

# PRAYER ALERT...

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

### ■ **FRIDAY FOCUS: 22 May 2009 - Hope for our work colleagues and friends - 2 Peter 3:8-9**

Yesterday, was the beginning of the 10 days of prayer which concludes with the Global Day of Prayer (31st May). Let's pray during these 10 days for God to bring salvation to those we know.

**Pray:** For divine appointments and opportunities to share about Jesus with colleagues and friends. For God to soften hearts so that people may receive God's word when it comes

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

### ■ **Boris Johnson backs Global Day of Prayer**

London Mayor Boris Johnson has come out in support of a major citywide prayer event on Pentecost Sunday. Each of the capital's 33 boroughs will unite together for the Global Day of Prayer on 31 May to pray for London, the Government and the nation. Previous Global Day of Prayer events have seen tens of thousands of Christians together in West Ham and Millwall football stadiums, and thousands are expected to take part again this year. Johnson showed his support for the event last year, where he asked Christians to pray for his vision to transform London and work for better community cohesion. He was later prayed for onstage by church leaders including the Bishop of Barking, the Rt Rev David Hawkins, and GDOP London convener Pastor Jonathan Oloyede. The Global Day of Prayer London is part of a worldwide day of prayer taking place across some 220 countries on May 31. (See Prayer Alert 1909)

**Pray:** for all those involved in organising this event and that it will be well supported. (Ps.65:2)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/boris.johnson.backs.global.day.of.prayer/23393.htm>

### ■ **Report on Ireland child abuse due**

The findings of a nine-year inquiry into abuse suffered by children in Catholic institutions in Ireland over a 60-year period are due to be published. About 35,000 children were placed in a network of reformatories, industrial schools and workhouses up to the 1980s. More than 2,000 told the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse they suffered physical and sexual abuse while there. The BBC's Mark Simpson said the inquiry was expected to criticise the Church's handling of sex abuse complaints. The institutions housed abandoned or neglected children, but courts also sent those guilty of truancy and petty crime. The commission was established in 2000 after the then Taoiseach Bertie Ahern issued an apology on behalf of the State to the victims of child abuse. Led by Mr Justice Sean Ryan, the commission's report is believed to be five volumes and 2,500 pages long.

**Pray:** for those who will be affected by this report including especially the victims of abuse and that God will give wisdom to those who decide what must be done next. (Pr.2:6)

**More:** <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/8058224.stm>

### ■ Church leaders speak out against prejudice ahead of elections

Bishops from the West Midlands have added their voices to calls from church leaders asking people not to support extremist parties in the forthcoming European elections. In a joint statement, 11 bishops encourage church members to vote in the elections on June 4 and urge them to 'resist' parties that promote prejudices based on country of origin, race or religion. 'We cannot stand by when groups and individuals are maligned, misrepresented and singled out for verbal or even physical abuse, say the bishops. 'Any prejudice against others should be deeply offensive to all Christians, who believe that all are equal and immensely valued in the eyes of God. So we wish to express in the strongest terms our distaste for any political platform which has the effect of destabilising communities.' (See also Europe)

**Pray:** for people's hearts to be moved to stand against the evil of prejudice, whatever form it may take. (1Pe.3:12)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.co.uk/article/church.leaders.speak.out.against.prejudice.ahead.of.elections/23382.htm>

### ■ Evangelical Alliance urges churches to confront money issues

The Evangelical Alliance is to host a finance-focused seminar at this year's Pentecost Festival in a bid to get churches talking more openly about money and debt. <http://www.pentecostfestival.co.uk/#> 'Churches are failing their members and communities by avoiding openly talking about money and debt', the EA said. The seminar will be joined by Credit Action's Chris Tapp and National Stewardship and Resources Officer for the Church of England, John Preston. Mr Tapp said: 'Money is generally seen as a very private subject and this all too often leads to reluctance on the part of churches in discussing financial matters, however it is an absolutely crucial issue for Christians to tackle especially today when so many in our churches and communities are struggling desperately with money and debt issues.' They will lead conversations in the role of churches in fighting insecurity, unemployment and debt, and consider how Christians respond to the economic crisis.

**Pray:** for an understanding of the role the church can play in supporting people in times of economic difficulty. (Pr.13:11)

**More:** <http://www.eklesia.co.uk/node/9471>

### ■ Law will force churches to employ gay staff

Religious groups are to be forced to accept homosexual youth workers, secretaries and other staff, even if their faith holds same-sex relationships to be sinful. Christian organisations fear that the tightened legislation, which is due to come into force next year, will undermine the integrity of churches and dilute their moral message. It comes amid growing concern that Christians are being unfairly targeted by discrimination laws, following a number of high-profile cases of courts finding against believers who stand up for their faith. Religious leaders had hoped to lobby for exemptions to the Equality Bill but Maria Eagle, the deputy equalities minister, has now indicated that it will cover almost all church employees. A spokesman for the Christian Institute said that many churchgoers had deep concerns about how the bill would be enforced and accused politicians of hypocrisy. It would be absurd to pass a law demanding that the Labour Party employ card-carrying Conservative members, but that is effectively what churches are being told to do.

**Pray:** that even at this stage there will be change of mind before this legislation comes into force. (Ps.55:1)

**More:** <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstoppers/religion/5357247/Law-will-force-churches-to-employ-gay-staff.html>

### ■ No whip for Labour Lords on assisted suicide vote

The Coroners and Justice Bill includes provisions that would make it illegal to encourage suicide on a website. However, some members of the House of Commons and some Peers in the House of Lords wish to legalise assistance with suicide. Lord Bach's introduction to the Bill on behalf of the Government offered some cautious advice that the 'issue of doctor-assisted dying is too important and too profound for it to be slipped into a passing Government Bill. It warrants a Bill of its own and, in the Government's view, a Private Member's Bill at that.' The Government do not want to deal with the issue of assisted suicide in this Bill. A number of Peers, however, spoke in favour of legalising doctor-assisted suicide. Baroness Jay of Paddington (Labour) said that she remained 'strongly in favour of a change to the law.' However, 'this is not the Bill in which to attempt a wide-scale reform of that law.'

**Pray:** for our government that they will be able to listen to God prompting as they consider this legislation. (Ps.49:1-3)

**More:** <http://www.ccfon.org/>

## EUROPE

### ■ Vote in the European Elections

European and local elections will take place on 4 June. The European Parliament is the only directly elected part of the European Union, so this is our chance to have a say. The European Parliament is elected through proportional representation and this means that minor parties have a greater chance of winning seats. With the recent furore over expenses many people are disillusioned with politicians and may not vote. However, now is the most important time to vote. We need representatives with integrity in all our political institutions. The European Evangelical Alliance, working with Care for Europe has produced a dedicated website for these elections – see link. Your vote for the Christian Party Christian Peoples Alliance, <http://www.christianparty.org.uk/EuropeanElection09/aboutus0.html> who are working together again for the European Elections, could help ensure that an uncompromising Christian voice is heard where it counts.

**Pray:** for God's people across Europe that they will be given wisdom to vote according to the Spirit's leading. (Pr.1:5)

**More:** [http://www.vote2009.eu/index.php?page=christian\\_citizenship&l=en](http://www.vote2009.eu/index.php?page=christian_citizenship&l=en)

### ■ Russian police break up gay march

Police in Russia have broken up a march by gay-rights activists in Moscow hours before the Eurovision Song Contest final. At least 30 campaigners had gathered near a university and were later arrested by riot police for taking part in the

demonstration condemning the treatment of gays and lesbians in Russia. The group, which included Peter Tatchell, British gay rights activist, were dragged away by police when they waved flags and chanted slogans demanding equal rights, including: 'Homophobia is a disgrace of this country!' As he was being taken away by police, Tatchell said: 'This shows the Russian people are not free.' Among those detained was Nikolai Alexeyev, a Russian gay rights leader. Police said they were arresting him for walking with a transvestite. Earlier on Saturday, a counter-demonstration by nationalist and religious groups was allowed to be held.

**Pray:** for God to speak into the hearts and minds of those who have been deceived. (1Cor.6:9)

**More:** <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/europe/2009/05/2009516101017326355.html>

## WORLDWIDE

### ■ Sri Lanka: Battle won - war not ended

Sri Lankan church leaders say its time to address grievances 'enabling all ethnic and religious groups to become a nation in which every woman, man and child, regardless of religion or ethnicity is made to feel equal, free and proud to call themselves Sri Lankan. Now is the time to take prayerful, purposeful and collective steps towards an integrated, united and just Sri Lanka. The process must begin with the children, schools, Buddhist temples, Hindu temples, mosques and churches.' Meanwhile the authorities have said that because of security, access to certain areas is restricted and the Red Cross had to halt its activities even though 265,000 ethnic Tamils were displaced in the recent offensive and many have been sent to overcrowded camps in the country's north.

**Pray:** for unity in the multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and multi-cultural community of Sri Lanka and a political formula that is open to international assistance. (Ps.140:11-14)

**More:** <http://www.eni.ch/featured/article.php?id=3021>

### ■ Pakistan: Prediction of imminent violence against Christians

The Taliban has turned on Christians over the US and Pakistan's military operations in Swat Valley. A Christian colony was attacked causing fear and panic and forcing them to join 200,000 others fleeing the area. Karachi is a growing foothold of the Taliban with attacks on Christian slums by extremists. Pastor Salim Sadiq of Holy Spirit Church in Karachi said homes were invaded and people beaten by Islamic extremists vowing to avenge for 'the suffering of their brotherhood' and shouting 'death to infidels.' Christians have no voice here. We are suffering under the staunch Muslim militants who rape our daughters, burn our churches and raze down our homes.' There is rising fear that Taliban insurgents will spread. An 11-year-old was killed during violence towards Christians who were protesting against anti-Christian graffiti on the walls of their Church.

**Pray:** for an outpouring of Godly confidence for all those under the spectre of fear and for Him to contain and restrain the spirit of violence cloaking the area. (Ps.14:4-6)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/pakistan.taliban.strikes.christians.with.a.vengeance/23381.htm>

### ■ Australia: Homosexual indoctrination now aimed at two year olds

A book that teaches children about lesbian mums getting pregnant using sperm donors is being pitched at kids as young as two. The publication, Where Did I Really Come From? also features a drawing of two gay men holding a baby in a chapter about surrogacy. The book, which includes descriptions of sexual intercourse is being promoted as suitable to be read to two-year-old children. But angry family advocates claim the book targets children too young. 'It devalues the traditional family unit and at the very least desensitises us,' Focus On The Family spokeswoman Deb Sorensen said. The book was first penned in the early 1990s, but has been updated and re-launched by Learn to Include, which has published a range of books featuring child characters whose parents are gay.

**Pray:** not only that this publication never reaches its audience, but for children, youth and adults all to be protected from ungodly teaching on lifestyle choices. (Dt.32:2)

**More:** [http://ausprayernet.org.au/newsletter/DisplayNewsletter.php?e\\_id=0000001732#st4](http://ausprayernet.org.au/newsletter/DisplayNewsletter.php?e_id=0000001732#st4)

### ■ America: One in seven freed detainees return to terrorism

An unreleased Pentagon report concludes about one in seven of the 534 prisoners transferred abroad from Guantánamo Bay has returned to terrorism or militant activity. The conclusion could strengthen the arguments of critics who have warned against the transfer or release of any more detainees as part of President Obama's plan to shut down the prison by January. Past Pentagon reports on Guantánamo have been met with scepticism from civil liberties groups and criticized for their lack of detail. To relocate 240 prisoners at Guantánamo officials will ultimately send some overseas for release, transfer others to foreign governments, and move others to US facilities for military or civilian trials, or in some cases to be held without charges. But the prospect that detainees might be moved to American soil has run into strong opposition in Congress.

**Pray:** for Godly threads of forthrightness and integrity to strengthen all decisions relating to terrorism and terrorists. (Is.13:4)

**More:** <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/21/us/politics/21gitmo.html?ref=us>

### ■ America: Muslims arrested in bomb plot

The FBI arrested four American Muslim men on Wednesday in a plot to detonate a car with plastic explosives outside a synagogue in the Bronx neighbourhood, and to shoot military planes at the New York Air National Guard base with Stinger surface-to-air guided missiles. Officials told The Associated Press the arrests came after an undercover operation that had been ongoing for about a year. James Cromitie, David Williams, Onta Williams and Laguerre Payen, all of Newburgh, were charged with conspiracy to use weapons of mass destruction within the United States and conspiracy to acquire and use

anti-aircraft missiles. Cromitie's parents had lived in Afghanistan and he was upset about the number of Muslims being killed in the war there and in Pakistan by American forces.

**Pray:** for all ongoing terrorist investigations to successfully thwart global plans of destruction. (Is.14:5)

**More:** <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1087134.html>

#### ■ **Iraq: Baghdad and Kirkuk suicide bombs**

At least 19 people were killed on Thursday in separate attacks in Baghdad and Kirkuk. The first happened in a crowded market in south Baghdad killing 12 and wounding 25 others. Three U.S. soldiers were also killed. A nearby hospital was packed with victims of the blast, including an elderly woman and young men, some crying in agony. An eyewitness said a U.S. patrol and some Sunni Arab anti-insurgent militiamen were at the entrance to the market when a man walked into the crowd and blew himself up. Later a bomber triggered a vest packed with explosives as he mingled with Sunni Arab anti-insurgent militiamen. He was dressed in a security forces uniform. Cars nearby were damaged by the blast, their cracked windshields spattered with blood. Shoes littered the area.

**Pray:** and continue to hold before the Lord the fragile security gains in Iraq. (Is.32:15-18)

**More:** <http://uk.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUKLL36115520090521>

#### ■ **Indonesia: Muslim group threatens newly elected Christian**

An Islamic group in West Sumatra province, Indonesia, has issued threats against Dominikus Supriyanto, the only Catholic to win a seat in the district legislature in recent general elections, warning him that he should convert to Islam if he wants to retain the seat. Supriyanto's party supports Pancasila, Indonesia's national policy of tolerance for all religions. Earlier this year, supporters of other candidates engaged in a so-called 'black campaign,' warning that Supriyanto would likely 'Christianize' West Pasaman if elected.

**Pray:** against all threats and plots aimed at Christian politicians and for a wave of God's values to wash over global governments. (Ge.41:39-41;Is.40:10)

**More:** <http://www.compassdirect.org/en/display.php?page=news&lang=en&length=long&idelement=5919&backpage=summaries&critere=&countryname=&rowcur=>

## PRAISE REPORTS

#### ■ **Ghurkhas win right to settle in UK**

Ghurkha veterans were today given the right to settle in the UK after an extraordinary campaign led by the actor Joanna Lumley. The home secretary, Jacqui Smith, completed the expected U-turn by confirming that veterans who had served four years or more, their wives and dependent children could apply to come to Britain. She said the move 'recognises the unique nature' of the soldiers' service and was consistent with the government's broader immigration policy. (See Prayer Alert 1909)

**Praise:** God for this governmental U-turn enabling the fulfilment of their moral obligations to those who have served our nation well. (Rom.8:12-13)

**More:** <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/may/21/gurkha-uk-settle-rights-lumley>

#### ■ **India: Christians thanking God for big win in elections**

Mission Network News reports that Christians and other minorities are celebrating a landslide victory in national elections in India by the Congress Party. The five-phase election, which took nearly a month to complete, indicates the Congress Party won resoundingly. They started talks on forming a new government which will likely keep Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in power. Though it may sound like a contradiction in terms to some, the Congress Party's platform supports a secular government and freedom for all, including minorities. The importance lies in the fact that the defeated BJP party, and other hard-line groups, supported Hinduism as the national religion. President of Serve India Ministries Ebenezer Samuel said, 'Hundreds of thousands of people across India and the world have been praying. This will definitely benefit the growth of Christianity in the next five years.'

**Praise:** God for answering our prayers and pray that this signals a new dawn for religious freedom in India. (Ex.3:7)

**More:** [http://www.breakingchristiannews.com/articles/display\\_art.html?ID=6731](http://www.breakingchristiannews.com/articles/display_art.html?ID=6731)

#### ■ **Syria: Over a thousand Muslim clerics watch gospel film**

A film about the life of the biblical Apostle Paul, which 'clearly reflects the Gospel,' had its premiere in Damascus in March. Some 1,135 people, most of them Muslim clerics and politicians, including a minister of Culture, as well as some journalists, watched the premiere organizers said in comments, monitored by BosNewsLife on Monday, May 18. The 77-minute movie, described as 'a tool for evangelism', was shown on March 13 in an Opera theatre of Syria's capital Damascus. Organizers said the film was produced by Syrian Protestant Christians in close co-operation with mission groups Agapè and Campus Crusade for Christ.

**Praise:** that the Holy Spirit will continue reminding them of Paul's message of salvation. (Eph1:13)

**More:** <http://www.bosnewslife.com/7412-over-thousand-muslim-clerics-watch-gospel-film-in-syria-investigation>

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