



# barnabasprayer

BARNABAS FUND – AID AGENCY FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

To help you  
pray for the  
persecuted  
Church

JANUARY/  
FEBRUARY 2018

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**Thank you for your prayers for our persecuted brothers and sisters in Christ, which make such a difference to them. We sometimes have to change or omit their names for security reasons, and we have only limited space to share their stories. But the Lord knows the people and places we are praying about. Please do not feel limited by the specific prayer requests, but pray as you feel led. On each Sunday we have provided a set prayer; please feel free to use these in their current form, to adapt them as you prefer, or to use the information they contain to frame your own prayers.**

## January

**MONDAY 1** At the start of a new year, pray to our God, who makes known the end from the beginning and whose purposes will stand, that He will have mercy on our troubled world, wracked by wars, hunger, and injustice. Pray especially for Christians living under pressure and persecution, that they may look to the new year with hope and joy despite their suffering. Remember also Christians in Western countries where the secular humanist agenda is making rapid strides and Christians seeking to live a godly life in Christ are increasingly facing discrimination and harassment; ask that they will watch, pray and act with wisdom and courage in the coming year. (Isaiah 46:10)

**TUESDAY 2** In September 2017 the United Nations Security Council unanimously agreed to set up an investigation into crimes against humanity and possible genocide committed by Islamic State militants

in Iraq. Crucially, the resolution (number 2379) includes crimes “motivated by religious or ethnic grounds.” This means that the investigation will be able to look at the targeting of Christians, Yazidis and Shia Muslims, described as “genocide” by former US Secretary of State John Kerry. Pray for justice to be done.

**WEDNESDAY 3** Shia Muslim militias in formerly Christian towns of northern Iraq are “systematically trying to change the Christian demography,” said an Iraqi Christian, for example, by opening Islamic schools in church premises. A Christian representative in the Kurdish parliament spoke of the “flagrant injustice done to Christians” by the “Shiafication of the Nineveh Plains.” The Nineveh Plains, around the city of Mosul, are the historic heartland of Iraqi Christianity, but the Christians fled when Islamic State seized the area in 2014. Though Islamic State have been forced out, Christians are nervous about returning. Humanly speaking, things look bleak and uncertain for them, but pray that they will have confidence that God plans to give them a future and a hope (Jeremiah 29:11).

**THURSDAY 4** About a thousand Iraqi Christian families returned to their homes in the town of Teleskof, from which they had fled in August 2014 as Islamic State swept across the Nineveh Plains. The town has been rebuilt with aid money from the Hungarian government. But on 16 October a battle broke out between the Iraqi army and Kurdish forces, and the Christians – caught in the crossfire – had to flee again. Pray that displaced

Iraqi Christians will find their peace, security and stability in the Lord, even though their future is so uncertain. (Psalm 23:2)



Iraqi Christians

**FRIDAY 5** “Hungary would like to be a refuge for persecuted Christians,” announced Zoltán Balog, Hungarian Minister of Human Resources, on 29 September. The Hungarian government offers student scholarships to Christians from places of pressure and persecution, gives money to help persecuted Christian communities (see above for an example in Iraq), and also wants to speak out on behalf of persecuted Christians, making known their plight. Thank the Lord for Hungary’s unashamedly pro-Christian stance and pray that other governments of countries with a Christian heritage will follow Hungary’s example.

**SATURDAY 6** “Fight the infidels without exception, as they fight you without exception, and know that Allah is with the pious.” A French imam leading Friday prayers on the street outside a town hall in Paris chanted these words from the Quran (Q 9:36), effectively inciting the several hundred Muslim

worshippers to engage in jihad against non-Muslims. Pray that a liberal and peaceable interpretation of the Quran will spread throughout Muslim communities around the world and be taught by Islamic clergy instead of radicalism and calls to violence. Ask God’s protection on the few Muslim leaders now teaching such peaceable doctrines, as their lives are in danger from the Islamists.

**SUNDAY 7** Lord Jesus Christ, who prayed on the cross that those who crucified You would be forgiven, teach us and all Your followers how to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. We want to glorify You by our lives, and to show ourselves the children of our heavenly Father, who causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. We cannot do this in our own strength, dear Lord. So we ask for Your Spirit to be at work in our hearts, moment by moment, giving us the grace to forgive others as our Father forgives us. (Matthew 6:43-45)

**MONDAY 8** A Pakistani Christian from Derby, UK, was beaten up by Pakistani Muslims on the evening of 20 October for displaying a cross in his car and two Remembrance Day poppies on the front of it. Tajamal Amar (46) had to be hospitalised because of his injuries. He and his wife are often shunned by the Pakistani community in Derby because they are Christians. “I fled from Pakistan to escape violence such as this, but more and more the same violence is coming into Britain. Freedom of religion should be the right of any British citizen,” he said, “but

today I feel unsafe. Even then nothing will stop me going to church.” Pray that Tajamal and his wife may have grace to rejoice that they participate in the sufferings of Christ, looking forward to the time when His glory will be revealed. (1 Peter 4:12-16)

**TUESDAY 9** “Our churches and chapels are now being targeted by extremists who have told Christians not to gather to pray,” reported church leaders in Mali in October. In the previous few weeks, several churches had been ransacked and torched in Mali’s central Mopti region. At Bodwal, the congregation were driven out from their worship service and told that they would be killed if they were “seen praying in the church.” Pray for the protection of Christians in Mali and that they will not give way to fear.

**WEDNESDAY 10** In 2012 Tuareg separatists and Islamists linked to Al Qaeda seized control of northern Mali and declared it an Islamic state, under sharia law with punishments such as amputations for theft. A 2015 peace deal with the rebels does not seem to have made much difference on the ground, and Islamist violence continues, despite the presence of UN troops. Pray that the Christian community, numbering just a few percent in this Muslim-majority country, will be kept safe by God’s power. Ask Him also to establish peace and freedom in Mali.

**THURSDAY 11** Early last year the Sudanese government announced that they would demolish at least 27 churches in the capital, Khartoum. They have also banned

the construction of any new church buildings, on the basis that most of the Christians in the country were South Sudanese and have now gone back to live in South Sudan. Sudanese Christians feel that their government is working to eradicate all Christianity from Sudan. Pray that 2018 will see a change for the better in the Sudanese government’s policy towards Christians.

**FRIDAY 12** On Sunday morning 22 October the congregation of a church in El Sawra, Omdurman, Sudan, found that their church doors had been locked during the night. Soon police arrived and told the Christians that a Sudanese government department had decided to appoint a new administration for the church. The Christians declared that the congregation alone should choose its administration. Tearing off the locks, they entered their building and began their worship. As soon as the service was over, five of the church’s leading members were arrested and held until midnight, when they were released on bail. Pray for an end to government harassment and interference in churches in Sudan.

**SATURDAY 13** “Ask God to stop the blood running all the time.” This was the prayer request of a pastor from Sudan’s Nuba Mountains. During 2017, the government greatly reduced its aerial bombardment of this part of Sudan, whose population includes many Christians. Praise God for this and pray for a complete end to the persecution. The people are poor; both food and water are in short supply. Pray for rain at the right time to make

the maize grow and that Christians will be encouraged, despite decades of extreme suffering, mainly inflicted by their own government.

**SUNDAY 14** Father in Heaven, we pray today for our Christian brothers and sisters in North Korea, who live daily in extreme danger because of their love for the Lord Jesus Christ. Fill each one with a peace that passes understanding that they may have no fear as they trust in You. For those in brutal prison labour camps, we ask that You will give them grace to endure, that their patience, love and fortitude may be a witness that draws others to You. We ask this in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ and for His glory.

**MONDAY 15** On 24 October the Indonesian parliament voted into law a presidential decree banning organisations with an ideology that conflicts with the state ideology of Pancasila. Meanwhile a crowd of about a thousand Islamists protested outside the parliament building. Pancasila is doctrine of religious tolerance and national unity, which was introduced when Indonesia became independent in 1949: all Indonesians are required to follow one of six specific world religions, which are given equal status. This equality of treatment is not acceptable to Islamists who believe that Islam should always have a superior position. Pray for success for President Joko Widodo's apparent efforts to restore the harmony and equality between religions which used to exist in Indonesia until a generation ago.



Indonesian Christians

**TUESDAY 16** Indonesian Christians planned an open-air prayer service last October to mark the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation. The event was to be held in a football stadium in Yogyakarta. But it was cancelled when a Muslim organisation wrote to stadium officials, calling on them not to allow the gathering to take place, alleging that it was an attempt to convert Muslims to Christianity. Police rejected the claim that hardliner pressure had forced the cancellation. Many Muslims are turning to Christ in Indonesia – praise God that no human force can stop this and pray for the new believers that they will quickly mature in their faith.

**WEDNESDAY 17** Islamist militants who seized the town of Marawi in the southern Philippines last year targeted non-Muslim civilians for extrajudicial executions; almost all the victims were Christians. They were often asked to recite the *shahada* (Islamic creed) or respond to Muslim greetings, and those who did not were killed. Praise God that the town was liberated after five months, and pray that the

bereaved families will find comfort in the Lord, particularly by remembering that their loved ones died for Christ.

**THURSDAY 18** Christianity is growing fast amongst the Hmong people of Vietnam, an ethnic group who are very poor and uneducated. Praise God that, in 30 years, almost a third of the one-million Vietnamese Hmong have come to faith. A major factor has been Christian radio programmes in the Hmong language, broadcast from the Philippines. The Vietnamese authorities at first denied what was happening, published anti-Christian propaganda and repressed the Christians. The converts were intimidated, arrested, fined, beaten and had their property confiscated. This persecution has reduced now, but Christians are still discriminated against in higher education and civil service jobs; it is difficult for new churches to gain official recognition. Pray that the Hmong Christians will continue faithful and that their perseverance in the face of persecution will draw others to the Lord.

**FRIDAY 19** In 2015 and again in 2017 the New Zealand Christian charity “Family First” faced attempts by the New Zealand Charities Board to strip it of its charitable status because it promotes traditional marriage and family values. Praise God for a court ruling last year which put this deregistration process on hold while the matter is considered by the Wellington High Court. Pray that the High Court will find in favour of “Family First” and that this will mark a turn in the tide of Christian freedom in the West, which has been so much challenged in the last few years.

**SATURDAY 20** A special panel was set up by the Australian prime minister Malcolm Turnbull in November to look at existing legislation on religious freedom and see if any new law is required to enshrine religious freedoms. The panel is due to report on 31 March. Pray that they will have wisdom and that the issues of freedom of religion and freedom of conscience will remain high on the public agenda in Australia. This move came soon after a plebiscite vote in favour of same-sex marriage, which will probably have been made law in Australia by the time you are reading this. There were calls for religious exemptions to be built into the same-sex marriage law but the new panel and the possible new law are presented as an alternative solution.

**SUNDAY 21** **Lord Jesus, we bring to You the hundreds of thousands of Christians in Saudi Arabia, migrant workers far from their homes and families, unable to show publicly anything of their Christian faith, and taking a risk even to meet together in a home to worship You. We ask that You will bless them with Your own dear presence to cheer and to guide. We pray too for Saudi believers, converts from Islam, whose very lives are at risk every moment of every day because of their decision to follow You. Keep them in Your perfect peace and protect them from harm.**

**MONDAY 22** “It is good this happened to the Copts [Christians] and not to anyone else. They forgive and do not retaliate.” This comment was made on Egyptian national TV by a Muslim news presenter last year, after Islamic

State militants had attacked a group of Christians on a family day out in Minya province, killing 29 and injuring 22, among them children. Praise God that the Christ-like response of His people is so much the norm in Egypt, and pray that this may draw many peace-loving Muslims to the Lord Jesus. Pray also that the Comforter may console the bereaved families in their ongoing loss.

**TUESDAY 23** The kidnapping of Christian girls in Egypt and their forced conversion to Islam in preparation for marriage to a Muslim is “big business.” There are networks of abductors working as Islamic mercenary-kidnappers, who are given material rewards for abducting the Christian girls. Some of the girls are snatched by force, some are drugged, some are tricked. Another target of the abductor networks is Christian mothers with several young children. If they can force the mother to convert



An Egyptian Christian girl

to Islam, then all her children will be considered Muslim too. Pray for all the Christian girls and women who have been abducted. Keep them strong in the Lord in their hearts, despite what has been forced on them, and enable them to escape back to their families.

**WEDNESDAY 24** Ask God to guide the discussions of the committee set up last May to review the status of unlicensed churches in Egypt. It was not until 9 October that they had their first meeting. Early last year the Egyptian parliament removed the draconian Ottoman-era restrictions on church construction, which had made it so difficult to get licences that many congregations had no option but to worship illegally in unlicensed buildings. Over 2,000 congregations have now requested legal status for their buildings and this is what the committee must consider. Pray that they will act speedily to grant permission.

**THURSDAY 25** According to classical Islam, Christians and Jews can only be allowed to live in an Islamic state if they recognise that they are inferior and submit to the Muslim majority. The Wafa Media Foundation (WMF), linked to Islamic State, has urged Muslims to attack Egyptian Christians because the Christians continue to construct church buildings and have Christian TV networks to make known their faith. This, says WMF, shows that Egyptian Christians have not submitted to the Muslim majority and therefore the deal that allows them to live in an Islamic state is off; instead, they must be attacked as “infidel fighters.” Pray that the Egyptian Muslim community will reject such teaching and affirm

the right of Christians to live as equals with Muslims, have Christian places of worship and proclaim their Christian faith in Egypt.

**FRIDAY 26** Christians in the tumultuous Democratic Republic of Congo face a potential new threat from a little known Islamist group, which has called for volunteers to wage jihad and turn the country into an Islamic state. The group, called the City of Monotheism and Monotheists, issued their call in a video showing a jihadist with three child soldiers. Ask the Prince of Peace to bring an end to the fighting in this vast country, which seems beyond human ability to achieve.

**SATURDAY 27** Muslim Fulani herdsmen continue to attack Christian communities in Nigeria. Fifty-five people were killed last October alone in such attacks, including one incident in Bassa, Plateau State, when 29 people – mainly children – were locked in a classroom and slaughtered. Five days earlier there had been an attack on the village of Jebu Miango, also in Plateau State, where Christians say that the soldiers they looked to for protection, would taunt them, saying, for example, “Why don’t you ask your God to guard you?” Three people were killed in that attack. Ask the Lord God Almighty to guard the lives of His faithful ones and deliver them from the hand of the wicked (Psalm 97:10).

**SUNDAY 28** O God, we ask that You will have mercy on Your people in northern Nigeria and other places where Boko Haram militants are kidnapping and killing with impunity. We pray for the bereaved, the injured, the displaced,

and especially for the many thousands of people abducted and held by Boko Haram for long periods. Be close to each one. No matter how they are brutalised or brainwashed, please help them to keep and guard their faith in You. We pray especially for the remaining “Chibok girls,” kidnapped from their school almost four years ago, that they will be freed. We ask all these things in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**MONDAY 29** A Ugandan Muslim boy called Fahad loved Christian music and so he joined a church choir, even winning a prize. Only his mother knew what was happening. He began to attend church more and more, and then at an all-night prayer meeting he testified that he had left Islam to follow Jesus. When his father heard, he started hunting for Fahad with spears, but Fahad managed to evade him until one day his father found



Fahad



him and tried to break his legs with a big stick. Fahad's mother died and then his brothers and other relatives threw him out of the family, burning all his belongings including his school uniform. They killed and buried his chicken, as a sign that they were burying Fahad. Pray for this brave young believer, who has suffered so much rejection, that he will feel welcomed, wanted and loved by the Christian community as well as by the Lord. Pray also for the ministry that cares for him, supported by Barnabas Fund.

**TUESDAY 30** The Iranian parliament has announced its intention of amending Article 26 of its law on elections. This Article permits followers of the four religions recognised in the Iranian constitution (Islam, Judaism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism) to stand for election. It appears that the proposed amendment may be to the effect that people can only vote for candidates of their own religion. This would mean that religious minorities would never be elected, only Muslims. This issue came to the fore after a Zoroastrian, who had been re-elected to the Yazd City Council, was suspended from the council, following a ruling by a senior ayatollah that non-Muslims cannot make decisions affecting Muslims. Pray that the proposed amendment will not be passed and that non-Muslims will continue to be able to play a role in Iranian politics.

**WEDNESDAY 31** Khuzestan province in south-west Iran has been a focus of anti-Christian persecution for years. Many Muslims in the province have

come to Christ and the leaders of their underground churches have often been arrested. In October another three Christians from a Muslim background were arrested by the Iranian intelligence service, although two were released after some hours of interrogation. Pray that the detention of our brothers and sisters will serve to advance the Gospel and to encourage other Christians to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly. (Philippians 1:12-14)

## February

**THURSDAY 1** "I did not have anything against your faith, but you have made a mistake. You told your stories when my daughter could hear them. She started to ask me about Jesus. If she becomes a Christian, I will cut off her head. After this, I will find you and will do the same to you." These chilling words were said by a Muslim in the North Caucasus to a Christian builder from elsewhere in the Russian Federation who had moved to that country to work and share Gospel. His method is to give his testimony to the families he is working for. Pray that our brother will not fear, knowing that the Lord Himself is with him, and will strengthen him and help him in his God-given task. (Isaiah 41:10). Pray that the Muslim who made the threat will meet with Christ and will believe.

**FRIDAY 2** Continue to pray for Pastor "Odil" in Central Asia, after the youth meeting in his home was disrupted by police who beat the young people to force them to make false accusations against him. Odil, his wife and their three small daughters were held for

18 hours without water. Later his wife gave birth to twins. One was dead and the other – another daughter – was disabled. At first doctors said the baby would need surgery on her spine when she was three months old, but she has responded so well to twice-weekly massages that the operation is no longer thought necessary. Praise God! Pray for His healing hand on this little girl, and for His strong arm to protect the whole family from further persecution.

**SATURDAY 3** Uzbekistan used to be the hardest place of all the Central Asian republics for Christians. This is now changing, not because things are getting easier in Uzbekistan but because they are getting more difficult in the other republics. Believers are often fined, and sometimes imprisoned, simply for meeting to worship, or for owning Bibles and Christian literature or music. Pray that our brothers and sisters in Central Asia will not be ashamed for suffering as Christians, but will praise God that they bear that name. (1 Peter 4:15-16)

**SUNDAY 4** Dear Lord Jesus, we want to bring to You today our brothers and sisters in Russia, who put themselves in danger of being prosecuted and fined whenever they speak about You, blog about You or even invite someone to church. Please give them courage and peace, day by day, as they choose to obey Your command to make disciples rather than to obey Russia's 2016 Religion Law which bans missionary activity. Lead them to people whose hearts You have prepared, who are seeking truth and salvation, and give them the right words for each one, that Your

## **Kingdom may be extended in Russia and Your Name glorified. (Matthew 28:19; Acts 4:19)**

**MONDAY 5** The authorities in Turkmenistan say that it is a Muslim country. Christians are viewed with suspicion because they are considered to be associated with Russia. Yet the ancient and beautiful city of Mary in Turkmenistan has many Christian roots, dating back to the third or fourth centuries. Pray that this Christian heritage will be made known and that Christians may be seen as fully belonging to Turkmen society, and being a strength and help to the country.

**TUESDAY 6** Many Christians in Turkmenistan face hostility from family, society and the authorities. Church leaders ask prayer that all believers will be bold and faithful like a Turkmen woman who was threatened with losing her job when she left Islam to follow Christ. She told her bosses she did not mind because Jesus would give her another job. Then they said she would lose not only her job but also her house. She replied, "Please take my house, because Jesus will give me another." Her bosses said she was crazy and left her alone to continue in her job and home. Pray that her faith and example will inspire other Christians who may be wavering or tempted to give way to fear.

**WEDNESDAY 7** Bringing Bibles into Turkmenistan is normally forbidden but the Religious Affairs Department has occasionally given specific permission to an individual to bring in a certain number of Bibles. Though we may never meet our brothers and sisters from Turkmenistan until we



Pakistani Christian brick-kiln workers Mumbarak and his family are now free

get to heaven, we can unite with them now in prayer, asking for more such permissions to be given. They also ask prayer for wisdom in dealing with the authorities. Everyone in the Religious Affairs Department is Muslim and Islamic extremism is growing.

**THURSDAY 8** Five Christian families fled their village in Punjab province after a Christian teenager was accused of “blasphemy” on a Facebook page designed to mimic a news channel. A photo of 18-year-old Sonu Arshad was posted, together with a call for local Muslims to “burn his church and give him the death penalty.” On 10 November 2017 a Muslim mob gathered in the village after Friday prayers at the mosque. Police intervened but Sonu’s family and four other families went into hiding, fearing for their safety. Pray for God’s continued protection over the

families and pray that Pakistan’s draconian “blasphemy” law, so easily misused, especially by making false accusations against non-Muslims, will be favourably amended.

**FRIDAY 9** Praise God for the freeing of 80 families of Christian brick-kiln workers who had been bonded labourers, unable to leave their jobs. Thanks to the generosity of Barnabas Fund supporters, the loans these families had taken from the brick-kiln owners, long ago in times of sickness or other family crisis, have been paid off and now they are receiving their full wages and can leave to get another job if they choose. After he was freed, Mumbarak said, “I used to think I might stay in debt my whole life. This thought would not let me sleep at nights. But God sent you for me!” Pray that the faith of these families will continue strong, even as their economic situation improves.

**SATURDAY 10** Chinese New Year will begin on 16 February. Pray for thousands of Christian families in Yugan county, south-east China, who hung Gospel verses or pictures of the cross on their front doors at this season last year, only to have them torn down by Communist party officials. The families are poor and, according to local reports, will be deprived of government poverty relief if they insist on putting up Christian posters. Qi Yan, the Communist leader in Huangjinbu township has said, “Many rural people are ignorant. They think God is their saviour. After our cadres’ work, they will realise their mistakes and think: we should no longer rely on Jesus but on the [Communist] party for help.” He also said the Communist Party and its General Secretary Xi Jinping would be better than faith in Jesus for curing illnesses. Pray for Qi Yan and all the Communists of Yugan that they will discover that God is indeed their Saviour and Jesus the Person they should trust.

**SUNDAY 11** We praise and thank You, Lord Jesus, for continued growth of the Church in Turkey, as Turkish Muslims from all walks of life turn to You. Guide and inspire by Your Holy Spirit the believers who are now writing worship songs in Turkish, and the rising new generation of leaders. Bless the young married couples and protect their children, growing up in Turkey with the word “Christian” on their identity cards. We ask that You will continue to build Your Church in the country where the seven churches You wrote to through the Apostle John were located. May Your people there

**today never forget their first love for You, never follow false teaching and never become lukewarm in their faith. (Revelation 2,3)**

**MONDAY 12** Please continue to pray for Pastor Marat Niyaziliev in Kyrgyzstan. After the false sexual accusation concocted against him by the police, no one will give him a job. He has therefore established a small farming business to support himself and his family. Barnabas Fund has helped with the start-up costs by sending a grant to purchase cattle. Pray that the business will flourish, enabling him to fulfil his call to keep serving the Lord in Kyrgyzstan. He believes the authorities want to force him, by constant harassment, to return home to Russia.

**TUESDAY 13** A hotspot for Islamist violence, very poor, and at the end of the old Soviet railway line, Tajikistan is a hard place to live and an even harder place to be a Christian. Yet the Church is growing, with many converts from Islam – praise God. New believers often suffer physical violence from their relatives or are threatened with death. They are also persecuted by wider society and by the government. Pray that they may rejoice in the gift of suffering for their Saviour. “It has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him.” (Philippians 1:29)

**WEDNESDAY 14** Pray that Christians in Afghanistan will know God as their refuge and strength (Psalm 9:9), for God’s protection from persecution as apostates from Islam, and that



Homeless Santal Christians in Bangladesh have lived in makeshift tents since police and Muslims torched their wooden homes in November 2016

they will be encouraged by Christian radio and internet ministries. Ask the Lord to provide for Afghan Christians who have fled the country and live as refugees. Pray especially for those who have been forcibly returned from European countries to Afghanistan in the last three years, putting their lives at severe risk from the Afghan government, who could execute them under Afghan law, or from the Taliban or their Muslim relatives who could murder them.

**THURSDAY 15** Praise God for the growing Church in Algeria and that believers have had relative freedom compared with many convert churches in other countries since 2000. There are, however, indications that the situation may be deteriorating, with a church forcibly closed in November for allegedly printing Bibles and evangelistic material. Call on the Lord to move the government to allow Christians the freedom to worship anywhere without having to register and also the freedom to share their faith.

**FRIDAY 16** Ask for the Lord's protection over Christians in Bangladesh, particularly those from Muslim backgrounds who are most at risk, as they boldly share the Gospel with their friends, relatives and neighbours. Pray that the efforts of Islamists to increase the influence and power of Islam will be halted, and that the rights of all the population to religious freedom will be fully upheld. Ask for God's blessing, guidance and protection for Barnabas Fund's project to build simple brick houses for Santal Christians from Gaibandah, who have been living in tents since their flimsy wooden homes were deliberately destroyed by police and Muslims 15 months ago; pray that the joy of the Lord will be the strength of the Santal believers (Nehemiah 8:10).

**SATURDAY 17** Pray that the parties to the ceasefire in the Central African Republic will keep to their agreements and reject violence so that there will be peace at last. Pray for Christians, surrounded by many dangers, that their hearts will be filled with a peace that

passes understanding and that God may “protect [them] from wicked people who attack [them], from murderous enemies who surround [them]” (Psalm 17:9). Ask that they will respond to what they are enduring in a Christ-like way. Pray especially for church leaders who are a particular target of the Islamist militants (Psalm 105: 15).

**SUNDAY 18** Lord Jesus Christ, we lift to you our Christian brothers and sisters who live with the constant threat of violence or injustice simply because of their faith in You. Please be a shield to all who take refuge in You. Help those who have had to leave behind family, friends and all that is familiar, in order to make a fresh start, after violence or injustice; bless them in their new beginnings and keep them safe. Praise God for those who endure injustice and imprisonment, and ask Him to strengthen them and their families. (2 Samuel 22:31)

**MONDAY 19** Praise God for the continued growth of the Chinese Church, during years of discrimination and persecution. As government pressure on Christians worsens, pray that their faith will not fail. Lift up our brothers and sisters in prison – some have been detained for many years – experiencing inhumane treatment and sometimes torture. Ask that they be comforted by the presence of the Holy Spirit.

**TUESDAY 20** Give thanks for the support of Egyptian President al-Sisi for Christians and pray that local authorities in Egypt will exert themselves to rescue abducted Christian women and girls. Pray that Christians will be permitted buildings

where they can worship Christ in safety. Call on God to give believers in Egypt the strength to bear the threats and violence from Islamist extremists, enabling them to love and forgive their enemies as Christ commanded.

**WEDNESDAY 21** Call on the Lord to help Christians in Eritrea labouring under the yoke of persecution and imprisonment, trusting that He is “aware of their sufferings” (Exodus 3:7) even if we do not know the details. Pray that God will move the Eritrean government to respect the freedom of religion laid down in their country’s constitution. Pray for Eritrean believers who have fled the country, asking that they may they find safe havens where they can live safely and worship Christ freely.



Eritrean Christians face severe persecution. Many have fled the country

**THURSDAY 22** Ask the Lord Jesus to have mercy on Eritrean Christian refugees in Israel, and that the Israeli government will repeal its harsh laws against them and give them hope in the land of His birth. Thank Him for the generous and compassionate concern of ordinary Israeli citizens. At the time of writing, the Israeli government seems to be preparing to deport them in large numbers to

Rwanda, where they would probably live indefinitely in a refugee camp. Some 2,000 Eritreans have already made the journey to Rwanda from Tel Aviv, and found life there very difficult. Their papers were taken away on arrival and never returned, and there is much concern about people-trafficking into Uganda.

**FRIDAY 23** Pray that the plans of those who seek to Islamise Indonesia will be thwarted and that politicians and public figures will strongly advocate a return to the country's historic practice of equality. Pray for believers in Aceh who live under sharia (Islamic law) and remember when Muslim mobs burnt down churches. Ask that they will have the strength to stand firm in their faith, despite the opposition they face.

**SATURDAY 24** Pray for Iranian converts from Islam to Christianity, such as Maryam Zargarani, who was accused of "undermining national security" and spent four deeply traumatising years in jail where she suffered from serious health problems; pray for physical and psychological healing of the scars of captivity and for protection for believers currently imprisoned. Give thanks that many Iranian Muslims continue to turn to Christ despite increasing persecution from authorities.

**SUNDAY 25** Heavenly Father, we pray for the children of persecuted Christian families around the world. Be their Protector and their Comforter in the face of danger. Enable these little ones to break free from the cycle of poverty and illiteracy, and give them a safe and nurturing learning environment where

**they can grow in their Christian faith as they gain an education. Lighten the path of persecuted children, that they will grow up to be faithful men and women of God.**

**MONDAY 26** Lift up the many Iraqi Christian refugees and displaced believers who, having fled a genocide, can no longer imagine a future in the country which was once their home. Pray that the Lord will watch over His people who have suffered so much and guide them into the future. Ask that, in their day of trouble, He will keep them safe in His dwelling. (Psalm 27:5)

**TUESDAY 27** Pray that the Church in Kazakhstan will not become inward looking, but reach out fearlessly to spread the Gospel to the Kazakh nation. Ask that God will strengthen those suffering persecution at the hands of the authorities, that they may persevere (James 1:2) and "commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good" (1 Peter 4:19). Pray that restrictions on religious freedoms in Kazakhstan will be lifted.

**WEDNESDAY 28** Beseech the Lord for the defeat of the Somali-based Islamist militant group Al Shabaab and the end of their campaign of terror against Christians in Kenya. Pray that the Kenyan church remains vigilant over the use of *khadi* (Islamic) courts, to ensure that they do not curtail religious freedom. Ask the Lord to protect all our brothers and sisters in Kenya; that their "light shine before others, that they may see [their] good deeds and glorify [their] Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:16)

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