

January Prayer points: Praying for the Nations

Country	% Christian	
Comoros	<0.1%	Only three churches are permitted across the islands that make up this country and these are used only by foreigners. 99.99% Islamic and becoming more fundamentalist. Despite legally allowing religious freedom, the few Christians face persecution. There are also beliefs in witchcraft and spiritualism. The country is poor with high rates of illiteracy and political instability. (For the geographers, this is an African country which managed to get on the wrong list. Apologies.)
East Timor (Timor-Leste)	87%	Mainly Catholic with a small evangelical and Protestant community. Timor was invaded by Indonesia in 1975 and when it withdrew in 1999, over 100,000 people had died due to war famine and disease and 75% of the country's infrastructure had been destroyed. It is a desperately poor country with a gang culture that draws in young people. Christian resources in local languages are needed.
Fiji	65%	The Methodist Church is very strong in Fiji. As a colonial power Britain brought a large number of Indian workers to Fiji. Their descendants have a lot of economic power but are denied full rights of citizenship as a result the islands are riven by racial tensions. This has caused a big reduction in tourism and the democratic institutions are under stress. It has twice been suspended from the Commonwealth. EU decisions to reduce subsidies on sugar have also caused problems and despite having great potential Fiji is a major aid recipient.
Vanuatu	94%	A poor country with remote tribes still apparently untouched by modernisation, yet regarded as being a happy, stable place. Crime and divorce rates are low however education for many does not go beyond primary. Predominantly Protestant, many political leaders are rooted in church leadership and the country has formally dedicated itself to the Lord. There are some false teachings reported which should be prayed against.
Kiribati	98.5%	Interestingly, the only country that lies across all four hemispheres, this is a group of islands spread across 2 millions sq. kilometres of sea. It has poor transport links, is becoming over populated and has significant drug problems brought in by returning migrant workers. There is high unemployment among the young. On the face of it, the country appears Christian but established churches

		are declining in favour of those who bring in money with financial benefits becoming more important than teaching. Kiribati is also likely to be the first country to 'disappear' due to rising sea levels.
Marshall Islands	97%	As with Kiribati, it is reported that believers are being seduced away from established teachings. The islands are spread over a huge swathe of the Pacific and are under US protection with 60% of its budget coming from US aid. The US still conducts nuclear tests there. There is overpopulation compared to usable landmass leading to unemployment and very poor living conditions. Over dependence on the US is a major issue.
Micronesia, Federated States of	96%	Split between Catholic and Protestant, Micronesia offers a similar tale to other island states above in that there are spiritual influences and false teachings. There is also corruption within the churches with many pastors being appointed by cronies without formal teaching. The islands lack much by way of natural resources and are too remote for tourism. Over 90% of income is derived from the US and this is being reduced. Work is mainly subsistence farming with shoals of tuna the only sellable commodity. Biblical resources are now available in all local languages.
Nauru	93.5%	Nauru is the world's smallest republic with a land mass of only 21 sq miles and just 10,000 people. It has had economic booms and slumps but is now in a severe economic depression with huge unemployment. A westernised culture it has high rates of obesity and diabetes. The main industry of phosphate extraction is close to ending as it is mined out. Nauru is strongly Christian with resources available in the local languages. The country's motto is 'God's will first'.
New Zealand	53%	New Zealand is becoming more secular and it is estimated that there will soon be more people of 'no-belief' than Christians. The country is regarded as one of the least corrupt in the world and is very stable. There has been a growth in more charismatic churches. It is regarded as having dealt well with Covid. There remain tensions with indigenous peoples who suffer high rates of social problems.
Palau	96%	At the confluence of three major ocean currents, Palau has rich animal life and so attracts many tourists. It has US economic support and by Pacific island standards is quite affluent. That brings with it problems of drug and alcohol use and high divorce rates. Despite high levels of association with Christianity, many people pay lip service to it with the young being tempted by materialism. There

		is though a strong presence of Christian ministry on the island.
Papua New Guinea	96%	Probably the most culturally diverse country in the world and still in parts unexplored and untouched by the modern world. There are around 830 languages spoken but high rates of illiteracy so many people have no access to literature. It is predominantly rural. There are social issues due to inter-tribe violence and gang culture and violence. Human trafficking is rife. Although predominantly Christian, in some cases this is mixed with old beliefs and there has been some resurgence in witchcraft related violence.
Samoa	97%	Church is central to life across Samoa with daily prayer times common in villages. There is though some inter-Church rivalry and some pay lip service but the country is proud of its Christian roots. The Mormon church is growing as it is on other islands. Income is derived from tourism and agriculture but many Samoans have to emigrate to find work.
Tuvalu	98%	A tiny country made up of a number of islands, Tuvalu faces an uncertain future. It's highest point is only 16 feet above sea level and it has agreements with Australia and New Zealand in the event of a climactic disaster. The economy is weak but what is available seems well managed although there are increasing foreign influences and income disparities. Many men work overseas. The church is revered and a central part of life with growth in evangelical and charismatic wings. There is though the inevitable conflict with secular forces.
Solomon Islands	96%	A similar story to others above. A strong Christian presence but battles with secularism and old ideas and some only notionally Christian with the Church appearing to stagnate. The church does though have a key role and is a unifying force amid some ethnic divisions so remains a central part of life. There are some undeveloped mineral resources but fishing and timber are major employers although most business is foreign owned.
Tonga	98%	A strongly Christian country the Tongan flag has a cross on it to reflect this. There is though rivalry between churches with people more interested in benefits rather than teaching in some cases. The Mormon Church is growing and many major businesses are Mormon owned. Although the Government is actively seeking to improve economic prospects there is high unemployment. There are more Tongans living aboard than in Tonga and their remittances are economically important. There is a need to develop infrastructure.

