

October 2022 Prayer

Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, until he come and showers righteousness on you.

—Hosea 10:12

North Korea—Praise God that though the past three dictators have tried to strangle the Gospel in North Korea, its light has just shone brighter. Defector Illyong Ju shares how his poor but happy family would risk their lives to listen to foreign radio (with windows closed and volume extremely low). His grandfather was killed for talking about human rights. His aunt's father-in-law was a Christian, and as a result, her entire family is in a prison camp. His cousin's family was all executed for sharing the Gospel. Mr. Ju and his family escaped North Korea and are blessed to be in Seoul, but so many are trapped under persecution and the oppressive regime. He testifies that there are Christians there now who are not hopeless—they are sharing the gospel and worshipping underground and in the mountains. He tells about Mrs. Kim who was tortured in prison camp, and yet cried out to Jesus and experienced heaven on earth with him in prison. She brought six women to the Lord and they worship together every morning in silence in the camp. Praise God that the Gospel is spreading in North Korea. Pray for His protection, for miracles, for freedom. (*Source: International Christian Concern*)

Nigeria—Deborah Emmanuel was a second-year Home Economics university student when she was brutally murdered in Sokoto State. Having been wrongly accused of blasphemy on a WhatsApp group college group chat, as mostly male mob beat and stoned this 25-year-old woman to death. Nigeria is one of 71 nations around the world which criminalize blasphemy—leaving millions vulnerable to this kind of horrific mob violence—including those, like Deborah, who did not even do what they are accused of. Pray for those who loved Deborah and who are feeling her loss most acutely. May they be comforted and given peace by the Holy Spirit. Pray for the preservation of the Church in Nigeria. Pray that they would be strengthened and protected. Pray for those who committed this murder—that they might be deeply convicted of the wrong they have perpetrated, repent, and even find life in Christ. (*Source: Christian Solidarity Worldwide*)

Burkina Faso—Suellen Tennyson, an 83-year-old nun from New Orleans, has served the Yalgo community for ten years, where she ministers to children with malaria. Some travel 50 miles to be treated at the clinic where she works. For unknown reasons, she was kidnapped from her house by ten armed men in the middle of the night in April. Her captors and the details of her kidnapping are unclear. However, praise God because she was recently released and is in good health. Pray for her peace and emotional recovery, and that she would be a witness to God's goodness. Please pray for this unstable, dangerous country to become a safer place for Christians to serve God and share the Gospel. (*Source: Open Doors*)

Ukraine—While we praise God for the recent liberation of the Ukrainian town of Izyum, it also revealed even more of the atrocities perpetrated by Russian forces. A burn-pit containing the partially charred bodies of approximately 1,100 men, women, and children was found after the Russian troops retreated. This follows the discovery of mass graves in the cities of Bucha and Mariupol, confirming that the indiscriminate killing of civilian, non-combatants is a standard practice that Russia is utilizing in their illegal invasion of Ukraine. Pray for the protection and deliverance of Ukraine. Pray for wisdom for those who are engaged in turning back this aggression. Pray for Putin that he might be brought to his senses, humbled, and completely changed as he rules his own country with repression and fear. Pray for many to rely on Jesus not only for their earthly hope, but for eternal deliverance. (*Sources: Fox News; Forbes; Reuters; New York Times*)

Sudan—In June, four men named Badar, Mohamed, Tariq, and Mortada were arrested during a raid of their Baptist church. Equipment was confiscated, and they were beaten and accused of apostasy. The prosecutor told them if they did not renounce their faith and stop praying and meeting, they would be put to death. They refused and were charged as apostates. However the law that penalized apostasy ended in 2019, so they argued that they should not be sentenced to death. When they faced trial, the judge referred them back to the public prosecutor office, unsure of who's to handle the case. Praise God that at this point it seems that justice will prevail as it will likely be dismissed because the law has changed. Please pray that they would trust in God and find great encouragement and peace from Him who holds the fate of all people in His hands. (*Source: Middle East Concern*)

Iran—In the wake of the arrested and killing of Mahsa Amini at the hands of Iranian morality police, a 22-year-old woman arrested on September 13 for not wearing a hijab, Iran has erupted in protests. In unprecedented acts of peaceful protest, Iranian women have taken to the streets, burned their hijabs, shaved their heads, and carry photos of this innocent young woman who lost her life for merely expressing her human rights. Many Iranian men have joined the outcry against this murderous oppression, including the Iranian football (soccer) team, who wore black jackets covering their country's badge on their uniforms as their national anthem was played prior to a match in Austria against Senegal, in a protest against the treatment of women in Iran. Give thanks for the growing outcry against the notorious treatment of women in Iran. Pray for the protection of protesters. Pray for a regime change in Iran, for greater freedom and upholding of human rights in Iran. Pray for the Church in Iran, which has been increasing greatly in recent years. (*Sources: Reuters; The Guardian*)

Yemen—Voice of the Martyrs urges prayer for the poor Christians in Yemen: Russia's invasion of Ukraine has essentially halted grain exports from both countries, and an impending food crisis faces other countries throughout the Middle East, some of which were already experiencing a significant economic crisis before hostilities began. Our Christian brothers and sisters in Yemen face the potential for severe hardship, as Yemen imports the majority of its food from neighboring countries. "There already was a humanitarian disaster in Yemen before the current wheat crisis," a front-line worker shared. "The people of Yemen need our prayers." (*Source: Voice of the Martyrs*)

Qatar—Over the past 12 years in preparation for the World Cup, migrant workers in Qatar have been horribly exploited, suffering debt bondage, wage theft, terrible working conditions, their documents confiscated, and other abuses. Many have died, and none have received adequate or promised compensation for their labor building infrastructure and hospitality industry to host a game. Now many—including Freedom United, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and Fair Square—have called on FIFA to set up a fund of at least \$440 million to compensate exploited workers and the families of those who have died. This figure would barely cover the appropriate wages, especially for an event that FIFA and others in the industry will likely make billions of dollars from. Also brands such as Adidas, Budweiser, McDonald's, and Coca-Cola have come out in support of the workers' fund. And Qatar has passed some reforms to protect migrant workers—on whom they, like most countries around the world, depend as a vital part of their workforce. However, these reforms have not trickled down into practice, those taken advantage of in the past 12 years have not been compensated, and much needs to be done to address the widespread oppression of poor populations. Pray for vulnerable people who are forced to leave their homes to find work to support their families, many of whom live on the brink of survival. Pray for those who head FIFA and national football associations to ensure that those who make profits for them are humanely treated and adequately paid. Pray that unscrupulous employers would recognize this great injustice and repent of their actions. (*Source: Freedom United*)

Sri Lanka—August 30 was International Day of the Disappeared where the millions of innocent people who were forcibly abducted—most often by clandestine elements of their own countries’ governments—are remembered. For decades, many families have remained without answers, closure, or justice for those who have been taken, imprisoned, and frequently murdered—merely for expressing their religious or political beliefs or reporting the truth. Though there are millions, we share the situation of one such person, to emphasize that each story represents a real individual, and family and friends who continue without peace or justice for their loved one. Pray for the family of Prageeth Eknaligoda, who desperately want to know his fate. This journalist, cartoonist, and political analyst left work on the evening of 24 January 2010, after telling a close friend that he believed he was being followed. This occurred just days before the Sri Lankan presidential elections, in which Prageeth Eknaligoda was supporting the opposition candidate. More than 12 years later, the Sri Lankan authorities have provided no answers to his disappearance, his well-being, or if he is even alive. And he is just one of the thousands of enforced disappearances human rights organizations estimate to have been committed in Sri Lanka in connections with the internal armed conflicts over the past 40 years—some estimates are as high as 100,000. Pray for justice and ethical actions in Sri Lanka regardless of conflict or political upheaval. Pray for answers, peace, and comfort for the family and loved ones of Prageeth Eknaligoda. Pray that many will find ultimately peace and comfort in following Christ. (Source: Amnesty International)

China—International Christian Concern shared this letter from a house church in Xian, which was pressured to testify against their pastor. They have sent this out in response to this coercion, and the letter is reproduced here:

Dear brothers and sisters,

Peace to you! Beginning July 20, the brothers and sisters from our church began to be summoned by Xi’an City’s Shilipu Police Station or had police officers visiting their homes. Some of their houses have been repeatedly searched, which greatly affected their lives and mental state. According to those who were summoned, the police officers led by Zhang Haipo demanded the members to surrender church offering, testify against their pastor claiming that he commits fraud and spreads cult message, and fabricate offering amount, or else their jobs or children’s education could be negatively affected. Zhang also deceived the summoned Christians and told them that their pastor pays himself 50000 yen (USD 7380) monthly as his salary. He also told them, “The higher amount you say you offer to church, the more you will be able to get it back.” We are deeply shocked and concerned about the illegal actions committed by some of the law enforcement personnel. For the past 30 years, Xi’an Abundant Church has strictly lived out faith according to the Bible’s teaching: love God, love [your] country, love your neighbors, and submit to those who are in power. In terms of offering, Abundant Church asks its members to offer voluntarily according to the Bible and allows church coworkers to manage by themselves. It is done in a public and transparent manner. The pastor is not in charge of money nor finance, and the members are all aware of that. There is no fraud involved. We would like to ask, “Who granted them the authority to freely trample on the religious freedom that is guaranteed by the Constitution to every citizen?”

- 1. Please pray for the brothers and sisters who were summoned and have their mental state and lives affected. May God’s comfort and healing be with them so they can walk out from this traumatic experience;*
- 2. Pray for every member of Abundant Church. May God grant us sufficient grace so we can stand firm amid the wind and waves;*
- 3. Pray for Shilipu Police Station. May God stop their illegal actions, and that they will return our church’s property to us;*
- 4. Pray for our motherland. May justice be established in this land. (Source: ICC)*