

## November 2013

*Each November, the church around the world joins together to remember and pray for persecuted brothers and sisters in Christ, who suffer for their faith. Christian Advocacy Now observes the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church (IDOP) with our 24-Hour Prayer Vigil — praying through the 50 most restricted nations, filling every minute of the 24 hours of IDOP. Beyond this, though, at our regular monthly meetings, we will continue to focus on praying for countries where those who are free in Christ are not free to worship Him.*

### Afghanistan

Persecution of Christians in Afghanistan comes from family, community, the government, and extremist factions. The level of persecution—even of expatriate Christians—is intense, including abductions, torture, rape, and murder. Decades of instability and conflict have devastated the economy and infrastructure, and drug trade is a key component to the Afghani economy, providing 90 percent of the world's opium—the revenue from which also funds the Taliban.

- Pray that believers sense God's presence.
- Pray for the believers in Afghanistan who must worship in secret. There are no church buildings, and even private meetings of believers are extremely dangerous.
- Pray for Muslim-background believers who are ostracized, or worse, when they convert, and tortured when they share Christ.
- Pray for the protection of NGOs and relief organizations, as they are often targeted by the Taliban.
- Pray that Bibles that are translated into Dari and other indigenous languages reach Afghan Muslims. Pray for President Ashraf Ghani, and for peace and stability in Afghanistan as international troops withdraw.

### Algeria

An era of relative liberty to practice Christianity ended in 2006 and no new churches have been registered since 2008. An additional law was passed stating that house churches were not permitted. The law, ordered by the nation's court, was an effort to stop evangelism and church growth in Algeria. Believers not only face state persecution, but they also face it within their families. Divorcing spouses who convert to Christianity is strongly encouraged by religious leaders—and women are particularly vulnerable. Sadly, the Arab Spring, which began with calls for greater freedom has created an opportunity for greater Christian persecution. In recent decades, oil and gas reserves were discovered, and yet most of the country lives with poverty, substandard public services, high unemployment, and endemic governmental corruption. In addition, there exists long-standing conflict between the Arab population and the indigenous Berbers.

- Pray that the church continues to grow.
- Pray for bold Christians, witnessing despite ordinances against evangelizing, and that Christians fined for preaching to Muslims continue their outreach ministries.
- Pray for the protection of women—especially new believers.
- Pray for believers to feel the presence, comfort, and strength of Christ.
- Pray for President Abdelaziz Bouteflika.

## Bahrain

Bahrain has a large stake in international trade and banking, and is considered quite liberal in terms of allowing expatriate Christians to practice their religion. This is not at all the case for Muslim-background believers. A large percentage of the Sunni and Shiite population in Bahrain are fundamentalist Muslims. However, the Shiite majority, who are ruled by a Sunni minority, are protesting against this imbalance. And yet, indigenous contacts report that Christians who share their faith and Muslims who convert to Christianity are persecuted by friends and family. Because of this, many choose to meet secretly. Those who witness openly pay a price. The Bahraini government currently blocks Christian websites, but nearly 99 percent of all Bahraini households have satellite receivers.

- Pray for the 9 percent Christian population living among hostile Shiite and Sunni Muslims.
- Pray for a variety of witnessing tools, such as satellite broadcasts, to bring many to Christ. Pray also for the availability of Arabic Bibles and Christian literature.
- Give thanks for the relative freedom of expression, and that Christians will make the most of every opportunity to share Christ.
- Pray for King Sheikh Hamad.

## Bangladesh

Bangladesh is plagued by deep poverty and social unrest. Frequent floods and cyclones cause billions of dollars worth of damage and the tragic loss of many lives. Nearly half of this densely populated nation live on less than a dollar a day. Islamic extremism is on the rise in this nation of 150 million. As head of the government, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed has more control over daily life than President Rahman. Islam is the official religion of Bangladesh. Other religious minorities may worship openly but face social discrimination. The Vested and Nonresident Ordinance (formally called the Enemy Property Act) states that property can be confiscated if the owner is considered an “enemy” of the state. This ordinance is used to seize property from Christians and other religious minorities. The majority of discrimination against Christians comes from Muslims, who deny Christians access to public water wells, beat them, extort money from them and destroy rickshaws to eliminate their only source of income. On December 10, 2008, Buddhists and local officials took converted Christians from the Chittagong division in Bangladesh and held them against their will. They were pressured to convert back to Buddhism and forced to undergo Buddhist rituals.

- • Ask God for strong outreach ministries, and for encouragement for new believers, especially in Pray for the expanding literacy program as it reaches rural believers and unbelievers.
- Pray for abused women in rural villages, including the wives and daughters of Muslim-background believers.
- Copies of the Bible Storybook are being distributed to children and semi-literate adults. Pray that they will grow in their understanding of God.
- Pray for President Abdul Hamid.

## Bhutan

This tiny remote South Asian country, bordered by China and India, has gone to great lengths to preserve its traditional Buddhist culture—including limiting tourism. This emphasis and protection of ancient traditions has also caused tension within the ethnic Nepali community in Bhutan. However, Bhutan is one of the most restricted nations in the world for Christians. All public worship and evangelism by non-Buddhists is illegal. Churches are never permitted to evangelize. Christians can worship with their own family, but not with others. Importing printed religious material is banned, and only Buddhist materials are allowed. Christians are routinely denied government benefits, education and medical care. Bhutanese Christians also face subtle forms of discrimination within their families, as well as pressure to reconvert to Buddhism. Lack of training for believers causes disunity and doctrinal problems in church theology.

- Pray that more openness to outside culture will lead to more positive portrayals of Christians in the media and attitudes in the public in general. Pray that this will lead to greater opportunities for believers to share the gospel.
- Pray for better training for pastors and leaders.
- Pray religious freedom and Christianity flourish as the country has recently transitioned from an absolute monarchy to a more democratic constitutional monarchy.
- Pray for King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck.

## **Brunei**

Brunei is one of the richest states in Asia. Oil is the sole source of wealth, but its reserves are predicted to be used up by the year 2020. Muslims in Brunei officially follow Shafi'i Islam, a sect of the Sunnis. Though the constitution guarantees freedom of religious practice for non-Muslims, in reality religious freedom is limited. One of the world's longest-ruling monarchs (it has been ruled by the same family for more than six centuries), conversion to Christianity is prohibited, Christian literature is banned, Bible importation is not allowed and the government regularly ignores requests to build or expand churches.

- Pray for this country, where many are materially wealthy but are spiritually poor.
- There are only three registered churches in the country, all built during the colonial era. No new churches have been allowed, so other believers must meet secretly. Pray for protection and multiplication of these believers.
- Pray for believers' efforts to share Christian literature and Bibles which are banned.
- Pray for Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah.

## **Burma (Myanmar)**

Burma (also known as Myanmar) has spent decades isolated by the international community due to its appalling human rights record—including widespread forcible relocation of citizens and forced labor of adults and children. Recent movements toward greater democracy, including the freeing of opposition leader and human rights activist Aung San Suu Kyi at nearly 20 years of house arrest, have opened the door to international relations for the first time in many years. However, ethnic tensions persist, and the government of Burma continues to discourage, harass and use other, more severe, forms of persecution on any group it considers harmful to the state. Christianity is high on the list, even though the government claims freedom of religion in Burma. Ethnic Christians, in particular, are singled out for repression because of the government's goal to create a uniform society of one language, one ethnicity and one religion. Christian children are barred from schools in some areas. Burma's economy has suffered under mismanagement and stagnation, despite fertile land, oil and gas deposits, and exports jade, pearls, rubies, and sapphires. Burma is also a major exporter of heroin.

- Pray for the Christians here who are considered a threat to the Buddhist nation. Pray for Christians' protection and courage. Pray that they remain steadfast.
- Pray that the recent reforms might bring a new era of protection of the population, freedom of expression, and spread of the gospel.
- Pray for President Thein Sein to uphold basic human rights.

## Central African Republic

As the name connotes, CAR is a country centrally located in the continent of Africa, bordered by Chad, Sudan, South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cameroon, and the Republic of Congo. Though this is the first year CAR has had reason to be included in the 50 countries designated by Open Doors as a place of Christian persecution, it has been marked by decades of political turmoil and rebel-incited instability--including attacks and unrest perpetrated by the Lord's Resistance Army, a violent rebel group that claims pseudo-Christian affiliations. These disruptions and governmental corruption have resulted in a lagging economy, which contributes to low life-expectancy, low education rates, and high rates of child labor (almost 50 percent of children age 5-14 years). In addition to these challenges, 2014 has seen an unprecedented occurrence of attacks on Christians and non-Muslims by foreign Muslim extremists, primarily from the Seleka rebel group. Churches and Christian-owned buildings and houses have been destroyed, pastors targeted for murder, and widespread rape of Christian and non-Muslim women as part of an increasing terrorizing of this predominantly Christian country, along with robbery, torture, and other kinds of violence.

- Pray for Christians to persevere through these horrific trials, and to maintain a spirit of grace and forgiveness toward those who harm them. Pray for the peace and healing that only Christ can supply and for an overwhelming sense of the presence of God amid their terrible suffering.
- Pray for those who persecute, that they might become convicted of the grave wrongness of the atrocities they are committing and also might turn to the love and light of Christ.
- Pray for the government of the Central African Republic, that a desire to serve and promote the well-being of their whole country might replace self-serving, self-preserving attempts to retain power and wealth. Pray that they might be full of integrity and justice, and that the CAR might become a place of freedom, equity, stability, and peace.
- Pray for Interim President Catherine Samba-Panza.

## China

Pray for students who risk everything to study God's word at underground Bible schools. Pray for their protection and courage. The human rights record in China is one of the worst in the world. Its system of "re-education through labor" detains hundreds of thousands of people each year in work camps without a court hearing. More Christians are in prison or under detention in China than in any other country. About 90 percent of China's Christians belong to house churches which endure harsh persecution. Each year, China forcibly repatriates around 4,000 refugees to North Korea – where they face imprisonment, torture and even execution.

- Pray for Christians sentenced to re-education camps--harsh, tortuous prisons--that they would remain steadfast, be comforted by the Holy Spirit, and able to persevere until the end.
- Pray that many within the prisons would see the light and love of Christ through the witness of imprisoned believers and that many would come to accept Christ's salvation and forgiveness.
- Pray North Koreans seeking refuge in China aren't repatriated but find Christian shelter.
- Pray for President Xi Jinping.

## Colombia

In recent years, the Marxist guerrilla group Armed Revolutionary Forces of Colombia (FARC) has killed more than 300 evangelicals and displaced hundreds. Despite this, many Christians reach out to FARC guerrillas with the gospel. Colombia is plagued by paramilitary and Marxist guerrilla groups, which are known for assassinations and kidnappings. Parents have even been murdered in front of their young children for things like leading Bible studies.

- Pray that parachutes (with Scripture written on them) and solar-powered radios that provide Christian broadcasting will help bring the gospel to Colombia.
- Pray that FARC and other paramilitary groups would be drawn to Christ.
- Pray for those who have lost loved ones through this violence, that they might experience healing and comfort from their Heavenly Father.
- Pray for President Juan Manuel Santos.

## Comoros

Comoros' fewer than 300 national Christians are forbidden to witness about Christ. Christians in Pemba and the Comoros archipelago have been beaten, detained, and banished. Only non citizens are allowed to use Comoros' three churches. There are fewer than 200 Christian nationals in this country of 750,000 people who live on three islands. This is a matriarchal society, where husbands move in with their wives' families, and demands on Christian husbands can be very high.

- Pray for tenacity and perseverance among the small Christian population. Pray that they would not be discouraged, but strengthened in their faith.
- Pray for programs established by organizations such as Open Doors, which aim to support and train believers in the area.
- Pray for marriages where there is only one believer—that they will withstand the pressure and that their spouse will come to know Christ.
- Give thanks for some situations where believers who once had to worship in secret and who withstood tremendous pressure, are now experiencing a measure of acceptance.
- Pray that the church—including house churches—will grow in Comoros.
- Pray for President Ikililou Dhoinine.

## Djibouti

A small African nation, bordered by Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, and the Red Sea, Djibouti's economy relies solely on its location and its function as an exporter of neighboring countries' goods. Otherwise this nation's resources are quite limited. Though the government constitutionally protects freedom of religion, Djibouti is 95 percent Sunni Muslim, and due to its location, is extremely vulnerable to influence and attacks of al-Qaeda and al Shabaab.

- Give thanks that expatriate Christians and Ethiopian Christians are tolerated and allowed to pursue their faith with relative peace and freedom. Pray they make use of this freedom to share the gospel with others.
- Pray for native Djibouti Christians who do not share that freedom but experience many forms of persecution from their families and communities.
- Pray for President Ismael Omar Guelleh.

## Egypt

Recent years in Egypt have been marked by upheaval, instability, and violence, as original calls for freedom have led to greater persecution of believers in the country. Egypt still withholds the right of former Muslims to officially convert to Christianity, and Egypt's constitution gives preference to

Muslims. Christians are treated as second-class citizens, denied political representation and discriminated against in employment. Since the Arab Spring devolved into an opportunity for repressive, extreme Islamist groups to exert power, it has become open season on Christians in Egypt.

- Pray for Christians, who are fleeing the country in large numbers or who remain to face unprecedented danger and violence within Egypt.
- Pray that these recent upheavals will finally lead to a stable, democratic government, providing peace and religious freedom.
- Pray for Coptic Pope, Tawadros II, to continue to unite denominations in Egypt, leading to an increased sharing of the gospel.
- Pray that believers in Egypt will not succumb to fear, but be upheld in the perfect peace of Christ.
- Pray for President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi.

## Eritrea

Eritrea is a tiny nation on the Red Sea, which carved itself out of Ethiopia after a protracted and bloody conflict with that country. Though there are some prospects of a boom in mining, Eritrea's economy currently is underdeveloped and relies primarily on income sent in from Eritreans living abroad. Its totalitarian government tolerates no dissent, and its human rights record is notably one of the worst in the world. This is especially true for Christians, who as a whole, are not tolerated by the government and face imprisonment under some of the most tortuous and atrocious conditions known—particularly in shipping containers where many of them have died in detention. In 2002, all evangelical churches were banned, and Christians outside of the Orthodox Church find themselves reported on even by those within the Orthodox Church. Muslim extremists also participate in persecuting believers, rivaling the government for their intense oppression of believers.

- Pray for those believers languishing in unspeakable conditions in shipping containers, in the heat and cold of the desert; pray that God would provide miraculous comfort and sustenance within these circumstances.
- Pray for families separated by arrests and detention, and by fleeing as refugees.
- Pray for the improvement of human rights and religious freedom in this extraordinarily repressive nation.
- Pray for President Isaias Afewerki.

## Ethiopia

With an economy that is fast growing, but not oil-dependent, Ethiopia stands as a unique model of African independence. Though vulnerable to drought and resultant famine, which also affects vital exports such as coffee, Ethiopia continues to make some progress. It does remain one of the poorest African nations, approximately two-thirds of its population is illiterate, and it relies heavily on international food aid to feed its people. Interestingly (and ironically), the Ethiopian Orthodox Church is both one of the oldest Christian Churches in the world and traditionally the main persecutor of non-Orthodox believers. However, with the rise of militant Islam, this is shifting, and believers are experiencing persecution similar to that in other parts of Africa and the Middle East, where Islam is making deep, violent inroads. Kewarjah is the group most actively operating in Ethiopia and is responsible for attacks on Christians in the Southwest. Many believers have become extremely cautious and have gone underground. New laws banning public religious messages will mean more restrictions on believers as well.

- Pray for secret believers, that they might be protected and grow in their faith—especially when they experience attacks and mistreatment within their own families.

- Pray particularly for Christian women, who are vulnerable to attack, but whose attacks go unreported and unpunished.
- Pray for President Mulatu Teshome.

## India

The population of India has overtaken that of China, it has the fastest growing economy in the world, and it is a nuclear power. Yet, India still struggles with widespread poverty, great disparities between the wealthy and the poor, and a society that experiences deep strife because of its vibrant cultural diversity. The plight of girls and women is additionally precarious, as families favor male children, and even discriminate against women who marry into their families. This has resulted in the infanticide of millions of baby girls and the murder of similar numbers of women, in feigned “suicides” and “domestic accidents.” An estimated 50 million girls and women are considered “missing” from Indian society because of these barbaric practices done with impunity. Among those who suffer are Christians, who are a persecuted minority among majority Hindus and Buddhists. They also tend to be from the lower end of the social caste, and are resented when they experience freedom and self-worth in Christ. These resentments have escalated in recent years into full-blown violence, with churches and whole communities of believers being attacked, and many losing their homes, livelihoods, and lives. The government does not intervene as they should to prosecute perpetrators, and state-sponsored anti-conversion laws are often used as justification for harassment and disruption of churches and the lives of believers.

- Pray for persecuted Christians to respond with grace and love.
- Pray especially for believers who have converted from Islam, Buddhism, or Hinduism, who experience persecution more acutely from family and friends, as well as from the state.
- Pray for the protection of girls and women in India, who remain so vulnerable; give thanks for the recent outrage that has shed light on these atrocities and has made small, but important inroads into fighting these crimes.
- Give thanks that despite great persecution, the Church in India continues to grow. Pray that it continues to flourish, and through the love and truth of Christ, transform this nation into a just society.
- Pray for President Pranab Mukherjee.

## Indonesia

Indonesia—a country comprised of thousands of islands—is characterized by extreme diversity in ethnicity, languages, and even lifestyle. Yet, Indonesia is the most populous Muslim country in the world. Frequent earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, and other natural disasters are not the only disruptions this island-nation experiences. Recent years have seen the rise of Islamic extremist groups, using bombings and other violent persecution to intimidate the population. Despite this, during the last 40 years, evangelicals have grown from 1.3 million to 11.5 million, but they are still a minority in this majority Muslim country. Many recent troubles have come in the form of closing churches or prohibiting expansion.

- Pray for the church to continue fellowship among believers and for their witness to grow and to be bold and courageous.
- Pray that God will stem the rising tide of Islamic extremism and protect Christians and an innocent population.
- Pray for organizations like Open Doors, working on the ground in these regions, to be enabled to support believers.
- Pray for President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.

## Iran

Evolving from the ancient empire of Persia, Iran has remained culturally unique within the Middle East. Its pursuit of a nuclear program, along with increasing unrest and instability in the region, has led to severely strained international relations with Iran. The state religion is Shi'a Islam, and the followers of all other faiths are treated harshly and often brutally. Protestant pastors are forbidden to preach in Farsi (the official language) and can only use the Armenian or Assyrian language. Believers are discriminated against in education, employment and property ownership. Mission organizations are not allowed to enter Iran. Open witnessing to Muslims is banned, and the government sends spies to monitor Christian groups. Holding Bible studies with Muslims is seen as "activities against national security." Yet, nearly 500 Iranians are coming to Christ daily. After decades of government oppression, Iranians are hungry for spiritual meaning as well as freedom from their oppressive government. Christian programs broadcast by satellite receive hundreds of calls from people asking for more information about Christianity. House church leaders are nearly overwhelmed caring for these new believers.

- Pray for boldness and protection and for the spread of the gospel, especially among disillusioned Iranians who are curious about Christ.
- Pray for the many Iranian Christians languishing in prisons around the country—pray for wisdom for their lawyers, justice in their cases, spiritual sustenance during their detainment, physical protection, and an incredible witness to those surrounding them in prison.
- The two most influential leaders in Iran are President Hassan Rouhani and the Supreme Leader Ali Hoseini-Khamenei Pray for these leaders.
- Pray for spiritual growth within the Iranian Church.

## Iraq

The site of some of the most ancient civilizations, and home of the Ziggurat of Ur, Iraq in recent history has been marked by dictatorial repression, and now continual civil unrest. The Iraqi economy has struggled, despite oil revenue due to years of war—with Iran, the first Gulf War, and then Operation Iraqi Freedom. Subsequent insurgent attacks on oil installations further cost the nation billions in oil revenue. The ousting of Saddam Hussein, the intervention of the United States, and the subsequent removal of international troops have left Iraq an ongoing battlefield, where competing groups vie for control. Amid this environment, Christians have become primary targets for abduction, rape, torture, murder, and all kinds of intimidation and violence. Many have been killed, and churches have been bombed. Al Qaeda militants demand Christians convert to Islam or die; at least 10,000 Christians have fled Mosul because of violent threats.

- Pray for Hassan and other evangelists as they plant churches and shepherd God's people.
- Pray for Pray for President Fuad Masum.
- Since 2003, there has been a mass exodus of Christians from Iraq. Pray for this vacuum to be filled with new believers.
- Pray for protection for our brothers and sisters there, and pray that they would be courageous, knowing that Christ is with them.

## Jordan

Unlike its neighbors, Jordan has no oil resources and derives much of its importance on its strategic location in the region. It also relies on services, tourism, and foreign aid—primarily from the United

States. King Abdallah II has undertaken economic and political reforms, pledging to improve conditions for the poor and fight corruption. Yet, Christians cannot openly evangelize Muslims. Many who become believers are put on trial for converting to Christianity. Converts from Islam face discrimination and risk the loss of civil rights. Some have had their marriages annulled and lost custody of their children. More recently, Muslim-background believers in Jordan have begun to face physical violence and killings at the hands of extremists. Suicide bombings have also been new experiences in this country, which has long boasted safety and stability within its borders.

- Pray that believers remain steadfast in the faith, despite increasing persecution and violence.
- Give thanks for growth of the Christian church in Jordan among nominal believers and Muslim converts.
- Pray for the safety and assimilation of the many refugees from Iraq and Syria, and especially for the growth of the church within this population.
- Pray for King Abdallah II, and for his promises to enact reform within Jordan. Pray that he will follow through with these promises.

## **Kazakhstan**

Bordered by Russia, China, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan is the size of Western Europe and is diverse in culture, climate, and terrain. Government scrutiny of Christians has increased; recent legislation requires churches to register with the state. Believers who live and work in Kazakhstan report that people from their churches have been questioned by the secret police. This has resulted in more complicated training of leaders, and to work with youth, the consent of both parents is required. Recent persecution has included detention of pastors, raids against churches, and steep, unfair fines.

- Pray that lawmakers will not enact legislation to restrict religious freedom.
- Pray for Christians trying to establish churches and faith communities in a culture of bribes and corruption.
- Pray that God will give believers boldness and tenacity to proclaim the gospel despite intimidation, and often ostracization and harassment from family and community.
- Pray for President Nursultan Nazarbayev to make wise choices and guarantee religious freedom.

## **Kenya**

Kenya is a beautiful, verdant country with abundant wildlife that draws many visitors from around the globe. It is also considered one of the oldest sites of human habitation, which contributes to a vibrant and diverse ethnic culture. The troubling flip-side to this cultural richness is inter-ethnic conflict, which has plagued this nation on and off for decades. Unrest in recent years has been largely resolved through a power-sharing government and a recovering economy. However, Kenya's military role in Somalia has made it a target for attacks from radical al-Shabaab. Kenya is technically a Christian-majority country, and yet where Islam is present, it is often the dominant faith group. In these locales, believers face intense persecution, including church bombings and looting, and even the deaths of Christians.

- Pray that believers in Kenya would respond to attacks with the grace and forgiveness of Christ—and that they would be an influence of light in their country rather than their nation being swayed by the extreme actions of a few.
- Pray that Muslim-background believers would be especially protected, and pray for Christians in inter-faith marriage; both are under more pressure and scrutiny.

- Pray for the training and strengthening of the Church in Kenya, to grow in faith, knowledge and courage, and to continue meeting despite fears of attacks on churches.
- Pray for President Uhuru Kenyatta.

## **Kuwait**

Kuwait was the first Arab-Gulf nation to have an elected parliament, and also granted women full political rights in 2005. These progressive moves have not benefited all Kuwaitis. Despite constitutional guarantees of religious freedom, much legislation is derived from Islamic law and conversion from Islam is not allowed. Converting to Christianity could mean harassment and possibly arrest. Pray for believers to be strong in the Lord. A few years ago there were only a handful of Kuwaiti believers, but now there is a small, growing community of indigenous believers. Some of these are very bold in sharing their faith. The government discourages Christianity by providing financial incentives for Muslims. Foreign Christians have the freedom to live and work in Kuwait, but they must worship in a physical location within their own Christian community. Evangelism to Kuwaitis is forbidden.

- Give thanks for the growing number of believers in Kuwait, and pray that their witness draws many to Christ.
- Pray for the many Christians in Kuwait who are foreign workers, may they feel the comfort and community of Christ in a world where they are often twice the outsider.
- Pray for the expansion of facilities for the four registered denominations in Kuwait—and for the expansion of their outreach and ministries.
- Pray for Emir Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah, the head of state.

## **Laos**

Laos is both a communist and Buddhist country, with Buddhism being integral to Laotian identity. The situation in Laos is volatile. Christian Hmong people living in Laos are often singled out for persecution. Khmu Christians have been imprisoned, persecuted, and evicted from their villages. Ban Mai officials forced 40 Christian families to leave this village and relocate. Christians also face severe persecution from tribal animists, who lose trade when people from their communities convert to Christianity.

- Pray that relocated believers may resettle safely and find their strength in Jesus.
- Pray for Katin and Hmong Christians, who are especially vulnerable.
- Pray for protection and encouragement for Christians holding secret baptisms in the jungle.
- Pray for safety and great boldness for Christians, as well as a deep sense of the comfort and presence of the Holy Spirit. Pray that they would have wisdom as they interact with the government and its monitoring of their activities.
- Pray for trained Christian leaders to minister to Laos' growing number of Christians.
- Pray for President Lt. Gen. Choummali Saignason.

## **Libya**

July 2012 witnessed the first democratic elections in Libya in six decades. Since that time, the new government has struggled to maintain any semblance of order amid a large number of armed groups exerting pressure for their own agendas. However, the persecution of Christians has remained

consistent. There are very few Libyan believers; almost all Christians are foreign workers, and the government strictly monitors them. A non-Libyan Christian man who sought to share the gospel in Libya was beaten and held for 45 days before he was deported. Becoming a Christian in Libya is costly. Christian literature only enters Libya through smuggling. While in the past under Gaddafi, persecution came primarily from the state, the absence of a centralized government in recent years has allowed extremists to perpetrate violence against Christians there.

- Pray for radio and internet broadcast to touch seeking hearts and secret believers.
- Pray for new Christians detained and tortured for converting from Islam.
- Pray that the Word of God will spread throughout the country.
- Pray for President Nouri Abusahmain and Chairman Mohamed Magarief. Pray the message of the Gospel permeates the hearts and lives of Libyans and their leaders.
- Pray that the Gospel will spread despite these attempts to stop it.

## Malaysia

Malaysia is a prosperous nation characterized by a Muslim majority and a economically powerful Chinese minority. Christian evangelism is greatly hindered, and it is forbidden to convert from Islam. Recently, Muslim-background believers have even been sent to “re-education” centers as a result of their faith.

- Pray for Christian outreach to Muslims, that they will have wisdom and courage.
- Pray Malay Christians are protected as they meet in secret to avoid persecution. Pray for church leaders whose actions and services are watched by authorities.
- Pray for Bibles and Christian materials to find their way to seeking hearts.
- Malay-language Bibles are labeled “Not for Muslims” on the cover. Pray that Muslims would be drawn to the Word of God by Christ Himself.
- Pray for Prime Minister Najib Razak.

## The Maldives

Neither the press nor non-Muslims are allowed freedom of speech. Outsiders are allowed only brief visits to the Maldives, in order to keep their influence on Muslim communities minimal. Maldives is one of the least evangelized countries on earth. The 0.10% figure for Christians on the island refers to expatriate Christians. All citizens must be Muslim, and converts lose citizenship. Maldivian believers are carefully watched. Pray they point their observers to Christ. They suffer ostracism, and they cannot openly meet together or read the Scriptures.

- Pray for the protection of secret believers and that many would be added to their number.
- Pray that those pursuing education abroad might encounter the gospel, receive Christ, and share their faith when they return home.
- Pray for an abundance of Bibles and Christian literature in the Dhivehi language.
- Pray for President Abdulla Yameen.

## Mali

One of the poorest nations in the world, Mali has relied on gold and cotton exports for its economy, which has experienced some growth since the 1990s. Remarkably stable and democratic for decades, Mali model status was deeply threatened by a military coup and the seizing of control of the north of the country by al Qaeda. The intervention of the French restored democracy, but the future of this nation remains tenuous. Part of the aftermath of the conflict is the onset of very real persecution of Christians. Especially in the north, tens of thousands of Christians have fled.

- Pray for the secure, permanent establishment of a democratic state that can protect all its citizens, and respects those of different faiths.
- Pray for the protection and provision for believers that have had to flee violence and persecution from Islamic extremists in the north, and have now returned.
- Pray that within the Malian society, religious radicalization will not be tolerated and they will not only be tolerant of believers, but open to the gospel themselves.
- Pray for President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita.

## **Mauritania**

Mauritania is one of the world's poorest countries and one of the most restricted. Freedom of religion is nonexistent in this one-party state where Islam has dominated for more than 1,000 years. There is a handful of believers, but in the past individuals who showed interest in Christianity were imprisoned or put to death. Even families will beat and torture family members who profess Christ. Distributing Christian literature is illegal, and a single group of believers will share a Bible. Anyone who confesses Christ faces the death penalty. Believers must trek miles into the desert to worship in secret.

- Pray that the Word of God will be more readily available.
- Pray for strength, blessing, and protection for Christians who are sharing their faith.
- Pray the light of the gospel would permeate this country.
- Pray that the influence of al Qaeda will diminish in the region.
- Pray for President Gen. Mohamed Ould Abdelaziz to find Christ.

## **Morocco**

Culturally rich, Morocco in many ways has been a bridge between Africa, the Middle East, and Europe. However, its reputation has been marred by decades of human rights abuses ranging from death in detention to forced exile. Even as the current king has embarked on careful reform and modernization, the situation for Christians has not improved. The government is committed to the preservation of Islam as the religion of all Moroccans. Contact with foreign missions and missionary work is illegal, as is any kind of evangelism. Converts endure ostracism from their families, loss of employment, and imprisonment for their faith. However, unlike other countries affected by the Arab Spring, Moroccan Christians still can maintain hope for more religious freedom.

- Pray for strength and protection of Muslim converts, who are treated like criminals by authorities and are ostracized by family and friends.
- Give thanks for the encouragement the Arab Spring has provided especially Christian youth in Morocco.
- Pray for the work of organizations such as Open Doors, who work diligently supporting believers in these regions. Pray especially for discipleship training and women's training programs implemented by them.
- Pray for King Mohamd VI.

## Niger

A leading producer of uranium and other minerals, Niger is a vast, drought-prone country, that remains one of the poorest in the world and often struggles to feed its people. It has a history of slavery, and though the practice was officially banned in 2003, human rights organizations say thousands still remain enslaved. While the government does not actively persecute believers, in this country where 98 percent of the population is Muslim, society in general is the source of hostility toward Christians. Increasingly extreme Islamic movement seek to restrict minorities such as Christians and those they deem as “deviant Muslims.”

- Pray especially for new believers, whose families pressure them to renounce their faith.
- Pray for the Christian community that does not currently seem prepared to face increased pressure from Islamic extremists.
- Pray that the influence of these extremist groups would decline instead of increase.
- Pray for President Mahamadou Issoufou.

## Nigeria

Nigeria is consumed by greed and corruption at all levels of the country’s government, creating an atmosphere of discrimination. In northern Nigeria, Islam has been given preferential treatment over Christianity. Shariah law is in place in 12 of northern Nigeria’s predominantly Muslim states. The election of a southern, Christian president has only exacerbated the tension. Groups such as Boko Haram have dedicated themselves to the destruction of the Christian community in Nigeria and even of moderate Muslims. No other country has seen such bloodshed directed toward Christians in recent years. Especially in the north, believers face bombings, threats of abduction, denial of employment, healthcare, and even clean water.

- Pray for encouragement and healing for Nigerian Christians affected by violence in the north.
- Pray for safety and boldness for Christians, and give thanks that many are responding to attacks with increased prayer, evangelism, and care of Muslim-background believers.
- Pray for young Christian girls who are kidnapped and forced to convert to Islam, and forcibly married to Muslim men.
- Pray for Boko Haram and other perpetrators, that they might turn from hatred and violence to the light of Christ.
- Pray for President Goodluck Jonathan.

## North Korea

North Korea is one of the most repressive and isolated regimes in the world—number one on Open Doors World Watch List. Government officials deny the country’s citizens even the most basic human rights. The country’s previous leader, Kim Il Sung, founded an ideology called “Juche,” which centers on the worship of the country’s leaders. In the decades following the Korean War, this family of dictators has systematically impoverished their nation, destroyed all infrastructure, and brought the entire population to the brink of starvation. Now his grandson, Kim Jong Un has taken control and the situation has not improved for most of the population and certainly not Christians. Many of the estimated 200,000 people suffering in detention are Christians. North Korea is the worst perpetrator of persecution against Christians in the world. Possessing a Bible could mean prison for three generations of a family. Christians must practice their faith in deep secrecy and are in constant danger, but many continue to stand strong under relentless persecution. The government considers Christians to be a stability threat, and they are hunted all over the

country. Being a Christian carries a more severe punishment than espionage. The largest number of Christian worshipers in North Korea exists in concentration camps. In addition, one out of four Christian prisoners are sent to political prison camps where prisoners almost never leave. Many North Korean Christians have fled to China, where there are an estimated 200,000 to 300,000 North Koreans. The Chinese government offers a bounty for North Korean refugees equal to one year's salary. When refugees are caught, they are returned to North Korea, where they face torture, imprisonment and often death.

- Pray for the gospel to spread in prisons, that the suffering of believers would not be in vain. Pray for prisoners' comfort and strength.
- Pray for North Korean refugees to find safety so they will not be sent back, and pray that they find refuge in Christ.
- Pray that radio broadcasts and other means of communication might reach many isolated within North Korea with the gospel.
- Pray that a miraculous work would transform this dark nation into one characterized by the widespread worship of the One True God.
- Pray for the growing underground church, estimated to be 400,000 believers strong. May it grow exponentially in a short time.
- Give thanks that organizations such as Open Doors have been able to deliver emergency aid.
- Pray for Kim Jong Un.

## Oman

With an economy held up primarily by oil, Oman is the oldest independent state in the Arab world, and has remained relatively isolated until recent decades. It also has strategic importance due to its location at the mouth of the Gulf. Oman is dominated by the state religion of Ibadhi Islam, and the legal system is based on Islamic law. Evangelizing Muslims is forbidden. Non-Muslim home meetings are not permitted. Those who do convert risk losing their families, their livelihoods, and even their very lives. All Christian activity is monitored.

- Pray church leaders have courage, and that believers would have wisdom sharing the gospel, as open evangelism is prohibited.
- Pray for safety of gathering Christians—pray they will find ways to meet, have fellowship, and encourage one another.
- Pray that the message of Christ will spread through Christian TV and internet sites.
- The church consists mostly of foreigners; pray their lives manifest the love of Christ.
- Pray for Sultan and Prime Minister Qaboos bin Said al-Said.

## Pakistan

Now a Muslim-majority country, the region of Pakistan was once a place where both Hinduism and Buddhism was practiced. It was formed as an official country when the Indian subcontinent divided to accommodate a separation of Muslim Indians from primarily Hindu India. Though religious freedom is guaranteed in the constitution, Christians increasingly suffer under Shariah law. Things are particularly bad for Pakistani Christians in northern areas. Christians there live under constant threat from fundamentalist Muslims. Christian girls are often sexually assaulted by Muslim men, and their attackers do so with impunity. The Pakistani government has also been accused of propping up terrorist groups.

- Pray for the many Christians who must toil in indenture servitude at brick kilns to pay back debt. Pray for the many other believers who are considered “low-caste sweepers.”

- Pray for Christian girls, kidnapped and forced to marry Muslims.
- Pray that the gospel of Christ might reach many in Pakistan and transform lives and the nation.
- Pray Law 295c, used to punish Christians under false charges, is repealed.
- Give thanks for the steady growth of the Christian community in Pakistan, and the relative freedom they have from the government to meet and run their churches.
- Pray for President Mamnoon Hussain.

## **Palestinian Territories**

To be a Christian in Gaza or the West Bank is to be a minority. However, in Gaza, where the influence of radical militants is more intense, the situation for Christians is far more severe. Believers face all kinds of oppression from extremist groups, and worse, authorities in the region fail to protect believers or uphold their basic human rights for fear of these groups. While the West Bank is controlled by the secular Fatah Party, Christians are still vulnerable, and believers in all the Palestinian Territories are at risk especially with mounting tensions between Iran and Israel.

- Pray that the political situation in the region would not affect the health and growth of the Church there.
- Pray for the protection of believers, that they would remain steadfast and not lose heart and would maintain a strong witness in this region where many need to find Christ.
- Pray for the work of Musahala, bringing reconciliation between Messianic believers and Palestinian Christians.
- Pray for President Mahmoud Abbas.

## **Qatar**

Qatar was transformed from one of the poorest Gulf-state nations to one of the richest when oil reserves were discovered in the 1940s. Politics in this otherwise barren peninsula in Gulf has been dominated by the Thani family for nearly 150 years. Qatar is also home to the important TV station, Al-Jazeera. However, despite some moves toward modernization, the situation for Christians in Qatar is restricted at best. The first church building in Qatar since the seventh century was built in 2008 though the government has also shut down numerous house churches. Those who follow the Christian faith in Qatar must do so quietly or risk arrest, or worse, under the country's Shariah law. Proselytism of Muslims is forbidden; however, expatriate believers are allowed to practice their faith. Many believers do not have access to one of the few religious complexes permitted by the government or are not allowed to attend by their employers. A Muslim who converts may face the death penalty. Women in Qatar also live under very harsh rules. They are not allowed to drive or travel abroad without permission from male relatives.

- Pray that women in Qatar find the freedom of Christ, and that they know their value in His eyes.
- Pray that foreigners, who are allowed to worship more freely, might shine the love of Christ.
- Pray for the development and distribution of printed and digital Bible resources in Qatari.
- Pray for head of state, Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani.

## Saudi Arabia

Considered the cradle of Islam, Saudi Arabia is an Islamic state committed to its role as custodian of Islam and its holiest sites. The country's enormous oil wealth has financed global Islamic expansion. Saudi Arabia is a main source of funding for madrassas (Islamic religious schools) worldwide, where extremism can be propagated. Saudi Arabia is the second most repressive nation in the world for Christians. Converts from Islam to Christianity are rare in this nation, and those who do find Christ are often martyred for leaving Islam. The Internet is often the only source of teaching and encouragement for new believers. Public non-Muslim worship, even for foreign Christians, is prohibited. Christians are regularly imprisoned or deported, and Christian churches are banned.

- Pray for the delivery of Bibles and Christian materials to searching hearts and for the spread of the gospel in many ways, including online resources—and that many would come to accept Christ.
- Pray for the encouragement and perseverance of believers here, who face isolation, loneliness, and rejection. Pray also for their protection as they are vulnerable to honor killings and other kinds of abuse.
- Pray for King and Prime Minister Abdallah bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud.

## Somalia

The past two decades in Somalia have been marked by extreme turmoil, violence, and natural disaster: more than 20 years without a functional government, plagued by armed conflict, and devastated by one of the worst famines in history. This context, which is incredibly challenging for average Somalis, is profoundly more difficult for Somali believers. Just one percent of Somalis are Christians – most are secret believers. It is difficult to know the exact number of underground churches. Islamic radicals, such as al-Shabaab, have vowed to wipe out all Somali Christians and have already murdered many. Persecution has intensified in the past 15 years in the midst of this virtual anarchy. Persecutors are family members, clan members, Islamist extremists, and local administrators. Many Christians have been martyred or named as targets for execution. Christians in refugee camps still suffer persecution.

- Pray for Bible distribution within refugee camps and to Somalis outside the country (it is forbidden in the country).
- Pray for safety and that this persecution will not be in vain but produce much fruit.
- Pray for leaders and members of al-Shabaab and other extremist groups that they might turn from hatred and violence to the love and light of Christ.
- Pray that Somalis who fled famine and conflict, who were exposed to Christianity elsewhere and are now returning to Somalia, might come to faith and share their new hope with others.
- Pray for radio programs that share the gospel, that they might reach many and bring them to salvation.
- Pray for President Hassan Sheikh Mohamoud.

## Sri Lanka

After centuries of being subject to a variety of colonial powers, Sri Lanka gained independence in 1948. However, from that point forward, this beautiful island nation in the Indian Ocean has been beleaguered by sectarian strife that escalated in the 1970s to a full blown civil war. Though rebels were finally defeated in 2009 and a tenuous peace brokered, the UN has stated human rights violations were perpetrated on both sides, and ethnic and religious tensions are still felt. A relatively prosperous nation with high life expectancy and literacy rates, Sri Lanka's Sinhalese Buddhist majority has intensified its discrimination against ethnic Tamils, as well as Sinhalese Christians--to be a Tamil Christian in Sri Lanka today is to be in a very precarious position indeed. Most believers must keep a very low profile and meet secretly in homes. Though religious freedom is constitutionally protected, Buddhist extremists have incited mobs to attack churches and Christians, as well as threaten pastors and others with death. This kind of persecution

is seen as tacitly endorsed by the government, is worse in rural areas, and has also extended to the Muslim minority population in Sri Lanka as well.

- Pray that believers in Sri Lanka will remain strong and steadfast despite persecution, and bold in sharing their faith even as they face hostility. Pray that more and better Bible training resources might become available to bolster their spirits and mature their faith.
- Pray that the Sri Lankan government will uphold their own constitution, promote religious freedom and expression, and protect all their citizens from those who would seek to harm them.
- Pray for those who use threats and violence to attack those they disagree with. Pray that all who act on their hatred would find their consciences troubled and ultimately turn to the peace and salvation offered by Christ.
- Pray for President Mahinda Rajapaksa.

## Sudan

The government of Sudan has been one of the most genocidal in recent history, embarking on a scorched-earth policy in Darfur, and similar civilian-targeted violence in the South of Sudan. The secession of South Sudan in 2011 has done little to curb these attacks, as Sudan tries to retain control over valuable oil resources. Ethnic and religious animosity also fueled these conflicts. A repressive religious law in effect since 2002 bans unregistered religious activity, meetings with fewer than 20 members, and any religious activity in private homes. All religious literature is subject to censorship. Pray for Christians in the Nuba Mountains where the church is under heavy pressure. Today the great needs in southern Sudan are to build up the faith of new Christians, to help young and old recover from traumatic experiences and to provide a strong Christian foundation for believers. Thirty years of persecution has not stopped the growth of the Sudanese church. Most expatriate missionaries have left, but national leaders remain committed to evangelism.

- Pray for the believers' boldness and give thanks that the number of Muslim-background believers continues to grow.
- Pray for the safety and healing of Christians who have suffered extremely in the attacks along the conflicted border.
- Pray for President Omar al-Bashir.

## Syria

Nowhere has the Arab Spring played out in a more deadly fashion than in Syria. With the death toll well over 100,000 and the country in full-blown civil war, the few protections Christians did enjoy have been completely obliterated. What began as a hopeful pursuit for greater freedom has devolved into a chaotic opportunity for the most violent and extreme factions to exert themselves—and believers are particularly vulnerable to rape, abduction, torture, and murder. War crimes have been attributed to both sides of the conflict. Quite apart from the civil war, Christian evangelism is not welcome, and missionaries are not allowed in the country. Syria is a secular state, but Islam is recognized as the religion of the majority. The government closely monitors all activities deemed a threat to communal harmony, so most churches in Syria are hesitant to evangelize Muslims. Pray for boldness.

- Pray that God continues to reveal himself to the hearts of the Syrian people, and that whole families become Christians, giving them strength and encouragement.
- Pray for protection and healing for believers who have remained in Syria.
- Give thanks that despite extraordinary challenges, the Syrian church continues to reach out to others, and pray that the church would be established in the Arab, Kurd, Armenian, and all ethnic groups.
- Pray for peace and safety to be restored to this troubled country, and that a more free and

just society will be established.

- Pray for President Bashar Al-Asad.

## Tajikistan

Civil war in the 1990s almost immediately followed the independence of this former Soviet satellite. Ever since this rugged, mountainous country, the poorest in Central Asia, has been the target of allegations of governmental corruption, as well as hosting training camps for Islamic extremists. Half the population is under the age of 14. In an effort to stay in control, the government closely monitors all religious activity, especially Christians. The registration process for churches is almost impossibly cumbersome. Churches have been subject to raids, believers have been attacked, and new laws have forbidden Christian youth work with anyone under 18 years old.

- Pray for Christian materials in the Tajik language which are greatly needed.
- Pray for effective outreach to Tajikistan's Muslim-dominated population.
- Pray for comfort, strength, peace, and healing for believers who have been intimidated and attacked.
- Pray that involvement in human trafficking is stopped and for emotional healing of victims.
- Pray for President Emomali Rahmon.

## Tanzania

This African nation is unlike its neighbors in that it has enjoyed relative political stability and that its poverty is directly related to a lack of exportable resources (as opposed to other nations that are resource-rich, and yet due to corruption and mismanagement, deprive their populations from benefiting from the potential wealth). Home of the Serengeti game park, tourism is of major importance to Tanzania. The country consists of the mainland and the semi-autonomous island of Zanzibar. It is from the island that Muslim militants determined to drive Christianity out of this Christian-majority nation have embarked on a campaign of looting and burning churches and threatening Christians with physical harm and death. While less intense on the mainland, the persecution of Zanzibar is encroaching into mainland Tanzania, and making life more and more difficult for the Christian population there. This is especially true for Muslim-background believers, who not only face particular targeting from militants, but who also are ostracized from and rejected by family and community.

- Pray that the sharing of the gospel will be a peaceful antidote to the rise of violent Islam, and that many might find the joy of following Christ.
- Pray for the special protection of church leaders on the island of Zanzibar, who are often targeted in acid attacks and other violence.
- Pray that the government will be wise, discerning, and full of integrity as they implement a constitutional review process; pray that leaders do not succumb to pressures from extremists to limit personal and religious freedom.
- Pray for President Jakaya Kikwete.

## Tunisia

The incident which triggered the Arab Spring occurred in Tunisia with the self-conflagration of a fruit vendor. The events led to an ouster of President Ben Ali and calls for greater freedom and democracy. The end result, as was the case in most of the countries affected by the Arab Spring, was that an Islamic state was established, making the difficult plight of Christians worse. It is also concerning for women and other moderates, who had enjoyed a level of freedom and personal

rights unmatched in the Arab world.

- Pray for wisdom for authorities as they deal with radicals attempting to organize violent demonstrations.
- Pray for church leaders who have received threats and find their circumstances increasingly precarious. Pray for believers in Tunisia to remain bold and courageous.
- Pray also for foreign Christians living there, who have observed increased surveillance. Pray they are wise and effective in their sharing of the gospel.
- Pray for President Moncef Marzouki.

## **Turkmenistan**

The government of Turkmenistan exerts complete control over all aspects of societal life, and registering a church is nearly impossible. Though they claim to hold the fifth largest reserves of natural gas in the world, Turkmenistan has not been able to fully benefit from this because it has no direct routes for export. In this autocratic and isolationist nation, police and secret services monitor civilian activities, especially that of believers, and in recent years this has increased markedly. Christians in house churches continue to receive fines, salary deductions, and harassment. Religious literature cannot be legally produced in Turkmenistan, and it is difficult to import.

- Pray for encouragement of all believers, but especially Muslim-background believers, who have suffered more physical attacks.
- Pray that the government will be increasingly willing to register more churches.
- Pray for creativity in providing God's Word.
- Pray for President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow.

## **United Arab Emirates**

The economies of the seven states of the United Arab Emirates were transformed by the discovery of oil in 1962. The population is comprised of 80 percent expatriates. Culturally more liberal than other Gulf nations, the United Arab Emirates has recently clamped down even more extensively on religious activity and any kind of dissent. The United Arab Emirates allows only foreign Christians to worship and witness freely. Islam is the state religion, with a Sunni majority. Many U.A.E. citizens appear eager to learn about the gospel in private, and they enthusiastically receive Christian materials. Pray their wealth and luxury do not deter nationals from seeking eternal life in Christ.

- Pray for the few local Christians to find support and fellowship.
- Pray for foreigners to find the opportunity to share the gospel.
- Pray for President Khalifa bin Zayid al-Nuhayyan.

## **Uzbekistan**

A major producer of cotton, and additionally rich in gold, oil, and natural gas, Uzbekistan still faces widespread poverty and unemployment. President Islam Karimov is a totalitarian leader, who ruthlessly maintains total power. Due to fears of losing control, Karimov and the government of Uzbekistan tolerate no dissent, and they have been accused of broad human rights abuses, including torture and the killing of civilians. Many activists and other persecuted minorities have fled. The Uzbek government uses claims of fighting terrorism as justification for their human

rights abuses, which have been described by the UN as “systematic.” Of course, the human rights situation is unfavorable for Christians as well, especially evangelical Christians or denominations outside the Russian Orthodox Church. Religious gatherings in private homes are illegal, as is religious education for children. Raids of church events or even private meetings are common and increasing; and Christians can face harassment, arrest, detention, and steep fines for engaging in any of these activities.

- Pray for wisdom for children’s ministry.
- Pray for the protection of Christian materials, many of which are being confiscated and burned.
- Pray for protection for house churches, for the encouragement of believers, and for the opportunity for larger groups to meet together for training and support.
- Pray for President Islam Karimov.

## Vietnam

Vietnam is one of the few remaining communist nations in the world, and the Communist Party shows no signs of wavering in their efforts to remain in total power. There is a growing disparity between the urban wealthy and the rural poor, further exacerbated by terrible inflation causing sky-rocketing food prices. Vietnam’s human rights record is additionally abysmal. Despite these facts, they are a major clothing manufacturer and the second biggest supplier of clothes to the United States. To be a Christian in Vietnam is a risky proposition, as they are perceived as Western and threats to the state. Many Christians are in prison. Only a few have been released, and many have been forced to renounce their faith. Several ethnic Christians reportedly died after being released from prison or while in police custody because of injuries caused by torture. Pray for their protection and encouragement. Despite persecution, many Vietnamese, especially from ethnic groups in the mountains of Central and Southern Vietnam, have turned to Christ in the past 10 years. They baptize at night in streams and walk for days to obtain and distribute Bibles. Because of this growth, there is a great need for trained teachers and leaders.

- Pray that many who continue to persecute Christians turn to Christ.
- Pray for the encouragement and protection of believers here, especially Hmong and other ethnic converts, who face pressure from their communities to return to traditional ways, as well as persecution from the state.
- Pray for bicycle and motorcycle ministries taking God’s Word across Vietnam, and pray for the broad distribution of Christian materials, such as Open Doors’ Children’s Bible.
- Pray that many become disillusioned with Buddhism and Communism and turn to Christ.
- Pray for President President Truong Tan Sang.

## Yemen

At the crossroads between Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, Yemen is the poorest country on the Arabian Peninsula and has been slow to modernize. In recent years, it has become a central haven for al-Qaeda and other terrorist organizations. The government has actively fought al-Qaeda for control of towns in South Yemen, and to assist these efforts, the United States has used unmanned drones to attack these regions. All these factors have led to widespread unrest, instability, unemployment, and lack of economic development. Ninety percent of the men use a drug called “khat” daily, limiting national advancement. Radio broadcasts and discrete evangelism are bringing many Yemenis to Christ. Yet, Yemeni converts from Islam face the death penalty if discovered. The small number of believers in Yemen often leaves them isolated from other Christians. In recent years, Yemen has been the site of deadly suicide bombings, and the general instability in the country has resulted in many foreigners—who comprise the largest number of Christians—leaving Yemen. Additionally, over 200 foreign nationals have been kidnapped in the country in the last 15 years. Most have been released unharmed; however recently some Christian foreigners have been murdered.

- Pray for peace and stability for this troubled country, and that the influence of militants would wane.
- Pray for fellowship among the believers, who struggle with feelings of isolation and fear. Pray they would remain strong and bold for Christ, as well as wise and discerning as they reach out to others.
- Pray for President Abd Rabuh Mansur Hadi.