

August 2015 Prayer Items

Colossians 1:9-12 *For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and long suffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.*

Iraq—The Yazidi are a polytheistic, Kurdish-speaking people group that number around 700,000 globally, but the highest concentration of them (approximately 500,000) living in northern Iraq have been targeted by Islamic State for mass execution, abduction, systematic rape, torture, and other war crimes. Communities have been raided, men separated from women, and the women are then given or sold to become sex slaves. Reports from some women and girls who have escaped indicate that they were raped multiple times a day by numerous men, severely beaten, and burned with cigarettes. Some girls were as young as six years old. In the eyes of IS, the Yazidi are considered even less than Christians or Jews because they are polytheistic. Pray for the protection and deliverance of the Yazidi people, those fleeing for their lives, and especially those who have been abducted by IS. Pray for the healing and comfort of Christ to be with them in these horrific situations, that amid even these circumstances they might find Christ. Pray for members of IS that they might be convicted of the great evil they are perpetrating on the Yazidi, and many other innocent people. May they, too, find the love and peace of Christ. (Sources: The Daily Mail; The Washington Post; Frontline; Human Rights Watch)

Iran—Farshid Fathi, a Muslim convert to Christianity, has been imprisoned in Iran since December 26, 2010, when he was arrested with 22 other believers. He is the only one to remain imprisoned, despite his family paying an enormous sum for bail. Since his arrest, he has spent nearly a year in solitary confinement, has been told lies about threats to his family, had his foot broken, had years added to his sentence, and has been transferred to a prison with harsher conditions. Throughout this, Farshid has become well known for his kind and gentle demeanor. Though scheduled to be released in December 2017, there has been recent progress in his case and a potential early release date has been set for December 2015. Give praise for this positive answer to prayer, as we continue to pray for the perseverance and sustenance of Farshid as he has to endure several more months of imprisonment. Pray that the Iranian government will keep its word and deliver Farshid back to his family this coming December. Continue to pray for Farshid's wife and two children who are safe in Canada but are deprived of their husband and father and are concerned for his well-being. Pray that this family might be reunited and restored emotionally from this ordeal. (Sources: Voice of the Martyrs; Jubilee Campaign)

Egypt—As if it is not challenging enough to be a soldier in the Middle East in recent days, Christian soldiers in the Egyptian army face a threat within their own ranks, as many have been threatened and killed by fellow soldiers. It was recently reported that Bahaa Gamal Mikhael, a Christian soldier in the Egyptian army, had committed suicide. However, his family strongly denies this as a possibility, and say that they firmly believe he was killed because he was open and outspoken about his faith. They are further suspicious of the suicide report, because they do not believe he would be able to shoot himself in the heart twice, which was the cause of death. Pray for the family of Bahaa Gamal Mikhael, that they might find truth and justice, as well as the peace and comfort of Christ. Pray for all Christians serving in the Egyptian army, that they might be confident in their faith as they work under such stressful and challenging circumstances. Pray for the country of Egypt, that basic human rights and religious freedoms would be protected and respected by the government, as well as by the general population. (Source: Voice of the Martyrs)

Cuba—Despite recent developments in US-Cuban relations, the Church in Cuba faces continued hostility and repression. Such is the case for Maranatha First Baptist Church in Havana, which has been threatened with confiscation of their church building. Pray for Reverend Amado and the congregation, as they continue to worship and serve God under such repressive conditions. Give thanks that the advocacy of Christians around the world has motivated the UK Embassy to offer unconditional support of the church throughout this process. Pray that Maranatha First Baptist Church and all other Christian churches in Cuba will continue to be bold in their witness for Christ. Pray for Cuba, that social reforms will be ongoing, that the population will experience unprecedented and increasing freedom, and that religious freedom will be a part of that. (Source: Christian Solidarity Worldwide)

Sri Lanka—Pray for the healing, both physical and emotional, for a Sri Lankan pastor who was kidnapped and beaten for attempting to demonstrate the love of Christ to others. This pastor, who has remained unnamed, was approached by a man in a car who asked the pastor to accompany him to his mother's, where she lay ill and in need of prayer. However, when the pastor joined the man in his car, instead of bringing the pastor to the man's ailing mother, he and an accomplice drove the pastor to a remote area and demanded he “apologize for his Christian activities.” When the pastor refused, they severely beat him. The men also threatened to destroy the pastor's church. Despite filing a police report, the assailants have not been apprehended. Pray that this pastor and his congregation will continue to grow in their faith through this experience, that they will be comforted by the Holy Spirit, and will be bold in their witness. Pray they will be protected from further violence, and pray that many will be responsive to Christ because of the way these believers persevere. Pray for the assailants who committed this act against an innocent pastor, that they might repent of this violence and choose the peace and love of Christ instead. Pray for the country of Sri Lanka, for increased peace and religious freedom, for basic human rights to upheld, and for endemic issues like poverty to be addressed in constructive and effective ways. (Source: Voice of the Martyrs)

Pakistan- A courageous group of evangelists regularly attends Islamic festivals in order to pass out copies of the New Testament to Muslims. On a recent visit, an angry mob attacked the Christians and injured some, but when the police were called they actually arrested the evangelists for disturbing the peace. Pray that these courageous Christians would persevere despite hardship and persecution. Praise God for the faith of these Christian brothers who love Christ even more than their very lives. Praise Him for giving them opportunities to share the Gospel with many Muslims. Pray that their labor would be safe and fruitful, and God's name would be glorified in Pakistan. (Source: Voice of the Martyrs)

Mexico- Less than a year after a Catholic priest was violently attacked, three elderly nuns from the same village in Oaxaca State were tied up, gagged and assaulted. The attackers have not been identified, and some feel that authorities are not pursuing justice. Please pray that the perpetrators would be brought to justice, and that these elderly women would heal both physically and emotionally from this trauma. Pray that God would give them love and forgiveness for their assailants and that this would be a witness of Christ's love. (Source: Christian Solidarity Worldwide)

Saudi Arabia- A Christian taxi driver picked up a Saudi man to take him to the airport and was asked if he could get him a Bible. The man explained that he was an Islamic teacher that had been in Syria teaching the IS fighters the theology and practice of jihad. He said, "I'm sick of the killing. There must be something better than this." Pray that God would save this man and countless others in the Middle East who have realized that their religion can not redeem humanity from evil. Praise God for providing a Christian taxi driver and pray that He would continue to safely guide and direct believers to share their faith with seekers. (Source: International Christian Concern)

Middle East- The brutality and evil in the Middle East go on and on, yet in the midst of the terror Christ is strengthening and building his church. Lost Muslims are having dreams about Jesus and seeking out underground churches to learn more about the truth. While many are turning to Christ, they are even willing to suffer martyrdom for His name. Despite the earthly horrors in this region, many people are becoming citizens of Heaven where God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Praise God that He is sending aid, even from unexpected foreign places. An elderly Jewish man in Britain named Lord Weidenfeld has set up a fund to rescue Christians from Syria and Iraq. He explains that in 1938 Christians saved him from the Nazis in Austria by bringing him to Britain and feeding and clothing him, and he wants to show his gratitude to them by helping 2000 Christian families escape the horrors of the Islamic State. His Safe Havens Fund has begun flying Christians on a privately chartered jet to Poland for safety. Pray that God would continue to save, both physically and eternally, those that are suffering in the Middle East. (Source: International Christian Concern and The Independent)

Nigeria- Pray for Pastor Mark and his wife who lost their daughter, Monica, in the Chibok abduction where nearly 300 girls were kidnapped by Boko Haram. Monica was recently murdered because she would not deny Christ and convert to Islam. She was buried from the neck down and stoned to death. Her parents find comfort only in their faith and trust in Christ. Pray for their consolation during this terrible loss, while praising God for the strength He gave to this young martyr. Continue to pray for the estimated 200 girls who are still held captive by Boko Haram. (Source: International Christian Concern)