

March 2020 Prayer

For the word of the Lord is right and true; he is faithful in all he does. The Lord loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love.

–Psalm 33: 4-5

To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless, and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we entreat. We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things.

–1 Corinthians 4: 11-13

United States—Native American women are murdered at a rate 10 times higher than the national average and represent a disproportionately larger percentage of all missing people in the United States, especially troubling since they comprise a significantly smaller percentage of the population than other people groups. And yet historically, local and federal law enforcement efforts to locate missing Native American women or investigate and prosecute cases of known violence and murder have been consistently slow and minimal. For instance, in 2016 almost 6,000 indigenous women were reported missing, but only 116 were officially recorded as missing in the US Department of Justice's federal missing persons database. Activists have long been calling for the governments in North America to address these discrepancies between cases reported and official follow-through and investigation. Pray for the families of the missing and murdered Native American women who grieve without justice, and sometimes without answers. Give thanks for a recent task force organized by the US government to look into the crisis and address gaps and shortcomings in law enforcement's handling of these cases. Pray for truth and justice to prevail in these situations, for the violence to be curtailed, and for women in these communities to feel safe and valued, as they are in God's eyes. (*Sources: The New York Times; The Guardian; CNN; US Department of the Interior*)

Uganda—Namuwaya began following Christ in March 2019 and gradually shared her faith with her nine children. When she found courage and told her husband, Waiswa, in October, he beat her, but after two months of praying and sharing the good news with him he became a Christian as well. When Waiswa's father found out that the family became Christians, he called his son for a trial with Muslim leaders. Fearing the death penalty for apostasy, Waiswa took his family and fled and they have been hiding in a local church. As we praise God that these 11 family members are now saved, let us also pray that God would sustain them and protect them. Pray for the father to have a change of heart, to be convicted of his cruelty and to seek Jesus Christ as well. Pray that the family would be able to return to their home. Pray especially during the suffering that their new, young faith would be strong and they would be able to stand during persecution. (*Source: International Christian Concern*)

Nigeria—Wednesday, 26 February 2020, marked the two-year anniversary of the abduction of Leah Sharibu, who was among 109 girls abducted by Boko Haram in 2018. Of these, Leah was the only Christian and is currently the only one still being held, because she will not renounce her faith. On the anniversary of her abduction, over 80 people gathered outside the Nigerian High Commission in London—including her mother Rebecca and Eritrean gospel singer and former religious prisoner Helen Berhane—to protest the Nigerian government's failure to make good on promises to free Leah. Continue

to pray for Leah's sustenance, protection, and deliverance. Pray for comfort, peace, and perseverance for her family and others who suffer from religious persecution in Nigeria. Pray that the UK government will exert pressure on Nigeria to force them to act on Leah's behalf, and pray Nigeria's President Buhari will honor his word and secure Leah's freedom. Pray for Boko Haram to turn from darkness to light and end their terrorizing tactics. *(Source: Christian Solidarity Worldwide)*

Yemen—Because of civil war, Yemenis are experiencing unprecedented suffering. Eighty percent of the population, over 24 million people, need humanitarian aid. It is considered the largest humanitarian crisis in the world. 20 million people are in need of food and clean water, despite the fact that there is food available. Prices have skyrocketed and no one can afford the food in the markets due to unemployment. Children are scrounging in trash heaps to find their next meal. Please pray for our merciful God to provide relief from suffering and food for the hungry. Pray that the war would end and stability would return to this country. Pray ultimately for Yemenis to know the Bread of Life and to come to Him for Living Water. *(Source: International Rescue Committee; BBC)*

Vietnam—Pray for the protection and release of Pastor Ton, who has been held unjustly in Vietnam for 12 years. This courageous advocate for religious freedom in a country that is openly hostile to Christianity has persevered during this trial, but now is suffering greatly from problems affecting his kidneys and joints. Pray for complete healing, for good health, and the ability to endure under these trying and unjust circumstances for Pastor Ton. Pray for the Vietnamese government, that they would cease to persecute and imprison their own citizens, and govern with justice, equity, and integrity for all. *(Source: Christian Solidarity Worldwide)*

North Korea—Please pray for Christian brothers and sisters in this already devastated country as threats of the coronavirus loom. Because of the poverty and corruption, so many live on the streets and so few have adequate food and medicine that they would most likely not be able to recover from an outbreak. To further complicate matters, they have completely closed their borders to prevent the disease spreading from China into the country. Sadly, this also prevents imported goods coming in, and as a result food and fuel prices have drastically gone up. Please pray that God would protect the people of North Korea from further famine and disease. Pray that He would strengthen His people and increase their faith. Pray that they would have an unwavering hope for their eternal future. Pray that this hope and courage would cause many around them to seek salvation in Jesus Christ. *(Source: Open Doors)*

Nepal—Pray for Grishma, a teenager in Nepal who was was beaten, threatened, and eventually kicked out of her home by her father after she began attending church with some local friends. When her father refused to pay her school fees and threw her out, in desperation Grishma turned to employment as a dancer for three years, suffering even more abuse. However, she ultimately remembered the "peace she had in Christ" and began attending church again, for which she was fired from her job. Despite the rejection of her family and the loss of a job, Grishma is determined now to follow Christ, is enrolled in a discipleship training course, and dreams of one day serving in Christian ministry. Pray that her devotion to Jesus would remain strong and that her dream of working in ministry would both come to fruition and be productive for Christ. Pray that many would see her life of peace in Christ and be compelled to follow Him. Pray that she would experience the church as a loving family in the absence of the acceptance and affection of her own, and she would find the Father faithful to provide for all her needs. *(Source: Voice of the Martyrs)*

Paraguay—Juana worked from 2 am until 5 pm for ten years after being trapped into forced labor on a cattle ranch in the remote region of Chaco, Paraguay. Along with grueling work for barely \$1 a month and mounting "debt" at the farm store, she endured sexual exploitation as well. Tragically, she is just one of the 1.8 million victims of forced labor in Latin America and the Caribbean. Most of these individuals are deceived into these situations with promises of real employment only to find themselves suffering years of inescapable servitude under appalling and abusive conditions. Additionally troubling is that these practices are pervasive in myriad industries, including cattle ranching, mining, logging, and agricultural work—tainting supply chains globally with slave labor and other human rights abuses. These abuses often happen in remote regions, making existing laws hard to enforce, and even sadder is that there has been a very slow and slight improvement in nations addressing the problem. In fact, "only four out of the thirty-three countries in the region—Argentina, Panama, Suriname, and Jamaica—have ratified the International Labour Organization's Forced Labour Protocol (P29)." Pray for the rescue of the millions enslaved around the world, and especially in Paraguay and Latin America, making slave labor an intrinsic part of products we in the United States and other developed nations use and benefit from daily. Pray for those who would indifferently and systematically exploit other humans for profit and greed. Pray that we would repent of our own indifference and complicity. Pray for the love, mercy, and justice of Christ to come soon. (*Source: Freedom United*)

Iran—Mary (Fatemeh) Mohammadi is a 21-year-old convert to Christianity who has been targeted by Iranian authorities. She was first arrested in November 2017 at a house church and imprisoned for six months in Evin prison for "membership in evangelical groups", "engaging in Christian activities", and "acting against national security through propagating against the regime". After being released, she has been vocal about her faith and has advocated for legal rights and freedom for Christians to attend Christian meetings. In January 2020, she was arrested at a rally to protest a shooting and was again imprisoned. After being tortured, she was conditionally released and awaits trial. Please pray for this brave young woman to be unconditionally released. Pray for her comfort and healing from the beatings that she endured while in prison, and for God to protect her from further harassment. (*Source: Middle East Concern*)

India—Niladri Kanhara was a Hindu radical who persecuted Christians and desecrated their churches. He explains that since childhood he had "learned to hate and torture Christians". His belief was: "To save Hinduism, Christians must be eliminated." However, when his children became ill, and all of his efforts of selling his gold and sacrificing his goats would not help them, he asked a Christian pastor to pray for them. When they were healed, he turned to Jesus Christ as his Savior. As a result of his conversion, his former friends started persecuting him. He was beaten, his son was kidnapped, and they were all ostracized. He and his family fled their home and have not returned. Praise God for Niladri's Paul-like conversion, and pray for him and his family to be protected. Pray that God would meet their needs, and would use his testimony to spread the Gospel. (*Source: International Christian Concern*)