent actions. (Ps.119:105)

**More:** <http://www.religionnews.com/2013/10/28/methodist-court-sidesteps-changes-gay-policies/>

#### Egypt: Muslim Brotherhood trial judges resign

The judges presiding over the trial of some Muslim Brotherhood leaders accused of inciting violence during a protest where people were killed have resigned citing 'uneasiness' over the trial for their departure. The move forces the trial of 35 Brotherhood leaders to start all over. The trial began in August in the Criminal Court's chamber. However the defendants were unable to appear because of the risk of protests. There had been pressure for the trials to be held in a prison as tighter security would have allowed the defendants to be present. The lawyer for Mohammed Badie (the Brotherhood's top leader) said the judges decided to leave because of the pressure to move the trial, adding, 'This is not a trial, it is a farce.' The defendants consist of six senior leaders including the group's powerful financier (Khairat el-Shater). President Mohamed Mursi (Egypt's first freely-elected President) is due in court on Monday.

**Pray:** for justice not only to be seen to be done, but to actually happen. (Ps.9:16)

**More:** <http://www.cbn.com/cbnnews/world/2013/October/Judges-in-Muslim-Brotherhood-Trials-Resign/>

#### Nigeria: President's visit to Israel pilgrimage sites

The Mount of Olives, the Garden of Gethsemane, the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan River, the Church of the Annunciation, and the Church of Dominus Fleuit (where Jesus wept) were visited by President Goodluck Jonathan over the weekend as he and eight Nigerian governors made a Holy Land pilgrimage. President Jonathan made the trip to pray for peace between Nigeria's Christians and Muslims and to sign agreements with Israeli leaders regarding international flights and other matters. At a prayer service in Jerusalem for thousands of Nigerian pilgrims he said, 'This is the first time the pilgrimage has taken this shape. I believe we will continue in this spirit. Let me reassure you even though we are passing through challenging periods that God has made it possible for us to be here. Even in the Scripture we've seen the many battles the Jews fought. But because of their zeal and commitments, God has kept them.'

**Pray:** for the Lord to walk with and support Nigerian leaders as they face overwhelming challenges. (Ps.23:4)

**More:** <http://www.christianitytoday.com/gleanings/2013/october/nigeria-president-israel-pilgrimage-jonathan-goodluck.html>

#### Tunisia: Suicide attack at resort town

Tunisia has battled unrest since a poverty-stricken man set himself alight and ushered in the overthrow of Ben Ali's regime in 2011. Today there's a rise of self-declared jihadist movements. This month nine security force members were killed in clashes with 'terrorists'. The unrest is particularly worrying because Tunisia's 2011 revolution inspired others and was seen as a model for its neighbours. On Wednesday a man wearing a belt of explosives blew himself up in front of a tourist hotel in Sousse. It was not clear if other people were hurt or killed in the explosion. On Tuesday Tunisian police captured a man who tried to blow himself up at the tomb of a former president in Monastir. On Monday the army launched a 'huge' operation to catch the killers of six policemen. Many impoverished communities face daily struggles against tough conditions where assets have been over exploited and badly managed. Militants and political slayings keep Tunisia in revolution limbo. See also [http://www.vice.com/en\\_uk/read/militant-attacks-and-political-assassinations-are-stalling-tunisia's-revolution](http://www.vice.com/en_uk/read/militant-attacks-and-political-assassinations-are-stalling-tunisia's-revolution)

**Pray:** against the revolutionary atmosphere that is returning to Tunisia; to ask God to show Tunisia's leaders how to provide for the poor and downcast. (1Sa.2:8)

**More:** <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2013/10/suicide-blast-hits-tunisia-tourist-spot-201310309586804204.html>

## PRAYER FORUM OF THE BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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