

## **Prayer Items for October 31, 2010**

Wait on the LORD; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the LORD!  
Psalm 27:14

### **PAKISTAN — Bibles, Hymnals and Church Property Burned — VOM Contacts**

Romans 12:14

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

On Sept. 19, Islamic extremists broke into the Philadelphia Pentecostal Church in Sharif Town, Karachi City, Pakistan, and set fire to Bibles, hymnals, a musical instrument and a table, according to The Voice of the Martyrs contacts. The church, which is led by Pastors George Rakha and Peter Shahzad, was established six years ago and is actively involved in Muslim evangelism. “At 4 a.m., some fanatics broke the lock of the church door and entered the church,” VOM contacts reported. “They burned three crosses, nine Bibles, five books of worship songs, a table and a musical instrument Tabla [local drum].” On Sept. 20, the Christian community displayed a banner protesting the burning of their Bibles. Christians believe this incident was a reaction to an American pastor’s widely publicized threat to burn copies of the Quran on Sept. 11. Christian leaders in the U.S. spoke out against the pastor’s plan to burn the Quran, and he ultimately decided against it. But it seems that no Muslim leaders spoke out against the burning of Bibles in Pakistan. Pray for believers in Pakistan who courageously live for Christ in the midst of opposition. Pray that believers’ testimonies and love for Christ will draw their Muslim neighbors into fellowship with Christ.

### **IRAN — Nine Believers Arrested — Farsi Christian News Network**

Acts 4:29–31

“Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, 30 by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.”

And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

Nine Christians were arrested recently in Hamedan, Iran, on charges of engaging in journalistic activities, according to Farsi Christian News Network (FCNN). Iranian state television reported that two of those arrested were supported by organizations from the United States and Great Britain, but their nationalities are unknown. The other seven were reportedly accused of cooperating with “Christian-Zionist organizations.” The Iranian government uses this terminology to describe Christians who have access to a number of evangelistic networks and TV satellite programs. FCNN concluded that this is the first time in three decades that state TV has broadcast news about the arrest of Christians. Pray that God will equip these believers to share the gospel while in prison, and pray for their release. Pray that the increased persecution in Iran will result in increased boldness among Christians.

### **CHINA — Pastor Detained at Trial of House Church Leaders — China Aid Association**

Romans 5:10–12

For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.

Pastor “Bike” Zhang Mingxuan and his wife, along with several other believers, were detained on Sept. 20 while attending court proceedings for imprisoned Christians Liu Yunhua and Gao Jianli in Xuchang, Henan province, according to China Aid Association. Pastor Zhang, who has been imprisoned previously, was released a few hours later with his wife. Other Christians, including the son of defendant Liu Yunhua, were detained by authorities on their way home from the trial. At last report, these believers were still in detention. Pray for the release of the detained believers, and pray that God will grant patience and faith to Liu and Gao throughout their trial. Ask God to continue to equip and embolden Pastor Zhang in his ministry.

### **IRAN — Pastor Sentenced to Death — VOM Contacts**

Matthew 5:44–45

But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

Christians in Iran are reporting that Pastor Youcef Nardarkhani has been sentenced to death for what is called a “thought crime.” VOM contacts confirm that the pastor’s trial was held in recent weeks in the 11th Chamber of The Assize Court of the province of Gilan, but a formal verdict has not yet been delivered by the court. Pastor Youcef, a leader in the Full Gospel “Church of Iran” network, is one of several members of his church who have been imprisoned. The Iranian government has also threatened his wife with life imprisonment and has threatened to take away their two children, who are currently being cared for by relatives. Pastor Youcef was arrested in October 2009 after protesting a decision by the government requiring that his son study the Quran. Media reports suggest that Pastor Youcef was transferred to Lakan prison, which is supervised by the Political Police of the Islamic Republic. If a death sentence is officially handed down by the court and Pastor Youcef is executed, his would be the first judicial execution of a Christian in Iran in two decades. This arrest is the latest in a series of arrests of believers in Iran in the past year. Eighty-three Christians are known to have been arrested in Iran since the beginning of 2010. Of those, 65 were subsequently released, but 18 are still believed to be in custody. Pray for Pastor Youcef, his family and other believers in prison. Ask God to protect them and to embolden them to proclaim his name in the face of great persecution.

### **IRAQ — Christian Disappears — VOM Contacts**

1 Thessalonians 3:7–9

Therefore, brethren, in all our affliction and distress we were comforted concerning you by your faith. For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord.

For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before our God,

The Voice of the Martyrs contacts in Baghdad, Iraq, report that a Christian woman disappeared several days ago after being caught reading her Bible. VOM contacts are not sure who may have discovered the woman reading the Bible, but Christians in Iraq are concerned for her safety. Pray that God will protect this woman and that Christians will be encouraged during this uncertain time. Praise God for all believers in Iraq.

### **CHINA — Authorities Harass Christian Attorney — China Aid Association**

Matthew 5:10–11

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake,

For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.”

On Oct. 10, police officers confronted Christian attorney Jiang Tianyong while he was on his way to a worship service in Beijing, according to China Aid Association. As Jiang was walking to church with his wife and child, police officers blocked his way and told him that the deputy director of Yangfangdian Police Station would not allow him to go to church. When Jiang called the station to confirm their claim, he was told that an official from the Haidian Public Security Branch, Song Aixin, was the one preventing him from attending church. Jiang told the officers that he was determined to go to church but said they could follow him if they wished. Then, at a subway station, two young police officers grabbed Jiang from behind. Jiang told his family to leave, then tried to talk with the two officers. They told Jiang that it would be a “serious act of dereliction” if he attended church, and they held him long enough to prevent his church attendance before escorting him home. Pray that Jiang and his family will persevere in faith amid this harassment. Pray that they will continue to yield their hearts to God’s will and demonstrate his love even to their oppressors. Pray that Christians in China will continue to exercise their right to worship, despite opposition.

#### **NORTH KOREA -- Pray for Believers**

Please pray for believers in North Korea during this time of political transition. On Sept. 30, Kim Jong Un, the youngest son of North Korean dictator Kim Jong Il, was named Vice Chairman of the Worker’s Party Central Military Commission. Kim Jong Un is expected to succeed his ailing father as the country’s leader. Pray for believers in North Korea as they continue living for Christ under North Korea’s communist rule. Ask God to protect and encourage them during these political changes.

#### **CHINA -- Prayer Rooms Destroyed, Believers Detained -- China Aid Association**

On Sept. 21, nearly 200 police officers demolished a prayer room at Taishan Christian Church in Taizhou, Zhejiang province, citing a “building code violation,” according to China Aid Association. After the demolition, dozens of church members held a church service and police officers tried to disperse them. A member of the church said a line of police prevented them from removing their belongings from the prayer room. This is the second such incident in less than a month. Authorities had previously raided the church on Aug. 30. “The last time they came here, they tore down six of the eight rooms,” the church’s pastor said. “About 200 people came again and surrounded the entire place. Then, they totally leveled the buildings, stating that the structures violated the building code.” On Sept. 22, following the most recent demolition, police raided the Chen Pengyi Church in Wancheng district, Henan province, where several believers were gathered for a Bible study and training session. Police detained an American pastor and a Russian pastor as well as more than 30 attendees. One believer’s car was also confiscated. Pray that God will continue to give these believers a steadfast spirit of courage and faithfulness amid these challenges. Pray that their witness will help awaken their oppressors to the saving knowledge of Christ, and pray that those detained will be released.

#### **INDIA -- Hindu Extremists Disrupt Church Service -- Compass Direct News**

On Sept. 26, Hindu extremists disrupted a worship service and dragged Christians out of a building in West Bengal, India, according to Compass Direct News. The attackers said they did not want Christian prayer or worship to occur in the village. Compass Direct reported that extremists threatened to kill Christians if they did not convert to Hinduism. “The Christians reported the matter to the Kenda Police Station,” Compass Direct reported. “Officers summoned both parties to the police station, but the extremists threatened to kill the Christians if they went.” Pray for believers in this church as they

continue to serve Christ despite these threats. Ask God to use their testimonies to draw nonbelievers into fellowship with Christ.

#### **INDIA -- Church Destroyed, Christians Arrested -- VOM Contacts**

On Sept. 5, Hindu extremists in Andhra Pradesh, India, destroyed a church building in Patagunta village, according to The Voice of the Martyrs contacts. The following day, the extremists filed charges against two pastors and three members of the church, alleging that the Christians had destroyed local temples and Hindu idols. Police arrested all five believers the same day. Pray that these five Christians will have the opportunity to share their faith, even in chains, and pray that they will be released soon. Pray that those behind this injustice will repent of their actions and come to embrace Christ as Lord and Savior.

#### **INDONESIA -- Bekasi Church Suffers Repeat Attack -- Asia News / Jakarta Globe**

On Sept. 11, eight unknown assailants attacked the Batak Christian Protestant Filadelfia Church in Bekasi, Indonesia, during a worship service, according to Asia News. An elder, Asia Sihombing, was stabbed in the stomach during the attack. When Reverend Luspida Simanjuntak tried to help the elder, she was beaten with a stick on the head and back. At last report, both believers were recovering in a local hospital. In August, the same congregation was attacked by Muslim extremists who were opposed to the church's worship services, even though they were held on church-owned property. Reverend Luspida insisted that the church has a right to worship openly and said that she will continue her mission without fear despite growing threats against Christians. The recent violence has intensified concerns among Christians, human rights activists and many other Indonesians about the decline of religious freedom in the country. Pray for the healing of Asia and Reverend Luspida, and pray that the attackers will be brought to justice. Ask God to give these church members boldness and wisdom as they face persecution because of their faith.

#### **TURKMENISTAN -- Update: Family Concerned About Imprisoned Pastor's Health -- Forum 18 News Service**

The family of Pastor Nurliev has expressed concerns about his health after learning that he is being held in a crowded and smoky cell, according to Forum 18 News. Pastor Nurliev's wife, Maya, has been denied access to her husband since he was arrested on Aug. 27 in Mary, Turkmenistan, on charges of large-scale swindling. "He is innocent of the accusations against him, and I want him back home," Maya told Forum 18 News. "All this is being done because of his faith." Pray for Pastor Nurliev's health, and pray that he will be released soon. Pray that Maya and her family will trust in God's provision and care in this difficult time.

#### **LAOS -- Christians Arrested -- VOM New Zealand**

On Sept. 18, police arrested 35 Christians in Meung Feung in northern Laos, according to VOM New Zealand. The believers, who were detained while in the area for a tree-planting project, are very active in sharing the gospel and have helped lead many people to the Lord. Thirty of the Christians were released, including the mother of a four-month-old child, but at last report five were still being held. Believers in the area are deeply concerned for the welfare of the five still in detention. Pray for the release of the five believers, and pray that God will strengthen their faith as they face this persecution. In addition, pray that God will grant boldness and wisdom to Laotian Christians as they share the love of Christ amid ongoing harassment and threats of imprisonment.

#### **CHINA -- Police Raid House Church -- China Aid Association**

On Sept. 26, police and security officers raided a house church meeting in Youqing, Sichuan province,

China, detaining and beating church members, according to China Aid Association. Authorities, who claimed the Christian gathering was illegal, took 20 believers to the police station for interrogation. Five were released after their families posted bail, but the others remained in detention for several hours before being released. While in detention, two of the believers were reportedly beaten by the police station's director. When some of the Christians returned to the station the next day to retrieve their property, five were sentenced to 15 days in detention for "disrupting the public order under the guise of religion." During the raid, authorities smashed a desk and about 30 benches, and they also confiscated Christian books and 500 Yuan (US\$29). Praise God for the faithfulness of Chinese Christians who continue to meet for worship despite the risk. Pray that those who were beaten will be strengthened and fully restored to health.

### **ALGERIA -- Christians Acquitted -- Australian Evangelical Alliance Religious Liberty Commission**

On Oct. 5, a court in the Kabylie region of Algeria acquitted Christian converts Hocine Hocini and Salem Fellak of the charge of "non-compliance with a precept of Islam." The men had been arrested for eating lunch during Ramadan. Also in Algeria, four Protestant leaders were to have appeared in court on Oct. 10 on the charge of "practicing non-Muslim worship without authorization." Pastor Yahou Mahmoud and elders Raid Abdenour, Mokrani Nacer and Haouedj Idir lead a fellowship affiliated with the Protestant Church of Algeria, a large nationally accredited denomination. The outcome of their hearing is unknown. Thank the Lord for the acquittal of Hocine Hocini and Salem Fellak and for the support they received from many Christians across Algeria. Pray that the Lord will use the case of the Protestant leaders to strengthen his church and further the spread of the gospel in Algeria.

### **Evangelical Fellowship of India NEWS**

#### **Christians beaten and threatened in Karnataka**

On October 3 in Kolar, Karnataka, Hindu extremists allegedly from the Bajrang Dal barged into a Christian prayer meeting, beat up believers and seized Bibles.

Our correspondent Rev. Noel Kotian reported that a mob of about 20 Hindu extremists forcefully entered into the prayer meeting conducted by Pastor Daniel Shankar, started verbally abusing the Christians for their faith, beat them up and took 20 Bibles from them.

The extremists further threatened the Christians with dire consequence if they continue to conduct prayer meetings in future. Alerted by the extremists, police arrived at the spot and seized Pastor Shankar's motor bike and 20 Bibles.

Police on the next day gave back the motor bike and Bibles to the Christians only after they forcefully took an undertaking from them in writing that they will not continue future Christian activities in the area.

No worship was had on the following Sunday (Oct.10).

#### **Christians beaten, pastor's wife suffered miscarriage in Karnataka**

Karnataka police arrested two suspected Hindu extremists for beating four pastors and kicking the wife of one of them in the stomach resulting in the lost of her unborn child on Oct. 2 in Kolar district.

Our correspondent *Rev. Noel Kotian* reported that the principal of New Public School Smt. Ambujakshi invited Church leaders and members from Living Gospel Prayer Fellowship for the celebration of Gandhi Jayanti when about 40 Hindu extremists barged in and started beating the Christians.

Verbally abusing the Christians for their faith, the extremists punched and kicked the pastors and pushed down the four months pregnant wife of Pastor Fernandez, Kejiya Fernandes, and struck her in the stomach.

The attack against the Christians was reportedly carried out to avenge an alleged insult to Hindu gods during the Christian gathering. The extremists filed a police complaint against the Christian prior to the assault.

Five Christians were detained in the police station for about five hours and were released only after Kelija Fernandes began to bleed profusely. The court granted them anticipatory bail.

Poice registered a case against 12 attackers under Sections 316 and 504 of The Indian Penal Code for "causing death of quick unborn child by act amounting to culpable homicide" and "intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of the peace" respectively. Two extremists were arrested the same day, the rest are absconding, reported our correspondent.

### **Church construction Destroyed in Madhya Pradesh**

Alleged Hindu extremists from the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh on 16 Sept attacked a church construction, completely bringing it down to the ground in Jabalpur , Madhya Pradesh.

Our correspondent *Rev. Akhilesh Edgar* reported that that the Hindu extremists allegedly from the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh demolished the church construction of Believers Church with a JCB truck after claiming that they do allow any church to exist in the area .

Area Christian leaders are taking steps to solve the matter.

### **Christian arrested, pastor assaulted in Chhattisgarh**

On 28 Sept in Rajnandgan, Chhattisgarh, Hindu extremists assaulted Pastor Suresh Deep from The Church of God after the state police arrested one church member.

Our correspondent *Rev. Akhilesh Edgar* reported that the incident started on 27 Sept when two church members Shilembra Sahu and Raj Kumar started quarrelling. Raj Kumar was reported as back sliding and had earlier threatened to harm the church members.

The villagers swelled up as the two Christians fought with Hindu extremists supporting Raj Kumar. The extremists later filed a complaint against Sahu and strangely, police arrested him under Section 151 of the Indian Penal Code and put him in police custody.

The next day, Pastor Suresh Deep went to the court to submit the bail petition of Sahu where about 20 extremists gathered at the court premises and started verbally abusing the pastor and beat him up.

The extremists then dragged Pastor Deep to a Hindu temple and forced him to drink dirty water and pressured him to put in writing that he will not do any conversion activity in future.

The pastor sustained bruises all over his body. Area Christian leaders intervened and police registered a case against the attackers but no arrests had been made at press time.

Shilembra Sahu was sent to Rajnandgan district jail but was released on bail on 30 September.