

## February 2021 Prayer

*We have been rescued from our enemies so we can serve God without fear, in holiness and righteousness for as long as we live.*

—Luke 1:74-75

*Even in darkness light dawns for the upright,  
for those who are gracious and compassionate and righteous.  
Good will come to those who are generous and lend freely,  
who conduct their affairs with justice.  
Surely the righteous will never be shaken;  
they will be remembered forever.  
They will have no fear of bad news;  
their hearts are steadfast, trusting in the LORD.*

—Psalm 112: 4-7

**Karabakh**—Armenian Christians have certainly experienced their share of suffering in the past, and the recent 44-day war with Azerbaijan and Turkey has sadly added to their plight as some Azeris attempted to eliminate Christian Armenians from the region of Nagorno-Karabakh. When the attacks began in October, 58-year-old Alvard Tovmasyan stayed in her home in the village of Karin Tak instead of fleeing. When her relatives returned after the ceasefire, she was found dead in the yard of her home, “mutilated almost beyond recognition.” The treatment toward this innocent woman and countless others like her has many speaking of genocide and certainly raises grave concerns for the Christians still living in the area. Please pray for the situation in this small region of the world— that God would bless His people with protection, comfort, courage and perseverance. Please pray for Alvard’s family as they mourn her tragic and atrocious death. (*Source: International Christian Concern*)

**Uganda**—Mansitula Buliro was about to pray her Muslim evening prayers when she had a vision of a bright light and heard a voice saying Jesus’ name. She secretly sought out a Christian neighbor who prayed with her and she came to faith in Jesus. Her husband found out about her conversion and beat her. He then cut her mouth with a knife to punish her for speaking about Jesus in their house. Her and her children’s screaming brought neighbors who stopped the attack. Mansitula’s husband divorced her right then and told her to leave the house or be killed. Christians took her to a hospital and are now keeping her at their home in safety. Praise God for this sister’s salvation, and pray that God would provide for her and her children. Pray also that her faith in Him would remain steadfast and strong and that her ex-husband would come to Christ as well. (*Source: International Christian Response*)

**Pakistan**—Farah Shaheen is a 12-year-old girl who was kidnapped by a 45-year-old Muslim man and forced to convert to Islam and marry him. When her father went to the police, they refused to help him and suggested he be glad that his daughter is now Muslim. After the Christian community protested, Farah’s abductor was brought to court but he was declared innocent because Farah supposedly married him of her own free will. She was then returned to him. Please pray for this young girl who lost her mother five years ago and has surely

undergone unspeakable trauma in the presence of her captor. Pray for her release and for her mind and heart to be protected. Pray that she call out to Jesus and cling to Him. (Source: *Voice of the Martyrs*)

**Lebanon**—The Christian community in Lebanon is dwindling as more and more believers flee the ever-growing hostility of the region. Already, 380,000 requests for immigration, mostly by Christians, were made to Africa and the EU since August. Iraq and Syria are seeing similar trends. While this Christian exodus brings relief for those that are persecuted, it leaves the very few that remain (who are mostly the poor) vulnerable and alone. Indeed, their small number could be targeted all the more. Please pray for the future state of the church in Lebanon and the surrounding Middle Eastern countries. Pray for the body there to be miraculously strong despite their small numbers, pray for their fellowship and encouragement and unity, and pray that they would have discernment to know the Lord's will for their own lives. (Source: *International Christian Concern*)

**Pakistan**—Tabitha Nazir Gill, a 30-year-old maternity nurse, was accused of blasphemy by colleagues in her hospital. Coworkers that she has known for nine years tied her up, beat her, and locked her in a room. Police then arrested her, but, thankfully, found the allegations to be unfounded. Apparently, a personal dispute had caused another nurse to falsely accuse her. Although hundreds of people gathered in a mob to condemn her, police released her to her family and she is now hiding in safety. Please pray for Tabitha's protection. Sadly, even false accusations such as this can threaten her life and future prospects. Pray that she would be able to start over in a new place where she won't fear for her life, and pray that God would bring comfort and encouragement to her in her suffering. (Source: *International Christian Concern*)

**India**—Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India has actively pursued a policy whereby being Hindu was required to be truly Indian. This has led to the widespread persecution of and discrimination against religious minorities of all kinds in India, including Father Stan Swamy, who at 83 years old is the oldest person ever accused of terrorism in India. The Jesuit priest has worked for over three decades with an indigenous group named the Adivasis, and he was recently helping more than 3,000 wrongly imprisoned Adivasis young. He was arrested on October 9 after filing a petition with the Jharkand High Court on their behalf. Advocates and activists are calling for his release. Pray that their calls for freedom for Father Swamy would be successful, and that until they are, that he would be upheld, strengthened, and sustained by the Holy Spirit. Pray also for the people with whom he has worked, that they would be encouraged by his strong witness and draw near to Christ. Pray for the release of the 3,000 unjustly imprisoned young people. And finally pray for Prime Minister Modi, that in his zeal for a Hindu India he would not trample on the rights of those who believe differently. Pray that he and many other might find the love, light, and salvation of Jesus. (Source: *Christian Solidarity Worldwide*)

**Malaysia**—Nearly 2/3 of the world's protective rubber gloves are made in Malaysia, and migrant workers largely supply the labor for this industry—a labor force that is exploited, working and living under squalid conditions that amount to modern slavery. There is some progress as the Malaysian government has recently raided factories and brought charges against several companies, including Top Glove, Brightway Holdings, and two subsidiaries, Biopro and La Glove. The increased scrutiny was prompted by the country's largest COVID-19 breakout among workers, who were found to be forced to share one bathroom

among 200 men, with 4 men sharing 1 bunk bed. Labor rights advocates in Malaysia strongly believe that this kind of abuse is endemic in most industries using migrant workers, and believe the government must take extensive legal action to improve the conditions of workers throughout the country. Pray for those of whom the Bible says, “woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness, and his upper rooms by injustice, who makes his neighbor serve him for nothing and does not give him his wages” (Jeremiah 22: 13), that they would see the injustice they are perpetrating and repent. Pray for fairness and protection of the vulnerable from poor health in extreme conditions, and from those who would get rich from their suffering. Pray that the Father would draw many close to him. (*Source: Freedom United*)

**China**—Nike, Zara, and Uniqlo are three of the world’s largest companies by revenue, are based in three different regions of the world (the US, Europe, and Japan), and all have labor connections to a region of China where hundreds of thousands of Uyghurs, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, and Hui are persecuted for their ethnicity and forcibly detained in camps where they provide slave labor for products that make their way into marketplaces in every part of the globe. This forcible detention—that includes torture, constant surveillance, involuntary “ideological training,” and forced renunciation of personal faith—is the largest group detention of an ethno-religious group since World War II. Over a million people have been detained and/or involuntarily relocated. They are especially vulnerable to COVID-19, as the conditions under which they work and live are cramped, unhygienic, and offer no protections. Give thanks that the United States recently declared the treatment of Uyghurs a genocide. Also, praise God that numerous multinational companies are cutting ties with any suppliers that are in this region. But continue in vigilant prayer for the more than one million people in this region who suffer unspeakably for their ethnicity and faith under this repressive regime. Pray that all companies, such as Marks and Spencer’s would prioritize ethics above profit, and refuse to use forced, exploited labor. Pray that the Chinese government would miraculously change course, pursue justice, and serve and protect its people rather than repress and abuse them. (*Sources: Jubilee Campaign; Freedom United; CSW*)

**International**—The number of Christians murdered for their faith rose 60 percent in 2020, and Open Doors reports now that 1 in 8 Christians around the world are persecuted for following Jesus. Among these, over 340 million believers suffer a high level of persecution and discrimination. This year as Open Doors released their World Watch List, which indicates the top 50 countries where it is most dangerous to be a Christian, they reported that many, many more countries could easily have been added to the list. Pray for the global Church as they seek faithfulness among the severest of trials. Pray that their suffering would be an incredible witness to those around them—even their persecutors—and would bring glory to the Father. Pray heartily that the Holy Spirit would comfort, uphold, sustain, and strengthen persecuted believers. (*Source: Open Doors*)

**Ethiopia**—Tigray is a region of northern Ethiopia that borders Eritrea, where violent conflict has erupted in recent months between Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and the Ethiopian government. The leader of the TPLF, Debretsion Gebremichael and the current Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy, once political colleagues and allies, have fallen out, resulting in calls for the region of Tigray to become autonomous. In November 2020 the conflict turned violent when TPLF forces captured Ethiopian military bases in Tigray. Since then millions of people have been displaced, and reports of widespread atrocities against civilians have been documented and attributed to both sides of the conflict—including murder, rape, torture, and starvation. One such incident was a massacre of over 750 innocent people hiding in Maryam

Tsiyon Church in Aksum—considered a historic center of Orthodox Christianity, a world heritage site, and the purported home of the Ark of the Covenant in January 2020. Increasingly, this war has taken on characteristics of an ethnic, genocidal conflict. Pray that the leaders involved would put aside vanity and personal ambition, work toward peace, and put first the well-being of the people of Eritrea, especially those in Tigray. Pray for the end of abuse and atrocities—and for the protection of the innocent and vulnerable people caught in this conflict. Pray for the international community to investigate and intervene in helpful, efficient, humanitarian, and diplomatic ways. (*Sources: BBC; The Guardian*)