

January 2011 Prayer Items

For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you. And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith, that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again. Philippians 1:19–2

INDIA — Pastor Attacked by Hindu Extremists — VOM Contacts

Matthew 5:10–12

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. 12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

On Dec. 2, more than 20 Hindu extremists from the Bajrang Dal group attacked Pastor Johnson in Udayanagar, near Bangalore, India, accusing him of trying to convert people to Christianity. Pastor Johnson was leaving a prayer meeting at a believer's home when the extremists surrounded him and asked him why he was trying to convert people. "They simply started to beat him up," VOM contacts said. "The pastor's plea that he had just come on an invitation for a prayer ... simply fell on deaf ears." VOM contacts said the extremists then dragged Pastor Johnson to the Mahadevapura Police Station, continuing to punch him along the way. The extremists also reportedly beat him right in front of the police station, and police officers watched without saying a word or doing anything to stop the assault. At last report, the pastor was still in custody. Pray that God will heal this pastor's physical wounds and minister to him during this challenging time.

UZBEKISTAN — Christian Books Confiscated — Forum 18 News Service

Romans 8:35

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

The Uzbek government recently confiscated Christian books from a youth group returning from Kazakhstan, according to Forum 18 News. An Uzbek customs official told Forum 18 that the books were not confiscated, but had been temporarily removed. Members of the youth group reported that a customs official swore at them, saying "We are the bosses here, and we will do what we like. If we need to, we'll lock you away." Customs officials said a court will decide what happens to the literature. Also in Uzbekistan, the head of Ukraine's Baptist Union has been denied entry to the country, and another Christian has been denied permission to leave. According to Forum 18 News, government officials have provided no reason for either action. In addition, access to two foreign religious websites has been blocked from within Uzbekistan. These actions appear to be part of a policy of isolating Christians in Uzbekistan from fellow believers in other countries. Pray that Christians in Uzbekistan will remain faithful despite opposition from those in authority. Pray that they will not feel alone, but will know they are part of the Body of Christ.

ETHIOPIA — Christian Sentenced to 3 Years in Prison — Compass Direct News

Psalms 91:9–16

Because you have made the LORD, who is my refuge,
Even the Most High, your dwelling place,
No evil shall befall you,
Nor shall any plague come near your dwelling;
For He shall give His angels charge over you,
To keep you in all your ways.
In their hands they shall bear you up,
Lest you dash your foot against a stone.
You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra,
The young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot.
“Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him;
I will set him on high, because he has known My name.
He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble;
I will deliver him and honor him.
With long life I will satisfy him,
And show him My salvation.”

On Nov. 18, Tamirat Woldegorgis, a Christian in the southern Ethiopian town of Moyale, was sentenced to three years in prison for allegedly desecrating a Quran. Tamirat, a father of two and member of the Full Gospel Church, was arrested in early August after a Muslim co-worker at a clothes-making business discovered that Tamirat had inscribed “Jesus is Lord” on some cloth. The co-worker then accused him of writing “Jesus is Lord” in a copy of the Quran, but no evidence has proven the co-worker’s claim. Tamirat is being held at Jijiga prison, and members of his church are concerned for his safety. Pray that God will comfort and protect Tamirat in prison and that he may soon be released. Pray for all believers in Ethiopia.

INDONESIA -- House Churches Closed -- VOM Contacts

On Dec. 12, seven house churches were forcibly closed in West Java, Indonesia, by Muslim extremists who claimed the buildings were being used for "illegal church meetings," according to VOM contacts. Between 200 and 300 extremists from the Islam Protector Front, Moslem Forum and Islamic Reformation Movement gathered outside the houses and demanded to inspect the buildings. The extremists said the buildings, which were being used by the Protestant Batak Christian Huria Church, could not be used for Christian worship services, and they told the congregation to meet elsewhere. The owners of the houses were told they could remain in their homes but could no longer open their homes for Christian worship services. Ask God to use this incident to strengthen the members of this church. Pray that they will demonstrate Christ’s love to those who oppose them and that their faith will be a light that helps guide others to the Lord. Pray that persecuted Christians in Indonesia will keep their eyes on Jesus, persevere in faith and not grow weary or lose heart.

CHINA -- Worship Service Raided in Hunan Province -- China Aid Association

Chinese authorities raided a house church on Dec. 12 in the city of Changsha, Hunan Province, according to China Aid Association. Dozens of believers from the Hope Church in Changsha were gathered for worship when police officers and government officials arrived and forced them to disperse. Authorities confiscated several items belonging to the church, including the podium, chairs and air conditioner. Pastor Zing Jinfu and Minister Le were taken to a local police station and questioned for a couple of hours before being released. Pray that members of the Hope Church will be encouraged to continue worshipping together despite government harassment. Ask God to embolden all believers in China to proclaim their faith boldly and demonstrate God’s love to others in the nation.

INDIA -- Priest Attacked -- VOM Contacts

On Dec. 16, Fr. Thomas Chirattavayalil was attacked by a group of unknown men at his parish house, according to VOM contacts. When Fr. Thomas opened the door of the parish house, armed assailants wearing masks hit him on the head and continued to beat him as they chased him. Fr. Thomas sustained two deep wounds on his head and also received injuries to his shoulder and other parts of his body. Pray that Fr. Thomas will recover completely and that the assailants will be brought to justice.

PAKISTAN -- Mullah Offers Reward for Killing Asia Bibi -- VOM Contacts

On Dec. 3, 2010, a mullah in Pakistan offered more than \$6,000 (U.S.) to anyone who kills Asia Bibi, according to The Voice of the Martyrs contacts. In the past, Christians have been killed in jail, on their way to court and even after being released from jail. "There is threat that she can be killed even after her releasing from the jail," said VOM contacts in Pakistan. "It's not just a statement by mulana, but we have examples of previous blasphemy cases." Following the mullah's statement, Muslims protested against Asia and a proposed amendment of the blasphemy law. Protests were held in many major cities in Pakistan. Pray for Asia's release from prison and for her safety after her release. Ask God to minister to her family, especially her children.

AZERBAIJAN -- Government Considers Stiffer Penalties for Religious Activity -- Forum 18

Less than two years after increasing penalties for illegal religious activity, parliamentary deputies are about to consider even harsher penalties in proposed amendments to the Code of Administrative Offences, according to Forum 18 News Service. "Minimum fines for individuals violating the Religion Law, such as by holding unregistered religious worship, could be increased fifteen-fold," Forum 18 reported. Rabiyat Aslanova, chair of parliament's Human Rights Committee, told Forum 18 News, "This is connected with religious communities which have failed to gain re-registration but still function. It's so that they realize the responsibility for their actions. People are not fined just for praying to God. This is a question of national security." Pray that these amendments will not pass. Ask God to protect believers who continue to worship him openly despite oppressive government restrictions.

CHINA -- Christian Lawyer Still Missing -- China Aid Association

Christian human rights attorney Gao Zhisheng has been imprisoned by Chinese authorities for more than two years, and his whereabouts are currently unknown, according to China Aid Association. In an October radio interview, Gao's wife, Geng He, expressed her family's eagerness to find him. "My family only wants to get some news of him," Geng He said. "When I talked with his sister, she said, 'He is a member of the family. No matter what he does, such as eating the daily meals, sleeping or even taking a walk outside, anything would make us miss him. Where on earth has he gone? The entire family of mine is puzzled and we have been looking for him ever since.'" Pray that Gao will continue to look to the Lord for strength and guidance, and pray that God will comfort his family and enable them to persevere in hope and faith. Pray that the Church in China will continue to shine the light of God's love and truth and that it will continue to grow despite opposition from some government officials.

For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Hebrews 4:12

ALGERIA—Christians Sentenced for “Illegal” Place of Worship—Asia News

Psalm 23:1–5

The LORD is my shepherd;

I shall not want.

He makes me to lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside the still waters.
He restores my soul;
He leads me in the paths of righteousness
For His name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil;
For You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil;
My cup runs over.

Four Christians were given suspended prison sentences recently for opening a place of worship without a license in the eastern region of Kabylia, Algeria, according to Asia News. The Christians, a Protestant clergyman and three of his parishioners, were convicted under a controversial 2006 law. The law requires that anyone who wants to set up a place of worship, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, must obtain a permit indicating the name of the place of worship and the name of the pastor. Some believe this law violates Algeria's constitution, and this is the first time the law has been enforced. Three of the men, Abdenour Raid, Nacer Mokrani and Idir Haoudj, received two-month prison sentences. The fourth, Pastor Mahmoud Yahou, was sentenced to three months in jail and fined almost \$3,600 (U.S.) for illegally sheltering a foreigner. Pray that God will encourage these believers, that the ministry of churches in Algeria will flourish and that the gospel will be preached throughout the nation.

SOMALIA—Teenage Girl Shot to Death for Following Christ—Compass Direct News

2 Corinthians 12:19–11

And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong. I have become a fool in boasting; you have compelled me. For I ought to have been commended by you; for in nothing was I behind the most eminent apostles, though I am nothing.

A 17-year-old girl who converted to Christianity from Islam was shot to death recently in an apparent "honor killing" in Somalia, according to Compass Direct News. Nurta Mohamed Farah, who had fled her village to live with relatives after her parents tortured her for leaving Islam, died on Nov. 25, according to the Compass Direct report. "Area sources said they strongly suspected that the two unidentified men in Galgadud Region who shot her in the chest and head with a pistol were relatives or acting on their behest," Compass reported. Pray that God will use Nurta's testimony to draw non-believers into fellowship with him, and pray for the protection of all believers in Somalia.

The following accounts from Evangelical Fellowship of India News—Persecution Watch

1 Christian family boycotted in West Bengal

On Nov 28 in Natungram, Murshidabad, West Bengal, alleged Muslims radical boycotted a convert Christian woman from Islam and threaten to impose a fine on her if she continues to follow Jesus Christ. Our correspondent reported that Chanda Babi and her family, who is running a milk business, accepted Christ as their Savior and Lord on February this year. The radicals for the last few months were pestering the Christian family and threatened them not to attend the church services or face dire

consequence. They also urged Babi's family to isolate themselves from all the neighbors.

However, Babi and her family continues to follow Christ, the Muslim radicals on Nov 28 ordered the villagers not to buy milk from Babi and ordered shopkeepers not to sell anything to her. They further threatened Babi that they will impose a huge fine if her family continues to believe in Christ. Please pray for peace as the area has been witnessing several anti-Christian incidents for the past two years.

Pastor assaulted in Uttrakhand

Uttrakhand Police on Nov 9 arrested a pastor on false charge of 'forceful conversion' and threatened to harm his life in village Ravli mehdud, Haridwar. Our correspondent reported that police officers barged into the prayer meeting conducted by Pastor Manoj Kumar of the Indian Pentecostal Assemblies and forcefully took him and two church members. It was also alleged that the police continued assaulting the pastor, threatened to harm his life and made derogatory remarks against Jesus Christ and Christian's community. After the intervention of the area Christian leaders, the police released the pastor without charges. Please pray for justice and peace in the area.

Church demolished in Karnataka

On 5 December in Kengeri, Bangalore, alleged Hindu extremists pressurized the Slum Board administrative to demolished Gypsy Prayer Church. Our correspondent reported that the extremists barged into the prayer hall and disrupted the prayer meeting conducted by Pastor Rajesh. They filed a complaint against the Christians to the Slum Board committee and pressured them to issue an order to get the church demolished. Under pressured, the board subsequently issued an order to demolish the church. Karnataka police arrested four Christians after alleged Hindu extremists from the Bajrang Dal disrupted their prayer meeting, verbally abused them for their faith and dragged them to the police station on 5 December in Basavanagudi, Shimoga. Our correspondent reported that a mob of about 25 Bajrang Dal barged into prayer meeting attended by the Immanuel Church elder Kamamma and her three children Choudamma, Parvathi and Chandru. As the Christians started praying, a group of about 25 Bajranga Dal activists suddenly barged in, pounced upon them and dragged them to the Vinobanagara Police Station accusing them of forceful conversion. The Christians were charged under Sections 153-A and 298 of the Indian Penal Code and were sent to District Shimoga Jail later that day. Please pray for peace and religious tolerance in Karnataka.

Christian lady threatened in Karnataka

On 2 December in Hova Maru, near Bangalore, a mob of about 20 alleged Hindu extremists led by Majunath threatened to rape a Christian convert woman if she did not convert back to Hinduism. Our correspondent reported that the Hindu extremists confronted a convert Christian lady identified only as Vijayalakshmi, called her a pagan saying that they would teach her a lesson. It was reported that the extremists verbally abuse and threatened her that they would stop at nothing short of raping her one of these days.

Later the enraged extremists shouting anti-Christian slogan went near the church premises and started threatening the pastor and church members to stop following Christ or face dire consequences. The Christian reported the matter to the police but no actions has been taken at press time.