



# PRAYER ALERT...



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

### ■ MPs pitch for Christian votes

Politicians from the three main parties are among those who offer advice, in a new book, to voters who want to cast their ballots according to their consciences ahead of the coming general election. Votewise Now! argues that politics should be first and foremost about right relationships, and that the best way to 'do' politics is to engage with the things that really concern people. Published by social reform organisation, the Jubilee Centre, a panel of experts examine the most important issues facing Britain today, including topics such as the economy, criminal justice, race relations, and employment. After outlining the key debates, Votewise Now! presents a Christian perspective and offers a series of principles against which readers may evaluate party promises and so vote wisely. To coincide with the launch of the book, the Jubilee Centre has also released a group discussion guide and an accompanying short video, which poses questions such as 'Which party has the best answers to the global economic crisis?' (See Prayer Alert 3109 & 3209)

**Pray:** that Christians would use their votes wisely and even take up the challenge to bring Christian principles to politics. (1Kg.3:9)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/mps.pitch.for.christian.votes/24052.htm>

### ■ Christian primary school receptionist sues over religious discrimination

Jennie Cain, who was told to stay away from her job for nearly four months before receiving a written warning over the affair, has lodged a complaint with Exeter employment tribunal. However, Mrs Cain claims she has been victimised and harassed because of her faith since her return in early June. Sean Kehoe, who is representing Mrs Cain, said 'No one ever seemed able to answer the simple question of what exactly Jennie had done wrong. Mike Judge, from the Christian Institute, said 'Her case is important because it highlights a wider problem,' he said. 'I am sad to say that a number of Christians, particularly those who work in the public sector, have been disciplined for expressing their faith.' Mrs Cain claimed her daughter Jasmine, who is a pupil at Landscore, had come home from school in tears after being told off by a teacher for talking to another pupil about Jesus, Heaven and God. (See also Prayer Alert 0709)

**Pray:** for all involved in this matter especially Jennie as she seeks to uphold her faith at work. (Mt.5:10)

**More:** <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstoppers/religion/6061088/Christian-primary-school-receptionist-sues-over-religious-discrimination.html>

### ■ One in six homes 'has no work'

More than one in six UK homes which house at least one person of working age does not have anyone in employment, official statistics show. This is the highest rate since 1999, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said. The number of workless households hit 3.3 million in April to June, a 240,000 rise compared with a year earlier. The issue was most acute in the north-east of England, and the lowest rate was in the eastern region of England. A workless household is defined by the ONS as a home which includes at least one person of working age, where nobody aged 16 or over is in employment. As

a result, the workless household figure is higher than the number of people who are counted unemployed - 2.35 million - as it includes people such as early retirees, full-time students or those receiving disability benefit who are not included in the official unemployment statistics.

**Pray:** that the government will be able to find solutions for this current situation and stimulate economic growth. (Ps.90:17)

**More:** <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/8222145.stm>

#### ■ **Blunder makes sale of adult films to kids legal**

People selling violent or pornographic films to children are not breaking the law because of a mistake made in 1984. It has emerged that a 25-year-old Act regulating the video industry was never reported to the European Commission and so is not valid. Lavinia Carey, Director-General of the British Video Association said: 'What a ludicrous situation to find ourselves in after all this time.' The Lib Dems said the error had 'thrown film censorship into chaos.' The Department for Culture, Media and Sport said that it had received legal advice that people who had previously been prosecuted and convicted would be unable to overturn their convictions or seek compensation. The Government will bring in emergency legislation to make the law effective. 1659 convictions were made under the Act between 1995 and 2007. A spokeswoman for the Home Office said: 'The important thing is that we close this loophole as quickly as possible.'

**Pray:** for our government as it considers this legislation that it would not rush it but ensure its validity. (Is.28:17a)

**More:** <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/20090826/blunder-makes-sale-of-adult-films-to-kids-legal/>

#### ■ **Parts of Britain like 'The Wire'**

The Conservatives have compared parts of the UK to The Wire, a US television show which portrays inner-city drugs and violence. In a speech, shadow home secretary Chris Grayling argued that the UK was suffering the same culture of gangs and street violence found in the US. Mr Grayling told an audience in Westminster that police were fighting an 'urban war' against gangs and that violence in society had become 'a norm and not an exception'. 'When The Wire comes to Britain's streets, it is the poor who suffer most'. But Home Secretary Alan Johnson said gun-related crime was falling and the police should be supported not attacked for their efforts. 'The serious problems being tackled in our communities will not be diminished by Mr Grayling's embarrassing habit of making glib references to television programmes that he thinks will make him sound cool,' he added.

**Pray:** for those affected by the erosion of social cohesion especially for the young and for all those seeking to tackle these issues. (Is.7:4a)

**More:** [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk\\_politics/8219482.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/8219482.stm)

#### ■ **'Gay survey' to take place within Church of England**

A national survey is set to take place to reveal the number of gay clergy within the Church of England, the Guardian newspaper has reported. The survey is being backed by the Inclusive Church network, which aims to prove that homosexuals perform an important role in the regular running of the Church body. Canon Giles Goddard, Chair of the Inclusive Church told the Guardian: 'It's very early days but we need realistic information on how many LGBT clergy there are. It's about demonstrating to people that we're here and we need to be respected and recognised. We want to play our full role in the life of the church. The survey will question the participants on their relationship status - whether single or in a relationship - and whether they have held a 'blessing' or 'thanksgiving celebration' to celebrate their 'partnership'. The Church of England is officially against the ordination of gay clergy and the authorisation of same-sex blessings.

**Pray:** for all those who may be affected by this survey and the possible divisiveness it may cause.

**More:** [http://www.christiantoday.com/article/gay\\_survey\\_to\\_take\\_place\\_within\\_church\\_of\\_england/23956.htm](http://www.christiantoday.com/article/gay_survey_to_take_place_within_church_of_england/23956.htm)

#### ■ **Cardinal criticises same-sex Bill**

The leader of Ireland's Catholics has criticised civil partnership legislation in the Republic of Ireland. In a sermon, Cardinal Sean Brady said the measures would hugely change peoples' concepts of the family. The Civil Partnership Bill, published in June, gives Irish same-sex couples recognition as partners before the law. Dr Brady said marriage between a man and a woman would always remain the ideal environment in which to raise children. He said any government which undermines such an environment could hardly be said to be promoting the common good. Cardinal Brady also said those who refuse to officiate at a same sex wedding would be guilty of an offence and described this as 'an alarming attack on the fundamental principle of freedom of religion and conscience'. He said the Bill left the door open for individuals and religious organisations to be sued for 'upholding their belief that marriage is an institution exclusively for men and women'.

**Pray:** for the people of Ireland as they discuss these sensitive changes in legislation. (Pr.11:14)

**More:** [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern\\_ireland/8217567.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/8217567.stm)

## EUROPE

#### ■ **20 years after Berlin Wall, WCC told, divided world needs vision**

Twenty years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, churches need to offer a vision to a world divided in more complex ways than at the time of the Iron Curtain, the moderator of the World Council of Churches has said. Addressing the WCC's main governing body on 26 August, the Rev. Walter Altmann, a Lutheran from Brazil, remembered how people celebrated the end of the 154 kilometre (96 mile) fortified wall that divided Berlin's western and eastern sectors from 1961 to 1989. 'It came to symbolise the division of the world into two conflicting systems,' said the moderator. 'Yet we do not forget either that many other walls, be they of concrete, or of prejudices, or of laws which discriminate against foreigners, persist or are being raised, dividing peoples and causing great suffering, in many parts of the world.'

**Pray:** for the worldwide Church that it would continue speaking out against discrimination and prejudice wherever it is seen. (Ep.2:14)

**More:** <http://www.eni.ch/featured/article.php?id=3300>

#### ■ **Belarus: Pastors protest against religious restrictions**

Some 50 Protestant pastors, many of whom were punished for religious activities, have written to President Aleksandr Lukashenko complaining of long-standing restrictions, an advocacy group said Tuesday, August 25. Forum 18 said the letter came as officials defended fining Baptist Christians in the Western town of Baranovichi about one month's average wages for using their homes for religious worship. 'They violated the Religion Law,' ideology official Sergei Puzikov was quoted as saying. He denied the measure contradicted Belarus' Constitution, which apparently guarantees religious freedom. 'In any country there is not only the Constitution, but individual laws.' Puzikov was reportedly also involved in a fine handed down to another Baranovichi church in July. Police in nearby Malorita tried to have Baptists punished for singing hymns on the street, but the judge threw out the case, said Forum 18, which has close contacts with the Christians.

**Pray:** for the Church in Belarus that God would protect it from those who would wish to hold it back. (Ac.4:29)

**More:** <http://www.bosnewslife.com/8741-protestant-protest-religious-restrictions-in-belarus>

## WORLDWIDE

#### ■ **Israel/Palestine: Abbas willing to meet with Netanyahu**

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas may meet Binyamin Netanyahu at the United Nations next month. The meeting would be the first since Netanyahu took office in March. Abbas has refused to reopen peace talks until Netanyahu halts all settlement construction in the West Bank, and the prime minister rejects this demand. Speaking on condition of anonymity a Palestinian official stressed that Abbas was not dropping his conditions stating the meeting would be a chance to talk not negotiate. Netanyahu said he hoped peace talks with the Palestinians could restart soon, noting his preference for continued settlement construction while restarting talks. Meanwhile in Geneva the general secretary of the World Council of Churches said Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories should be declared a 'sin against God' along with the related humiliation of a whole people for over six decades. For background that would help with informed intercession into the secular roots of this sensitive and complicated matter click the insights button to read an abridged United Nations report.

**Pray:** for God to restore His purposes for the area and that the city will once again be called the City of Righteousness. (Ps.147:14-15)

**More:** <http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1251145121977&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull>

#### ■ **INSIGHT ARTICLE: Israel/Palestine**

America is attempting to seal an Arab-Israeli peace deal that has eluded the region for more than six decades. Ahead of an initiative expected to be announced in September the controversial issue of Jerusalem needs to be discussed. The city is claimed as the capital by both Arabs and Israelis. There are at least four major obstacles to achieving a lasting peace agreement: settlements, refugees, economic independence, and Jerusalem, which holds an ideological power on Israeli and Palestinian identities. The division of Jerusalem in 1948, with Jordan controlling the Old City and the Western Wall, saw the creation of 'eastern' and 'western' halves of the city which were essentially cleansed of the other community. Indeed, the current division of Jerusalem into Jewish-Western and Palestinian-Eastern halves - which is, in fact, no longer accurate given the large Jewish settler population in East Jerusalem - contradicts the much more mixed ethnic and religious landscape of the city before 1948. This insight article covers highlights of UN directives on this division.

**Pray:** for God to go ahead of all talks and inspire individuals with initiatives that would become a workable solution for Jerusalem and its neighbourhoods. (Ps.90:1)

**Info:** <http://www.prayer-alert.net/info/InsightIsrael3509.pdf>

#### ■ **India: Hindu radicals set fire to church in Andhra Pradesh**

Hindu radicals belonging to a group called Sangh Parivar set a church at Mahasamudram village on fire in the Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh state on August 20. According to news issued by the All India Christian Council on their website ([www.christiancouncil.in](http://www.christiancouncil.in)) a newly constructed church run by Pastors Chandriah and Solomon Raju was set ablaze by the Hindu radicals. The pastors were about to inaugurate the church building for the village community. Pastor Chandriah, Solomon Raju and Church members went to the local police station and filed a complaint.

**Pray:** for God in his mercy to hold and protect these victims of persecution and for His banner of spiritual blessings to be over all those suffering for their Christian beliefs in India. (Mt.5:10)

**More:** <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/2009/s09080164.htm>

#### ■ **Pakistan: Christians intensify demand to repeal blasphemy law**

Pakistani Christians who bore the brunt of a series of assaults have demanded the repeal of the 'blasphemy law,' which they say has been misused time and again by Muslims. Pakistan Christian Congress is a Christian political party established to launch a struggle to safeguard the social, religious and political rights of Christians in Pakistan. Since its inception in 1985 it has been demanding the repeal of the blasphemy law. In a public statement it noted that 'there were almost no allegations of blasphemy' prior to the addition of blasphemy law into Pakistan's Penal Code. But most of the assaults thereafter are allegedly on the misuse of blasphemy. Most recent attacks include rioting between Christians and Muslims in eastern Pakistan's Punjab region last Saturday killing six people, including a child, and injured more than a dozen following allegations that a Quran was defaced.

**Pray:** that the law established to create religious tolerance would be amended, allowing it to be used for the purpose it was created. (Pr.29:26)

**More:** <http://www.christianpost.com/article/20090803/pakistani-christians-intensify-demand-to-repeal-blasphemy-law/index.html>

#### ■ Iran: Factional disputes grow increasingly bitter

Aides to Iran's president lashed out publicly at two former presidents. The nation's most influential dissident cleric said government officials had taken a 'deviant path' and a government-aligned Web site reported that the Tehran prosecutor had been fired. Since June there have been daily flare-ups in the increasingly bitter fight between political and clerical factions. 'The game in Iran is no longer between the reformists and the conservatives,' said Mustafa El-Labbad, an expert in Iranian affairs and the director of the Middle East Centre for Regional and Strategic Studies in Cairo. 'It is now between the pragmatists and the radicals.' Ayatollah Khamenei said that while he thought the events that followed the elections were pre-planned, he was not yet convinced that the leaders of the opposition were guilty of collaborating with foreign powers as the issue has not been proven.

**Pray:** Praise God for some truth being revealed and ask God to remove the spirit of chaos over the country, and for all false claims, outright lies and hidden atrocities to be exposed by God's sovereign power. (Job.34:24)

**More:** [http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/27/world/middleeast/27iran.html?\\_r=1&ref=middleeast](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/27/world/middleeast/27iran.html?_r=1&ref=middleeast)

#### ■ North Korea: Justice generation challenge

Eddie Lyle Open Doors Chief Executive in the UK has been encouraging people to sign a letter to the ambassador of the Chinese embassy in London pleading for mercy for North Korean refugees. Asking China to provide refugees with a safe place and support for a new beginning rather than being sent back into a pariah state to face imprisonment and even execution. As a result of famine and political oppression many people are joining a mass exodus to get away and start a new life elsewhere. The Chinese authorities have started to forcibly repatriate people that have fled North Korea, many of them Christians. News reports say South Korean human rights groups are deeply concerned about the escalation of the execution of Christians who are meeting their death after having been repatriated. Between 100,000 and 300,000 North Korean refugees are hiding in China searching for food, jobs, freedom and a better life.

**Pray:** for God to move this petition into a powerful new dimension to initiate justice for North Korean Christians who escape. (1Cor.15:24-5)

**More:** <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/2009/s09080168.htm>

## PRAISE REPORTS

#### ■ Australia: 'Incredible renewal' among indigenous Australians

Rev John Blacket of Khesed Ministries reports signs of an incredible renewal among indigenous Australians and clear expectations that this move of God's Spirit will impact many Australians. 'Many young Aborigines in Central Australia and Arnhem Land have turned to Jesus Christ from drugs and petrol sniffing, worshipping the Lord in new songs in their own languages,' said Blacket. 'There is deep repentance that we haven't seen for over 25 years. There is also a lot of prayer and symbolic acts for healing the land, and a move to work through deep cultural issues like we have never seen,' he added. 'So many of our dreams and heart cries of 20 years are beginning to happen!' According to a Christian Today report, the recent release of Scriptures translated into Aboriginal languages is helping people to know and understand the Word of God.

**Praise:** God for His blessing of renewal on the indigenous people of Australia. (Tit.3:5)

**More:** [http://www.breakingchristiannews.com/articles/display\\_art.html?ID=7075](http://www.breakingchristiannews.com/articles/display_art.html?ID=7075)

#### ■ America: Powerful Christians in Hollywood

Praise God for the Hollywood Prayer Network, and the Hollywood powerhouses who are unabashed about proclaiming their Christian beliefs in tinsel town. Mel Gibson, despite many weaknesses produced 'Passion of the Christ' which changed much for Hollywood regarding matters of faith and waking up the powers-that-be to the box office potential of the Christian audience. Since then, making the next 'Passion' has been Hollywood's own unique Holy Grail quest, resulting in the successful 'Chronicles of Narnia' and the disappointing 'Nativity Story', and leading to the creation of FoxFaith and other religion-focused studio subsidiaries. Denzel Washington, the son of a Pentecostal minister, donated \$2.5 million to his church and lent his voice to an audio Bible called 'The Bible Experience'. There are many others who are not shy about making their faith public and Christian beliefs known. Cecil B. DeMille one of the founder fathers of Hollywood films said, 'I have found the greatest power in the world is the power of prayer' Praise God for the root of prayer that is now beginning to grow through intercessors who faithfully pray for Hollywood through the Hollywood Prayer Network. Check it out at: <http://www.hollywoodprayernetwork.org/>

**Praise:** and thank God for the way He is initiating His purposes through the wilderness of media and entertainment. (Ps.51:15)

**More:** <http://www.beliefnet.com/Faiths/Christianity/2008/09/The-12-Most-Powerful-Christians-in-Hollywood.aspx>

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