



January 2014

2013 was a year full of significant developments, some less positive than others! There were setbacks, but there were victories. This New Year looks likely to be even more demanding of prayerful attention in view of the approach of the General Election in 2015. Many issues that have been of deep concern for Christians are not yet completely settled so in some areas the battle continues. Whatever happens, we must be alert in our prayers!



**Some major issues we could usefully pray into are below.**  
*(Scriptures and model prayers offered may help us to get started.)*

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**Weekly Prayer Meeting**

**Prayer for Parliament and the Nation**

We meet on Tuesday nights



**Slavery and Human Trafficking**

Many politicians are becoming increasingly concerned at the continuing occurrence of slavery in its various guises. Some say there are more slaves in the world now than there were at the time of Wilberforce. The Home Secretary has announced that a Bill will be introduced concerning "Modern Slavery" to tackle the rise in human trafficking and sexual exploitation and such, which leads to so much human misery. We must pray that the Bill will prove to have teeth!

**Psalm 82:3-4 (NKJV)**

*Defend the poor and fatherless; do justice to the afflicted and needy. Deliver the poor and needy; free them from the hand of the wicked.*

**Proverbs 31:8-9 (NIV)**

*Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.*

**A starting point for prayer:**

Lord of mercy, we cry out to you on behalf of those whose lives are held to ransom by heartless people who would exploit them and deprive them of their liberty. We acknowledge that we are all made in Your image and are precious in Your sight. Therefore we plead with You, Lord Jesus, to come as the Anointed One of God to release the captives [Isaiah 61:1 and Luke 4:18]! Amen.



**Persecution of Christians**

A recent debate in Westminster Hall, about the persecution of Christians in the Middle East, and a later one in the House of Commons about such persecution around the world, revealed that many MPs are aware of this awful state of affairs, and willing to speak out about it.

This nation sends aid to some countries which allow or even encourage such persecution: surely this gives us some leverage!

We must pray the Government will take notice and act - and effectively - so as to help our



*The LORD detests lying lips, but he delights in people who are trustworthy.*

**Ephesians 5:5-7 (NIV)**

*For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore do not be partners with them.*

**A starting point for prayer:** Almighty God, we are instructed to "be subject to the governing authorities... for the authorities that exist have been established by God" [Romans 13:1]. May those in positions of authority learn to acknowledge the source of that authority and get in line with Your will and Your Word. "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people" [Proverbs 14:34]. Lord, have mercy on this nation, which in times past has been so clearly blessed by You! For Jesus' sake. Amen!



**Northern Ireland**

The recent negotiations chaired by American Diplomat Richard Haass ended on New Year's Eve without reaching a comprehensive agreement on the very challenging issues of dealing with the troubled past, flags and emblems and parades and protests. Each of these issues has proven to be highly contentious and lack of agreement is holding back plans to build a shared future. However, progress has undoubtedly been made in the talks and the five main parties have committed to continuing the dialogue. There is a great need for healing in Northern Ireland and the redeeming power of our saviour is the real answer. The breakthrough will come through the power of prayer and it is essential that praying Christians get behind their political leaders and provide the spiritual support that is essential for a consensus to be arrived at and reconciliation to begin.

**2 Corinthians 5:18 (NIV)**

*All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.*

**James 3:18 (NIV)**

*Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.*

**A starting point for prayer:** Our Lord, you are a sovereign God and you rule over the affairs of men. You have a special plan for Northern Ireland and have promised that when your people who are called by your name, the name of Jesus, will humble themselves and pray and seek your face and turn from evil, THEN you will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land. In humility we repent of the sinfulness that has seen many dark days in Northern Ireland and we commit ourselves to the ministry of reconciliation. Heal this beautiful land and its people we pray and bring them into the light that comes with true peace.

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