



# barnabasprayer

**BARNABAS FUND** - AID AGENCY FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH  
BRINGING HOPE TO SUFFERING CHRISTIANS

To help you  
pray for the  
persecuted  
Church

MARCH/APRIL  
2019

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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.**

## March

**FRIDAY 1** “Separate me from my wife and children, ruin my reputation, destroy my life and my family – the authorities are capable of doing all of these things. However, no one in this world can force me to renounce my faith.” These words were written from Chengdu jail in China by Pastor Wang Yi. He, his wife Jiang Rong and about a hundred members of their Early Rain Covenant Church were imprisoned in December. Eighty of the jailed church members were later released, but then 30 more were arrested as they gathered in a restaurant for a Bible class. After interrogation they were set free. Pastor Wang’s bold letter makes clear that he wants only to worship Christ freely. Pray that the living God will touch the hearts of the atheistic Chinese authorities, causing them to realise that Christians bring compassion, love and harmony. Pray that Wang Yi, Jiang Rong and all the remaining Christians in detention will be effective witnesses in jail, until the Lord, in His perfect timing, brings about their release.

**SATURDAY 2** The Chinese government is piloting an extreme surveillance programme of its citizens, underpinned by advanced technology including face recognition, and due to be rolled out to monitor every Chinese citizen by 2020. This will provide information about every movement of every individual as they go about their daily lives. The government will use the data to award “social credit” scores to each person according to their behaviour and reward or penalise the individuals. At the same time the Chinese government is eliminating cash, meaning that all payments must be electronic and therefore trackable. Pray for Christians facing the scenario that their every activity and donation will be known to the authorities, that they may have courage and wisdom.

**SUNDAY 3** **O LORD, our God, who commanded that we should have no other gods before You, we gladly bow before You and worship You alone. We pray for Chinese Christians in Dongcun village, Henan province, who were ordered by government officials to erase the first of the Ten Commandments, displayed near the pulpit. When Christians did not act, the officials erased the first commandment themselves, and later forced church members to remove the whole display. We pray that our brothers and sisters, who had been forced to remove the cross from their church building just three months earlier, will stand firm and continue to glorify the Lord Jesus in whose Name we pray.**

**MONDAY 4** Seven Christians spent five days behind bars after police raided a Christmas church service in Laos

on 29 December 2018. Nine police officers swooped on the church in Nakanong village in the southern province of Savannakhet, arresting three church leaders on charges of an “illegal gathering”. They returned later that evening and arrested another four Christians. They also demolished the church’s stage, cut off its power, destroyed its sound system and took three mobile phones. Pray that Christians in Laos may rejoice at being counted worthy of suffering for the Name of Christ their Saviour (Acts 5:41).

**TUESDAY 5** Two Chin Christians in Myanmar were injured on 24 December when a mob of about 40 local people, led by three Buddhist monks, attacked a group of twelve Christian Chin families who were setting up a tent to celebrate Christmas Day. It was to be the first time that Christmas was celebrated in the Buddhist-majority village of Sappie. Pray for the persecutors of these village Christians, that they may meet the Lord Jesus for themselves.

**WEDNESDAY 6** Pray that Christians in Afghanistan will know God as their refuge, fortress, shield and rampart,

and will rest in the shadow of the Almighty (Psalm 91:1-4). Ask that God will protect them from persecution as apostates from Islam, and that 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, 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 7** More than 80% of a certain congregation in Albania are Christians from a Muslim background. Many are young people, in their teens and twenties. New believers are increasingly coming into contact with Muslims who attack their faith in Jesus and in the Bible. Atheistic materialism is actively propagated by most Albanian school teachers and these new Christians do not know how to answer this challenge either. The church has set up a programme (funded by Barnabas) specifically to teach, train and equip



Albanian Christians

these young Christians so that they can withstand the attacks on their faith. Pray that the Holy Spirit will grant them wisdom from above and a close walk with Jesus who said, “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.”

**FRIDAY 8** Praise God for the growing Church in Algeria, which is nearly all converts from Islam and their children. President Abdelaziz Bouteflika has been in office since 1999 and during that time the religious liberty situation for Algerian Christians has swung up and down a number of times with things deteriorating in 2018. Presidential elections will be held in Algeria on 18 April. Pray that the Lord will raise up the person of His choice, who will rule Algeria with justice and righteousness, granting liberty to the Christian minority, the Muslim majority and people of all religions.

**SATURDAY 9** 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 harm

Christians and 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 in November 2016; pray that the joy of the LORD will be the strength of the Santal believers (Nehemiah 8:10).

**SUNDAY 10** Heavenly Father, 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 Jesus. 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. We praise You for those who endure injustice and imprisonment bravely for His Name’s sake, without wavering in their faith. Please continue to strengthen them and their families. We pray in the Name of Christ. (2 Samuel 22:31)

**MONDAY 11** In response to the concerns of Christians, the Bulgarian government has agreed not to pass into law amendments that were planned for the country’s Law on Religious Communities. The stringent amendments would have restricted evangelism and ministerial training, forbade worship outside of officially recognised buildings, and required every religious group to have at least 300 members in order to gain official



Santal Christians outside their new, safe and secure home

recognition. There would also have been state control of foreign financial donations to religious groups. Praise God for answered prayers and that the Bulgarian government is honouring the promise of religious freedom contained in its own constitution which states that, “the practising of any religion shall be unrestricted.”

**TUESDAY 12** 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. Last year the communist government’s White Paper on religion announced new policies of “sinicisation” (i.e. making Chinese) with the intention of selectively reinterpreting Christianity and Scripture. This is already beginning to take place. Pray that the Lord’s disciples in China will hold to His teaching, so that they will know the truth and the truth will set them free (John 8:31-32).

**WEDNESDAY 13** According to official Egyptian government statistics there are 2,869 church buildings in the country. This is for a Christian community of 8 to 10 million people. It is small wonder that many Christians have to meet in buildings that are not registered as churches and therefore are meeting illegally. In August 2016 the Egyptian parliament passed a law making it much easier for churches to register their buildings, but the process is slow. More than 3,000 applications are still waiting to be processed. Pray

that they will all be granted permission soon. Pray also that attacks on church buildings by angry mobs will cease. In mid-January, for example, another four churches were forced to close and their ministers arrested.

**THURSDAY 14** 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 find safe havens where they can live safely and worship Christ freely.

**FRIDAY 15** A mass grave containing the bodies of 34 Ethiopian Christians martyred in 2015 by Islamic State (IS) was discovered in Libya on 23 December 2018. Pray that the long awaited return of the bodies of their loved ones may bring comfort to those in Ethiopia who mourn for their husbands, sons and fathers. Ask that they will be enabled to rejoice in the fact that they died for Christ and have received a martyr’s crown (Revelation 2:10).



Image taken from the IS video of the killing of the 34 Ethiopian Christians in Sirte in 2015

**SATURDAY 16** A group of Christians had gathered in one of their homes on Sunday morning 13 January in Medan, the capital of North Sumatra, Indonesia. They were just about to start their meeting when a mob invaded the building, protesting that it was being used as an “illegal” church. Members of the congregation say they obtained permits two months ago for the house to function as the Indonesian Bethel Church, adding that some documents have been difficult to obtain from government officials. Medan police say the permit was not granted. Ask that Indonesian Christians will have the strength to stand firm in their faith, despite the increasing opposition they face.

**SUNDAY 17** 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. We ask all these things in the Name of Christ.

**MONDAY 18** Praise God for the wonderful growth of the Church in Iran as more and more Muslims turn to Christ, despite increasing persecution from the authorities. Pray for each one, that they will be strong in the Lord, especially those serving terms in prison on trumped up charges, and that their witness will draw more to put their faith in Jesus.

**TUESDAY 19** The Iraqi government has made Christmas Day a public holiday in Iraq. This is a great encouragement and affirmation for the Christian minority. The government is also reconstructing and restoring church buildings that were destroyed (about 15) and damaged (about 40) during the three years that Islamic State militants occupied the city of Mosul. Thank our Lord Jesus Christ for this good news.

**WEDNESDAY 20** Ask the Lord Jesus to have mercy on Eritrean and Congolese 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 but ask that He will touch the hearts of those in government and cause them to change their policies designed to crush the spirits, impoverish and force out of Israel these desperately needy believers.

**THURSDAY 21** 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 1:3) 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.

**FRIDAY 22** The employment situation in Kyrgyzstan is very difficult and many people are leaving the country to seek work to support their families; this includes church leaders. Ask the Lord that leaders will return

to their homeland and to raise up new leaders in the country as well. Pray for Christian children who face persecution at school, that the presence and comfort of the Holy Spirit will be very real to them. Bring to the Lord also the many Christians who cannot get work to support their families unless they deny Christ; ask that they will continue to be faithful and that our heavenly Father will provide for them.

**SATURDAY 23** Christian worship is allowed in some parts of Laos (with state officials present to check for anti-government statements), but Christians living in remote areas of the country suffer much harassment by local officials who consider Christianity a foreign religion and often force the Christians out of their homes and away from the land they need for their livelihoods. Pray that Laotian Christians will boldly proclaim the truth of their Saviour without fear, knowing that the LORD is with them (Psalm 118:6).

**SUNDAY 24** **O LORD, we lift up to You all Christians who are refugees in other countries or displaced within their own country. Be their refuge and a strong tower. Watch over and provide for all who are dispossessed. Let them hear Your words of comfort and fill them with a peace that the world cannot give. Remind them of their heavenly homeland, where You have prepared a city for them. Watch over all dispossessed Christians, and let them know Your comfort and peace and Your assurance of their heavenly homeland. In Jesus' Name we ask. (Psalm 61:3; Hebrews 11:16)**

**MONDAY 25** Praise God for the vigilance of the Lebanese police whose 10-month surveillance operation uncovered a terrorist plot to target places of worship, military targets and gatherings of Christians to “cause chaos” during Lebanon’s parliamentary elections last year. On two occasions, explosives hidden in tubs of cheese had been sent from Syria to Lebanon by Islamic State militants. Pray for peace and stability in Lebanon, which is a haven for Christians from other parts of the Middle East.

**TUESDAY 26** There are many migrants in Libya, mainly from West Africa and Eritrea, hoping to get from Libya to Europe. But they are in permanent danger of being picked up by Libyan militias and sold into slavery in modern-day slave markets. Amongst these vulnerable Africans are many Christians, for example Eritreans escaping religious persecution in Eritrea and many girls and young women from Nigeria. Pray for an end to what the secretary-general of the United Nations has described as “among the most egregious abuses of human rights”. Pray especially for our Christian brothers and sisters that they will not lose heart, as they fix their eyes on the unseen and the eternal (2 Corinthians 4:16-18).

**WEDNESDAY 27** Timbuktu, the famed city of gold and learning, lies in the country of Mali in the Sahel. Today Mali is in deep despair. Growing climate changes have brought about major floods alternating with drought. A rising tide of Islamic extremism has produced growing terrorism. The ugly spectre of tribalism has arisen, coupled with disputes over land. All this has

seen many Malians reduced to abject poverty, their animals dead, their crops destroyed by flood or drought, their homes and livelihoods affected. In the midst of this are small Christian communities, affected by these massive forces. Pray that the Lord will sustain His Church in this beleaguered and often forgotten Muslim-majority nation, that He will protect His people and give them great courage. In recent times extremists have targeted their churches for destruction and have killed pastors and other Christians.

**THURSDAY 28** Lift up in prayer the many displaced Christians in Myanmar (Burma), who have experienced horrific treatment at the hands of the country's military. Pray that they will remain strong in the Lord as they face great hardship. Buddhism is the de facto state



"Par Te" is a Kachin Christian who loves to read the book of Proverbs. She has been displaced since 2011 when she was ten and the army attacked her village. "I tried not to cry because I am the oldest," she recalls, as she and her brothers and sisters fled into the rice fields to hide

religion in Myanmar, where the military retains considerable power in Aung San Suu Kyi's government. This has emboldened ultra-nationalist Buddhist monks, including members of the extremist Ma Ba Tha group, who have played a key part in inciting violence against Christians and refusing them the right to congregate for worship. Pray that progress of democracy in Myanmar, so feted in the world's press, will lead to true religious freedom for all.

**FRIDAY 29** Four Christian women were arrested near Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal, in November and charged with breaking Nepal's anti-conversion laws which came into force two months earlier. According to some reports, they had been evangelising door to door. The four were charged with trying to convert Dalits (the lowest level of the Hindu caste system) and landless nomads by force. Pray for Yasura and Makihikula from Japan and for Pushpa and Tirthamaya from India that they will not be dismayed or discouraged despite the fact that all could face five years in prison and a fine if found guilty (or the Japanese could be deported).

**SATURDAY 30** Ask the LORD to give His people in northern Nigeria rest from their enemies (Joshua 23:1). Pray for the complete defeat of the Islamist militant group Boko Haram and that its members may come to know and love the Prince of Peace. Pray also that Fulani herdsmen will cease attacking Christian villages. Pray for the protection of Christians who have fled their homes because of anti-Christian violence and that, even in the midst of adversity, the light of their love for Him will continue to shine.

**SUNDAY 31** Thank you, dear LORD, for pastors, church-planters and evangelists who serve You in the face of opposition and violence in places where Christians are a despised minority. May Your Holy Spirit equip and empower them spiritually, just as You meet their material needs. Protect them from attacks from the majority community, harassment from the authorities and unjust penalties for their service to You. Please make their ministries fruitful in lives transformed by the truth of the Gospel of Christ in whose Name we pray.

## April

**MONDAY 1** At the end of the Second World War, the powerhouse of Korean Christianity was in the north of the country. Three-fifths of the Protestants lived in the north and so did many of their best church leaders. But immediately Soviet troops moved into the north, and in 1948 the country was divided in two. By 1953 (when a truce was arranged in the Korean war), a third of the northern Christians had fled from the communist north to the south. The remaining 200,000 Christians in North Korea suffered terrible persecution, as did their believing children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. But the Korean Church has endured persecution bravely for centuries. Praise God for this and pray for a great harvest of souls from the many grains of wheat that have fallen into the Korean earth (John 12:24 ESV).

**TUESDAY 2** On 13 December brothers Qasir and Amoon Ayub were sentenced to death by a court in Pakistan for defiling the name of Muhammad (part of Pakistan's so-called "blasphemy" law). The Christian men had left Pakistan in 2011, after allegations surfaced that they had posted on their website material that was "disrespectful". When they returned in 2014 they were arrested and have been in jail ever since. Pray that their conviction and sentence will be overturned.

**WEDNESDAY 3** Pray for Palestinian Christians in the West Bank and Gaza. Because of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, they face many difficulties, especially those in Gaza, where the Christian minority is very small and the Hamas-led government is more extreme and hostile than the Fatah-led government in the West Bank. Unemployment is one of their main problems. Pray for jobs and that they may find hope in God.

**THURSDAY 4** Christians in the European part of Russia find themselves under increasing pressure from the legal sphere. Laws keep changing and new laws are passed. Inspectors find fault with the slightest violation and immediately send the matter to court, instead of giving the church an opportunity to correct it, as they used to do. Fines are much higher than they used to be, and a church that has been found guilty of several violations can be liquidated. Pray for wisdom for Christians as they defend themselves in these court cases and that the Lord will lead the judges to find in their favour.

**FRIDAY 5** Pray for isolated, secret Saudi believers, known only to their Father in Heaven; may they be encouraged and comforted by the Holy Spirit, and grow in their faith through revelation and the study of the Word. As Saudi Arabia begins to give a little more freedom to women, such as allowing them to drive, pray that they may also give freedom to non-Muslims to live and worship according to the faith of their choice.

**SATURDAY 6** All Somali Christians, being converts from Islam, are in grave danger, especially those living in Somalia itself, and many have been killed. Pray that the Lord Jesus will keep them safe and their faith unwavering in the tempests of political and social persecution, and the Islamist violence which is so likely, humanly speaking, to lead to their martyrdom. Pray that the members of the Somalia-based Al-Shabaab militant group, a source of so much terrorism in East Africa, will turn away from their violence and learn to love peace.

**SUNDAY 7** **Almighty God, we bring to you in prayer all the Christian women and girls living in contexts of marginalisation, poverty and persecution. Many are doubly despised – for being Christians and for being female – and are at risk of abuse and violence. Be their shield and their glory, and lift up their heads. We pray especially for widows, whose husbands died for Christ. Comfort their broken hearts and enable them to provide for themselves and their children. We ask this in the Name of Your Son Jesus Christ. (Psalm 3:3)**

**MONDAY 8** Pray for the Christian minority in Sri Lanka, vulnerable to many kinds of harassment, pressure and persecution. Pray that they may have wisdom to understand the complex times and context in which they live and to know what to do (1 Chronicles 12:32). Thank the Lord that the new Prime Minister appears to be more just and favourable to Christians. Ask that Christians will be able to meet and worship freely without persecution. Many Sri Lankan Christians are impoverished and often exploited by their employers; they suffer greatly at times of natural disaster. Pray that they know the comfort of their Heavenly Father and be able to rest in the knowledge that even though they are poor, they are rich (Revelation 2:9).

**TUESDAY 9** President Omar al-Bashir has ruled Sudan with an iron fist since 1989. Sharia law had already been introduced in 1983 and al-Bashir has maintained a strongly Islamic rule. After many years of civil war, South Sudan became independent, and Christians who remained in Sudan itself (approximately 3% of its population) were even more persecuted than before. Last year was particularly bad for Christians with increasing arrests and destruction of church buildings. At the time of writing Sudanese citizens have been protesting for weeks against the dire economic situation in their country and demanding that President al-Bashir step down. Pray for just and righteous rule in Sudan, with freedom and equality for all citizens.

**WEDNESDAY 10** Many Syrian Christians left their homes during the war years, seeking safety in another part of

their homeland or in another country altogether. Amongst those who remained in the most difficult places are many elderly, disabled and sick who could not travel. Pray for them now, as they struggle through each day. Ask that the Lord will provide for all their needs. Pray for the many Syrian Christians in other countries that they will be comforted by the presence of the Holy Spirit and will be welcomed into the family of believers around the world.

**THURSDAY 11** Pray for Christians in Tajikistan, who live with harsh laws restricting the way they can practise and share their faith. Lift up Christians who have been arrested and jailed under the “extremism law”; pray for their safe release. Remember the children of Christian parents, banned for the last eight years from taking part in public religious activities. Pray that parents will find other methods to teach them the way of the LORD (Deuteronomy 11:19).

**FRIDAY 12** Intercede for Pakistani and Vietnamese Christian asylum-seekers in Thailand, whom the government will not recognise as refugees. Pray for a dramatic change of policy by the Thai government and for the release of believers held in conditions sometimes worse than jail simply because they have tried to escape discrimination or persecution in their homeland. Remember also Thai converts from Buddhism, often facing family opposition, and pray that they will draw strength from the words of the Lord Jesus: “If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also.” (John 15:20).

**SATURDAY 13** The small church in Tunisia is almost all converts from Islam and their children. Pray that they will grow in faith, understanding, courage, unity and love as well as growing in numbers. Pray that they may do everything without complaining or arguing and that they may shine like stars in the universe as they hold out the word of life in this country which was a great centre of Christianity in ancient times (Philippians 2:14-16).

**SUNDAY 14** Heavenly Father, we thank you for the example of those from other religions who decide to follow Your Son, willingly taking up their cross, enduring loss and suffering for His sake. Please strengthen, encourage and protect them in their walk with Him. In times of loneliness or rejection, let them feel His presence and love in a very special way and remember that their place in Your family can never be taken away from them. Equip them with all they need to grow in the knowledge and love of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in whose Name we pray. (Luke 14:27)

**MONDAY 15** Modern Turkey was created almost 100 years ago, with a strongly secular basis. But Christians have faced hostility and periodic harassment throughout this time, and their difficulties are increasing under the current president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who is strongly Islamic. As well as the small population of historic Christians and the very small population of Turkish Christian converts, there are now many thousands of Christian refugees from Syria, Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan who have fled their homelands but cannot

settle in Turkey. Pray that all Christians struggling today within the boundaries of Turkey will know the peace of Christ in their hearts and will have the boldness to witness for Him.



Barnabas Fund provided Christmas gifts for Christian refugee children in Turkey

**TUESDAY 16** Christians in Turkmenistan face many difficulties; pray that they will rejoice that they participate in the sufferings of Christ (1 Peter 4:13). Pray that churches will be permitted to re-register with the authorities, in accordance with a law issued three years ago, so that they can function legally. Ask that the Lord Jesus will strengthen the faith of His followers in Turkmenistan, especially converts from Islam, and make a way for Bibles and Christian literature to be more freely distributed. Ask that church leaders will have wisdom from above as they shepherd His people through difficult times, and especially in their dealings with the authorities.

**WEDNESDAY 17** Forty police accompanied by the SSS secret police

and (for the first time in a church raid) military personnel from the National Guard raided a church in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, on 25 November during Sunday worship. Fourteen Christians were detained, including a 14-year-old boy, and taken to a police station where they were held outside in the severe winter cold, while police tried to force them to admit they had attended an “unauthorised meeting”. They refused and after more than nine hours of interrogation were released. During the raid on the unregistered church, every member of the congregation was photographed and their details recorded. Hymn books and other items of Christian literature were confiscated. Later in the evening, as the temperatures plummeted, the police cut off the church’s heating. (Forum 18)

**THURSDAY 18** The persecution situation of Christians in Vietnam varies greatly, depending which part of the country they are in, which ethnic group they are, and whether they are active in advocating for religious freedom and human rights in Vietnam. Pray that Vietnamese Christians will be encouraged by remembering that they are part of a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God. Pray that they will live such good lives that non-believers who try to accuse them of doing wrong will be confounded and the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ will be glorified (1 Peter 2:9-12).

**GOOD FRIDAY** Thank God for the assurance of eternal life for all who believe in Jesus. Praise Him for the perseverance of believers who did not cling to life in the face of death

(Revelation 12:11). Ask that their sacrifice will embolden others to endure and demonstrate the truth and power of the Gospel to their killers. Pray, too, that the Lord will comfort those left behind in their grief and give them His peace that passes all understanding (Philippians 4:7).

**SATURDAY 20** Most Zimbabweans are Christians, but their faith has been severely battered by fear because of the terrible human rights atrocities in their country during the past 18 years. In recent years, however, courageous Christian individuals have taken a stand in the Name of Christ, against the regime. Now more and more Zimbabwean Christians are daring to speak out for justice and righteousness. People have marched with crosses throughout Zimbabwe. Praise the Lord for the courage of His servants, and pray for real change for the better in Zimbabwe very soon.

**EASTER SUNDAY** We praise You, our Lord and God, for the glorious rising of Your Son from the dead. We rejoice that death has lost its sting and the grave has lost its victory for all who love and trust in Him. We lift to You our brothers and sisters who today face harassment, discrimination, violence and persecution, that they will hold firm in the assurance of that living hope and be sustained through the comfort of the Holy Spirit and the resurrection power of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in whose Name we pray.

**MONDAY 22** A group of young Uzbek Christians, all converts from Islam, had gathered in secret for a youth prayer meeting on 1 December when a group

of police officers in civilian clothes entered the church and attempted to film their meeting on a mobile phone. One of Christian girls offered that the group should pray for those in authority (1 Timothy 2:2), meaning for those who had come to persecute them. This caused the police to stop their filming. After the meeting they resumed their harassment of the believers, shouting threats to make them give written statements to incriminate others. When the group refused they were taken to the police station to have their identities checked and then released after about 40 minutes. Pray that the experience of being prayed for by those they had come to persecute will have a life-changing impact on these police officers.

**TUESDAY 23** “This ‘golden era’ of religious liberty may be ending and the United Kingdom risks regressing. Religious believers are, once again, facing increased pressure to restrict their faith to the ‘private sphere’. We now see regular, and increasingly unapologetic persecution of Christians who remain committed to Biblical teaching, refusing to bow to liberal, secular orthodoxies... although it is now Bible-believing Christians who face increasing discrimination today, radical secularists are every bit as determined to undermine the freedoms of observant Muslims and orthodox Jews.” These are the words of Sir John Hayes, a British MP. Pray that full religious liberty for people of every religion and none will be maintained in the UK.

**WEDNESDAY 24** “Stop all your services straight away,” read the handwritten letter to a church in Sheffield, UK. “If you don’t your church will be petrol

bombed while in service. Continue behind closed doors and your congregation members will be stabbed one by one. Blood on your hands. You have been warned.” Fifteen British churches received similar letters in a two-month period. Police have been deployed to the churches affected but pray that God Himself will be a shield of protection around His people and that they will continue to meet together.

**THURSDAY 25** The UK’s Foreign Secretary has ordered a government review of the UK’s response to global persecution of Christians. But less than a month later, the Home Office appeared to admit that it was discriminating against Christians when deciding which Syrian refugees to give sanctuary to in Britain. The number of Christian Syrians accepted for resettlement in the UK is far less than their percentage in the Syrian

population. Thank the Lord for the British government’s concern to help persecuted Christians in other countries and pray that it may be shown in practical action by allowing more of them to settle and re-start their lives in safety in the UK.

**FRIDAY 26** Iraqi Christians who fled from their homes in Mosul and the nearby Nineveh plains, when the city was occupied by Islamic State militants in 2014, have received news that hundreds more of their empty houses have been occupied, seized or sold under false ownership names. This is in addition to all the Christian homes lost in this way while Islamic State was still in control of the region. The same thing is happening to Christian-owned properties in Baghdad, Kirkuk and Basra. The government recently managed to stop 50 sham sales but many other sales have gone through. Pray that the suffering



Iraqi Christians

these believers have endured may help them to store up treasure in heaven, as they trust their heavenly Father for His provision and live Christ-like lives amidst the Muslim majority.

**SATURDAY 27** An Egyptian Muslim extremist wielding an iron bar in one hand, holding a Quran in the other, and shouting, “Allahu Akbar ... Death to the apostates,” broke into a Cairo church in the early morning on Sunday 11 November, while church staff were preparing bread for the communion service. He was overpowered by church members and held until police arrived. Reportedly, he shouted at the police officer, “Give me your gun so I may kill them. If you don’t, you’d be an infidel like them.” Praise God that no one was seriously hurt in this attack and pray that the God who is love will take away the hatred from this young man’s heart (1 John 4:8).

**SUNDAY 28** Heavenly Father, we praise You for the perseverance of Moroccan believers, who loved, trusted and have followed Your Son for many long hard years when Moroccan Christians were not supposed even to exist. Thank you for the signs of a greater freedom coming in Morocco. We pray for a positive response to their request to the National Human Rights Council that their right to exist, to worship and share their faith will be officially recognised, and we ask that many more Moroccans will put their faith in Jesus Christ, in whose Name we pray.

**MONDAY 29** Christians in India are coming under increasing pressure in the legal sphere. New regulations are making it more and more difficult

for them to function and to finance their ministries. The slightest error in filling out forms and other official paperwork leads all too often to penalties and the possibility of being closed down. Pray that God will enable Indian Christians to fulfil all the administrative requirements of the Indian government. Pray also for protection from physical attacks by extremists on church buildings, worshippers and especially pastors and from those who try to force Christians to convert to Hinduism.

**TUESDAY 30** Islam is the only recognised religion in the Republic of Maldives, which is overwhelmingly Muslim. In December 2017, President Abdulla Yameen stated that there is “no room for any other religion” than Islam in the Maldives. Even non-Muslim visitors are not allowed to show their faith openly. The tiny number of Maldivian Christians (who are not supposed to exist as all Maldivians should be Muslims) are ostracised, discriminated against and carefully watched. The perceived immorality of Western tourists increases the hostility of Muslim Maldivians towards Christians. In 2016 the government passed a Defamation and Freedom of Speech Act, which criminalised comments against “any tenet of Islam”. Anyone convicted faces a fine which can be as high as 5 million rufiyaa (around £250,000; \$330,000; €300,000) or three to six months in prison. Intercede today for Maldivian Christians, asking that God will strengthen any in prison and that the Holy Spirit will comfort and encourage isolated believers.



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**Front Cover: Young Christian survivor of the Sulawesi earthquake and tsunami**