

# PRAYER ALERT...

An initiative of the Prayer Forum of the British Isles & Ireland  
www.prayer-alert.net editor@prayer-alert.net

Issue 1809

Website

Contact Us

Donations

Friday 01 May 2009

## ■ British Isles & Ireland

- [FRIDAY FOCUS: 1 May 2009 - Hope for the state of our nation - Jeremiah 6:16-18](#)
- [Teacher suspended for Christian beliefs](#)
- [Atheists target UK schools](#)
- [Methodist Church aims to close gap between work and worship](#)
- [Call for one million hours of prayer for one of England's toughest cities](#)
- [Christians to mobilise for outreach at London Olympics](#)
- [Leader of Ireland's Roman Catholics urges prayer by Twitter](#)

## ■ Europe

- [Germany: Atheist Berlin to decide on religion's place in its schools](#)
- [Slovenia and Croatia: EU urges end to border dispute](#)
- [Elections to the European Parliament](#)

## ■ Worldwide

- [World Health Organization raises pandemic alert level](#)
- [Somalia: European aid workers released](#)
- [Somalia: Bishop says piracy is 'fight back' against globalisation](#)
- [Iraq: Gunmen kill Christians in Kirkuk](#)
- [Argentina: Priests in drug protest](#)
- [Kenya: Charities highlight new food crisis](#)

## ■ Praise Reports

- [Brown suffers a surprise defeat over Gurkhas](#)
- [Redeeming Our Communities launches in Liverpool](#)

## BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

### ■ **FRIDAY FOCUS: 1 May 2009 - Hope for the state of our nation - Jeremiah 6:16-18**

Our nation continues to need more prayer in this time of economic instability.

**Pray:** That the church will learn how to wait on the Lord for wisdom and direction in this difficult time and that God would have mercy on this nation.

**More:** [http://worldprayer.org.uk/uploads/Friday\\_Focus\\_May\\_2009.doc](http://worldprayer.org.uk/uploads/Friday_Focus_May_2009.doc)

### ■ **Teacher suspended for Christian beliefs**

A Christian teacher has been suspended from a senior post for complaining that a staff training day was used to promote homosexual rights. Kwabena Peat, 54, left a compulsory training session with several other Christian colleagues at the north London school after the speaker, Sue Sanders, invited by the School head teacher, openly questioned why people thought heterosexuality was natural. Mr Peat says that Ms Sanders, who openly describes herself as a lesbian, told him and his colleagues that those who did not accept that being homosexual was 'normal' had 'issues' they must deal with. He said: 'I expected the training session to help us by providing good information on how to handle bullying but she had another agenda. She started promoting homosexual lifestyles and suggesting those who had objections should sort out their prejudices'. Mr Peat, who is a year-head, and other staff were deeply upset that teaching staff, and others, who disagreed out of Christian conviction were given no opportunity to respond.

**Pray:** [against the ongoing attacks on Christians in the workplace. Pray for their ability to stand firm in their faith.](#)  
(2Ch.20:17)

**More:** <http://www.christianlegalcentre.com/view.php?id=729>

### ■ **Atheists target UK schools**

Atheists are targeting schools in a campaign designed to challenge Christian societies, collective worship and religious education. Backed by professors Richard Dawkins and AC Grayling, the initiative aims to establish a network of atheist societies in schools to counter the role of Christianity. It will coincide with the first atheist summer camp for children that will teach that religious belief and doctrines can prevent ethical and moral behaviour. The federation aims to encourage students to lobby their schools and local authorities over what is taught in RE lessons and to call for daily acts of collective worship to be scrapped. It wants the societies to hold talks and educational events to persuade students not to believe in God. Simon Calvert of the Christian Institute said: 'Atheists are becoming increasingly militant in their desperate attempts to stamp out faith. It is deeply worrying that they now want to use children to attack the Christian ethos of their schools.'

**Pray:** that in the face of such challenges, those of faith will rise up to proclaim the Word with power and authority from God. (Ep.6:14-16)

**More:** <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/5219687/Atheists-target-UK-schools.html>

#### ■ **Methodist Church aims to close gap between work and worship**

As the recession continues to dig in its heels, the Methodist Church is pioneering ways to bridge the gap between work and place of worship. May 3 will see the first Business Sunday, a day when leaders of Methodist services will be encouraged to connect their sermons with the whole world of work. Business Sunday was an idea instigated by Vice-President of the Methodist Conference, David Walton, following an ethical business consultation at the Martin Luther King Centre in Manchester in October. The date May 3 was chosen because of its proximity to Labour Day and Rogation Sunday; two festivals which remember the joys and trials of working life. David said 'We are not spending enough time making the link between our faith and our working lives. We often include doctors and teachers in our prayers, but we don't pray for the entrepreneurs, estate agents, accountants or people working in industry and commerce generally.'

**Pray:** for those who encounter difficulty in living their faith in their working lives. (Hab.2:4b)

**More:** <http://www.methodist.org.uk/index.cfm?fuseaction=opentogod.newsDetail&newsid=344>

#### ■ **Call for one million hours of prayer for one of England's toughest cities**

One of the UK's best known youth evangelists Andy Hawthorne is calling on Christians around the world to take part in a million hours of prayer for Manchester, a city that has one the highest rates of knife crime in the country. The one million hours of prayer initiative is in partnership with The Message Trust, UCB, Audacious, World Prayer Centre and many others, who are calling for 30,000 Christians around the world to commit to 20 minutes of prayer a day for 100 days for the city of Manchester starting this Friday May 1st. Andy's vision is to enable every young person in the city of Manchester to repeatedly hear the Christian message and he strongly believes this will only come about as a result of focused prayer.

**Pray:** that God will raise up an army of intercessors to pray for Manchester and that the message of God's grace would be heard loud and clear. (Jer.29:7)

**More:** <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/2009/s09040153.htm>

#### ■ **Christians to mobilise for outreach at London Olympics**

Christians from all denominations will come together for a major conference in July to see how they can maximise the presence of the church during the 2012 Olympics in London. The conference is being hosted by More than Gold, a church charity that has been coordinating outreach at the Olympics since the 1996 Games in Atlanta, when local churches distributed more than three million cups of water across the different Olympic venues. More Than Gold, chaired by Lord Mawhinney, Chairman of the Football League, is hoping that the conference will pave the way for similar outreach during London 2012. The charity is looking to inspire community festivals, prayer, performing arts initiatives, sports mission, chaplaincy and the mobilisation of thousands of volunteers in the run-up to and during the Games. The Archbishop of Canterbury and Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster have already given their backing to the initiative, as has Olympics minister Tessa Jowell.

**Pray:** for all those who are seeking to coordinate prayer and outreach that they will be open to the Holy Spirit's guidance. (Pr.24:5-6)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/christians.to.mobilise.for.outreach.at.london.olympics/23213.htm>

#### ■ **Leader of Ireland's Roman Catholics urges prayer by Twitter**

Cardinal Sean Brady, the leader of Ireland's Roman Catholics, has urged social network users to start sending daily prayers by text, Twitter or e-mail. The Primate of All Ireland and Archbishop of Armagh said: 'Make someone the gift of a prayer through text, twitter or e-mail every day. Such a sea of prayer is sure to strengthen our sense of solidarity with one another and remind those who receive them that others really do care.' He told followers to turn off their televisions, computers and mobile phones in order to pray more effectively. He was speaking as he unveiled a statue of Father Patrick Peyton, the man known as the 'rosary priest' because of his work to promote the saying of the rosary by families together. 'He attracted the support of many famous film stars along the way. I am sure if there had been mobile phones in his day Father Peyton would have been into texting and Twitter!'

**Pray:** for those who can use new means to promote intercessory prayer and for those who may receive it. (Phi.4:6)

**More:** <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newsttopics/religion/5235473/Leader-of-Irelands-Roman-Catholics-urges-prayer-by-Twitter.html>

## EUROPE

#### ■ **Germany: Atheist Berlin to decide on religion's place in its schools**

Decked out in campaign posters, Berlin is a city in the midst of poll fever. Full-page advertisements have been bought in the city's newspapers, street protests are being held, and sport and television personalities are being drawn into emotional public debates. But this is no election campaign: at stake is the soul of this devoutly secular city. Only 36% of people profess to having a religious allegiance in Berlin, often described as the 'atheist capital of Europe'. So a referendum on Sunday on whether religious education should have the same status in the classroom as ethics teaching has provoked a bitter stand-off. Christian Democrats and the churches have railed against the left, believers against atheists, west Berliners against east Berliners, and the middle classes against the proletariat. Unlike in other German states, secular ethics has been a compulsory topic in the city-state of Berlin since 2006, after the 'honour killing' of a Turkish woman murdered by her brother because of her western lifestyle.

**Pray:** that Christian ethics, and not secular ethics, will be recognised for the benefits they can bring to the nation. (Job.37:5)

**More:** [http://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/Atheist\\_Berlin\\_To\\_Decide\\_On\\_Religion's\\_Place\\_In\\_Its\\_Schools.aspx?ArticleID=3064&PageID=12&RefPageID=5](http://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/Atheist_Berlin_To_Decide_On_Religion's_Place_In_Its_Schools.aspx?ArticleID=3064&PageID=12&RefPageID=5)

#### ■ Slovenia and Croatia: EU urges end to border dispute

The EU on Monday called on Slovenia and Croatia to accept a European Commission proposal for international arbitration in order to solve their long-standing border dispute, warning that if the quarrel drags on it could have repercussions on other countries in the region. 'We recall the urgency attached to this issue,' Czech deputy prime minister Alexandr Vondra, whose country currently holds the rotating EU presidency, said at a press conference following a meeting of EU foreign ministers in Luxembourg where Croatia's EU progress was discussed. 'Many member states feel a certain sense of urgency, that the stalemate cannot last forever, that very much is at stake, the whole strategic concept towards the Western Balkans, as well as other disputes,' Mr Vondra added. Slovenia and Croatia have been unable to agree on their common land and sea border since they both seceded from Yugoslavia in 1991.

**Pray:** that this dispute would soon be settled and neighbour would live with neighbour in peace. (Lk.6:35)

**More:** <http://euobserver.com/9/28022>

#### ■ Elections to the European Parliament

Elections will be held from 4 June to 7 June 2009 in the 27 member states of the EU, using varying election days according to local custom. 496 million Union citizens will elect 736 MEPs by proportional representation.

**Pray:** that God would raise up Godly men and women to lead the parliament forward into the future. (Ro.12:8)

**More:** Please type or paste in full url starting with <http://>

## WORLDWIDE

#### ■ World Health Organization raises pandemic alert level

The UN's WHO has raised the alert over the spread of swine flu to level five - one short of a full-blown pandemic. A phase five alert means human-to-human transmission in at least two countries. The move comes after a 23-month-old Mexican child died in Texas - the first death from swine flu outside Mexico, where the outbreak originated. Announcing the latest alert level after an emergency WHO meeting in Geneva, Director General Margaret Chan urged all countries to activate their pandemic plans, including heightened surveillance and infection-control measures. She said action should be undertaken with 'increased urgency'. Officials put the number of suspected deaths from swine flu in Mexico at 159. Texas Governor Rick Perry said closing the US border with Mexico was an option, but added that taking that step now would be 'a little premature'.

**Pray:** for God's grace and wisdom to those who seek ways of dealing with this outbreak and equip them for the task.

**More:** <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/8025931.stm>

#### ■ Somalia: European aid workers released

The two aid workers, one Belgian and one Dutch, had been working for Doctors Without Borders. They were abducted by a group of gunmen on April 19 while travelling between towns in the Bakool region of southern Somalia, near the border with Ethiopia. A clan leader in Bakool, Ali Mumin, confirmed their release and said no ransom had been paid. The kidnapers had previously demanded a \$4 million ransom for the hostages. Abductions of aid workers are common in Somalia. According to the United Nations, 16 aid workers are being held in Somalia, including four Europeans and two Kenyans. A total of 26 aid workers were abducted in 2008, and 35 killed. Aid officials warn the insecurity threatens the humanitarian effort in Somalia, where more than three million people, or almost half the population, require emergency food aid.

**Pray:** for the aid workers who are still held in Somalia as we give thanks for those who have been released. (Ps.75:1)

**More:** <http://www.voanews.com/english/2009-04-28-voa15.cfm>

#### ■ Somalia: Bishop says piracy is 'fight back' against globalisation

The Anglican Bishop in the Horn of Africa has said that piracy in the region is 'almost an industry' and is a way for Somalis to 'fight back' against injustices caused by globalisation. In recent weeks, attacks by Somali pirates have risen markedly and drawn the attention of the media - particularly after the capture and then miraculous rescue of American cargo ship captain Richard Phillips. A second ship carrying donated food to Rwanda for World Vision was attacked earlier in the month by pirates off the coast of Somalia. No one was hurt in the attack and the ship was later allowed to continue to its destination. A Russian warship captured a suspected pirate vessel with 29 people on board off the coast of Somalia, Russian news agencies reported on Wednesday, The Rt Rev Andrew Proud, who is currently visiting the UK said 'My understanding is that, in the last 20 or 30 years, there has been a lot of illegal fishing off that coast, and perhaps nuclear waste being dumped, and this had led to the people wanting to fight back,' he said, according to the Church Times.

**Pray:** for the people of Somalia that ways would be found to meet their needs and a solution to the piracy problems. (Is.58:9-11)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/bishop.says.somali.piracy.is.fight.back.against.globalisation/23175.htm>

#### ■ Iraq: Gunmen kill Christians in Kirkuk

Gunmen in Iraq shot five Chaldean Catholic Christians in their Kirkuk homes on Sunday (April 26) in two separate attacks, killing three and injuring two. Cousins Suzan and Muna were killed in a suburb of the northern Iraqi city. Within a few minutes, Yousif Shaba and his sons Thamir and Basil were also shot in the same area, leaving the 17-year-old Basil dead.

One of nine suspects arrested is from the former insurgent stronghold of Ramadi and has suspected links to Al Qaeda, a source told Compass. Chaldean Christians have been hardest hit in the northern city of Mosul, where thousands of families have fled since an uptick in violence started last October, but Kirkuk has largely avoided the sectarian bloodshed of the region. For this reason clergy believe the five Christians were targeted purely for their religion. 'They were peaceful Christian families, not involved in any political affiliation or such activities,' said Father Emanuel Youkhana of Christian Aid Program Nohadra Iraq.

**Pray:** for the Christians of Iraq as they face up to intimidations and even death, that the Lord will provide protection and blessings. (Ps.5:11)

**More:** <http://www.compassdirect.org/en/display.php?page=news&lang=en&length=short&idelement=5897&backpage=summaries>

#### ■ Argentina: Priests in drug protest

Hundreds of priests in Argentina have highlighted their concern after two of their number received death threats. Some 353 Catholic priests in Buenos Aires signed a document in support of the men, who work with addicts in some of the city's poorest neighbourhoods. The Church last month published a report highlighting a huge increase in drug addiction and dealing in the city. The report said hard drugs, like Paco - a kind of crack cocaine - are sold openly and often near schools. The report added that there was a lack of political will to deal with the results. 'The drug trade has been like a tsunami breaking over us,' said Padre Pepe de Paola, one of the priests who has received death threats. 'Heavy drug trafficking started in 2001 when the Argentine economy crashed and we haven't been able to cope.'

**Pray:** that the Church will be able to stand up to the drug cartels and be an instrument of change. (Ps.12:7)

**More:** <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/8023928.stm>

#### ■ Kenya: Charities highlight new food crisis

Three major development agencies based in the UK have highlighted a new food crisis in Kenya. Oxfam, Care International and Concern Worldwide reported on Tuesday that rising food prices in the country had created a major food crisis for the urban poor. Whereas in some more rural areas of Kenya there are food shortages, in the slums, people are starving because they cannot afford to buy food. A joint study by the charities in Nairobi's shantytown, Kibera - the largest slum in sub-Saharan Africa - showed that 4,000 children under the age of five were malnourished. 'The urban poor rely on the markets for 90 per cent of their food and other products,' said Bud Carnall, director of Care International. 'This has made them the hardest hit by the recent commodity price increases.' The news came a day after the Catholic Church urged the Kenyan government to enforce price controls on basic commodities.

**Pray:** for the people of Kenya as they face up to the rising price of food and that the authorities and agencies will be enabled to meet their needs. (Pr.13:23)

**More:** <http://www.eklesia.co.uk/node/9361>

## PRAISE REPORTS

#### ■ Brown suffers a surprise defeat over Gurkhas

Government has suffered a surprise defeat in the Commons on its policy of restricting the right of former Gurkhas to settle in the UK. MPs voted by 267 to 246 in favour of a Lib Dem motion that all Gurkhas be offered an equal right of residence. Under pressure from opposition leaders in the Commons, the Prime Minister suggested Britain could not afford the £1.4 billion cost of an open door policy for Gurkhas. Liberal Democrat leader Nick Clegg launched a scathing attack on the Government's position, accusing the Prime Minister of giving 'deeply, deeply evasive' answers and adding: 'There is a simple moral principle at stake. It is this: if someone is prepared to die for this country surely they deserve to live in this country.' The High Court last year declared that preventing Gurkhas who had served in the British Army before 1997 from living in this country was unlawful. (See Prayer Alert 0209)

**Praise:** that this vote will finally lead to a just solution and that our government will honour its obligations. (Mt.5:37)

**More:** [http://www.theway.co.uk/news/shownews.php?news\\_id=7158](http://www.theway.co.uk/news/shownews.php?news_id=7158)

#### ■ Redeeming Our Communities launches in Liverpool

Redeeming Our Communities - Liverpool launches at the Liverpool Echo Arena on June 16th. The evening will give the opportunity to listen to speakers and hear some of the new and exciting projects that are being developed around Merseyside. The main theme of the evening will be 'Tackling Gun and Knife Crime', how to prevent it and how to effectively engage young people. Redeeming Our Communities, an initiative of City Links, was launched nationally at the NEC in Birmingham in 2006 when 7,000 people gathered to hear inspirational ideas and stories concerning partnering with the police towards community transformation. Debra Green, Director of City Links, says 'We have just launched a '10 Cities' strategy to work across the UK and we are delighted to be in Liverpool on June 16th. Merseyside Police have kindly invited us to bring this event and initiative into the city and we expect to see great results.'

**Praise:** that as this initiative is launched in Liverpool it will lead to a transformation in the community. (Ph.3:20-21)

**More:** <http://www.citylinks.org.uk/>

## PRAYER FORUM OF BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

Please feel free to distribute Prayer Alert to anyone you feel will benefit from its ministry. All we ask is that you do not edit or change it in any way or charge for its use without contacting us for written permission.

Prayer Alert is a partnership project of the Prayer Forum of the British Isles and Ireland  
C/O World Prayer Centre, Cornerstone House, 5 Ethel Street, Birmingham, B2 4BG, England