

May 2021 Prayer Items

*May we shout for joy when we hear of your victory and raise a victory banner in the name of our God.
May the Lord answer all your prayers.*

—Psalm 20:5

Iran—Pray for Hamet Ashouri, an Iranian Christian convert, who was arrested in February 2019 for his faith. Though offered by security agents a “monthly salary” to “cooperated” in their work against the Church of Iran movement, he faced a physical assault rather than betray Christ and the church he is a part of. He was held with no charges or advancement of his case from March 2019 until March 2020, when he was charged with “propaganda against the regime,” and sentenced to 10 months in prison. Give thanks for his faithfulness, and pray that his lawyer will have success in appealing his case. Pray that Hamet will have comfort and strength in Christ throughout this ordeal, and pray this as well for four other Christian converts, Esmaeil Narimanpour, Mohammad Ali Torabi, AliReza Varek Shah and Hojjat Lotfi Khalaf, arrested in Dezful on April 19. Though temporarily released because of COVID, they still face unknown outcomes and will be brought in for interrogations in the coming days. Pray for interrogators and government officials that instead of seeing “threats against the state” in these believers they would instead witness the transforming power and joy of Christ. Pray for Iran to cease in their persecution of believers. Also, another item of concern to pray about was the recent appointment of Iran to the UN Commission on Women’s Rights—a confounding move on the part of the UN, considering Iran’s misogynistic and repressive treatment of women across the board. Pray for some kind of reason and wisdom to direct these decisions that have real implications for people around the world. (*Source: Middle East Concern; The Hill*)

International—It is deeply disheartening that after decades of consumer education, advocacy, and numerous promises and claims by chocolate producers, the situation for laborers in the cocoa industry is not improved, but sadly is much worse. In fact, child labor has increased and includes human trafficking. Children as young as 6 after trafficked from Mali and Burkina Faso into neighboring Ghana and Côte d’Ivoire by a “big boss,” who pockets all their wages. These small children spray dangerous chemicals, clear forests with machetes, and haul 100-pound sacks for 14 hours a day, getting only scraps to eat. They are beaten and tortured if they try to escape. M&M’s, KitKat, Ferrero Rocher, Mars, Cadbury, Lindt, Nestle, Hershey, and Godiva, among others, have promised to eliminate child and slave labor from their supply chains but with minimal follow through—in part, because of their desire to pay insanely low prices to cocoa farmers, who in turn, cannot afford to actually pay workers wages. Pray for the protection of the smallest people, the most vulnerable in any society. Pray that we around the world with the means to live decent lives will not satisfy our addiction to sugar and cheap candy at the expense of the very lives of little children. May God forgive us, may He move us to act and advocate, and may He greatly convict the powerful executives of chocolate manufacturers to prize human lives and livelihoods over profit. (*Source: Freedom United*)

Vietnam—Vu a Sua, a Christian and member of the Hmong community, was hung by a rope and beaten for his faith. His tormentors told him that the Communist leader deserves to be followed instead of Christ. Because Sua wouldn’t recant, they seized his property. His unbelieving brothers stole what he had left, leaving him with nothing. Pray for this brother, his wife, and young child as they start over in a new area of Vietnam. Pray for God to meet their needs and provide for them. Praise God for Sua’s strength of character and for his faith, and pray that he would be encouraged and strengthened. (*Source: International Christian Concern*)

India—When Kirti, a young wife and mother, converted to Christianity along with her husband, she began an ordeal that would result in unimaginable suffering. She and her family were confronted by the village elders and the entire village, and threatened with beatings if they did not agree to stop attending church and prayer meetings. Though they continued in secret, and even witnessed the miraculous healing of a young man, they soon were discovered. They were attacked, their Bible burned, and all their food and livestock were stolen. The village cooked it all and had a feast—literally consuming their entire livelihood. The village refused to let them use the communal well, and Kirti would have to go at midnight to sneak water for them to survive. Then Kirti’s husband was abducted and tortured so severely, he did not recognize Kirti when she found him, before he was taken away and murdered—Kirti hearing his agonizing cries as he was put to death. There has been no criminal prosecution for this crime, and his murders have gone free. Kirti and her children fled to a safe house, and since then have been helped by some family and Open Doors. Give thanks for this miraculous provision and pray God’s blessing on the continued work of Open Doors and other advocates in India. Pray that Kirti, who has remained strong in her faith, would be deeply comforted by the Holy Spirit and would experience the peace that transcends understanding. Pray for the villagers and others who still treat Kirti and her family with hostility—may they find the light and love of Christ. (*Source: Open Doors*)

Egypt—Islamic State terrorists abducted 62-year-old Nabil Habashi Salama, a Coptic Christian, in November, and then executed him this month. They sent a video of his execution to Christians, warning them that they would be targeted too. Mr. Salama had built the only church in the town and was a prominent Christian in his community. Pray for his family that has gone into hiding and is mourning his loss. Pray for the Christian community in Egypt to remain faithful and stay safe in the midst of fear and violence. And please pray for the extremists to turn to Christ and cease their senseless killing. (*Source: Christian Solidarity Worldwide*)

United States—As a pastor in Uganda, Steven Tendo became a target of the government for his work promoting human rights and voting rights, as well as fighting government corruption. His friends and family were threatened, and he himself was illegally detained and tortured—including the amputation of two of his fingers. Knowing there was no possibility of safety in Uganda, Pastor Tendo sought asylum in the United States. However, despite overwhelming evidence supporting his claim for asylum, he was detained in the US for 26 months in a detention facility with hundreds of cases of COVID, was denied treatment for his diabetes, which in turn caused cataracts and nearly blindness. He was almost deported back to Uganda on the day he was supposed to get surgery for eyes—something that advocates had to fight for, and he lost 30 pounds while in detention, because of the poor conditions and his untreated health complications. Finally, with the help of Amnesty International and legal advocates, this pastor was released on parole while his asylum case continues, and gratefully rejoiced over a simple meal of fish and vegetables on his first night in over two years. We give thanks to the Father for preserving Pastor Tendo throughout this ordeal in Uganda and then in the United States. And we praise God for his release. Pray that the freedom and safety Pastor Tendo so tenaciously sought will finally and permanently be granted to him. Give thanks for advocates who sought protection and justice for Pastor Tendo, and pray that in our world the work of those seeking to protect the vulnerable will be advance and the powers of corruption and indifference will be conquered. (*Source: Amnesty International*)

Ethiopia—Last year, Liya’s husband rushed home from work when he heard that extremists were targeting Christians in violent riots, but he was caught and killed on his way. Liya was 8 months pregnant and gave birth to a son shortly after. She now lives with her mother, who is also a widow. Pray for her as she grieves for her husband and that the Lord would provide for her needs. In an area of 98% Muslim, A small church was meeting in a Christian man’s living room, when Muslim authorities had

him evicted. He was unable to rent another space, so the church was unable to meet. Recently, funds from abroad allowed this small congregation to purchase a building. Now the church has grown. (Source: *The Voice of the Martyrs*)

China—May 23-30 has been designated a Week of Prayer for China. We join CSW and Cardinal Bo, president of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, and Christians around the world in praying for China—where the persecution of all faiths has gone unabated even during the pandemic. Specifically pray with CSW for: “Zhang Zhan, the Chinese Christian who was imprisoned last year following her investigations of the COVID-19 outbreak. Thank you for her courageous determination, fuelled by her faith, to make the truth known. We ask you to keep her healthy and strong, despite her partial hunger strike; that her strong faith will continue to sustain her; and that she will be released from her unjust detention.” Pray also for human rights lawyer Gao Zhisheng, who after years of detentions, torture, and harassment, was disappeared again in 2017 and his family still has no idea of his whereabouts or even if he is alive or dead. Pray for some kind of resolution for his own suffering and that of his family—and that the God of justice would greatly reward Gao Zhisheng for his many trials for his faith and his willingness to fight for the rights of others. Pray for Uyghur Muslims in China and practitioners of Falun Gong, who are also mercilessly persecuted by the Chinese government and who have suffered displacement, detention, and horrific atrocities. Pray for their protection and healing. Pray for the Chinese government—so intent on using the worst kinds of oppression to control and their population. May Jesus's Kingdom of grace, love, mercy, forgiveness, and salvation advance in China and around the globe. (Source: CSW)

Israel—As nearly 100,000 ultra-Orthodox Jews gathered at Mount Meron in northern Israel, a tragic stampede resulted in 45 deaths. Large crowds visit the historic site every year to commemorate a famous rabbi named Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai who is buried there, but the structure is not safe for such large groups. After singing and celebrating, people started to leave through a narrow and slippery stairwell when someone slipped, and others fell over them and were crushed in a stampede. The government had unsuccessfully tried to close the area three times in the past because of the potential danger. Please pray for comfort and peace for Israelis as they grieve. Pray that this peacetime tragedy would cause many Jews to seek Jesus the Messiah for salvation and hope in the midst of such a sad and difficult time. Pray that the nation as a whole would support and encourage one another instead of blaming and finding fault. (Source: *The New York Times*)

Nigeria—Seven years ago, Boko Haram kidnapped 230 Chibok girls from their secondary school. Today, 111 of them are still missing. Parents say that the suspense of not knowing if their daughters are alive or dead and wondering what they are enduring is a nightmare. Those that have escaped reported rape and murder as common occurrences. In spite of all this, the government doesn't seem to be making enough of an effort to free them. Please pray fervently that any girls still living would be released, protected, sheltered, and comforted by God. Pray that parents can leave their daughters in His hands and find peace and trust. Pray for these girls by name, to be safe in His loving hands:

Yayi ABANA
Deborah ABARI
Deborah ABBAS
Hauwa ABDU
Safiya ABDU
Kummai /Jummai ABOKO
Hamasatu ABUBAKAR
Maryam ABUBAKAR
Hasana ADAMU
Asabe ALI
Mary AMOS
Rifkatu AMOS
Saraya AMOS
Esther AYUBA
Hauwa BALTI
Awa BITRUS
Godiya BITRUS
Ruth BITRUS
Nguba/Moda BUBA/Baba
Saratu DAUDA
Lydia EMMAR
Monica ENOCH
Rifkatu GALANG
Aishatu GREMA
Zara ISHAKU

Hauwa ISUWA
Awa Ali JAMES
Ladi JOEL
Esther JOHN
Laraba JOHN
Rhoda JOHN
Hauwa JOSEPH
Rakiyah KWAMTAH
Hauwa KWANGWI
Kauna LALAI
Aisha LAWAN
Falta LAWAN
Ruth LAWAN
Hauwa Musa MAINA
Kabu MALLA
Esther MARKUS 1
Esther MARKUS 2
Aishatu MUSA
Hanatu MUSA
Rejoice MUSA
Saraya MUSA
Elizabeth Joseph MUTA
Hauwa MUTAH
Hauwa NKEKI
Hanatu NUHU

Ladi PAUL
Laraba PAUL
Saraya PAUL
KAUNA/Hauwa PETER
Yana POGU
Sarah SAMUEL
Rejoice SANKI
Margaret SHETTIMA
Lydia SIMON
Deborah SOLOMON
Saraya Mal STOVER
Mary SULE
Hauwa TAKAI
Hauwa TELLA
Ladi WADAI
Margaret WATSAI
Hauwa WULLE
Glory YAGA
Dorcas YAKUBU
Rifkatu YAKUBU
Suzana YAKUBU
Jinkai YAMA
Yana YIDAU
Rahila YOHANNA
(Source: Open Doors)