

Prayer Items September 2015

Psalm 112:5 Good will come to those who are generous and lend freely, who conduct their affairs with justice.

Sudan- Praise God that Pastors Yat Michael Ruot and Peter Yein Reith were released after prayer and international attention on their behalf. They were imprisoned for their faith and faced a possible death sentence, but the judge determined that they had served long enough and called for their immediate release. Praise God for this great news and may He receive glory. (American Center for Law And Justice)

Iraq- Pray for Christians who have been driven away from their homes and are left destitute. One elderly lady said, "We have lost all of our possessions but we haven't lost our faith in Jesus." Praise God for His faithfulness and strength through trying times. Pray that He would provide safety, comfort, sustenance for those who have lost so much. (Open Doors)

Kazakhstan- Seven South Koreans and one American were arrested for holding an English camp and teaching children from the Bible in Kazakhstan this summer. Please pray that the Christians would be released, that these camps will bear fruit despite the hardship involved, and that this will not discourage believers in Kazakhstan from sharing the Good News to children or adults in the future. (Open Doors)

Vietnam- Praise God for His miraculous way of protecting His word and His people. A Vietnamese Christian brother felt called to smuggle Bibles to a rural area of Vietnam, but to do so he had to bring his box of Bibles on a public bus that would pass through several checkpoints with searching guards who could put him in prison for this crime. At the beginning of his journey he was alarmed to see a police captain board the bus and sit down right next to him. The chief officer took off his hat and set it directly on the Christian man's box of concealed Bibles. For the next ten hours, at each checkpoint, when soldiers and guards entered the bus to search through people's bags and belongings, they observed the sleeping official with his hat on the box and passed by the illegal Bibles unknowingly. The believer arrived at his destination with all of his contraband Bibles safely concealed. Praise God for protecting this man and the copies of His precious Word. Pray that the Bibles would be an eternal blessing to those who received them. (Voice of the Martyrs)

Kyrgyzstan- Please pray for a young woman who was beaten by her brothers and sister until she lost consciousness because she would not renounce her new faith in Jesus Christ. Pray for her healing as she suffered a concussion as a result of their abuse. Thankfully she was able to escape and find a safe place to hide from them, but pray for her future protection and for comfort during her sadness at the loss of her relationship with her family. Pray particularly for her siblings to find the love and forgiveness of Jesus and to come to a saving faith like their sister has. (Open Doors)

China—Christian human rights lawyer Tang Jingling is currently awaiting the outcome of his trial, as he faced charges of “inciting state subversion” for his work on behalf of religious freedom in China and defense of marginalized groups within the country. Frequently harassed, arrested, and tortured, he was again arrested on June 20, along with two other men, and could face up to 15 years in prison. During his trial, his defense lawyers were not allowed to call any witnesses, however Tang Jingling stated to the court, “Every time we make a choice, it is the same as a trial: the forces of good and evil struggle in your heart, waiting for you to decide—whether you stand on the side of evil, or the side of justice.” Pray urgently that Tang Jingling will receive true justice despite an unfair trial, and give thanks for his boldness. Pray also for Gao Zhisheng, who has technically been freed for a year, but as of yet there has been no report about whether the travel ban has been lifted so that he can receive medical treatment. Give thanks for the courageous work both men have embarked on for Christians and other persecuted individuals within China. Pray that both will feel the presence and sustenance of the Holy Spirit as they endure their own ordeals. Pray for the country of China. (*Source: Christian Solidarity Worldwide*)

Kenya and other parts of Africa—A recent Unicef report indicates that approximately 36 percent of children ages five to 14 living in Eastern and Southern Africa suffer the exploitation of child labor, the agriculture industry exploiting the largest numbers, exposing children to harsh conditions and chemical pesticides and other work dangers. More dangerous, however, is the commercial sexual exploitation of children common in Kenya, South Africa, and Madagascar. In Kenya alone, it is estimated that 2,000-3,000 girls are forced to work in the sex tourism industry year-round, with nearly half these girls beginning as young as 12 years old. Pray for these most vulnerable children, such as now 17-year-old Phoebe, who comes from a background of extreme poverty and was lured into sexual slavery with promises of a new life and a rich, foreign boyfriend. Pray that they might be delivered from all these dangerous and cruel conditions and given opportunities to pursue the simple dreams of education and a normal, healthy life. Pray that governments would implement zero-tolerance policies against child labor and that the international community would be aware of these practices and adjust their supply chains accordingly. (*Sources: Walk Free; Unicef*)

Iran—Give thanks for the release of Alireza Seyyedian, a Muslim-background believer who was arrested in 2012 in an attempt to flee to Turkey. Accused of criticizing lack of freedom in Iran by being baptized in Turkey, Alireza was originally given a six-year sentence, which was later reduced. During his three-and-a-half years in Evin prison, he was kept in an overcrowded cell with 30 other prisoners in unsanitary conditions. Even as we praise God for his release, pray also for his full healing, physically, emotionally, and spiritually, as his family had observed alarming symptoms of psychosis during his incarceration, including blank stares and trembling hands, as well as unexplained vomiting and seizures. Prison doctors had also prescribed addiction-forming medications for insomnia, depression, and stress. Pray that Alireza's faith would continue to grow and be strengthened because of this ordeal rather than damaged. Pray that those he encountered while in prison would be drawn to Christ because of his sufferings. (*Source: Voice of the Martyrs*)

Israel—The 47 Christian schools within Israel serving the Arab Christian and Muslim populations are facing potential closure due to government cutbacks and government-mandated fees that can be collected from families. Despite a long history of productive, useful, and peaceful service in Israel, these schools—representing a number of denominations—are at certain risks without a change of course by the Israeli government. The General Secretariat of the Christian Schools in Israel will be meeting with Israeli President Reuven Rivlin and Education Minister Naftali Bennet. Pray that this meeting will go well, that the Christian schools will be recognized for the vital contribution they make to Israeli society, and that the government will renew support for them. Pray for wisdom for the General Secretariat of the Christian Schools as this situation is navigated, and most of all, pray that none of these schools will be closed. (*Source: Middle East Concern*)

Qatar/International—Behind the excitement and sportsmanship of international sporting events hides a grim and tragic cost: the very lives of migrant workers. Among the worst offenders, the country of Qatar was awarded by FIFA to host the 2022 World Cup. In 2014 alone, 414 workers from India and Nepal died from a range of causes, while readying the country for this soccer tournament. It is estimated that more than 1,200 migrant workers have died in construction of the stadium and related infrastructure in Qatar since it was announced in 2010 that they would host the tournament. Lured by the promises of fair wages and adequate housing and working conditions, they are in fact forced to work in deplorable conditions, deprived even of water in temperatures that exceed 120 degrees, and when not working, kept in squalid living conditions. Many of these workers are already exploited through enormous loans at usurious interest rates taken out to finance their journey to Qatar, that they cannot possibly repay because their actual pay is far less than what was promised. Some have their passports confiscated and many are not issued proper IDs, ensuring that they cannot even leave the work site without fear of arrest. Pray that this unjust, deadly exploitation would be rectified, that both FIFA and the government of Qatar might take action to ensure that no more workers would be forced to toil under these inhumane conditions, especially for the sake of a sporting event. Pray that those who lie and exploit these workers firsthand will be convicted of the wrongness of their actions. Pray that investigations into deaths of workers would be conducted, justice given to their families, and reforms will be enacted. (*Sources: Amnesty International; BBC; The Guardian*)