

Prayer Items March 2016

Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

--1 John 3:18

Let those who love the LORD hate evil, for he guards the lives of his faithful ones and delivers them from the hand of the wicked.

--Psalm 97:10

. . . in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

--Genesis 1:27b

Nigeria—The village of Dalori in northeastern Nigeria was the scene of a horrific attack by Boko Haram at the end of January. The terrorists drove into the village, shooting people at random and firebombing homes, trapping inhabitants inside. One witness hiding in a tree reported hearing the screams of people, many of whom were children, burning alive. By the end of the attack 86 were dead and scores more injured. Fleeing civilians made their way to the nearby town of Gamori village, only to be met by more violence, as three female suicide bombers blew themselves up in the crowds. Pray for the survivors and family and friends of the victims. Pray for healing and restoration and peace that transcends understanding. Pray for Boko Haram, that their violence might be stopped, that those leading these atrocities would come to a full recognition of the horror and evil of their actions, and that those coerced into cooperating with that would be released from participation. Give thanks also for the recent success of an intervention of troops from Cameroon, working along with Nigerian troops, to successfully free at least 850 captives and resulted in the deaths of 92 Boko Haram members at the end of February. Pray for those freed that they might find the peace and healing of Christ. Pray for those who have loved and lost the nearly 20,000 innocent people killed in the 6 years the Boko Haram has terrorized Nigeria, as well as parts of Chad, Cameroon, and Niger. Pray for the more than 2.3 million people forced from their homes because of the violence. (*Sources: The Guardian; Al Jazeera; The Boston Globe; Newsweek*)

Paraguay—Mainumby, a ten-year-old girl in Paraguay, is one of scores of victim's of child sexual assault and abuse which has become an epidemic in the South American nation. In 2014 an astounding 684 girls in Paraguay between the ages of 10 and 14 have given birth as a result of this ongoing abuse, which has been completely ignored by the government, despite calls from international human rights organizations and the broader international community. In 2015 the numbers were higher, and there is growing concern that as perpetrators are allowed to act with impunity, this gross culture of rape and violence will increase. Mainumby is among these girls, having given birth at 11 years old, at extreme risk to her own life, while her stepfather who raped her has not been arrested or prosecuted. Instead, Mainumby's mother has lost her home and job. Pray that the Father of the widow and the orphan would intervene to protect the most innocent and vulnerable. Pray that the Paraguayan government might finally offer real protection and justice to the young girls at risk in their country. Pray that they would no longer protect perpetrators and allow a culture of rape and abuse to be pervasive. Pray for the healing of little girls like Mainumby. (*Source: EqualityNow.org*)

Egypt—In an outcome that shocked all involved, 4 Coptic teenagers were given the harshest sentences allowed after being convicted of “contempt of Islam” for making a video which parodies the horrific videos made by the so-called “Islamic State.” While most expected they would only be fined for the video, which enacted someone kneeling in prayer, while another acted as if they were beheading the

one praying, Muler Atef Daoud, Bassem Amgad Hanna, and Albert Ashraf, in fact, were sentenced to five years in prison. Their friend, and the fourth participant, Clinton Magdi Youssef, who is a minor, was referred to a juvenile detention facility. Their teacher, Gad Youssef Younan, also a Christian, was also tried for “insulting Islam” and received a three-year prison term. Pray that the appeal be lodged on behalf of these young men will be swift and effective and that they will be released quickly. Pray that they will be sustained and have peace and protection during this ordeal. Pray for a day when free speech and religious freedom is upheld in Egypt, and those who actually behead innocent people and film it will be the ones imprisoned. Pray for the blasphemy laws in Egypt to be abolished and for the light and life of Christ to reach many in that country. (*Source: Middle East Concern*)

Pakistan—Annually in Pakistan, over 1,000 women are shot, burned, strangled, drowned, or otherwise murdered by those closest to them for “offenses” as small as wanting to marry for love or for being suspected of infidelity. While they suffer brutal deaths, the real offenders literally get away with murder for the so-called “honor killings,” because Pakistani law allows the victim or the victim's family to “forgive” the murderer. Of course, families who are complicit in having a father, brother, uncle, or other family member murder a woman or young girl they deem “guilty” of the even the most trivial of offenses willingly “forgive” the one who carried out the act. Pray for women like Saba, who at 19, was shot in the face and thrown in a bag and then into a river by her own father and brother for wanting to marry for love. Though she miraculously survived, she was forced to “forgive” them, allowing them to walk free after attempted murder. Pray for her healing and protection. Pray for a change in Pakistani law which currently allows this grossly unjust loophole. Pray for the passage of legislation that is reaching the prime minister in March, that it will be passed, enforced, and a new day of protection will arrive for all Pakistani women. Pray that the One who made females in His image will act mightily to intervene on behalf of this consistently exploited and abused half of His human creation. (*Source: EqualityNow.org; Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy's Academy Award-nominated film, A Girl in the River: The Price of Forgiveness*)

Syria—In February 2015 more than 230 Assyrian Christians were abducted when Daesh (so-called “Islamic State”) raided 35 Assyrian villages. Months later, a video was released documenting the brutal murder of two Christian captives. In the year that has transpired, intense negotiations on the part of church officials, has resulted in the release of these captives, and we give overwhelming thanks for the release on 22 February 2016 of the final 43 captives. While we give praise for the deliverance of these believers, we continue to hold them up in prayer as they have lost livelihoods and live in persistent peril. We pray for their continued provision, protection, and healing. We pray as well for Christians from al-Qaryatain and other parts of Syria who remain abducted, that they would be comforted and sustained by the Holy Spirit, and be returned soon to their families and loved ones. Pray for peace and the establishment of the rule of law in Syria. Pray that those who abduct and murder innocent civilians will know the conviction of the Holy Spirit, repent of these great evils, and find life in Christ. (*Source: Middle East Concern*)

China— Praise God that Cheng Jie, the director of the Hualin Foreign Language Experimental Kindergarten, was released from prison and reunited with her husband and two young sons. She spent two years in prison because of her work in printing and selling books that taught lessons about good moral character. Most likely, the kindergarten was targeted because of its ties to a church. Praise God for her release and that He sustained her and her young family while she was in prison. Pray for her further protection and blessing on her family. (*Source: China Aid*)

Nepal— The new constitution in Nepal greatly restricts Christian evangelism and includes fines and jail time for “any act to convert another person from one religion to another or any act or behavior to undermine or jeopardize the religion of another”. This new law has been a disappointment to church leaders who say that since the earthquake of last year many people have come to Christ and the church has grown. Please pray that these new efforts to slow the spread of the Gospel will in fact not impede its growth at all. Pray that believers will continue to boldly proclaim the Gospel and that many more will come to faith, whether or not persecution follows. Pray for protection and God's spirit to continue to stir in the hearts of the Nepalese people. (*Source: International Christian Concern*)

India—As a teenager, Ajay heard the message of the Gospel and became a Christian, and his persecution began. His Hindu father beat him when he found him reading the Bible, and became so angry when Ajay refused to sacrifice to Hindu gods that he forced him to marry a Hindu girl. Thanks be to God, his new wife became a Christian after being married to him for a short time. Ajay's brothers then threatened his life and came home to kill him but thankfully he was not at the house. Instead, they threw out all of his and his wife's belongings. Ajay's father disowned him, and the couple had no home anymore. His extended family and in-laws refuse to talk to him and the members of the mostly Hindu village even deny his wife the right to draw water at the community well because she is a Christian. Ajay has been a persecuted believer for eight years, and yet his faith is strong and his love for the Lord is deep. Despite the continual trials, he says that he feels that God blesses him over and over. Praise God for this young man's devotion to the Lord and grateful heart. Pray for God to meet his needs and give him and his wife perseverance and continued blessing and joy. Thank the Lord for their young child and pray that he would be safe and grow up to know the Lord. (*Source: Open Doors*)

Ghana— In the nation of Ghana, many children are caught in the nightmare of domestic slavery. One young woman recounts how she was given by her parents when she was 12 years old to a trader who claimed that he would take care of her and educate her. Instead, her parents had unknowingly given her over to five years of domestic slavery. She was physically and emotionally abused and not permitted to go to school. Indeed, she had to accompany her master's children to school and then leave to go back to the house to work. After five years, she was finally given her freedom and is now recovering. Pray for her healing and pray for others like her that are separated from their parents in the terrible, unjust suffering of slavery. Pray for their protection and freedom and that God would comfort them. Pray for parents that may consider sending their children away to see the lies and treachery behind slave traders' words, and pray that Ghanaians would have enough basic needs and daily bread to not seek out alternative care for their precious children. (*Source: Walk Free*)

North Korea— Christians in South Korea and China have been reaching the lost in North Korea by evangelizing defectors, smuggling Christian materials into the country, broadcasting radio programs, and launching balloons with New Testaments attached. Although many North Koreans worship their dictator and are very wary of Christianity, many are disappointed in the government and are interested in hearing about Christ and his kindness toward us. One Chinese man found a North Korean man in the mountains near the border and shared the Gospel with him. He became a believer and is now leading a

church of 18 people in North Korea. Praise God for His sovereignty in ordaining their meeting. Please pray that the church would flourish in this dark country and that so many become faithful followers of Jesus that the government is changed to one that upholds human rights and honors God. Pray also for their daily needs and safety. (*Source: Voice of the Martyrs, Open Doors*)