

August 2012

Sudan—Praise God for heroes such as Romano Oguma, a father to many fatherless in Sudan. He is the director of Hope for Sudan of Make Way Partners, and has been known to climb mountains and trek through villages to search for Sudan's most vulnerable orphans. Sadly, Romano was attacked on July 14 while driving on his way to the border of Sudan and Kenya to pick up Peter, a construction manager who has worked with Romano in building orphanages. During the attack, a bullet shot up through Romano's ribs and into his stomach. God paved a way for Romano to be flown to Tenwick Hospital in Kenya, and He provided the finances and the doctors to operate on Romano. Please pray for his complete healing, his two sons, and particularly for his wife, Susan, who is due with their third child near the end of August. Pray for the many orphans in Sudan, who know Romano as their "Daddy." Pray for protection over the Make Way Partners ministry, as there is a great war between good and evil in this warn-torn country. (*Make Way Partners*; www.kimberlysmithblog.blogspot.com)

North Korea—Pray for the release of Shin Sook Ja and her two daughters Oh Hae Won and Oh Kyu Won. Shin Sook Ja was a South Korean national working in Germany as a nurse in the 1970s when she met her husband Dr. Oh Kil-nam. Because of his work in Marxist economics, the North Korean government persuaded Dr. Oh Kil-nam to emigrate to North Korea. Though Shin was reluctant to go, her husband was convinced by promises of an important position as an economist and medical treatment for Shin's hepatitis. So in the mid-1980s, the couple and their two young daughters arrived in North Korea to be confronted with brutality, poverty, and an extreme indoctrination program, rather than the life they had been promised. Eventually Shin and her husband were used as radio broadcasters in the propaganda war between North and South Korea. Tired of perpetuating the lies which had deceived them, Shin encouraged her husband to escape when he was sent by the North Korean government back to Europe in an effort to entice other South Koreans to defect to the North. In November 1986, Dr. Oh was able to escape but unable to free his wife and two daughters. Shortly thereafter, the three were sent to the infamous Yodok prison, otherwise known as Camp 15, a camp specially designed for "enemies of the state." Shin and her daughters were reported as being seen in Yodok by other prisoners who had defected to South Korea, until they were moved to the "total control zones," a level of the camp where prisoners are never released, and from which only one prisoner has ever escaped. There are also reports that Shin may already have died after decades languishing in Yodok. Pray that answers to the fate of these three women might be forthcoming, that they might find the freedom they have so long been denied. And pray for all the prisoners and guards of Yodok, that the light, comfort, and truth of Christ might reach them all in that dark place. (*Jubilee Campaign*)

Syria—The situation in Syria continues to disintegrate. Pray for the residents of the village of Tremesh, where a recent government-led massacre has left as many 220 people dead. UN observers discovered a burned school and houses, further evidence that civilians were being targeted. Local witnesses report brutal tactics, including the slitting of throats and putting out of eyes. Pray for those who remain, that they might find comfort and healing. Also thank God that so far it appears that no women or children were targeted in this attack, which has not been the case in previous atrocities perpetrated by Syrian government forces. While the U.S. has condemned the actions of the Syrian government and blamed the Assad regime for the indiscriminate killings, China and Russia continue to block Western attempts at imposing stricter sanctions on Syria. Pray that the international community would act with wisdom and integrity. Pray that a political solution might be found and facilitated in Syria before the situation devolves into full-blown civil war. Pray especially for the innocent victims of the Assad regime and the escalating violence in this country. (*Reuters*)

Lithuania—Pray without ceasing for Deimante Kedyte, a 7-year-old girl whose mother repeatedly sold

and forced her into sexual activity with high-ranking Lithuanian government officials since the age of 5. For awhile, the Lithuania judicial system worked hard to get Deimante back into her mother's custody, but Deimante's aunt, Judge Neringa Venckiene had been caring for her. Tragically, despite international efforts, a petition, and hundreds of Lithuanian citizens rallying together to protect Deimante, the corrupt government officials demanded this young girl be returned to her mother and took her by force on May 17. Pray for God's divine protection to cover this child and for justice to be carried out on her mother, her perpetrators, and the government officials wrongly deciding this case. Pray for their salvation. Pray Deimante will know the strong and pure love of Jesus, and for His light to shine in this dark, dark situation. (*The Independent; Make Way Partners*)

China—Pray for courage, protection and perseverance for the young people of the Shouwang House Church in China. When the student group gathered to play basketball on June 16th, they were denied access to the gymnasiums. When they attempted to play a different ball game in a grassy area, campus security guards surrounded them and confiscated their Youth Fellowship banner. Pray that this experience would strengthen their resolve to gather in fellowship and stand for Christ, rather than scaring them away at such an impressionable age. (*Voice of the Martyrs; China Aid Association*)

Uganda—Pray for the widows of Uganda, where 1 in 3 have their homes and land stolen from them by family and community members after the deaths of their husbands. In Uganda, land is synonymous with life, and without her home, a widow has no ability to shelter her children or grow food to feed them or to sell in the market. And yet, it is this high value of homes and land which have led to the widespread practice of "property grabbing," where a brother, father, or uncle of the deceased husband comes to claim the widow's home for their own family. The widow and orphans are routinely threatened and beaten. Praise God for the effective work of the International Justice Mission, who have through legal aid and aftercare, helped restore property and land to more than 650 widows and orphans since 2008. Pray for the expansion of their work as they attempt to expand their work to Gulu, North Uganda. Pray the families of this region, who choose greed over protecting the vulnerable—especially in a country that claims some Christian heritage. Pray also that the government in Uganda might take proactive measures to offer legal protections for widows and orphans. (*International Justice Mission*)

Vietnam—In response to violent attacks on July 1st against a gathering of Catholics, more than 10,000 Christians of different faith backgrounds gathered in prayer vigils and peaceful demonstrations in Vietnam on July 8th. Praise God for this example of unity, love, and faith. Those gathered prayed for the victims of the attacks and prayed for the Communist party to respect human rights and peace. Praise God that in rural areas of Vietnam, Christianity is experiencing a revival. Pray for protection for believers of all faith backgrounds, especially as the local authorities are instigating attacks like those on July 1st. (*Asia News*)

Nepal—Praise God that the government in Nepal has agreed to help a Christian church by building a much-needed retaining wall. The authorities responded positively after Christian human rights groups Freedom for All and the Nepal Christian Federation traveled to the remote area to support the Protestant church. A road expansion project had left the church without a retention wall and the church was in danger of collapsing. Before the Christians began advocating, the government planned to leave the problem for later, which may have been a form of religious discrimination. Pray for continued protection for the few believers in Nepal, pray that their voices would continue to be heard by authorities, and pray that this now safe church would be filled with seekers who find the Lord. (*International Christian Concern*)

Mexico—The abduction into and eventual escape from sex slavery of two 14-year-old cousins has

resulted in a huge anti-trafficking crackdown in Mexico. Maria and Lupe (names have been changed for their protection) were attending a local fair in their hometown in central Mexico when they were abducted by hooded men while waiting for a bus home. From there their nightmare only got worse. Drugged and confined without food or water for days, the girls were eventually beaten and then raped—and finally forced to have sex with as many as 23 men in one night. While their families embarked on a wide search for the missing girls, Lupe and Maria were forced to work 18 hours a day from 3 pm until 6 am. Amid the girls forced into prostitution with them was a girl as young as 8 years old. Despite being forced to use drugs and alcohol, Maria made an attempt to escape, only to be handed back to the brothel by a police officer on the payroll of the pimps. However, Maria made another attempt on April 14, 2010—this time running as fast as she could for several hours. Finally with the help of a group of concerned Christian men, Maria was given food, a place to sleep, and bus fair home. When she returned home, her family went to the police who raided the brothel, freeing 6 underage girls including Lupe. Praise God that these girls were rescued, and even more so, that this case provided vital insight into human trafficking in the region, resulting in the closing down of 600 similar brothels. Pray for the work of organizations such as Camino a Casa, an anti-trafficking group that assists victims emotionally, psychologically, and financially. Thank God that Maria and Lupe both have come to a place where they are no longer angry or seeking vengeance, but are interested in helping others who have suffered similarly. Pray that both girls and many others like them would be restored to their families, and find healing and peace in Christ. Pray that those who perpetrate these horrific crimes would be brought to justice and would also be personally convicted of the wrongness of their actions and turn from them. (*CNN Freedom Project*)

Sahel Region, Africa—As many as 18 million people are suffering from extreme hunger, more than one million of them are children. Annually, 200,000 of those children die from hunger-related causes. Ironically, the Sahel region—comprised of Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Senegal, and Chad—is the site where the first domestication of plants for agricultural purposes was achieved in Africa around 5,000 B.C. While drought and other factors play a role, the single most important cause of extreme malnutrition in the region is “price shock rises.” The endemic poverty of millions in the region do not allow them access to food available on the market. The chronic crisis is also one that cannot be solved merely through food aid. Pray for these vulnerable populations and pray for God’s unique provision for the poor of this region. Thank God for the valuable and selfless work of organizations such as World Vision, Save the Children, Oxfam, and ONE.org, who are on the ground attempting to effect real change in the realm of family cohesion, infrastructure, education, and social safety nets for times of crisis. Pray for the “Hunger Summit” scheduled to take place in London after the Olympic Games. Pray that the international community would be committed to finding and implementing real, longterm solutions to the hunger crisis in Sahel. (*BBC; ONE.org*)