

Prayer Items August 2016

Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care. Today, if only you would hear his voice.

--Psalm 95: 6-7

Mexico-- Eugenia and her teenage son were walking to a remote village in Chiapas to share the Gospel when a young man attacked her with a machete. He yelled at her to not bring the word of God there, and that nobody wanted to hear it. Although she was almost killed, she recovered in the hospital and continued spreading the good news. Now two years later, the man who attacked her is regularly listening to the Gospel preaching that she and her husband bring to that village. Praise God that He changes hearts and emboldens believers, and pray that this young man will receive salvation from Jesus Christ. (*Source: Voice of the Martyrs*)

Nigeria-- Muslim Fulani herdsmen recently attacked a predominantly Christian village in northeastern Nigeria. Dozens were killed and all the houses were set on fire. As women and children fled into the bush, groups of men from nearby communities came out to defend themselves against the attackers because the authorities would not send protection. Pray for an end to the violence and God's comfort for all that are suffering there now. Pray for peace and justice in this area of Nigeria. (*Source: Open Doors*)

Pakistan—We persevere in prayer for Asia Bibi, who will finally have her last appeal to avoid execution this October in the High Court of Pakistan. Asia has been in prison since 2009, the result of an altercation with coworkers after she shared a cup of water with them. Claiming as a Christian she tainted the water cup, they began to abuse her, eventually accusing her of blasphemy, leading to her arrest. Since that time she has remained incarcerated and her family has faced harassment, violence, and constant danger. Pray the High Court in Pakistan will act justly and love mercy. Pray for her family as they endure threats to themselves and anxiety over the fate of their mother and wife. Pray for Asia that she would have strength and peace and feel the presence of Jesus as she awaits this important date. Pray for the many people who have persecuted Christians in Pakistan, who need to know the love and grace and forgiveness of Christ. Pray that the Lord may intervene to spare Asia's life and restore her to her family. Pray most of all that God's Kingdom and His glory would be advanced through all of these trials. (*Source: Voice of the Martyrs*)

Cameroon—The war on terror and specifically the fight against Boko Haram in the African nation of Cameroon has caught many civilians in the crossfire. As many as a 170, 000 people across Cameroon have fled from the violence of Boko Haram, but in response the Cameroonian authorities have begun their own campaign of fear and human rights violation. In recent months, they have been entering villages, rounding people up without reasonable evidence, and detaining them without access to families or lawyers. They have most often targeted men and boys, picking them out at random to be imprisoned, tortured, beaten, and in some cases killed. It is known that at least 25 individuals that were taken from the villages of Magdeme and Doubl died their first night in detention. Two years later, more than 130 remain disappeared. The government of Cameroon has accused over a thousand people of supporting Boko Haram without evidence and have them incarcerated with no access to lawyers or family in deplorable conditions, such as overcrowding and malnutrition. With 1,500 individuals crammed into prison spaces meant for 300, people cannot even stretch out their legs and must take turns sleeping. Pray for the government of Cameroon that they would engage in the fight against terrorism with integrity, so that they do not become like the perpetrators they are seeking to bring to justice. Pray for those who have been wrongly imprisoned and tortured that they

might find freedom and healing. Pray that peace and civil rule would be brought to bear in Cameroon and neighboring African nations that are reeling in the wake of violence and terror. (*Source: Amnesty International*)

Iran—This summer has been particularly challenging for imprisoned Christian Maryam Naghash Zargaran, who has been imprisoned in Evin Prison in Tehran serving a four-year sentence after being charged with “acting against national security.” In June she had been granted a medical furlough because of serious health issues. However, she was returned to prison prematurely and embarked on a hunger strike on July 5th calling for her immediate and unconditional release in light of her denial of medical care and the inadequate addressing of her health concerns. At the urging of her family, she ended her hunger strike at the beginning of August. Despite prison officials' assessments that her health had deteriorated significantly, a high court in Iran denied her release for medical reasons. Finally, prison authorities have allowed Merriam to go home on the 28th of August to receive medical treatment. We join with Middle East Concern in giving thanks to God for this medical furlough. Pray also for Maryam that she will know God's encouragement, recover, and be strengthened both physically and psychologically. We also pray that the Lord will encourage and support her family, that she will be released unconditionally from prison, and that the Iranian authorities and officials will love mercy and act justly. (*Source: Middle East Concern*)

United States—Within the past year, more than 500 sex trafficking cases have been reported in California, the largest number of human trafficking cases in the US. We give thanks that a massive three-day sweep recently led to the arrest of 286 people in the Los Angeles area, in an effort to stem the tide of human trafficking in the region. During the sting operation victims were identified and are currently receiving care in protective custody. According to the US State Department, the top three countries of origin for people trafficked for sex or labor in the United States are the US itself, Mexico, and the Philippines. Pray for the thousands of people who are trafficked around the globe everyday, living in deplorable conditions and suffering unspeakable atrocities. Pray for the rescue and rehabilitation of people who are victims of these horrific crimes. Pray for the perpetrators of this inhumanity, that they might be convicted in their consciences of the horrible nature of what they are participating in, that they might be brought to justice, and that most of all, they might find the forgiveness of Christ and repent of their actions. (*Source: World Vision*)

International—August 30th is the International Day for Victims of Forced Disappearance. This day instituted by the UN recognizes the tragedy of forced disappearance used against human rights activists and people of faith around the globe. We join with Christian Solidarity Worldwide and Amnesty International, as well as a number of other groups and individuals, as we pray for the thousands who remain disappeared because of their work on behalf of the most vulnerable. We pray for the at least 236 human rights lawyers and activists or their staff or family members who have been detained since this summer. We pray for religious leaders forcibly disappeared in Columbia because they would not cooperate with armed groups. We pray for the many girls and young women in Pakistan, who are abducted and forcibly married to convert into Islam. Pray for the 50 million girls that have gone missing or been murdered in India over the decades because of their low status and undesirability to their families. We pray for the 26,000 more people that were reported missing or disappeared in Mexico between 2006 and 2012. We pray for the country of Sri Lanka where at least 12,000 complaints of enforced disappearances have been reported to the UN since the 1980s, despite estimates being as much as 30,000 higher. We pray for the 94 states who have signed the International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance, and for the 44 states that have ratified it. We give thanks for this step toward justice and protection of all their citizens, but we pray that leaders would have wisdom and integrity as they attempt to enforce laws that protect their civilian population. Pray for answers, justice, and peace for families of the disappeared. (*Sources: Amnesty International; Christian Solidarity Worldwide*)

India- After suffering from sexual abuse and a difficult childhood, Jinsy tried to end her life by drinking liquid fertilizer. She survived the attempt and while recovering, she listened to a Christian broadcast on the radio. A pastor was teaching about finding new life in Jesus, and Jinsy decided to call the program and speak with the pastor about accepting Christ. Praise God that he not only spared her physical life, but that He gave her eternal life through his Son. Please pray for other abused women like her who seek to end their life, that instead they would seek new life in Jesus. Pray also for radio programs like these that the gospel would be unhindered and spread throughout the country of India. (Source: Gospel for Asia)

Democratic Republic of Congo- Rebel groups have recently been attacking the eastern part of the country in an attempt to uproot and persecute Christians. On August 14, nearly fifty people were killed in an attack near Beni where townspeople were tied up and tragically hacked to death. Besides murdering civilians, they are looting, burning, and destroying villages so that the entire region has become a wasteland. Hundreds of people have fled to internally displaced people camps where many face starvation. At least nine churches have closed down, and one church that previously had 350 members decreased to ten because of people fleeing the area. Please pray for this desperate situation, for God's provision of food and protection, and for the peace and hope of Christ to fill the Christians' hearts. Pray also for the attackers from the rebel groups to be convicted and stopped in their wickedness and to turn to Christ for salvation. (*Source: World Watch Monitor*)

Vietnam-- Three houses in central Vietnam were attacked this month by local authorities and police officers who were throwing large rocks at them. The owners of the houses were new believers in Jesus and they had been threatened and told to recant their faith, an "American religion". Praise God that although some were injured nobody was seriously hurt. Please pray for courage, boldness and peace for those that were mobbed who are feeling fear and anxiety now. Pray that their faith will be even stronger as a result of this attack and that they will be a light for the Gospel to those around them. (*Source: Open Doors*)