

Missing Pastor's Wife and Friend Confirmed Dead, Police Make 4 Arrests

Authorities have confirmed the tragic deaths of a pastor's wife, Jillian Kelley, and her friend, Veronica Butler who went missing in Oklahoma two weeks ago. Their bodies were reportedly recovered in rural Texas amid an investigation into their disappearance.

The Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation, the FBI and the Texas County Sheriff's Office announced Sunday on X that the bodies would be "transported to the Office of the Oklahoma Chief Medical Examiner to determine identification and cause and manner of death."

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"This case did not end the way we had hoped. It's certainly been a [tragedy for everyone](#) involved," OSBI Director Aungela Spurlock said.

As CBN News reported, The Texas County Sheriff's Office requested help from the public on March 30, when they declared the disappearance of 27-year-old Butler and 39-year-old Kelley, the wife of Pastor Heath Kelley, who were traveling from Kansas to Oklahoma.

The pair had left Hugoton, Kansas, but never arrived at their planned destination, according to a report from [The Kansas City Star](#). The sheriff's office said they were "traveling together to pick up children."

According to descriptions of the two women, Kelley has brown hair and blue eyes and was last seen wearing light blue jeans

and a long-sleeved shirt, while Butler, who is five feet and four inches tall, has red hair and green eyes and was seen wearing denim shorts and a short-sleeved blue shirt.

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Oklahoma police announced Saturday that four people were arrested and charged with two counts of first-degree murder, two counts of kidnapping, and one count of conspiracy to murder in the first degree in connection with Butler and Kelley's disappearance, ABC News reports.

Tad Bert Cullum, 43; Tifany Machel Adams, 54; Cole Earl Twombly, 50, and Cora Twombly, 44 were taken in custody the day before the two bodies were found and were booked into the Texas County Jail.

Adams is the paternal grandmother of Butler's children and Cullum is her boyfriend, according to [NewsNation](#).

Butler was allegedly in the middle of a custody battle with the father of her children and seeking full custody.

To read the full story, [visit our content partners at CBN News](#).

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Wars and Rumors of War: Christian Leader Murdered in Political Assassination

JERUSALEM and south LEBANON – Christian-Muslim tensions in Lebanon have erupted after [the murder of well-known Christian politician Pascal Sleiman](#). Given his fierce opposition to Hezbollah, Lebanese Christians are worried for their safety as the terror group's intimidation grows.

A Syrian gang is believed to have kidnapped and murdered Sleiman, a strong believer and senior member of the Christian Lebanese Forces Party.

Experts here see it as a political assassination linked to Hezbollah, meant to frighten the Christian community and whoever else opposes the group's fight against Israel.

Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah took to the airwaves shortly after the government announced Sleiman's murder, accusing Christians of stirring up chaos.

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"They are not people of truth, nor are they people of justice and they do not care about the national interest, civil peace or anything. They are people of strife and seek civil war," Nasrallah claimed.

Christians feel caught between the Jewish state and the Islamic terror group. The two enemies last fought in 2006.

Here along the valley of Klayaa, a Christian community in south Lebanon, the folks CBN News has spoken to cannot believe that Israel and Hezbollah are once again at war. In fact, this is a region that has seen war for more than 50 years.

AP journalist Lotfalah Daher said, "We are struggling in all aspects, no matter who the players are or their agendas, regardless of which country they are affiliated with, at the end of the day the number one loser in all this are the Christians of Lebanon."

Hezbollah, meaning "The Party of Allah", wields significant power in Lebanese society. They control parts of Beirut, southern Lebanon and the eastern Bekaa Valley region.

Sarit Zehavi of the Alma Research and Education Center said, "[The basic goal of Hezbollah is to distribute the Islamic revolution](#) and to take over Lebanon and to establish an Islamic state in Lebanon. War in Israel serves this goal."

A former IDF intelligence officer, Zehavi is a leading expert on Hezbollah. She says even though Lebanon has the Middle East's highest proportion of Christians, at roughly 30%, Muslims dominate the landscape with Shia Muslims wielding the greatest influence.

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Hezbollah is a Shia group and their power runs deep throughout Lebanon's political structure, including the military.

Zehavi said, "Half of the combat soldiers in the Lebanese Army are Muslim Shiites, they are not going to clash with their brothers in Hezbollah. You can have a family that one is serving in the Lebanese Army and the other one is serving with Hezbollah."

It's why many Christians, like a civilian named Joseph, feel vulnerable to their attacks, intimidation, and persecution. We are concealing his identity for his safety.

A few weeks back, Joseph discovered Hezbollah firing rockets

across the border from his farm.

“They keep using our land as a launching pad. They assemble their missiles here then fire them into Israel,” Joseph said.

In this exclusive interview with CBN News, Joseph told us he repeatedly asked the Lebanese Army to intervene with no response.

“We don’t want our land to be a staging ground for war between these two parties. We take no part in this. What’s happening in Gaza is not our war,” Joseph said.

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WA School Principal Says No to Interfaith Prayer Club After Allowing Pride Club a Week Earlier

Two Washington elementary school students are demanding that their school allow them to start an interfaith prayer club after the school’s principal denied them access to meet on school grounds.

First Liberty Institute, a non-profit legal group, is representing two students from Creekside Elementary and their parents, claiming that [school officials engaged in religious discrimination](#) when they denied the students the opportunity to start a prayer group.

According to the law group, students L.A.W. and J.W. have friends from many different faith backgrounds and wanted to start a prayer club after school to “bring students together to serve their community.”

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L.A.W. and her mother met with Creekside Principal Amy Allison twice in February about the club, but Allison claimed that all the funding for school clubs was allocated in October, so the club would not be allowed to meet.

An LGBTQ Pride club, however, was launched and promoted by teachers just a week before L.A.W. met with the principal.

Allison told L.A.W. that her only option for the prayer club was to pay for space like outside groups.

First Liberty Institute [wrote a letter](#) on behalf of the students alleging Allison’s actions were unlawful and violated both the Free Exercise Clause and the Free Speech Clause.

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“Principal Allison’s suggestion that L.A.W. could apply and pay to use the school’s facilities as if she were an outside organization is [an unlawful sidestep of the law’s requirements](#). As the Supreme Court has repeatedly held, religious clubs must be afforded the same recognition, access, and rights as other non-curricular clubs,” the letter reads.

First Liberty is giving Issaquah School District and Creekside Elementary School until Apr. 22, to approve the prayer club stating it is a “time-sensitive matter.”

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American Flag Canceled at Seattle Dance Competition After Patriotic Team ‘Triggered’ Crowd

Members of a Seattle-based country line dance team were left stunned after being told to change their costumes because their American flag-themed shirts [made attendees feel “triggered and unsafe.”](#)

The Borderline Dance Team says they have experienced a gamut of emotions from “outrage to sympathy to disbelief” after being invited to perform at the Emerald City Hoedown in Seattle, this past weekend.

According to a post from the group on Facebook, they had been asked to perform at the convention for the last three years but were unable to make it until this year.

The dance group accepted the invitation and were excited to take part in it.

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“Dance teams work their boots off preparing for performances like these. Extra practices, babysitters, ferry rides, hours upon hours of practice, and commute time and time away from their families. We all were very excited to perform for this event,” they wrote on Facebook.

When the group arrived in their American flag shirts they were told by the Rain Country Dance Association, an LGBTQ+ dance community, that their stars and stripes made a small group of attendees uncomfortable.

“They had several claims for this reasoning. Mostly associated with the situation in Palestine and the Trans community in America,” the Borderline team shared.

“At first we were told we would just be booed, yelled at and likely many of them would walk out. This did not deter us. But then we were given an ultimatum,” they added.

According to the dance team, they were given the option of changing their outfits, which was impossible because some dancers did not bring another set of clothing, or wear mismatched shirts that were not a part of their brand.

“Or, don’t perform at all, which effectively was asking us to leave,” Borderline wrote on Facebook.

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The team’s co-captain Lindsay Stamp told [The Jason Rantz Show on KTTH](#) that only a “small percentage” of attendees were upset about the shirts, but her entire team was heartbroken about

the ultimatum.

“My team doesn’t take a political stance. We came to dance,” she explained.

The team shared that they were not the only ones who received a complaint.

Another dance team, West Coast Country Heat, also wore patriotic-themed shirts [and were given the same ultimatum.](#)

“Our friends, West Coast Country Heat, who were also scheduled to dance for the convention that evening also did not perform as they too proudly don the colors of our country in the same spirit of patriotism that we do,” the post said. “Both of our teams stood in solidarity and put actions to words.”

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ISIS Plot to Murder American Churchgoers

Federal authorities have thwarted an alleged terror plot in the U.S. in the latest disturbing development on the national security front.

An Idaho man is [facing federal terrorism charges](#) after

authorities say he was going to attack churches in his hometown of Coeur d'Alene.

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The FBI arrested Alexander Mercurio just hours before he planned to kill churchgoers and set fire to their buildings.

Authorities say the 18-year-old is allegedly an ISIS sympathizer. He reportedly told an informant he was going to harm his father and steal his weapons, then go from church to church killing as many people as possible until he was killed.

On Tuesday, FBI Director Christopher Wray warned of the increasing threat of terror attacks in the U.S.

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“While we continue to be concerned about individuals or small groups drawing some kind of [twisted inspiration from the events in the Middle East](#) to carry out attacks here at home, the foreign terrorist threat, and the potential for a coordinated attack here in the homeland, like the ISIS attack we saw at the Russia concert hall just a couple weeks ago, is now increasingly concerning,” Wray said.

Wray also listed the key foreign state threats to the U.S., naming China, Russia and Iran, and calling China “the defining threat” of our generation.

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Claims of Visiting Heaven Prove Bible

[John Burke, a pastor and author](#) who has studied and examined more than 1,000 accounts of near-death experiences, believes such reports provide faith-building evidence of God and the Bible.

Burke, author of the new book *Imagine the God of Heaven: Near-Death Experiences, God's Revelation, and the Love You've Always Wanted*, told CBN Digital why he believes these experiences corroborate Scripture and also detailed what a near-death experience entails.

"It's when someone clinically dies ... their heart stops, they have no brain waves," Burke said. "And yet either modern medicine or miracle brings them back ... minutes later, sometimes it's hours."

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He continued, "And when they come back, they talk about experiencing the life to come, and they talk about how it's more real than anything they've ever experienced in this world."

Burke said his latest book looks at scores of interviews with people from all over the world who've had these clinical near-death experiences.

"They are seeing and experiencing the God of Scripture," he

said. “And we’re looking, not only at His love story told throughout history in the Bible, but also His heart and characteristics, the mystery, the majesty of God.”

Burke, though, knows not everyone believes these heaven visitation stories.

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He said one factor is a failure to understand “these are testimonies” that shed light on God’s nature. Another is the complexities that come from trying to describe other-worldly experiences using the confines of human language.

“The way I like to describe it is: imagine if all of our existence is being lived on a flat, black-and-white painting on the wall of your home,” Burke said. “Death means separation. Your soul separates from your body. So, imagine at death, you peel off that two-dimensional black-and-white painting, you come out here into a three-dimensional world of color, and then imagine getting pressed back in and you have to describe three dimensions of color in two-dimensional black and white terms.”

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The Eclipse: Is this America's 'Nineveh Moment?'

Millions of skywatchers have gathered along a [narrow corridor](#) stretching from Mexico to Canada, eagerly awaiting today's total eclipse of the sun.

Almost everyone in North America will be guaranteed at least a partial eclipse, weather permitting.

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Unfortunately, some areas could only see clouds. The best weather is expected in New England and Canada.

Suelen Moraiz, in Texas for the eclipse, said, "I do have weather concerns but I'm really hopeful that we're going to have a very good experience."

Lindsey DeMoss admitted, "Its going to be disappointing definitely if it its cloudy."

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The timing and location of this particular eclipse has some reading biblical and [prophetic significance](#).

On [CBN's Global Lane program](#), Reverend Jeff Begley, co-author of "[Revelation 911: How the Book of Revelation Intersects with Today's Headlines](#)," said, "the fact that it goes over seven cities called 'Nineveh' and one called 'Jonah', makes you wonder. Is this our Nineveh moment? America, it's a time to reflect on where we stand on a number of issues."

The next total solar eclipse in 2026 will only be seen over

the Atlantic and in Spain. Alaska will have one in 2033 and the next chance for the lower 48 won't come for another 20 years.

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War At 6-Month Mark: Israel Pulls IDF Division from Gaza after US Pressure; Netanyahu Still Plans Rafah Invasion

JERUSALEM, Israel – Israel announced Sunday it has pulled a key division out of the southern Gaza Strip. It's a major shift in the war, [as Israelis commemorate six months](#) after the Oct. 7 massacre and kidnappings.

Israel's Defense Minister Yoav Gallant says the pullout is a sign of the beating Hamas has taken at this stage of the war.

"Hamas has ceased to function as a military organization throughout the Gaza Strip," Gallant said.

Yet, within an hour, Hamas terrorists were firing rockets at seven Israeli communities from the area Israel's military had just left.

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Still, as the fighting reaches the half-year mark, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu sees the elimination of Hamas just ahead.

“We are marking today six months of war. The achievements of the war are great. We eliminated 19 out of 24 Hamas battalions, including senior commanders. We killed, wounded, or captured a significant number of Hamas terrorists,” Netanyahu said.

He added, “We cleared Shifa, as well as many other terrorist headquarters, we destroyed rocket manufacturing plants, war rooms, weapons and ammunition caches and we continue to systematically destroy the underground (tunnels). We are a step away from victory.”

Former IDF International Spokesman Jonathan Conricus told CBN News there are several possible reasons for the timing of Israel’s pullout.

“On the tactical level, what you can read into it is that the IDF is pulling out troops in order to get them some rest and time to reorganize in order [to be prepared for the next stage of missions.](#) That’s one way of looking at it,” Conricus explained.

The next stage of missions would be an invasion of Rafah. Yet, Conricus also says the move can be seen as the result of American pressure.

“There was, a few days ago, an important and reportedly heated conversation between the (U.S.) president and the prime minister. And the demands were made. And you could think about what Israel is doing now is an implementation of those demands,” he suggested.

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A third reason for the pullout now could be the preparation for a greater conflict with Hezbollah in Lebanon and Syria.

“Time will have to tell and we will have to wait (to see) which one of the options it was. But it could be either one or a combination of all,” Conricus noted.

Netanyahu and Gallant insist on an invasion of Rafah, where Hamas’ last intact battalions are holing up. As it has for weeks, the White House disagrees.

Speaking on *CBS Face the Nation*, National Security Council Spokesman John Kirby declared, “All I can do is say what I said before: we don’t support a major ground operation in Rafah. That has not changed. And we’re looking forward to having conversations with the Israelis about alternatives to those kinds of operations.”

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Eclipse Weather Forecast:

Clouds Could Spoil View along Much of Eclipse Path

If you're in Vermont, Maine and Canada, you're in luck. But for the rest of the path of Monday's [total solar eclipse](#), it could be dicey weather-wise.

Clouds are forecast for much of the eclipse route through the U.S. with some possible patches of clear skies in some spots, according to the [latest forecast](#) from the National Weather Service.

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Northern New England into Canada is still the best bet [to witness the eclipse](#), when the moon blocks out the sun for a few minutes and day turns into night.

Texas is likely to have the heaviest cloud cover. More concerning, the weather service is forecasting severe weather—tornadoes and hail—about the time of the eclipse for parts of Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Louisiana.

The forecast for the eclipse path has been fairly consistent for the past 10 days, said David Roth, a meteorologist with the weather service.

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"Things aren't moving that fast," he said Sunday.

The [path of total darkness](#) stretches from Mexico and Texas through Maine and parts of Canada.

At the Great Lakes Science Center in Cleveland on Sunday,

weather service meteorologist Alexa Maines tried to reassure visitors that [all was not lost](#). A warm front was due to bring in clouds Monday morning, but they could clear out by eclipse time. “Cloud cover is one of the trickiest things to forecast,” she said.

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The New Evangelical Voter: Populist and Skeptical

Defining the evangelical voter has always been a challenge. And nowadays, it’s become even more complicated. Former GOP nominee for president Mike Huckabee says [evangelicals don’t just fit into one box anymore](#).

“I get so tired of hearing, particularly this line, ‘Well, evangelicals are all ... ‘ and then fill in the blank,” Huckabee tells CBN News. “Evangelicals are not all anything. Evangelicals are people with a lot of different views.”

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Huckabee knows the playing field because when he first ran for president in 2008, his more populist tone resonated with evangelicals long before Donald Trump came along. “I was

talking about working-class issues,” Huckabee says. “At that time, it was a little bit too soon for the Republican Party to hear it.”

Fast-forward to 2024 when headlines began declaring “Trump has Transformed Evangelicals” and Trump is “Connecting with a Different Type of Voter.” It highlights the changes. They result from the former president’s appeal to those who might not attend church regularly and are seen as anti-establishment and anti-elitist.

“I think it’s fair that he’s brought out a whole different segment of voters that have been really missing,” says Chad Connelly, founder of Faith Wins. Asked whether evangelicals are part of that movement, he tells CBN News emphatically, “Absolutely it includes evangelicals.”

Big Political Shifts for Evangelicals

A growing distrust of the federal government has helped drive this change. In 2017, 31% of white evangelical Protestants expressed trust in the government. Today, the number has dropped more than half to 15%.

Perhaps a more telling shift is the standard on [the personal morality of a candidate](#). More than a decade ago, 30% of white evangelicals believed an elected official could commit personal immoral acts and still be ethical in their public life. That number has now skyrocketed to 72%.

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Then there’s the contrast in education. Exit polls in this year’s GOP primaries show that while Trump splits the college-educated evangelical vote, he wins more than two-thirds of those who didn’t go to college.

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