

**News and Current Events :: Christian ministers deported from uk****Christian ministers deported from uk - posted by deltadom (), on: 2009/3/21 5:55**

U S Christian Ministers Deported From UK

I have just discovered the shocking news detailed below. Last month Geert Wilders was banned from entering the UK <http://www.ccfon.org/view...php?id=687>

... Now, in two separate incidents last week, a well known American gospel singer and a team of 11 young American Christian missionaries were all deported from the UK. It seems that they had fallen foul of new immigration legislation which has specific sections aimed at religious workers. It seems that this new points based (tier) system became law in December but it appears that very few people know about it. Under this system the applicant has to be sponsored by a licensed sponsorship agency and then apply for a visa. The 'agency' which in this case is likely to be a ministry or church would have to pay to be registered with the Government and would then pay a fee for each applicant it sponsors. The applicant would then also need to pay for his visa. This rule will apply whether you are applying to come in for a year or more, or whether it is just for a few days' ministry.

In the case of one well-known ministry I have been told that they had to employ a lawyer to help fill in the highly complicated application for their team of foreign volunteers (I believe it is about 50 pages) which can only be done online and which only permits one mistake before voiding the application and necessitating a second fee payment. (This meant that the fee of several hundred pounds became several thousand pounds to cover the lawyer.) While clearly this is meant to be a revenue raiser and will rule out anyone without funds, its complicated nature would also appear to be designed as a deterrent. It will have the further effect of giving the powers that be, very full details of any ministry which applies. I gather that 'authorized officers' will then be able to visit and do spot checks.

Don Francisco, who was only planning to be here for a few days and who had a return ticket was not allowed into the country. If that was true for him, what about the Christian leaders and speakers and worship leaders who regularly come in and out to speak at conferences, meetings etc? The more high profile, the more difficult it would be for them to merely say they are here 'on holiday'.

INCIDENT ONE: Gospel Singer – Don Francisco. Deported from Heathrow

Don Francisco Refused Entry Into The UK. [www.rockymountainministries.org](http://www.rockymountainministries.org)

On March 1st 2009, Don flew to the UK to visit friends and join rehearsals for the production "Why Good Friday?" based on his music and written by Brian Harries. He was detained at Heathrow and then flown back to the states on the grounds that he didn't have the right paperwork. Don has been ministering in the UK for over 30 years. For info about the production, please visit [www.donfrancisco.co.uk](http://www.donfrancisco.co.uk)

Don's story below in his own words which I received today in an email:

"I arrived at immigration with a new passport since mine had expired the previous month. I had filled in my occupation as "Gospel singer", the same phrase I had used for the last 30 years. When it became obvious that the officer did not want to let me in, I told him that I had come to England dozens of times and had never had any problems with entry before. He then asked me if I had my old passport with me to prove this. I didn't. I thought the last thing I would need was an old expired passport. He had me wait while he went to talk to his supervisor and then asked me to follow him down to baggage claim. We collected my luggage and he thoroughly inspected everything I had. I then loaded everything on a cart and followed him back upstairs to a place behind a security door. He then did a lot of work on a computer which I couldn't see, took a digital picture of me, and then tried to get the fingerprinting machine to work. He failed. After that he led me to about a 20'—20 foot room with an observation room next to it with several guards in it. I was then offered food and coffee. One of the sandwiches was so rancid I had to throw it away. While there I made an acquaintance with a man from Barbados who had been charged with felony. I was lucky enough to have some change to help him call for help on a payphone which was in the room. After an hour I was led back to the fingerprinting room where several employees tried to get the machine to work again, but they all failed. I was then fingerprinted manually - where a man grabs your fingers and presses them into ink and onto a piece of paper one by one. I was instructed carefully about how to wash my hands. Then I was led to another office where a young lady who was obviously

uncomfortable with the task assigned to her, told me I had been refused entry and was going to be put on a plane back to the United States. She led me back to the lockup where I reclaimed my luggage. I was then led by two armed Guards, one in front and one behind, through various hallways, elevators and escalators, to a van on the tarmac. There was a cage in van and I was instructed to get in. The guards were very nice and one of them expressed embarrassment at my having to ride back there. They drove me to the British Airways plane, escorted me onboard where they handed the stewardess an envelope containing my passport, boarding passes, and other paperwork. They told her not to give the envelope to me until the plane was in the air and that I was not to be allowed to leave before then. I arrived back in Denver at midnight, 40 hours after I had left home.

I have travelled all over England and the UK for over 30 years. My wife and I love the UK very much. We have many, many dear friends there. It is deeply saddening to us and to the thousands who receive our newsletter that this has happened. Our office has been flooded with letters of shock and apology. - Don Francisco

INCIDENT Two: 11 young Christian volunteers from Arkansas: deported from Edinburgh

From The Sunday Times

March 8, 2009

US volunteers sent home by 'Godless Scots'

Edinburgh airport officials have sent a team of American church volunteers home for not meeting new Home Office visa rules

Simon Houston

A team of American church volunteers deported from Scotland by immigration officials who told them they needed work visas to give food to the homeless have branded the decision as "Godless".

The volunteers from Arkansas, who had each raised almost £1,500 to fund the trip, had planned to spend 10 days working in homeless hostels in Edinburgh.

But they were detained after arriving at Edinburgh Airport last Sunday and sent home on the first available flight.

Although the 11 volunteers, who were all in their early twenties, would not have been paid, under new Home Office rules charity workers must be sponsored by a UK organisation in order to obtain a temporary work visa.

While the Scottish church group that arranged the trip had paid £400 for the necessary sponsorship certificate, it had not been processed in time.

Craig Johnson, 28, an associate youth pastor with the Harvest Time Church in Arkansas and the leader of the team, said he was astonished by the decision. "It was the last thing we expected when we touched down on Scottish soil. We were coming over to do God's work and were treated in a less than Godly way," he said.

"It just floored me that I can stay for six months without a visa but if I want to volunteer to work in a soup kitchen for a couple of nights to help a church, I need to have a visa. That was what blew me away. I mean, we were hardly a threat to national security."

Johnson said his church had been involved in several missions to other European countries but had never encountered similar problems with immigration officials. He said: "We take a team to Europe every year but I think it will be a while before we consider Scotland again."

Johnson added that the volunteers had raised more than £16,000 to fund the trip and that much of the money had been donated by friends and families. "I now have to explain to my superiors what happened and try to work out what to say to the parents of the individuals who came with us and the people who supported them," he said.

Reverend Andrew Smith, superintendent of the Assemblies of God Churches in Scotland, who had organised the trip, said he had paid £400 to sponsor the visit under UK Border Agency rules but that the paperwork had not been processed in time.

"I went to the airport and tried to explain that we had already applied to be a sponsor and had paid the necessary

£400. I also have paperwork showing that the UK Border Agency had received the application by February 10," he said.

"I really hope this doesn't have a lasting impression of Scotland on these young people who were coming here to do unpaid work for a very good cause. The whole episode has been rather embarrassing."

Last week Michael Connarty, the local Labour MP, described the decision to deport the volunteers as "outrageous", adding that he would raise the matter with the Home Office.

A UK Border Agency spokesman said: "Tier 5 of our new system allows temporary workers to travel to the UK for non-economic reasons. Individuals who fall under this category are required to ensure they have the relevant documentation.

"All migrants, not just charity workers, coming to the UK to work or study require a certificate of sponsorship."

If you know of other incidents such as these I would be grateful if you would let me know. I also urge you to take this up with your MP or anyone you may know in Parliament. I believe this is urgent and significant and has somehow got through Parliament while we were sleeping. I believe we should be asking why religious workers are singled out for special treatment? Would a secular singer have had a similar problem? Eg Michael Jackson singing at O2 last week? I recognize that this in principle affects all religions, however it seems to me that it is much more likely to affect Christians than others who may be prepared to be less honest about their activities.

(<http://moriel.org/MorielArchive/index.php/news/uk/u-s-christian-ministers-deported-from-uk>)

(<http://moriel.org/MorielArchive/index.php/news/uk/u-s-christian-ministers-deported-from-uk>) Moriels Site

We need prayer that the next Sermonindex conference in the UK happens!

A contact form for the Uk to complain

([http://www.ukimmigration.com/general\\_form.htm](http://www.ukimmigration.com/general_form.htm)) Contact Uk Immigration if you are from the Uk

**Re: Christian ministers deported from uk, on: 2009/3/21 8:45**

We can scratch Geert Wilders off the list of Christian ministers, he's a proclaimed atheist.

The Christian Singer, Don Francisco needed to get his papers straightened out as the new work visa law that came into effect late last year, needed to be addressed before he is let into the country. If the singer takes in any of the Quid, then that is considered to be under the "work visa" jurisdiction, whether he is here to volunteer or just singing on the street. Any money that is being taken from the pockets of fellow Brits into a foreigners hands is all considered "Work".

Now someone pointed out that if Muslims, or any other of the religions are not harassed at the border and they have NOT their papers done right regarding a work visa, then this would be classified under persecution and they are in for a battle from Christian groups all across the United Kingdom. But I don't think this has anything to do with that at all, at least not right now it isn't.

Regarding the Arkansas group, could be information there that we are not getting. But the level of tolerance for Christians in Scotland is weakening, so I have been told.

**Re: - posted by deltadom (), on: 2009/3/21 10:03**

According to the Uk Immigration you have to have £800 pounds in your bank! Before they let you in the country

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk/tier5/religiousworkers/>

The document is 50 pages long!

It is the sermonindex conference that I am worried about!

**Re: - posted by Miccah (), on: 2009/3/21 10:09**

wow. May His will be done.

**Re: Christian ministers deported from uk - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2009/3/21 14:30**

Ok, so I am ignorant...but what if you were to engage in 'tent-making' ministry, would you be allowed in? This is the way many Christians get into 'closed' countries.

Does this rule of having 800 pounds in your bank apply to tourists as well? I checked the web and this 800 pounds translates to \$1152.00, right?

ginnyrose