

September 2021 Prayer

We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.

—2 Corinthians 4: 8-9

Though he brings grief, he will show compassion, so great is his unfailing love. For he does not willingly bring affliction or grief to the children of men.

—Lamentations 3: 32-33

Philippines—Global Fingerprints is a child-sponsorship ministry of the Evangelical Free Church of America, which partners with local churches in impoverished communities to support children physically, emotionally, and spiritually. The children are sent to school, and the gospel is shared with them. Some of these same children, though, can experience persecution when they come to a saving faith in Christ, such as 18-year-old Ashnaira. Going to college, as well as working at the community center, she is on track to escape the cycle of poverty that has oppressed her community. However, because Ashnaira is a believer, her brother has threatened to kill her if she doesn't recant her faith. She is said to be standing strong, but undoubtedly, this has caused her great stress and fear. Pray that Ashnaira will be protected and experience the peace of Christ and remain strong in her new faith. Pray for the softening of her brother's heart—as well as that of her other family members—that they might not only accept Ahnaira's faith, but that they and others in their community might find Jesus. (*Sources: personal connection*)

Uganda—Tabiruka Tefiiro came to Christ two years ago as an 18-year-old and started worshiping at a church. His father, Kawono, kicked him out of the home because he had left Islam. Tabiruka's mother begged him to return and reconcile with his father, so he came back to talk to him this August after being gone for two years. He told his father and his extended family, "I want to confirm that I am saved by the grace of God. I can't renounce my faith now or in the future." His father left quietly, and then returned the next day with a knife and hoe. He beat him until he was unconscious, then hung him from the neck with a rope. Afterward, he told neighbors that he had killed his son because he had disgraced Islam by becoming a Christian. He was charged with manslaughter instead of murder because of the religious motive. Please pray for this shocking and troubling situation. Pray for comfort for the entire family during this tragedy. Pray that God would use this unimaginable horror to bring them all to Christ, and that He would work a miracle in this father and turn him from murderer to Christ-exalter. May the Lord use this wickedness to change hearts and bring people to Him. (*Source: Morning Star News*)

Afghanistan—Pray for the country and the people of Afghanistan, after many, many decades of violence, turmoil, and oppression, now facing another epoch of grave danger and uncertainty. Even as we give thanks for the 122,300 people evacuated by the US and NATO forces, pray for the safety of the approximately 250,000 Afghans known to have helped the US and NATO who remain in the country. Pray for comfort and peace for the families of those who have lost loved ones in this conflict, for the families of the US servicemen and servicewomen who enabled two decades of relative stability, relief aid, medical aid and vaccinations, and the education and employment of women and girls. Pray that all who served in this operation will not be discouraged or unappreciated, but have a sense of accomplishing more peace and opportunity for the Afghan people for 20 years than they had experienced in previous decades. Give thanks that both boys and girls returned to school the day after the US evacuation ended, and pray that they will continue to be allowed to be educated. Pray the Taliban will keep the promises they have made to pursue a more tolerant and civil course than

previously. Pray especially for the women and girls in Afghanistan who have experienced intolerable repression under the Taliban. Pray that many in Afghanistan might come to know the salvation of Christ. (*Sources: AP, Reuters, New York Times, BBC*)

Indonesia—Muhammad Kace is a former Muslim, now a Christian, who was recently arrested for putting a video on YouTube that insults the prophet Muhammad by saying that he is a liar. This blasphemy can cost him six years in prison, even though Muslims can speak against Christianity or Buddhism. Pray that this injustice would be overturned, and pray that this video that has gone viral would cause people to question what they believe and investigate Christianity. Pray as well for Mr. Kace's protection and that he would continue to defend the faith and share the Gospel even in prison. (*Source: International Christian Concern*)

Haiti—On August 14, a 7.2 magnitude earthquake struck southern Haiti, bringing destruction and suffering once again to this beleaguered nation. Prior to the quake, the country had been dealing with extreme gang violence—often perpetrated by the government—and then political unrest following the assassination of their president. As a baseline, following the 2010 earthquake and other natural and man-made disasters, approximately 4.1 million Haitians live with constant food insecurity, and 2.1 percent of children suffer from severe malnutrition. In addition, after the 2010 earthquake, UN peacekeepers introduced and spread cholera, which infected over 800,000 people and claimed more than 10,000 lives. This most recent earthquake, followed by tropical storm Grace, has left nearly 2,000 dead, over 6,000 injured, and many more still missing. Thousands of buildings were destroyed, among them hundreds of churches. Yet, in the days and weeks after the earthquake, Haitians were back at their churches worshiping outside and offering the shelter and relief they could to those who were suffering around them. Pray for relief and restoration to be brought to the people of Haiti. Pray for the end of corruption, whose seeds have often been sown and cultivated by powers outside Haiti. Pray for the comfort and peace of Christ to uphold and strengthen those who have lost loved ones and suffered much themselves. Praise God for the witness of hundreds of Catholic and Protestant churches, who despite being in rubble themselves, are still reaching out to the hurting. Pray that the global church will give generously to these struggling churches to further reach the suffering community. (*Sources: NPR; BBC; New York Times; Center for Disaster Philanthropy*)

India—A mob of about 250 people attacked eleven Christians in Adnadi, in Madhya Pradesh, because they refused to give up their faith in Jesus. They threatened them with the choice to leave Jesus or leave the village, and then threw stones at them when they refused. Four of the believers needed to be hospitalized. The village is home to fifteen families that became Christians 20 years ago, but their persecution started recently. Please pray for these specific believers and Christians as a whole in India, where persecution is sadly on the rise. Although they make up a very small percentage in India they are perceived as a threat and are often targeted for violence now more than ever. Pray for them to be steadfast and courageous, to cling to Christ in faith and hope. Pray that they would be a witness and have opportunities to safely share the reason for the hope they have. Pray that the mob in Adnadi would choose to leave the Christians alone or be thwarted in any further plans to hurt them. (*Source: AsiaNews*)

Russia—Though masquerading as some kind of a democracy since the fall of the Soviet Union, Russia has consistently and increasingly become a repressive regime that now allows virtually no dissent. The clampdown began in 2004 with a federal law regarding legal assembly, and the right to gather and peaceably protest has been continually eroded by successive amendments and increasing restrictions on the application process. This, coupled with brutal police tactics and criminal prosecutions, have resulted in dissent of any kind being treated as a criminal activity. A terrifying example of this is

Salman Tepsurkaev, a young human rights activist and moderator of a Telegram channel 1ADAT, which exposed human rights violations in Chechnya. As a result, he was abducted by men believed to be Chechen police, and a day later, a video was posted on social media of Salman being sexually violated as “punishment” for his involvement with 1ADAT. His whereabouts remain unknown, and officials have utterly failed to take any meaningful steps into investigating his disappearance and torture. Sadly, Salman is just one of many who have been imprisoned, tortured, disappeared, or killed in Chechnya. Pray for the safe return of Salman Tepsurkaev, and for his physical, emotional, and spiritual healing. Pray for all who suffer a similar fate. Pray for those who heroically take their lives into their hands by attempting peaceful protest in Russia. Pray for Vladimir Putin, whose despotic rule has made a mockery of freedom and human rights in Russia and has disrupted civil processes in other countries, including Syria, Afghanistan, and the United States. Pray that he would change course and lead with justice and integrity. Pray for his salvation, as well as that of those who perpetrate these sadistic atrocities in the name of country or professional allegiance. (*Source: Amnesty International*)

Vietnam—Buddhist activist Bui Van Tham has been in prison for four years, serving a six-year sentence, for peacefully protesting and calling for the freedom of religion. Recently, he was beaten by another inmate in Xuyen Moc Prison, but both of them were given punishments that include less food in already horrible conditions. Please pray for Tham as he suffers unjustly, and pray that he would soon be released. Pray especially that he would find Christ, possibly even in prison through the witness of believers. (*Source: Christian Solidarity Worldwide*)

Pakistan—In Punjab province, a man named Muhammad Azim with five other armed men broke into a house where 16-year-old Muqadas and 12-year-old Mehwish were home alone. They beat and abused the girls and then kidnapped Muqadas at gunpoint. Although neighbors tried to run after her, they stayed back after being fired at. Their mother is sick with worry and fear and their father, Nadeem, a sanitary worker, desperately appealed to the authorities for help in finding their daughter. After seven days, police reluctantly filed a report. Muqadas has still not been found. Please pray that she would be safe and released or rescued soon. Pray that God would heal her and her sister from the horrible trauma that they experienced, and that they would find refuge and comfort in Him. (*Source: International Christian Concern*)

China—Gao Zhisheng has been completely missing for 4 years now. This courageous human rights lawyer was first illegally arrested in 2006 for his work defending religious minorities, such as Christian and Fulan Gong members, as well as advocating for improved human rights in China. In the intervening years, he has suffered harassment, forced disappearances, torture, and a prison sentence from 2011-2014. On August 13, 2017, Gao went missing completely, and he has had no contact with family or legal counsel. This has been terribly difficult for Gao’s wife, Geng He, and his children. They continue to pray and advocate for him, so let us continue to as well. Join with Christian Solidarity Worldwide in praying: “that God will reach into the darkness, wherever Gao is being held, and bring him safely home to his family; for God to strengthen and comfort Gao’s family as they call for truth and justice; and for increased pressure on the Chinese government to release information about Gao’s whereabouts and condition.” (*Source: Christian Solidarity Worldwide*)