

## January 2021 Prayer

**India**— A group of fifteen Christian families were recently called to a meeting in a village in the state of Chhattisgarh to discuss their faith. They were ordered to recant their beliefs or leave the area. When these faithful Christians chose to obey Christ instead, they were beaten and forced to sign an affidavit that prevented them from receiving any governmental aid for food. The extremist group destroyed their 15 homes over two days while police and government authorities watched without intervening. The Christian families were then banished from their villages and fled to the jungle. As we praise God for strengthening these precious brothers and sisters to stand firm in such adversity, we also plead with Him to protect and shelter these now homeless families. Pray that He will sustain them and provide a place for them to live. Pray also that He would comfort and strengthen each family after this trauma. (*Source: International Christian Concern*)

**Mexico**-- Ten Protestant families from the Land of Revival Church are being threatened in Guerrero with the loss of social benefits, the right to vote, and being forced to leave their village. Community leaders have been forcing everyone to pay 500 pesos each month for the building of a new Catholic church, but the Protestants argued that they have a different church and tradition. Armed police have threatened that they will be forced to leave if they do not pay and have destroyed their church furniture. Please pray that there would be unity among those with different Christian faith backgrounds and that they would uphold freedom of worship. Pray for love and forgiveness and understanding in this community. (*Source: Christian Solidarity Worldwide*)

**Iran**-- In 2016, Christian convert Zaman Fadaei, called Saheb, was sentenced to 80 lashes for drinking wine during communion and ten years in prison for “propogating house churches and promoting Zionist Christianity”. He has already been in prison for two years, and although his sentence has been reduced to six years, he just recently received the torturous punishment of 80 lashes. He endured this brutal punishment while in prison, so he couldn’t even be comforted by family at home. Please pray that fellow inmates would encourage and help him and for his physical and emotional healing. Pray that he would know the Lord’s presence and miraculous healing hand. Pray also that his sentence would be reduced further so that he can go home and find relief from his suffering. (*Source: Middle East Concern*)

**Yemen**-- After more than five years of war and political unrest, the situation in Yemen is one of the worst in the world. Due to Covid and fewer funds reaching the country, the dire situation there has gotten even worse. In December, the number of malnourished children under five was the highest ever recorded, and there are over a million undernourished pregnant women in Yemen. Covid and the war have caused rampant unemployment, clearly leading to even more increased poverty and hunger. Please pray for God’s hand to intervene in this situation and cause the world to pay attention and send aid. Pray that humanitarian funds would reach the neediest people. Pray also that in their suffering, the people of Yemen would cry out to God for help and salvation. (*Source: International Rescue Committee*)

**Syria--** When their son was battling cancer, a Muslim couple visited a church to find hope and thankfully came to Christ. When they told their families, they were beaten, spit upon, and disinherited. Their response was forgiveness as Jesus had forgiven them. Praise God for their salvation, faith, and courage. Pray that God would help and encourage this poverty-stricken family who is enduring so much right now. Pray for housing, employment, and protection and that their new faith would stay strong and endure. (*Source: Voice of the Martyrs*)

**Pakistan--** Imran Ghafur, who has been in prison for ten years and sentenced to life in prison for blasphemy, has just been acquitted. His brother, Naveed Masih, said, "God has heard our cry and we are very thankful to him. It's a Christmas gift for us." Praise God for this excellent news for Imran and his family. Pray for protection for them all as extremists often target released prisoners. Indeed, before his arrest years ago, a mob beat him and his family and attempted to burn them. Pray that he would truly be free from his persecution and find safety. (*Source: International Christian Concern*)

**Peru--** Police violently attacked peaceful protestors in downtown Lima who were shouting out against their former President Vizcarra being controversially removed. Two people were killed and more than 200 were significantly wounded and needed hospitalization. Police fired shotguns with lead pellets and glass marbles, riot guns, and tear gas into the crowd. One man who was shot with six lead pellets at close range in the arm, back, and head almost died and said that in his opinion the police officers were trying to kill him. As violence like this seems to be increasing around the world, please pray for those in authority to protect the innocent and uphold basic human rights. (*Source: Human Rights Watch*)

**Laos--** After a recent severe drought, authorities distributed rice to community members in a small town in Laos to aid them in their poverty and loss. However, upon hearing that 17 of the families were Christian, the authorities refused to give them the handouts. Three of the families denied their faith in order to receive aid, and fourteen went without rice. Please pray for the three families to repent and return to Christ, and pray for the fourteen families to remain steadfast in the face of persecution. Pray that God would meet their needs and that they would be a light to their community so that others would choose Christ despite persecution. (*Source: Voice of the Martyrs*)

**North Korea--** After Kim Jong Un's sister, Kim Yo-jong, vehemently complained about defectors sending brochures via balloons into North Korea, South Korea recently voted to ban materials going into North Korea along the border. This law will be effective in February 2021, and violating it will result in 3 years in prison or fines over \$27,000. Christians in South Korea have sent balloons in the air or bottles in rivers to send Scripture, money, food, medicine, and flash drives with Christian messages to the lost in the spiritually dark country of North Korea. Tragically, this new law will severely restrict this practice. Some believers have bravely and boldly claimed that they would risk prison and continue to send Scripture despite the law. Praise God for these faithful believers. Pray that He would protect them and offer miraculous opportunities to continue to share the Gospel this way. Please continue to pray that North Korea

would be set free from its extreme oppression and persecution. (*Source: International Christian Concern*)

**Uganda--** After Acola Christine's husband was ambushed years ago by the Lord's Resistance Army, she was left to raise their four children on her own. She moved back in with her parents and when her father died in 2004, he willed his property to her. A neighbor decided to seize her property by first destroying what she planted, stealing her livestock and becoming increasingly violent against her. He finally told her and her family to vacate the property. When they did not, this neighbor started breaking the walls of her hut. When Christine ran outside, she was beaten. The authorities came and she was falsely accused and put in prison. Her family is destitute and there is no money for her children to go to school. International Justice Mission is helping her to fight for her land and to be able to support her family while she remains in prison awaiting trial. So far, one criminal case was decided in her favor, but another is still on-going. Christine is clinging to her faith and trusting that the Lord will provide for and protect her family. With Covid, the agonizing slow legal process may take even longer to conclude. Please pray that Christine would be vindicated of these trumped up charges and that her violent neighbor instead would be convicted, imprisoned and required to pay restitution and return her land. Pray for her faith and that of her children to remain strong while this trial drags on. Also pray that the outcome of this case would set a strong precedent and be a deterrent, so that widows in Uganda will no longer have to live in fear of violence and their property and their livelihoods being stolen. (*Source: International Justice Mission*)