

November 2011

International: November 13, 2011 is the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church, and in observance of this day, many of the prayer items will focus on countries where religious freedom is not a protected right and those who follow Christ do so at a great cost. However, this is also an important time to pray for the Church in the free world—that we, in grateful response to the safety and freedom with which we can live out our faith, will become even more compassionately engaged in the plight of brothers and sisters around the globe. May our comfortable Christianity not blind us to the dire circumstances of fellow believers, and may the pockets of the Church in the West, which remain oblivious to the sufferings of others be awakened and spurred on to prayer and action. May the Church become known by our love for our brothers and sisters, wherever they are, and as those who speak up for those who cannot speak up for themselves.

International: Pray for the various leaders of the nations of the world, that they might be moved to act and rule justly. Pray that they might come to know Christ and have lives and careers transformed by Him. Thank God that He remains sovereign. Pray especially for those countries that have been identified as the worst in regard to the persecution of Christians. Here are the leaders of the “Top 10.” Pray for them by name: **1—Kim Jong-il (North Korea); 2—Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Ahmadinejad (Iran); 3—President Hamid Karzai (Afghanistan); 4—King Abdullah (Saudi Arabia); 5—President Sheikh Ahmad (Somalia); 6—President Mohamed Nasheed (Maldives); 7—President Ali Saleh (Yemen); 8—Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki (Iraq); 9—President Islam Karimov (Uzbekistan); 10—President Choummaly Sayasone (Laos).** (Open Doors)

Cambodia and around the world: Pray for Somaly Mam, a Cambodian woman and activist who rescues you girls from brothels where they have been trafficked illegally for the sex trade. She herself was sold as a child into a Cambodian brothel, and after torture and rapes, escaped to begin her fight against this horrific human violation. She has done this at the risk of her own life, receiving death threats and having her car shot up and guns put to her head. Worse yet, her own 14-year-old daughter was abducted by traffickers as retaliation for her work, gang raped and video of it sent to Somaly. Despite this, her daughter was recovered later in a brothel, and she, along with her mother, continue their fight working with anti-trafficking police units to raid brothels, free girls and women, and bring traffickers to justice. Pray for her perseverance, her protection, and the efficacy of her work. Pray that she and her family might know Christ, who loves her and will bring justice to this and all situations in the world. Pray that anti-trafficking police work would be done with diligence and persistence. Pray that traffickers would be brought to justice and become personally convicted about the atrocities they are committing. (Kristof, Nicholas, “Fighting Back, One Brothel Raid at a Time,” *The New York Times*, 12 November 2011; http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/13/opinion/sunday/kristof-fighting-back-one-brothel-raid-at-a-time.html?_r=1&ref=opinion)

Pakistan: Unprecedented rains have hit the province of Sindh for a second year running—the same province that saw the worst damage after last year's flooding, which killed over 2,000 people and displaced approximately 20 million. This year over 5 million people displaced, 1.2 million houses damaged, and 80 per cent of crops destroyed or damaged. However, Christians in Pakistan who face discrimination and persecution on a daily basis, also are experiencing discrimination in these dire circumstance. Because of their faith, they are refused aid, and must look to other Christians to provide for their needs during this crisis. (Open Doors)

Nigeria: Last year alone, more than 2,000 Christians in Nigeria were killed in clashes with Muslim extremists. Recently, more than 100 Nigerians were killed during a series of attacks by the militant

Islamic group Boko Haram in Borno and Yobe states. Boko Haram wants to see Sharia Law instituted in Nigeria. Please pray for Christians in Nigeria. Their prayer request is that they would remain strong despite the persecution and be bold witnesses for the Gospel. Also, pray for Boko Haram, that they might desist in their attacks and their pursuit of Sharia Law for all of Nigeria. Pray they might see the love of Christ in those they are attacking. (CBN News)

Iran: Even as we continue to pray and advocate for Pastor Youcef Nadarkhani, as he faces the death penalty for apostasy and awaits a verdict in December, another Iranian pastor has been detained and is serving a prison sentence for his faith. Behnam Irani, a 41-year-old pastor, husband, and father from Kraj, Iran, voluntarily surrendered himself to serve a one-year sentence for “crimes against national security.” At the time of his arrest, he was assaulted by officers from the Ministry of Intelligence and National Security, his home was raided, and shortly thereafter, he learned he would have to serve a 5-year sentence for a previous conviction of “crimes against national security.” Pray that Pastor Irani would be a witness where he is, that his wife and family would be comforted and sustained while he is gone, and that more in Iran might see Christ’s love in those who suffer for His sake. (Voice of the Martyrs)

Sudan: On 10 November, confirmation was received that the northern Sudanese Air Force bombed a Nuba refugee camp in South Sudan, which constitutes an act of war (and a violation of international law) by Sudan against the newly established Republic of South Sudan. Beyond this, the target was not military, but an obviously civilian one, comprised mostly of women, children, and men too old to fight—clearly this was an act in keeping with Omar al-Bashir’s campaign to “cleanse” the country of the largest Christian community in the Nuba Mountains. Pray for Yasir Arman, one of the chief opposition leaders in Sudan, who has indicated what they need the most from the West is moral support and acknowledgment of the humanitarian crisis so that more aid can reach the refugees. Pray for protection of the Christian Nuba population. Pray for President Omar al-Bashir of Sudan, that he will become convicted of the horrific wrongness of the genocides he has overseen. (The Persecution Project)

China: Pray for Chen Guangcheng, the blind legal activist who has been an outspoken opponent of China’s One-Child Policy, and for his wife, who it now has been confirmed suffered a a brutal four-hour beating at the hands of local authorities. After months without reliable news of Guangcheng and his wife, these details of the July beating have emerged, one of which is that it occurred in the presence of their elementary school-age son. The world has been following the ordeal suffered by this dedicated couple after a videotape documenting their illegal house arrest by Chinese authorities was smuggled out and widely viewed. After the release of the tape, they suffered a similarly brutal beating in February. (ChinaAid; to view full report, visit www.chinaaid.org/2011/06/detained-blind-activist-chen-guangcheng.html.)

Colombia: Colombia is plagued by paramilitary and Marxist guerrilla groups, which are known for assassinations and kidnappings. President Alvaro Uribe Velez has gained considerable control over major metropolitan areas, but rural areas and the jungle are the domain of guerrilla groups. Colombia is considered one of the world’s most violent countries. In the last five years, the Marxist guerrilla group Armed Revolutionary Forces of Colombia (FARC) has killed more than 300 evangelicals and displaced hundreds. Guerrillas see Christians as a threat to their recruitment of young men and women into the FARC. Their violent acts are funded by illegal drugs. The mother of an 11-year-old girl named Grace was shot to death by the FARC for leading devotions in her home. Grace’s pastor father had been killed by the FARC just a year earlier. Pray for healing and comfort for Grace as she mourns her parents’ martyrdom. Pray for her protection as she grows up, and that she would cling to Christ. Pray for protection for believers against kidnapping and assassinations. Pray that Christians would love and

minister to guerrilla groups, and that many would be won to Christ. Pray for President Alvaro Uribe Velez, that he might be courageous and tenacious in protecting the citizens of his country, and that he would govern with justice, fairness, and promote freedom during his tenure. (Open Doors; Voice of the Martyrs; BBC)

Mauritania: This West African nation gained its independence from France in 1960, but did not have a democratic elections until Sidi Ould Cheikh Abdallahi was inaugurated in April 2007 as Mauritania's first freely and fairly elected president. His term ended prematurely in August 2008 when a military junta led by General Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz deposed him. About half the population still relies on agriculture and livestock, and the country experiences ethnic tensions and increased threats from terrorism. The only acknowledged religion is Islam, and any kind of evangelism or distribution of non-Muslim religious materials is prohibited by the government. To convert from Islam can mean death, and it certainly results in discrimination and isolation from one's community and family. In 2010, one young woman was beaten and burned to death because she had converted to Christianity, and there are other accounts of Christian adults and children having to flee because of persecution. Pray that this young church will become deeply rooted in faith, so it can withstand the storms of persecution. Pray for wisdom for Christian parents as they bring up their children in a Muslim society that can be very hostile. Pray that believers will be equipped and trained to reach people groups who never heard the gospel. Pray for leaders General Mohamed Abdelaziz and Prime Minister Moulaye Ould Mohamed Laghdaf that God might open their hearts and work through them to create greater freedom, tolerance, and justice within their borders. (Open Doors; BBC)