

March 2013

*Sing praises to God and to his name!
Sing loud praises to him who rides the clouds.
His name is the LORD—
rejoice in his presence!*

*Father to the fatherless, defender of widows—
this is God, whose dwelling is holy.
God places the lonely in families;
he sets the prisoners free and gives them joy.
But he makes the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land.*

Psalm 68: 4-6

Democratic Republic of Congo—Despite the natural wealth and beauty of this African nation, it has been the site of human suffering on an unimaginable scale for centuries. The fall and winter of 2012 has seen increased violence in the eastern provinces of North and South Kivu. The result of this has been the displacement of hundreds of thousands of civilians forced from homes and communities makeshift camps, with none of the protections and resources of official refugee camps. Pray for protection and healing for these thousands who have already lost so much—homes, possessions, and even loved ones—and who remain extremely vulnerable. Even gathering food and firewood can result in assaults, rapes, and killings. Pray for the wisdom and success of relief agencies as they advocate for these populations, seeking UN recognition of and provision for these unofficial camps. Pray for the rebel groups such as M23, that they might not respect their fellow countrymen and not victimize them, regardless of the conflict in their country. (*Source: Refugees International*)

Sri Lanka—From 1983 to 2009, Sri Lanka was embroiled in a violent civil war between the Sri Lankan government and the separatist forces, the Tamil Tigers. Despite the peace agreement, ongoing reports of persistent sexual violence against ethnic Tamil civilians and suspected Tamil fighters have been mounting. Human Rights Watch, using victim accounts and corroborating medical and official evidence, has documented numerous cases of Tamil men and women being taken into custody by Sri Lankan security forces, and repeatedly raped and sexually tortured—continuing to present day. Pray that the intervention of human rights groups will be effective in stopping these horrific crimes aimed at retribution and ethnic degradation. Pray that all acts of injustice and abuse will be investigated, prosecuted, and justice served. Pray that the nation of Sri Lanka might be governed with integrity and wisdom, and that a new era of peace, equity, and freedom might be inaugurated for all its citizens. Pray that many might find lasting peace and healing through Christ. (*Sources: Human Rights Watch; The Telegraph; Fox News*)

Tanzania—Pray for the family of Pastor Mathayo Kachili, who was beheaded during a clash with Muslims who opposed a group of Christians opening a meat processing plant. Laws in Tanzania require all slaughterhouses and meat processing plants to follow strict Muslim guidelines, and this is not the first times violent attacks have followed Christians who have tried to enter the business. In this same attack, two Muslims also died from injuries sustained during the conflict—which lasted all day. Pray for both Christians and Muslims, that all would seek understanding, restraint, and peace. Pray for all who suffered injury and loss—pray that the healing, truth, and light of Christ might transform

individuals and the situation in the region. (Source: *Voice of the Martyrs*)

Guatemala—Even as we pray for justice, at times it can seem discouragingly elusive. However, though long delayed, give praise that justice may finally be realized in the case of Guatemalan military dictator Efraín Ríos Montt. After a US-backed coup, Guatemala was launched into a decades-long civil war resulting in the disappearance and/or killing of over 200,000 Guatemalans. In 1982, Efraín Ríos Montt led another military coup and oversaw one of the bloodiest seasons in the country's troubled history. A “scorched earth” campaign primarily targeted indigenous Mayan populations and eliminated entire villages. These attacks were carried out by security forces known for rape and torture as well. Now at 85, Efraín Ríos Montt is the first Central American dictator being tried for atrocities and crimes against humanity in a Latin American court. In an recent effort to encourage reform of the corrupt Guatemalan government, the United States has now required reform of the justice system as a condition for lifting a US ban on military aid to the Central American nation. Pray that truth will be discovered and justice finally be served after decades of atrocities perpetrated with impunity. Pray that Efraín Ríos Montt might fully repent of the actions he took while leader of his nation and may seek the forgiveness of Christ. Pray that those who have been victimized or lost loved ones might find additional healing and peace due to this course of action taken by the Latin American court. Pray that the United States and other nations will interact with integrity and encourage fairness and justice in Guatemala. (Sources: *Fox News*; *ABC News*)

United States—Last month CAN prayed for the renewal of the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act, an important piece of legislation that provides funding for the aid and rehabilitation of trafficking victims and the prosecution of traffickers. Give praise that on February 28, the TVPRA passed the House, only days after it passed the Senate. Though the passing faced many setbacks and frustrations, it now only awaits the signature of President Obama. Thanks to God for His faithfulness in moving many to cry out on this issue, and moving lawmakers to finally take the right action. Pray for President Obama's follow through. Continue to pray for continued progress in the fight against this most awful crime. (Source: *World Vision*)

Bangladesh—Praise God that 19 children were rescued from human trafficking in Bangladesh this month. Their Christian parents were misled into thinking that they were sending them to a Christian missionary school. Instead, they were en route to being sold to madrassas (fundamentalist Islamic boarding schools). Thankfully, some of the children were able to escape and call their parents, and subsequently all the children were rescued. Pray for the trafficker, Binoy Tripura, who targeted low-income Christians, lied to them and then took money from families, in order to sell these children ages 5-12 years old. Pray that he might be truly be convicted of the cruelty and wrongness of his actions, repent, and seek Christ's forgiveness. Pray for the ongoing protection of children in this region, as more than 200 other children have been rescued from similar situations since this past July. Praise God for the integrity and tenacity of individuals working in the area, such as Dhaka University students who aided in the rescue of the most recent 19 children. (Source: *International Christian Concern*)

India—Please pray for Evangelist Pradeep and his mother Chowdamma in India. They were beaten and arrested solely on the testimony of a group of radicals who accused them of forcibly converting Hindus to Christianity. Pray for their protection in prison and that justice will prevail in their case. (Source: *Christian Persecution Update India*)

Egypt—Two 9-year-old boys were recently accused of desecrating the Koran. The incident occurred in September 2012, when the boys who are illiterate, found the pages of the Koran in rubbish and were unaware of what they were playing with. After public outcry, President Morsi pardoned the boys. However at the end of January the court continued the trial, and despite the prosecution presenting conflicting evidence, ruled that the boys be returned to their parents without acquittal. Despite a presidential pardon, this means that the boys are considered guilty but are too young face punishment. Their parents have appealed, but the appeals court have denied their appeal. Pray for the families of these two boys to have peace and healing throughout this ordeal. Pray for Muslims and Christians in the town of Ezbet Marko that they will live with mutual respect and understanding. Pray for all Egyptian Christians that they might have the peace and presence of Jesus, especially those wrongfully accused of blasphemy. Pray for the nation of Egypt that laws might be changed to offer greater freedom of expression and belief that will apply to all people. Pray that all officials involved will love mercy, act justly, learn about Jesus and choose to follow Him. (*Source: Middle East Concern*)

North Korea—Pray for "Mr. E," an underground evangelist in North Korea. He leads three underground house churches, totaling 87 members, and he is praying for a motorcycle to better reach his congregations. He reports that despite the new leader Kim Jong-un's brutally oppressive regime the underground church is growing. Pray for our brothers and sisters in this dark nation to stay committed to Christ, for their safety, and for many more to be saved. (*Source: Mission Network News*)

Saudi Arabia—Pray for 53 Ethiopian Christians detained in Damman, Saudi Arabia, while meeting for worship in a private home. Three church leaders were arrested during the raid and were accused of trying to convert Muslims. Of those detained, only two have residence permits, and the others will most likely be deported. Pray for all those involved in the incident, who face uncertain futures. Pray for those who cannot meet even in a private home for worship without intimidation and threat of arrest or worse. Pray that those being deported will feel the presence of Christ and that they will continue to be strong in their faith and in their witness. (*Source: Voice of the Martyrs*)