

July 2014

*“Woe to him who builds his house by unjust gain,
setting his nest on high
to escape the clutches of ruin!
You have plotted the ruin of many peoples,
shaming your own house and forfeiting your life.
The stones of the wall will cry out,
and the beams of the woodwork will echo it.
“Woe to him who builds a city with bloodshed
and establishes a town by injustice!
Has not the LORD Almighty determined
that the people’s labor is only fuel for the fire,
that the nations exhaust themselves for nothing?
For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.”*

—Habakkuk 2: 9-14

Iraq—Please pray for our Christian brothers and sisters from Mosul, historically called Ninevah, who have been forced to flee their hometown to find safety. Militants from the Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham (ISIS), a form of al-Qaeda, have taken over Mosul, devastating the city, and virtually all Christians have left. Pray that these refugees would find food and shelter and know the peace and comfort of Christ now that they've lost so much. Pray that they might be a light to those suffering around them. ISIS has also sought to terrorize and control the wider population with violent attacks, kidnappings, and extortion, particularly aimed at Shi'ite Muslims. Pray that the violent militants would repent of their cruel acts and turn to Christ just as the Ninevites of old repented when Jonah preached to them. Pray for the country of Iraq that as a nation it might come to know the peace of Christ. (*Source: Voice of the Martyrs*)

United States—A federal investigation of a sex-trafficking ring that preyed upon Mexican immigrant women culminated this past June in the life sentences of two brothers, who ran an extensive network that was described as a “sprawling family business.” Lured with promises of romantic relationships and better lives, women were kept in horrific conditions in brothels in and around New York or in sheds on rural farms where they might have to have sex with as many as 25 men in one day. Women who tried to escape, or even asked to rest, were beaten, starved, threatened with death, and punished in other cruel ways. Many victims refused to cooperate with the investigation for fear of retaliation. Give thanks that some semblance of justice has been served in this case, and that these life sentences for sex-trafficking demonstrate how seriously the federal government views this kind of criminal activity. Give thanks for federal investigators and prosecutors who brought these men to justice and shut down this trafficking ring. Give thanks for advocates like Alexandra F. Levy, a lawyer with the Human Trafficking Pro Bono Legal Center, a group that arranges free legal help for victims. Pray for the healing and restoration of each of the women victimized, that they might also find peace, freedom, and wholeness in Christ. Pray that these brothers, one of whom expressed deep remorse, might be truly repentant not only for these

horrific crimes, but might see their total need for Christ. Pray for others who are actively still exploiting and enslaving vulnerable people for greed, and for all who suffer currently in these vile, evil circumstances. *(Source: New York Times)*

Kenya—On June 15, a Somali group named Al-Shabab formed an attack on the town of Mpeketoni. The militants shot people in a hotel before setting fire to multiple hotels and over twenty vehicles, then went door to door demanding to know if the occupants were Muslim. Those that said they were Christians or who didn't speak Somali were shot. Please pray that these men who have so brutally attacked others would be convicted of their violent acts and turn to Christ for forgiveness and salvation. Pray for comfort and peace for the families of these Kenyan victims. *(Source: Huffington Post)*

South Sudan—The hope and promise of the newly independent nation of South Sudan was recently dashed when sectarian violence broke out in December following a falling out between the country's president and vice president. While more than 1.3 million have fled their homes to escape the violence, children are the most vulnerable, especially to recruitment as child soldiers. The UN estimates that approximately 9,000 children have already exchanged squalid conditions in makeshift camps for weapons and fighting. With no school or job opportunities available, and having witnessed mass killing and widespread rape, kids are especially prone to boredom and despair, making them prime targets for militias trying to bolster their numbers. Pray for these children already so scarred by war and violence to be protected from becoming participants. Pray that they would find peace and healing in Christ. Pray for militia leaders who are inclined to draw children into this conflict that they might recognize how gravely inappropriate that is. Pray for the country of South Sudan, that peace and resolution might be found. Give thanks for the work of groups like World Vision who are laboring diligently amid the violence to create opportunities for young people to work and learn instead of taking up arms, and providing child-friendly spaces within camps, where kids can process the trauma they have witnessed and experienced in ways that lead to healing. Pray that all might find the forgiveness and comfort of Christ. *(Source: World Vision)*

Argentina—Please pray for the Pueblo Grande Baptist Church in Cordoba, where a provincial law has robbed the Christians of their freedom to worship. The law was written to prevent psychological manipulation, but this has been misinterpreted and abused by authorities in such a way that the church is attacked. The pastor and his family's lives have been threatened and the church has been ransacked. The pastor asks that fellow believers pray for peace and joy in the midst of this persecution. Pray also for the 100 out of 150 church members who have left in fear, and pray for safety for those who have stayed. *(Source: Open Doors)*

Thailand—A wave of repressive and extreme crackdowns on all political expression has followed the military coup which occurred in Thailand at the end of May. Thailand's political situation has been in turmoil for years, fueled by conflict between a rural, poor populist movement and the urban elite that supports the royal and military establishment. In recent days, martial law was established, resulting in the disappearance of many dissenters, and something as simple as raising three fingers in protest or clicking the “like” icon on a political Facebook page can be considered a criminal act. On a global level, political instability in Thailand, dubbed the “Detroit of the East” could have a negative impact on a variety of industries that provide products around the globe. But more important, on a local level violent repression has cost the lives of many Thai individuals and many more languish in an

environment of fear and oppression. Pray for justice and freedom to prevail in this conflict where those who control wealth and power are using it to keep down those seeking a better and more just life. Pray that greater freedom in the society in general will lead to greater freedom for the peace and justice of Christ to be shared and known by many there. Pray that leaders will act justly and love mercy.

(Sources: CNN; Amnesty International)

North Korea—Please pray for Americans Jeffrey Fowle and Kenneth Bae, imprisoned in North Korea, to be a light in the spiritual darkness around them. Until they are released, pray that they will teach the Gospel and share God's abounding love to fellow prisoners who may have never heard of such good news. Pray that the Lord would use their time of imprisonment to reap a great harvest in North Korea. Lastly, pray that in His mercy God would topple the present regime and set the North Korean citizens free from oppression and brainwashing. *(Source: CNN)*

United States—Perhaps it is not surprising that an industry whose profits are gained at the expense of the health of its consumers would also allow child labor. However, it is appalling that young Latino children living in poverty are often forced to work 60 hour weeks in tobacco fields from Kentucky to North Carolina—poisoned by pesticides and toxins in the plants, and given nothing more than a black garbage bag as “protective gear.” Children are often so sickened that they throw up, and with such long work hours, they are certainly deprived of education and even the simplest joys of childhood. Give thanks for the Human Rights Watch investigation, and even the satirical news program, *The Daily Show*, that have revealed this gross exploitation of children. Pray that manufacturers of cigarettes and tobacco products will be motivated to clean up their labor practices, disallow child labor, and provide adequate protection and fair wages to those who labor in their fields. Pray that consumers of these products will find these labor practices to be additional motivation to no longer support this industry for their own health and for the well-being of others. *(Sources: Human Rights Watch; The Daily Show)*

Algeria/Tunisia—Please pray for the amendment of unjust laws that allow perpetrators of sexual violence to escape prosecution. Algerian and Tunisian teenage rape victims are often forced to marry their rapists because of these laws which allow rapists to walk free as long as they marry the victim. Pray for these governments to protect and care for the victims of violence. Pray for God to call these young girls to Himself and to bring His perfect peace, healing, and salvation in these tragic situations. *(Source: Amnesty International)*

Eritrea—After carving its independence out of Ethiopia twenty years ago, Eritrea embarked on a course of systematic repression of all political dissent and religious freedom. Human rights organizations have identified an intricate network of horrific prisons, both public and secret, where as many as 10,000 political and religious prisoners have been held after arbitrary arrest and never charged with a crime or given a trial. Continue in prayer for this secretive, repressive country and its totalitarian regime. Pray for the sustenance and perseverance of those who languish in atrocious prison conditions. Give thanks the UN has recently established a Commission of Inquiry to investigate the appalling human rights record of Eritrea—a move that has greatly encouraged the human rights community by exposing Eritrean atrocities to the widest global audience yet. Pray that this will result in the greatest pressure to date from the international community on the Eritrean government. *(Sources: Christian Solidarity Worldwide; Amnesty International)*

