

April 2022 Prayer

*In the place of judgment—wickedness was there,
in the place of justice—wickedness was there.
—Ecclesiastes 3:10*

*The oppressor will come to an end,
and destruction will cease;
the aggressor will vanish from the land.
In love a throne will be established;
in faithfulness a man will sit on it—
one from the house of David—
one who in judging seeks justice
and speeds the cause of righteousness.
—Isaiah 16: 4b-5*

Laos—Last December, a Christian mother named Seng Aloun who was already grieving as she was burying her husband, endured attacks by her village. They beat on the coffin and hit and clubbed the mourners there because of their “foreign religion”. Soon after, neighbors burned her house to the ground, forcing her out of town. Seng now lives in the woods with her children. Please lift this poor woman up to the Lord, asking for His perfect provision and care for her. Pray that He would be her Protector and Shelter and Refuge. Pray for her children to know the Lord and trust Him in the midst of their grief and suffering. Pray also that the villagers would have a miraculous change of heart and welcome the family back. (*Source: International Christian Concern*)

China—At the beginning of March, the Chinese government enacted a new and more stringent measure to restrict the use of the internet to share the gospel or even for churches to access it. The measure includes new licensing that will only allow “legal” churches—that is, government approved and government controlled—to legally use the internet to disseminate information. Religious schools or universities are only allowed to have information accessible to their enrolled students. Any religious services or practices, whether Christian, Buddhist, Falun Gong, or otherwise, will not be allowed to be posted on the internet. As China Aide reports: “The Measures follows complaints by President Xi Jinping that prohibitions against using the Internet to ‘advertise’ religion are easily eluded, and more should be done to make sure that the Internet and social networks are not used as tools for ‘religious propaganda.’” Pray that the gospel—which cannot ultimately be thwarted—will spread even more vigorously in light of these restrictions. Pray for the safety of those who courageously use the internet to share their faith. Pray for the heart of Xi Jinping. (*Source: China Aid*)

Pakistan—Wahid Lashari, a Muslim man, asked 18-year-old Pooja Kamari, a Hindu girl, to marry him, and she refused. Lashari later attempted to abduct her from her home to force her to marry him, and as she tried to get away from him, he shot her to death. This sad situation is repeated time and time again in Pakistan because so often these attacks go unpunished. Please pray for a vigilance and deep concern on the part of the government so that Hindu and Christian girls do not need to live in fear of this type of attack. Pray for Pooja’s family to find Jesus Christ and his salvation while they seek comfort in their loss and shock. Pray that many more would come to Christ in this often hostile country. (*Source: Christian Solidarity Worldwide*)

Mexico—In indigenous communities in Mexico, religious conformity is demanded and the cost of conversion is high. Christian converts, Angélica and her husband, have faced harrowing consequences

for their decision to follow Jesus. Angélica and others were threatened by a man who burst into their Bible study, drunk and wielding a machete. He kicked over the bench Angélica was sitting on, throwing her to the ground. Though pregnant, Angélica was denied medical care at the nearby clinic—which is common for believers in indigenous communities—and had to walk over an hour to get to medical care. Amid all this, Angélica’s husband was detained without food or water for over 24 hours, and Angélica, traveling to the city to get help, miscarried. Despite this tragic loss, she was not allowed to bury her baby in the local cemetery. Her family’s land has been confiscated, loss of her home has been threatened. Her brother-in-law, who is a community leader, was directly involved in the seizing of her land. He said to her, “It was your inheritance, but you now have chosen your path, and you are going to give up everything you have.” Pray for protection, provision, comfort, and strength for Angélica, her husband, and others who have chosen the path of Christ. Pray for the softening of the hearts of those in indigenous communities who persecute and oppress those who believe differently from them. Pray many would find Jesus through the courageous witness of Angélica and others like her. (*Source: CSW*)

India—Pastor Yallam Shakar was dragged from his home in Chhattisgarh by five disguised men. They took him outside and stabbed him to death. The pastor and community leader had been receiving death threats for leading people to Christianity in recent weeks. Please pray for comfort and encouragement for his wife, children, and grandchildren who are grieving his loss. Pray for the Christians in India to have enduring faith, courage, and perseverance despite the increase in persecution. Pray that the members of this pastor’s church would not give into fear or lose faith. And pray for these five attackers to be convicted of their sin and to seek the Savior. (*Source: Voice of the Martyrs*)

United States—While there is so much rhetoric around immigration—legal and otherwise—the fact remains that the US does, in fact, import a lot of foreign labor under guest worker programs. However, the US does not have the legislation to protect these same workers from trafficking and abuse. Recently, in Georgia, guest workers were forced at gunpoint to dig onions with their bare hands for pennies per bucket. If we think slave labor is a thing of the past or something that doesn’t happen within US borders, we are mistaken. Pray that the petition calling for California (the state with highest number of trafficking victims) to pass legislation that protects workers will be effective and that lawmakers in California will be tenacious and serious in eradicating human trafficking and exploitative practices from their local industries. Pray for the vulnerable, hardworking people who are trying to support families, only to be subjected to dehumanizing cruelty for the sake of others’ greed and profit. Pray for those who would be so callous as to perpetrate these kinds of crimes. And pray that the God of love, justice, and care for the widow, orphan, poor, and oppressed would intervene and rescue the least of these. Pray for those of us who inadvertently benefit from these practices—that we may become aware, prayerful, and ready to act for justice. (*Source: Freedom United*)

Nigeria—We both give thanks and persevere in prayer for the believers in Nigeria, especially for the Christian community of Guyaku, Nigeria. Boko Haram descended on this village in the middle of the night, and community members fled and hid in caves throughout the night as their homes and possessions burned, not knowing the fate of loved ones lost in the chaos. In the morning they found they had lost everything. During the attack, Pastor Andrew (name changed to protect his identity) prayed for his besieged congregation that their faith would be strengthened—even if they were abducted or tortured. And when they returned to their scorched village, he called the church members together, gathering the burnt-out zinc roof pieces and building materials. Their first action was to construct a makeshift church out of the rubble and worship God. We praise God for their amazing faith, for the response of perseverance and trust. Give thanks, also, for the ways in which Open Doors has provided emergency relief, food aid, trauma counseling—and even helped rebuild the church in Guyaku. In fact, the Christian community is larger there now than it was before the attack. Continue to

pray for those who mourn and are still healing from these horrific attacks. Pray for the ongoing provision for vulnerable Christians in northern Nigeria. Give praise for the ways that they have been provided for and how the church continues to grow. Pray for Boko Haram, that they themselves might be freed from the darkness and violence which holds their hearts hostage too. Pray that the Nigerian government might develop the courage, fortitude, and integrity to deal effectively with the persistent problem of Boko Haram and religious and ethnic violence in their nation. (Source: *Open Doors*)

Armenia—Armenia is considered a historically Christian nation, and yet Azerbaijan has promised to eradicate the Christians from the border area of Nagorno-Karabakh (called Artsakh by Armenians). They have made many attacks in recent days, cutting off a gas line twice and leaving the community with no heat or water in freezing temperatures. In addition, they have attacked with four drone strikes this month along the border. These are clearly in direct violation of the current peacekeeping mission. Please pray for our brothers and sisters in the border area of Armenia to be miraculously protected from this violence. Pray that God would thwart the Azerbaijani attacks in such a way that the believers know that He is their shield and protector. Pray that they would not lose hope, but keep their eyes fixed on Jesus. (Source: *International Christian Concern*)

Russia—Even as millions of Ukrainians suffer terribly under the illegal and inhumane aggression of Russia, many within Russia continue to protest these awful attacks, as well as the repressive rule of the current government. In the wake of the invasion, thousands of Russian citizens have been arrested and detained for doing nothing more than standing in a public place holding a completely blank sign. This both serves to demonstrate the extent to which the general Russian population does not support the invasion as well the extent to which the authoritarian regime has cracked down on any kind of free speech. This has included the increased interference with news media, from interrupting internet presence all the way to violence against and assassination of journalists. Pray for the brave people in Russia who are willing to speak out against their government's horrific actions both within and outside of their borders—for their protection, for ongoing courage, and for their sense of what is just and true and right to lead them to Christ. Pray for the Russian government, that they will tire of lies and oppression, relent on their attack on Ukraine, and pursue freedom and justice within their country. (Sources: *Newsweek*; *NPR*)

Syria—While the world's eyes have turned to the suffering in Ukraine, more than 27,000 children from a number of countries continue to be stranded in al-Hol refugee camp, in deplorable conditions, while their countries of origin fail to repatriate them. Little ones as young as 2 years old have been forcibly separated from their mothers, while older boys have been arbitrarily detained and cramped into filthy spaces where scabies and other diseases are rampant. This camp is a place where children are especially vulnerable, where murder, violence against children, and child labor is on the rise. These children have no access to clean water, food, medical care, and education. Diana Semaan, an Amnesty International Syria researcher, describes the situation this way: "Tens of thousands of children from Syria, Iraq and over 60 other countries, have been abandoned to misery, trauma and death simply because their governments are refusing to assume their responsibilities and bring these children back to a safe and secure environment." Pray for their deliverance to safety, return to their families and countries, and for adequate provision for their needs until that can be accomplished. Pray that the countries involved will recognize the tragedy their inaction and indifference has caused. Pray they act with urgency to rescue these little ones. (Source: *Amnesty International*)