

PRAYER ALERT...

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

■ Global Day of Prayer UK - 2010

Global Day of Prayer Sunday 23 May 2010 is a very unique day in the Christian calendars, when the Eastern Orthodox tradition of 'Kneeling Day' and the Western tradition of 'Pentecost Sunday' converge on the same day. Thus the 10 year celebration of the Global Day of Prayer is very significant in that hundreds of millions of Christians from all over the world will kneel simultaneously in a day of repentance and united prayer before God, expecting the glory of the God to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. (Hab.2:14) 216 nations are currently taking part – and the aim is to get all 220 nations involved. Across the British Isles there are events around Scotland; in Armagh for whole of Ireland; in Swansea, Wales; St. Hellier, Jersey; about 26 venues in England and in every borough in London. Check for full list under www.globaldayofprayer.co.uk under GDOP Events page; in London www.gdoplondon.com

Pray: [Blow the trumpet! A call for repentance and prayer \(Joel.1:14\)](#)

More: <http://www.worldprayer.org.uk/gdop---welcome/>

■ Pray for our new parliament

Last week's general election has brought a change in the political direction of our nation and is being heralded as a 'new era'. The new partnership has the potential to cause our government to re assess commitments and look again at previously rejected options. As the new members of parliament step into their roles of authority let us pray that decisions made are based on sound biblical values full of truth and justice, and not driven by political convenience or attractive presentations. Many of our politicians now need God's wisdom and vision for a prosperous and peaceful society. Christian Concern for our Nation are asking Christians to pray for those elected to parliament asking that they may be good governors; giving thanks for the Christian MPs amongst them and to bathe them in prayer so they may stand firm in the truth of the gospel from the outset.

Pray: [that the LORD would have mercy on our nation, turning hearts to Him and raising up godly leaders. \(Ro.15:5\)](#)

More: <http://www.ccfon.org/view.php?id=1073>

■ Christian B&B owner faces legal action from same-sex couple

Susanne Wilkinson told the two men that it went against her religious convictions to let them share a double room at the guest house where she lives with her family. She was reported to police but no charges were brought. However, she has now been told that Michael Black and John Morgan plan to sue her for discrimination. A letter before action sent by Liberty's legal director this week claims: 'Your unlawful treatment of my clients resulted in considerable embarrassment and humiliation to them both and they seek compensation from you for the injury to their feelings.' Simon Calvert of the Christian Institute said 'It does seem extraordinary that Liberty is invoking the power of the state to try to force this couple to act against their conscience in their own home.' Mrs Wilkinson is likely to invoke the Human Rights Act in her defence, on the grounds that Christians should be allowed to hold the traditional belief that sex outside marriage is wrong.

Pray: for Susanne and others like her who seek to defend their right to follow Biblical teaching. (Ep.3:16)

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newsttopics/religion/7725526/Christian-BandB-owner-faces-legal-action-from-same-sex-couple.html>

■ **Secularists say council meeting prayers are 'illegal'**

The National Secular Society has written to Bideford Council to say that its prayers at council meetings are 'illegal'. It has threatened the council with a judicial review unless it stops the prayers and hopes the action will "set a precedent that will affect the many other councils that have prayers as part of their agenda", the NSS said on its website. The NSS has decided to take action in response to a complaint from local councillor Clive Bone, whose motions to remove prayers from meeting agendas have failed. The former Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Carey told the Guardian: 'The centuries-long tradition of saying of prayers before council meetings is simply an acknowledgment of the important role the Christian faith plays in civic life. The attempt to rule such prayers as discriminatory is an attack on freedom and a cynical manoeuvre to drive public expressions of faith from national as well as local life'. (See also praise item)

Pray: against these attacks upon our Christian roots.(2Ti.4:18)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/secularists.says.council.meeting.prayers.are.illegal/25929.htm>

■ **Bishop tells church leaders to listen to the Holy Spirit**

Listening to the Holy Spirit must be brought back to the heart of church leadership, says the Church of England's Fresh Expressions leader. Bishop Graham Cray said planting successful churches would come through listening to the Holy Spirit, not 'cloning' existing churches. Speaking at the end of last week's Christian Resources Exhibition, he said that old strategies that had worked 20 or 30 years ago were no longer suitable for mission and church-building in today's diverse society. Today's church leaders need to look at their specific local contexts and lead their congregations in prayer to 'discern corporately' the best church for their areas, he said. The bishop warned that it was an 'endemic temptation' among church leaders to make plans based on previous experience and ask God to bless those plans, rather than 'shutting up' and listening to Him in prayer.

Pray: that the Holy Spirit would speak loudly into the minds and hearts of all those who lead. (Ro.15:13)

More: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/bishop.tells.church.leaders.to.listen.to.the.holy.spirit/25902.htm>

■ **'Charlie Condom' promotes condoms to 13-year-olds**

A new children's character, Charlie Condom, has been created by health authorities in Southampton to promote condoms to 13-year-olds. Education leaders have slammed the move and others call it 'ridiculous'. The character is promoting a scheme, designed to cut the number of teenage pregnancies, which will allow youngsters to collect the contraceptives using a condom credit card from 18 venues in the city. Monsignor Vincent Harvey, leader of the Roman Catholic Church in the city, cautioned: 'This campaign is sending out the message to 13-year-old children that this is the norm, that it is OK to be sexually active.' And Ron Clooney, from the teachers union NASUWT, criticised the scheme, saying: 'This method, where underage impressionable teenagers can get condoms so openly, condones the idea of under-age sex.'

Pray: for a more appropriate form of sex education that does not appear to promote under-age sex. (1Jn.3:7)

More: <http://www.anglican-mainstream.net/2010/05/18/charlie-condom-promotes-condoms-to-13-year-olds/>

■ **Methodists to play a key role at Greenbelt Festival in new partnership**

The Methodist Church will play a larger role than ever before at this year's Greenbelt Festival - Europe's longest running Christian event celebrating the arts, faith and justice. The Church has sealed a three-year partnership deal with Greenbelt organisers, which will see free tickets made available to Methodist ministers, deacons, preachers and worship leaders who have not attended the festival for the past five years. The free tickets, which must be claimed before 31 July via the Greenbelt office, will be on offer during the first two years of the partnership. Over time, the deal will allow the Methodist Church to have as influential a presence at the festival as the Department of International Development and Christian Aid - Greenbelt's existing major partners. Gawain Hewitt, Festival Director, said: 'The Methodist Church and Greenbelt both have a history steeped in a commitment to social justice and community engagement. We also share a commitment to dialogue, trade justice, environmental and development issues and human rights'.

Pray: for the Greenbelt Festival as it reaches out to a wide spectrum of mainly young people. (2Th.2:14)

More: <http://www.methodist.org.uk/index.cfm?fuseaction=opentogod.newsDetail&newsid=441>

EUROPE

■ **EU parliament backs new rules on organ donations**

As MEPs approve plans to help tackle the illegal trafficking of human organs, Miroslav Mikolášik has criticised Europol's "passive approach" to the issue. European parliament deputies voted by 643 votes to 16 in support of the draft directive on quality and safety standards for human organs used for transplants in Strasbourg on Wednesday. The plans aim to reduce waiting times for the 60,000 people in need of a transplant across the EU, introduce common safety standards and combat the commercialisation of organ donation and trafficking. Slovakian EPP deputy Mikolášik, parliament's rapporteur on the directive, told the Parliament Magazine that figures from Europol, the European law enforcement organisation, suggested the problem of organ trafficking does not exist. 'Everyone knows that this is a massive problem. But Europol does not actively search for cases, they only wait for announcements to be made and this is not good enough.'

Pray: that these new regulations will see a significant reduction in illegal organ trafficking. (Hos.14:9)

More: http://www.theparliament.com/no_cache/latestnews/news-article/newsarticle/eu-parliament-backs-new-rules-on-organ-donations/

■ Portuguese bishops: gay 'marriage' law a step backward

Portuguese bishops, joined by the country's Pro-Life Federation, denounced their president's decision to legalize same-sex 'marriage' on Monday, calling the move a 'step backward' and an attack on the traditional family.' A bill aimed at legalizing same-sex 'marriages' was passed by the Portuguese parliament in February with the support of the left-wing parties, which are in the majority. President Anibal Cavaco Silva had until May 17 to decide whether to sign the bill into law or exercise his veto power. The president, who is a self-identified Catholic, said on Monday that he was putting aside his 'personal convictions' and approving the legislation, making Portugal the sixth country in Europe to allow same-sex unions. Pope Benedict XVI recently visited Portugal, where he stressed the importance of 'protecting the essential and primary values of life' which include the 'indissoluble marriage between a man and a woman.'

Pray: against this trend across Europe and the World to go against God's marriage principles. (Heb.13:4)

More: <http://www.christiantelegraph.com/issue9789.html>

WORLDWIDE

■ Thailand: Mysterious black-clad gunmen

Thailand's government has vowed to go after shadowy 'terrorists' blamed for triggering bloody clashes between the army and red-shirted demonstrators, believing several hundred militants trained in combat joined protesters in their downtown Bangkok encampment. Government officials and the army believe the men in black are politically aligned with the red shirt movement and sought to cause bloodshed severe enough to force Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva to call a new election. Red shirt leaders said the 'black clads' are protecting them, but they don't know who they are. The government fears 'terrorists' could strike at any time and may have been behind dozens of unsolved grenade attacks and bombings across the city. Security and military analysts believe rangers trained in counter-insurgency may be among them.

Pray: for an unconditional end to bloodshed as God turns the situation into opportunities to end the divisions in Thailand's society. (Ro.15:5)

More: <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE63Q1F220100427>

■ Canada: Prayer for the world's poorest people

Canadian intercessors would welcome our support as they prepare for a weekend of continual day and night intercession for the G8 and G20 summit on June 25-27 in Ontario. The Luke 18 Weekend of prayer and worship hosted by Houses of Prayer from all over Canada will cry out to God to establish justice for the world's poorest peoples. Pray that God will raise up, envision and inspire many Canadians in the coming weeks to engage in this event and in His purposes for the nations. Also consider joining with our Canadian brothers and sisters to cover the summits - the only constants are: a focus on justice for the poor with positive scripture based prayers of faith in what God will do. The organizers are designing a communications hub available to IHOPS that are registered to share what God is saying as they pray. This networking will encourage others and the on-site teams in Toronto and Huntsville.

Pray: for the delegates to have a servant heart towards other nations and be led by God's spirit in all decisions made. (Is.54:1)

More: http://cityscapeprayer.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=179&Itemid=111

■ INSIGHT ARTICLE: Laos: 48 Christians expelled from village suffer critical illnesses

In spite of assurances of justice from officials the Lao Christians expelled from Katin village at gunpoint for not renouncing their faith (Prayer Alert0810) are suffering prolonged lack of adequate food and clean water. Lack of basic resources since January has led to diarrhea, dehydration, eye and skin infections, fainting and general weakness and one Christian died suddenly while praying for two Christians hospitalized with illness caused by their living conditions. They are living in temporary shelters at the edge of the jungle; their neighbours were aggressively warned not to help them in any way. In March a delegation of officials visited the Christian jungle site and assured the refugees of their legal right to embrace the faith of their choice and live anywhere in the district. For insights into how to pray for Laos click info button.

Pray: for God to protect and provide for the outcasts of Laos, to strengthen the Christians and bring those not knowing Him into faith through His son Jesus Christ. (Mt.5:11,12)

More: http://www.prayer-alert.net/info/2110_Laospeopleprayer.pdf

■ Ethiopia: Elections on 23 May

Church leaders in Ethiopia ask Christians everywhere to join them in prayer for the Ethiopian church in the run-up to the national elections on 23 May. Historically the pre-election period has been a time of increased difficulty for the church. Crime levels rise and legal processes slow down as government officials are pre-occupied with securing votes for their political party. Those opposing the Christian faith often take this opportunity to attack church buildings, and Christians who are arrested because of false accusations may have to wait longer before being able to defend their case in court. Church leaders also face increased pressure, many civilians fear a repetition of the 2005 political violence. Open Doors have asked us to pray for peaceful and just election procedures, that God's will be done, and that the outcome will not result in bloodshed.

Pray: for the protection of Christians located in persecution hot spots and for them to know God's strength and peace. (Is.49:8)

More: <http://www.opendoorsuk.org/pray>

■ North Korea: Torpedo sank a South Korean navy ship

International investigators say they have overwhelming evidence that a South Korean warship was sunk by a North Korean submarine in March, resulting in the death of 46 South Korean sailors. Investigators from US, Australia, Britain and Sweden

said they had discovered part of the torpedo on the sea floor and it carried lettering that matched a North Korean design. North Korea rejected the claim as a 'fabrication' adding the North would threaten war if sanctions were imposed by the South. But South Korean President Lee Myung-bak pledged to take 'stern action' against the North. UK and US Foreign Secretaries describe the sinking of the ship as an 'act of aggression' by North Korea that challenged peace.

Pray: and take authority over the spiritual principalities and powers that keep North Korea bound and ask God to turn this situation around and open His way forward for the nation (Eph.6:12)

More: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia_pacific/10129703.stm

■ Yemen: Abducted Christians update

In June last year nine Christians were kidnapped - three were later murdered. (See Prayer Alert 3009) Two of the captives have been found - Lydia and Anna aged 5 and 4 respectively were in a Saudi Arabian military operation in the disputed border region of Yemen and Saudi Arabia. Following hospital assessments in Saudi Arabia they returned to Germany on 19th May in good physical health. There is still no news of their parents Johannes and Sabine, their brother Simon aged 2 or of Tom the British man kidnapped with them. A peace agreement signed in February between the Yemeni government and militia ended a period of armed conflict in disputed border areas. Christians in Yemen request our prayers for Lydia and Anna to know the presence and peace of Jesus and recover well from the trauma of captivity; that the missing four (assuming they are alive) to know God's daily provision and be released unharmed shortly.

Pray: for close relatives to be able to provide the loving and secure environment the released children need, free from unwanted intrusion or publicity. (Ps.90:14)

More: <http://www.meconcern.org>

■ Syria: Defender of Palestinians

Syria claims to be the true defender of the 550,000 Palestinian refugees living there and is home to several Palestinian political organisations. However, the relationship between the two countries is strained. In general the Palestinians are poorer than the Syrians around them. Not having respect from the rest of society, makes them more passionate about returning to the Occupied Territories. Palestinians have not been allowed to revisit the occupied territories nor have Palestinians coming from the Occupied Territories been allowed to visit Syria. Palestinians in Syria have two choices; never visit family and see the homeland, or find ways to work around the rules and hope they do not get caught. It has been a generation since anyone in Syria has actually lived in the 'original' Palestine, but today's youth tell you what town they are from and when their family became refugees. It is instilled in them that their destiny is 'return to Palestine'

Pray: that Palestinians in Syria will discover their eternal citizenship through Jesus and that believers in Syria successfully share Christ's love. (Heb.11:16)

More: <http://www.cryoutnow.org/images/shoutforjoy-english.pdf>

PRAISE REPORTS

■ Christian preacher who said that homosexuality is sinful walks free

Common sense and the rule of law have prevailed after charges were dropped against a Christian preacher who said that homosexual conduct is sinful. Dale McAlpine, 42, was arrested and had to report before the courts after a homosexual police officer arrested him on 20 April 2010 for saying that homosexuality is going against the word of God. He was held in a cell for several hours before being charged with a public order offence. On 13 May 2010, charges against Mr McAlpine were dropped by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) as preaching peacefully that homosexuality is a sin is not against the law. In response to the CPS's decision, Mr McAlpine said: 'It's good news. I'm relieved the police and the Crown Prosecution Service have finally seen sense. It was a ridiculous charge and I should never have been arrested in the first place. The whole thing was like fiction. It was surreal'.

Praise: God for answered prayer. (1Cor.6:9)

More: <http://www.ccfon.org/view.php?id=1080>

■ Council rejects calls to ban prayers at the start of its meetings

Wellington Town Council has rejected a controversial motion calling to scrap the traditional saying of prayers at the start of its meetings. Independent councillor Pat McCarthy claimed compulsory Christian prayers discriminated against atheists and people of other faiths, and said he wanted a separate service before meetings with official council business starting 15 minutes later. The Council decided to reject the calls as none of its members was in favour of the ban. Rt Revd Mark Rylands, the Anglican Bishop of Shrewsbury, said: 'I fully support Council members in continuing to offer prayers before their meetings begin. The saying of prayers before meetings is an integral part of the British system of government. 'Prayers remind councillors that they are answerable not only to themselves but also to those beyond the Chamber. Those who pray remind themselves they are answerable to God'.

Praise: God for all those who have supported our Christian roots of prayer. (Ps.88:13)

More: <http://www.ccfon.org/view.php?id=1077>

PRAYER FORUM OF BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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