

PRAYER ALERT...

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

Issue 2207

Website

Contact Us

Donations

Friday 1 June 2007

■ British Isles & Ireland

- [FRIDAY FOCUS - 1st June – Children at risk - Lamentations 2:19; Romans 12:12](#)
- [Bible to be banned from student halls](#)
- [Christians seethe as pagans rejoice over their festival in Scotland](#)
- [Micah Challenge calls Christians to G8 rally](#)
- [Ban sought on promotion of marriage in schools](#)
- [No welcome at Lambeth for divisive Bishops](#)
- [Masons target universities to swell numbers](#)
- [STOP PRESS - Northern Ireland's Sexual Orientation Regulations](#)

■ Europe

- [Europe official urges Ukraine Churches to promote dialogue](#)
- [Vatican signals support for Turkey EU bid](#)

■ Worldwide

- [Jerusalem Church leaders back Israeli-Palestinian peace action](#)
- [Eritrean asylum seekers rescued and detained by Libyan authorities](#)
- [Belarus](#)
- [Beijing warns the world's missionaries: 'abide by our rules'](#)
- [Stern test of Canon's faith in dialogue](#)
- [Disparities in judging US asylum cases](#)

■ Praise Reports

- [Iraq: Three minutes to help change a nation](#)
- [Egyptian authorities release jailed Christian convert](#)
- [Global Day of Prayer update](#)

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

■ **FRIDAY FOCUS** - 1st June – Children at risk - Lamentations 2:19; Romans 12:12

The UK has been accused of failing its children, as it comes bottom of a league table for child well-being across 21 industrialised countries. **Confess:** 'Lift up your hands to him for the lives of our children'. **Pray:** for the World Weekend of Prayer for Children at Risk (2-3rd June); for Christian ministries reaching out globally to the billion children living in poverty and exploitation; for the church and government to work in unity and for children's needs to be taken seriously. **Consider:** how can I support vulnerable children in my community? See also http://www.viva.org/?page_id=94 for resources.

Pray 'Lift up your hands to Him for the lives of our children, who faint from hunger at the head of every street'. (Lm.2:19)

More <http://www.worldprayer.org.uk/pagesys.cfm?plD=123>

■ **Bible to be banned from student halls**

Gideon's Bibles are set to be removed from Edinburgh University halls of residence following protests from students that leaving them in their bedrooms is discriminatory. The bible ban has been described as disappointing by churchmen. But student leaders insist it is an important step towards making sure people of all religions feel welcome on campus. There are more than 2000 bibles at the University's Pollock Halls campus, on the edge of Holyrood Park - one in each room. They are expected to be removed after a vote by the Edinburgh University Students Association (EUSA). University officials have yet to approve the ban. However, similar calls from students in the past - including one to have prayers removed from graduation ceremonies two years ago - have been agreed without protest. The Students Union are also attempting to ban a Christian course on relationships, based on the orthodox Christian teachings concerning marriage, and teaches the importance of fidelity in relationships.

Pray that God's Word will not be held back but speak into the hearts and minds of all who read it. (2Sam.22:31)

More <http://edinburghnews.scotsman.com/edinburgh.cfm?id=2119002005>

■ **Christians seethe as pagans rejoice over their festival in Scotland**

Many Christians in Scotland are irate that Edinburgh University has approved a request by the international Pagan Society for its annual congress to be held on campus grounds not far from the city's Grassmarket. There, witches and heretics were burned to death in the 16th and 17th centuries.

Pray: for the University authorities that they will have their eyes opened and given true wisdom over their decisions. (1Cor.10:20)

More: <http://www.eni.ch/>

■ **Micah Challenge calls Christians to G8 rally**

Micah Challenge UK, a coalition of Christian churches, organisations and leaders, is calling on Christians to pressure world leaders on their promises to the poor by joining the 'The World Can't Wait' rally in London this weekend. The rally, to be held on Saturday on the banks of the River Thames, comes the weekend before the G8 leaders meet in Germany to discuss issues including the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals agreed in 2000 to alleviate global poverty and its consequences. The World Can't Wait Rally aims to call on world leaders ahead of the G8 summit to deliver on their promises and take decisive action against poverty and climate catastrophe. Micah Challenge UK is part of the international Micah Challenge movement of Christians lobbying their governments to do more to ensure the fulfilment of the MDGs to alleviate extreme poverty by 2015.

Pray for a breakthrough for the G8 leaders to deliver on their promises.

More <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/micah.challenge.calls.christians.to.g8.rally/10961.htm>

■ **Ban sought on promotion of marriage in schools**

Schools should be banned from promoting traditional marriage in sex education lessons for fear of discriminating against gay and lesbian children, academics claim. The biggest lecturers' union criticised teachers who champion heterosexual wedlock for instilling 'negative images' of same-sex relationships. Existing government guidance says that teachers should emphasise the importance of marriage to promote a stable family life. But the University and College Union said schools should prohibit any lessons which 'negatively characterise' the identity and lifestyle of homosexual or bisexual teenagers. They also criticised new equality laws - intended to outlaw discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation - insisting that faith schools are still allowed to teach that homosexuality is a sin.

Pray that God's plan for marriage will be upheld once more in this nation. (Heb.13:4)

More <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml;jsessionid=EZ3JIW2ZJFGI5QFIQMGCFFOAVCBQUIV0?xml=/news/2007/05/31/nmarriage31.xml>

■ **No welcome at Lambeth for divisive Bishops**

Several Anglican bishops whose attendance has been deemed too divisive have been left off the guest list for the next Lambeth Conference of over 800 bishops. The Archbishop of Canterbury decided not to invite the openly gay Bishop of New Hampshire, whose appointment has pushed the Anglican Communion to the brink of schism. Also not invited is the evangelical bishop's consecrated by Nigerian Archbishop Peter Akinola to give oversight to conservative congregations in the USA, and the Bishop of Harare, Rt Revd Nolbert Kunonga, a loyal supporter of Robert Mugabe. 'I have to reserve the right to withhold or withdraw invitations from bishops whose appointment, actions or manner of life have caused exceptionally serious division or scandal within the Church.

Pray once more for the unity of the Church and against any disunity that would dishonour our Lord. (Mt.16:18)

More <http://www.churchtimes.co.uk/content.asp?id=39479>

■ **Masons target universities to swell numbers**

Students and university lecturers are to be encouraged to join the Freemasons as part of a drive to increase membership. The organisation has changed its constitution - lowering the age limit of candidates from 21 to 18 - and established the Universities Scheme. Seven universities across England have been targeted, with lodges in the respective cities agreeing to 'promote and encourage freemasonry among undergraduates and other university members'. If successful, the project will be expanded. (See also Prayer Alert 2107)

Pray for the Lord's name to be upheld and His principles to be recognised above all. (Eph.6:12)

More <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2007/05/27/nmasons27.xml>

■ **STOP PRESS - Northern Ireland's Sexual Orientation Regulations**

The High Court in Belfast will consider the Christian Institute's legal challenge regarding Northern Ireland's Sexual Orientation Regulations on Monday 4 June. The case is scheduled to last for three days. The High Court will consider whether the SORs unduly interfere with religious liberty contrary to the Human Rights Act and whether the public consultation in Northern Ireland was flawed.

Pray: for the Lord to have mercy on Northern Ireland and grant success to this challenge so that the regulations will be declared unlawful and struck down.

EUROPE

■ **Europe official urges Ukraine Churches to promote dialogue**

The president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe has met religious leaders in Ukraine during a visit in which he urged dialogue to overcome a crisis that has pitted the country's president against the prime minister. 'For me, personally, intercultural and international communication is the main priority,' the Religious Information Service of Ukraine quoted assembly president René van der Linden as saying, in remarks explaining his desire to meet church leaders during his 21-22 May visit. President Viktor Yushchenko has for months been locked in conflict with Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich, and in April he ordered early parliamentary elections. Yanukovich, a long-standing rival of the president, resisted for weeks but eventually acquiesced, although the two have still not agreed on a date for the poll. Van der Linden, a member of the upper house of the Dutch parliament, urged 'a fully-fledged dialogue at the highest level in order to find a clear solution based on the rule of law', in a statement issued by the Council of Europe, which groups 46 European nations.

Pray that these discussions will lead to peace and sound government for this nation. (Rom.8:13)

More <http://www.eni.ch/featured/article.php?id=882>

■ Vatican signals support for Turkey EU bid

The Vatican has indicated it supports Turkish EU accession and acknowledged Ankara's progress toward democracy at a time when clouds of doubt are gathering over Turkey joining the EU itself. In an interview with Italian daily La Stampa, published on Wednesday (30 May), the Vatican secretary of state Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone said that if 'fundamental rules of cohabitation are respected, building together a common future is possible, also with [Turkey's] entry in Europe. Turkey has come a long way and is still progressing. I mean there are evolutions. There are obviously very different positions. But it is possible to build a mutual dialogue within a framework of individuals, populations and governments who respect the fundamental rules of living together,' he said. The comments represent a shift in the Vatican's position, which had previously opposed Turkey's EU entry on the basis that the country's cultural roots are too different from those of mainland Europe. France has also confirmed that it will agree to press ahead with Turkey's EU membership talks for now, see <http://euobserver.com/9/24155>

Pray that these moves will lead to the Turkish peoples learning to live together in peace and for an opportunity for the Gospel to be preached to all peoples. (Rom.10:14)

More <http://euobserver.com/9/24163>

WORLDWIDE

■ Jerusalem Church leaders back Israeli-Palestinian peace action

in Palestine and Israel campaign to mark 40 years of Israeli occupation of Arab territories captured during six days of fighting in 1967. The patriarchs and church leaders on 29 May 2007 urged support for the 3-9 June week of prayers and action, a campaign led by the World Council of Churches, its member churches and related organizations. 'This year marks the 40th anniversary of the occupation by the Israelis of land previously held by Palestinians,' said the Christian leaders. At the same time, on 29 May, the Geneva-based WCC described the goal of the campaign as being 'to raise awareness in churches and civil society and to impress upon governments the need for new efforts to end the conflict and negotiate a just settlement'.

Pray for this unique land and peoples. (Gen.12:7)

More <http://www.eklesia.co.uk/node/5307>

■ Eritrean asylum seekers rescued and detained by Libyan authorities

The 53 Eritrean asylum seekers who were feared drowned in the Mediterranean have been rescued and incarcerated by the Libyan authorities, according to the relative of one asylum seeker. One of the asylum seekers contacted a relative using a smuggled telephone. They reportedly indicated that the group, which includes women and children, is secretly being held in an isolated prison, and expressed fears that Libya plans to deport them to Eritrea surreptitiously. The asylum seekers were reportedly first sighted by Maltese armed forces, but fell into Libyan hands when the Maltese rescue vessels only reached the area following a nine hour delay. In an indication of the Eritrean government's increasingly oppressive tactics, the legitimate patriarch of the Eritrean Orthodox Church (EOC), Abune Antonios, was forcibly removed from his residence in the early hours of Sunday 27 May, (Pentecost) and transported to an undisclosed location, according to sources in Asmara, the capital city of Eritrea.

Pray against these refugees being sent back to Eritrea, where they are likely to be imprisoned, tortured and may even be killed. (Ps.17:8-9)

More <http://www.ucb.co.uk/index.cfm?itemid=152#1422>

■ Belarus

CSW request urgent prayer and action on behalf of a Belarusian Christian, facing deportation from the country on June 7th. Jaroslaw Lukasik is a pastor, who has lived in the country since 1999 along with his Belarusian wife and three children, all holding Belarusian nationality. The police annulled his residence permit for 'activities aimed at harming the national security of the Republic of Belarus in the sphere of inter-confessional relations.' A report by the KGB states, 'he conducted illegal religious activities in Protestant communities, took part in activities of radically inclined, politicised groups and resided in an area other than his officially registered place of residence.' Protestant leaders from different denominations describe him as a Christian active in the life of evangelical churches. As a mark of solidarity we are asked to contact Belarusian authorities at H.E. Ambassador Aleksandr Mikhnevich, 6 Kensington Court, London W8 5DL; asking them to rescind the order for deportation.

Pray: that many will support Jaroslaw in prayer and action, so that his release will be a witness to the Belarus authorities. (Jas.2:24)

■ Beijing warns the world's missionaries: 'abide by our rules'

Beijing responds to foreign missionaries' plans to take advantage of the 2008 Olympics for evangelization, telling them to respect the nation's laws. China, aims to use the event to improve its standing in the eyes of the world. Foreign Christian missionary groups seeking to expand their outreach efforts at the Beijing Olympics next year must abide by the mainland's rules, the China Christian Council warned yesterday. Protestant Reverend Cao Shengjie, said that these religious groups will be forbidden to follow through on evangelisation, while foreigners will be banned from organising any type of religious activity. These declarations were in response to reports that Christian mission groups were planning to send thousands of volunteer evangelists to the Beijing Olympics as visas will be easier to get. This warning to missionaries clashes with the image which China is trying to promote of itself ahead of the Olympics which represent an enormous opportunity for the country.

Pray that China will become open to democratic principles.

More <http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=9410&theme=1&size=A>

■ Stern test of Canon's faith in dialogue

Canon Andrew White is a central figure in the recent kidnapping in Iraq. He lives and works in the Baghdad headquarters of the GardaWorld security company, for which four of the men worked. When word came of the kidnapping, Canon White was devastated, 'It is all the more shocking, because I know them', Immediately he was contacting clerics in Sadr City, some of whom he had known since 1998. He deduced that as the finance ministry was a Shia-controlled institution, so the instigators must come from that community. Since his appointment as the Archbishop of Canterbury's envoy to the Middle East more than a decade ago, Canon White has sought to build bridges with the clergy of Iraq. Canon White quit his role as envoy after the 2003 invasion and set up the Foundation for Relief and Reconciliation in the Middle East.

Pray for Canon White as he attempts to build dialogue with groups on behalf of the hostages. Also see praise item 1 below
More <http://www.telegraph.co.uk:80/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2007/05/31/wirq231.xml>

■ Disparities in judging US asylum cases

A study has found that asylum seekers in the US face broad disparities in the nation's 54 immigration courts, with the outcome of cases influenced by the location of the court and the sex and professional background of judges. 140,000 decisions by immigration judges were studied by professors who compared the results of immigration court cases over more than four years, finding vast differences in the handling of claims with generally comparable factual circumstances. In one of the starker examples cited, Colombians had an 88 percent chance of winning asylum from one judge in the Miami immigration court and a 5 percent chance from another judge in the same court. 'These decisions can mean life or death, and seem to be the result of a clerk's random assignment of a case to a particular judge' said an author of the study, Philip G. Schrag, a professor at Georgetown University Law Center. The study offers an unusually detailed window into the overburdened and often erratic immigration courts.

Pray against injustice at the Office for Immigration Review, and that people's lives will no longer be subject to 'luck of the draw'. (Lev.19:33)

More http://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/31/washington/31asylum.html?_r=1&hp&oref=slogin

PRAISE REPORTS

■ Iraq: Three minutes to help change a nation

Iraqprayer.org was launched this week to pray for an end to the violence in Iraq. The vision is for thousands of churches around the world to pray for at least 3 minutes every week for the most violent cities of Iraq. This new prayer initiative has come out of a word from the Lord and out of partnership with prayer leaders from many nations. The site is based around a map of Iraq from which you can sign up to pray for one of the ten most violent cities. Take a look at www.iraqprayer.org then forward to others.

Praise God for prayer that changes nations

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

■ Egyptian authorities release jailed Christian convert

In a surprise gesture, Egyptian authorities have released a Christian convert from Islam who was jailed without charges two years ago under Egypt's controversial emergency laws. Officials at the Wadi el-Natroun Prison handed Bahaa el-Akkad an Egyptian bill worth nearly US\$9 for taxi fare late on the afternoon of April 28, telling him he was free to leave. Within minutes, El-Akkad had gathered up his few things and flagged down a taxi outside the prison, located an hour's drive north of Cairo. He was reunited with his wife and three children by nightfall. No official reason was given for his release, confirmed the following day by his attorney, Athanasius William. Notification of his release was delayed for security reasons. Just hours before his release, officers from the State Security Investigation had reportedly told El-Akkad that he would remain in prison for another 10 years if he did not return to Islam.

Praise God for transforming the attitudes of Muslim authorities in Egypt

More: <http://compassdirect.org/en/display.php?page=breaking&lang=en&length=long&idelement=4883>

■ Global Day of Prayer update

Last Sunday, Pentacost Sunday, saw the biggest prayer event the world has ever seen with meetings taking place in a record 203 countries praying to God for repentance and that He would heal our land. Global Day of Prayer reports are still being gathered and it is hoped to bring you a full report at a later date. There were also 75 nations where groups were praying on the high places to proclaim God's glory. A final group including 9 women summited Mt Kilimanjaro consisted of 32 South Africans, 2 Tanzanians, 1 Rwandese and 4 Americans. See picture

<http://www.kurv.co.za/~jirecoza/kilimanjire/day%205%20summit.JPG>

Praise: May our faith increase as we continue to trust and believe that we WILL see His glory cover the earth. Hab.2:14)

More: <http://www.transformationafrica.com/>

PRAAYER ASSOCIATION 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 Association of the British Isles and Ireland
C/O World Prayer Centre, Cornerstone House, 5 Ethel Street, Birmingham, B2 4BG, England