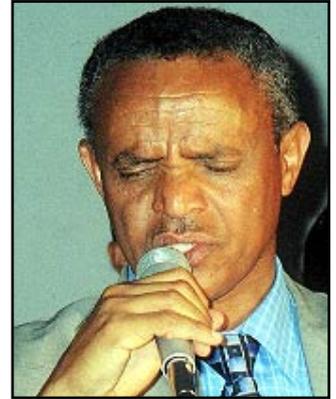




Week 6: Pray for Kidane Weldou (Eritrea)

Arrest and background Pastor Kidane Weldou, who is in his mid-60s, has been in prison for thirteen years. A church leader for many years, he was a senior pastor of the Full Gospel Church in the capital, Asmara (a church that is not permitted by the government) and was a member of the executive committee of Gideons International in Eritrea. Pastor Kidane was involved in ministry among students and professionals from various churches. Previously he was a secondary school biology teacher, with a science degree from Asmara University.

Pastor Kidane disappeared from the streets of Asmara on 18 March 2005, presumably detained by the security authorities, and his car was found abandoned in the city. His family was not informed of his whereabouts or any charge against him.



He is believed to be in the notorious maximum-security Wengel Mermera Central Criminal Investigation Centre, part of Asmara's 2nd Police Station, a labyrinth of dungeon cells where many of Eritrea's prominent political and military prisoners are thought to be incarcerated, as well as several Christian leaders. Like Pastor Kidane, they have never been tried and have been held incommunicado since their arrests.

The Eritrean government banned all religious groups in 2002 except the Eritrean Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Lutheran churches and Sunni Islam. Since then, thousands of Christians from banned denominations have been arrested and incarcerated in appalling conditions in shipping containers, open air facilities in military camps, pits in the ground and police stations, without charge or trial. They experience torture, hard labour, filthy conditions and insufficient food, and are denied visits from lawyers and family. Many come under severe pressure to sign documents renouncing their faith – if they refuse they are brutally punished and threatened that their families will be arrested. Even the permitted churches sometimes face interference and persecution.

Family Pastor Kidane and his wife Tirhas have four daughters. They have never been permitted to visit him.

Latest news There has been no recent news of Pastor Kidane. News of Christian prisoners held in Wengel Mermera is very rare. Over the years one or two long-term prisoners have been recognised on hospital visits, but no conversation has been permitted.

Prayer Diary

Sunday	Ask God to protect and sustain Pastor Kidane in prison.
Monday	Pray for his release.
Tuesday	Pray for Pastor Kidane's mental and physical health.
Wednesday	Ask God to encourage his faith.
Thursday	Pray for Pastor Kidane's wife Tirhas and their daughters.
Friday	Pray for the other Christian leaders in Wengel Mermera.
Saturday	Pray for their witness to guards and other prisoners.

