

July 2024 Prayer

For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

—Romans 12:3

Haiti—With what began as an act of opposition against the corrupt, decadent government of Haiti, violent gangs have now ravaged the country, forced the prime minister to resign, taken control of 80 percent of the capital, Port-au-Prince, closed the main port, and attacked the airport. In just 3 months at least 700 civilians were killed, 400 injured, and nearly 700 gang members were killed or injured. Some 600,000 people have been driven from their homes, and the gangs who intended to fuel and fund their actions from the corrupt wealthy elite have in reality extorted, kidnapped, and tortured the poor civilian population to pay for their fight. Haiti has been victim to international interference for over a century, including a 20-year occupation by the US, and a 13-year UN security mission fraught with allegations of widespread sexual abuse and which caused a cholera outbreak killing 10,000 and left the country worse than when the UN forces arrived. Now an international intervention has begun, led by Kenyan forces, to try to restore peace. Pray that this will be successful. Pray that violent gangs would be thwarted, that unscrupulous government forces and police would no longer abuse and exploit people, and that the efforts of the new fledgling government might be successful and moral. Pray for the protection of and provision for the impoverished and vulnerable people of Haiti. (*Source: NPR*)

Iran—Despite heavy persecution, the Gospel is spreading in Iran. The underground church is growing, and Christians are willing to suffer imprisonment rather than stop evangelizing. An Iranian woman named Elisa Shahvardian was visiting Iran last summer with her husband, Hakop Gochmayan, who is of Armenian descent. They were arrested because they were carrying copies of the New Testament written in Farsi (Iran's national language), which is illegal in Iran. Although both were arrested, praise God that Elisa was released and able to be reunited with their children who are 7 and 10. However, Hakop received a ten-year sentence that he is serving now in Evin Prison. Please pray for God's hand to be in this situation. Pray for His grace and mercy, that He would protect and provide, and that He would allow Hakop to be released early. Pray for strength and patience and that God would use this suffering for good. Thank the Lord for believers such as these who are willing to lose all for the Gospel. (*Source: International Christian Concern*)

Gaza/Palestine—UNICEF recently declared Gaza the “most dangerous place to be a child.” This is due not only to the recent siege, but to multiple violent conflicts over the past years. Doctors without Borders cites that the average 10-year-old in Gaza would have endured four military assaults in their short lifetime before this current conflict. Pediatricians and therapists working there describe children across the board as having vacant stares, even when witnessing scenes of horrific violence. This is in addition to displacement, food insecurity, lack of vaccinations and basic healthcare, and disruption of educations. Children also comprise a significant portion of the 35,000 killed, the 79,000 injured, and the 1.9 million people displaced from their homes. Even as we pray for justice for the Israeli victims and families impacted by the deadly attacks by Hamas, continue to pray for innocent children in Gaza. Pray for some kind of peace to be achieved. Pray that the minds, hearts, and spirits of children so gravely affected by these conflicts might be healed and restored. Pray that many on all sides of the conflict will find Jesus and seek His peace. (*Source: Doctors without Borders*)

Turkey—In this country where less than 1 percent of the population are Christians, the work of missionaries is vital. However, the Turkish government continues its efforts to stop evangelism, and

recently it expelled nine Christian missionaries from the country. Despite the fact that they had legal residency permits, the Turkish government deemed their Christian activities as “risks to national security”. When they appealed, the highest court ruled that their expulsion did not violate the religious freedom act. Since 2019, 250 Christian workers have been expelled or banned from entering the country. Please pray that despite these roadblocks, God would continue to call many of the lost in Turkey to salvation. Pray that missionaries would be permitted in the country and that many nationals would lead the churches and evangelistic efforts there. (*Source: International Christian Concern*)

Central African Republic—This African nation has suffered years of conflict, and while making slow progress toward peace, is still plagued by violence, displacement, and danger. Forty-six percent of the population remains extremely vulnerable and a fifth of the population has been displaced. Technically, CAR is a secular and democratic nation, however religious discrimination and persecution is prevalent. Human rights violations and atrocities are widespread and are especially being perpetrated by Russian mercenaries employed by Wagner Group, including rape, torture, kidnappings, and extrajudicial executions. Pray for the success of UN efforts to protect peace in the region. Pray for victims of violence and their family members—that they can heal and rebuild their lives. Pray for the protection of religious freedom in CAR, and pray that Christians in the area would experience the peace of Christ and be powerful witnesses to those around them. Pray urgently for the end of atrocities and that the UN human rights recommendations would be implemented immediately. (*Source: CSW*)

Pakistan—Sunny Mushtaq and Noman Asghar, teenage cousins who are both believers, received a cartoon drawing of Muhammad via WhatsApp five years ago. They were arrested for blasphemy and have been in prison since then. Although his cousin is still waiting for his sentence, last year, Asghar was sentenced to the death penalty for this minor “crime.” Asghar’s father says: “[His] mother and I yearn for him every day,” Masih said. “Our hearts broke today when our counsel informed us about the death verdict. But our faith in Christ has not waivered, and we trust God that He will rescue us from this suffering.” Please pray fervently for a reverse of these charges, for these young men to be released, and for comfort and peace for their families. Pray that they would know the presence of Christ while behind bars—that they would experience His protection, healing, strength, grace, and love in very vivid ways. (*Source: The New York Times; International Christian Concern*)

Algeria—In 2023 Algeria gained membership in the UN Human Rights council, and ironically the conditions around freedom of worship, religion, and assembly all worsened. Despite numerous communications from the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief warning of the countries violations—as well as a special report documenting the continued practice of church closures and criminal charges related to worship—Algeria was admitted in 2024 to the UN Security Council as a non-permanent member state for a term of two years. Algeria does not abide by the freedom of religion protections in their own 2020 constitution. Pray for the protection of religious minorities in Algeria, including Christians, atheists, and Ahmadi Muslims. Pray that the UN would no longer grant special status to Algeria while their violations are widely known and even reported on by their own rapporteurs. Pray that believers in Algeria would not lose hope, that they would trust Jesus, and that many in Algeria might put their faith in Him because of their witness. (*Source: Jubilee Campaign*)

Mexico—There has still been no solution for the more than 150 Protestant believers who have been displaced after being forced to leave their villages, Rancho Nuevo and Coamila, two months ago. Leaders of the community had cut off their electricity, vandalized their church, and blocked them from returning to their homes because they did not approve of their denominational views. The government has chosen to stay out of the conflict and advises the Protestants to comply with the town leaders, which includes paying high fines for converting to Protestantism. CSW’s Head of Advocacy Anna Lee

Stangl said: “The refusal of government officials at the municipal and state levels in Hidalgo to take action to address a mass forced displacement of these men, women and children on account of their religious beliefs clearly shows how deeply entrenched the culture of impunity around violations of freedom of religion or belief has become.” Please pray for these families, many with young children, to be able to return home or move to new, safe villages. Pray for their protection and courage, that God would meet their needs, and that He would soften the hearts of the village leaders. *(Source: CSW)*

Nepal—Pray for believers in Nepal like Mukesh Shah, who converted to Christianity in 2010 after his sister and her husband gave him a pamphlet. In 2012 after two years of Bible training, he began a church ministry that grew from just his family to a larger group of 70-80 members, that rented a room for their little church. But after 10 years meeting there, Hindu extremists threatened his landlady until she was forced to evict them. Now they meet in a tent outside Mukesh’s home, but this will be unsustainable during monsoon season. In recent years, Nepal has gone from a country relatively open to all faiths to an increasingly oppressive one. Hindu extremists have harassed believers and burned Bibles they were carrying. Police have arrested Christians for sharing the gospel. The Constitution that was ratified in 2015 prohibits proselytizing and conversion, and the implementation of the Anti-Conversion Law in 2018 made conversion and proselytizing a punishable offense with five years imprisonment and a fine of more than 350 US dollars. This is about \$100 more than the average monthly salary in Nepal. Pray for Christians in Nepal, who are finding it increasingly difficult to worship or share their faith, that they will remain courageous and bold. Pray that many still will encounter Christ through seeing faithful believers despite persecution. Pray for the provision of a suitable place of worship for Mukesh’s church. Pray for the country of Nepal to become more open to religious freedom and the light of Jesus. *(Source: Open Doors)*

India—Narendran and Kavita left Hinduism and came to Christ, then got married and decided to start an evangelistic ministry in a small village. They built a bamboo shed and started church services there as people began turning to Christ. After ten years of ministry the church grew to 40 people and sadly also began to experience persecution. Villagers started damaging their property and tried to stop them from using their cemetery. Then, during a prayer meeting, some young people from the village began yelling at them and beat Narendran, particularly punching his eyes. They beat Kavita until she was unconscious. As the couple were recovering in the hospital for a week, the attackers entered the open church and destroyed chairs, instruments, and other materials. As a result of the attack and continued threats, half of the church members stopped attending and those that do attend are understandably fearful and cautious. Please pray for God’s hand of protection over these believers in India. Pray that those who left would either continue to worship underground or would return to church. Pray especially for the hearts of the attackers to radically change and seek Christ. *(Source: Open Doors)*