

August 2014

But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

- Luke 6: 27-28

Azerbaijan-- This nation in the Caucasus region can boast of high rates of literacy and low rates of unemployment, however, it has been deemed by the international community as one of the most pervasively corrupt governments. In response to this widespread corruption and documented election irregularities, numbers of opposition groups have arisen, one of which is NIDA, a youth organization campaigning for social and political reform. In recent years, members of NIDA have been arrested in an effort to quell anti-government protests. The first three of these, Bakhtiyar Guliyev, Mahammad Azizov, and Shah in Novruzlu were arrested just days before a peaceful protest in the capital Baku. These young men were subsequently forced to read prepared confessions on state television which led many to suspect that they had been tortured. Following a peaceful protest, broken up by police using rubber bullets and water cannons, several other activists were arrested. Pray for Rashad Hasanov, Rashadar Akhundov, Uzeyir Mammadli, Zaur Gurbanli, and Ilkin Rustamzade, who along with the first three students have all been accused of illegal possession of drugs and explosives and intention to cause public disorder. There is great concern that their trials were not fair or impartial, and all their families insist that the evidence used against them was planted after their arrests. After a year in detention all have been given sentences of six to eight years in prison merely for expressing their desire for reform with another country. Pray that each of these young people might persevere through this ordeal, might be released soon, and they might find the full truth and freedom in Christ. Pray for the country of Azerbaijan where corruption and torture are endemic, and pray for President Ilham Aliyev that he might come to love mercy, act justly, and humbly walk with God. (Source: Amnesty International)

China-- Praise God that Pastor Zhang Shaojie's daughter, son-in-law and one-year-old granddaughter were safely smuggled out of China and have arrived in Texas. Since Pastor Zhang's arrest last November, his daughter and her family have been in hiding, fearing for their safety, but recently the US government granted them papers to come to the US and apply for asylum. Praise God for their miraculous safe arrival after hitch-hiking through five countries. Pray for protection and strong faith for Pastor Zhang, who remains imprisoned for his faithfulness to Christ. He was sentenced to twelve years in prison for "gathering a crowd to disrupt social order". Please pray that he will continue to gather crowds to worship Jesus Christ while behind bars. Pray also that God would give him a fruitful ministry there, so that his suffering would not be in vain. (China Aid)

Sudan-- Praise God that Meriam Ibrahim is safely out of Sudan and ready to settle in the United States. She had been sentenced to death because she converted to Christianity from a Muslim background and would not renounce her faith in Christ. Praise God for the

international prayers and petitions on her behalf, and praise Him for not only releasing her from prison but also rescuing her when she was banned from leaving the country. Pray that God would use her global visibility to glorify his name and point others to salvation in Christ. (Huffington Post)

Philippines-- Profound poverty makes many in the poorest places in the world particularly susceptible to the false promises of human traffickers. Give thanks for the efforts of organizations like International Justice Mission, who work on the front lines to intervene in these situations, as well as helping train local police and officials to identify traffickers, apprehend them, and bring them to justice. Give thanks for one such operation in Cebu, the Philippines, where seven girls, one as young as 12 years old, were recently rescued from an experienced trafficker, who lured them to come with him by promising to take them swimming but instead sold them for sex. Give thanks that the children now are safe in an aftercare home. Pray for their healing and that they may find comfort and peace in Jesus. Pray for the perpetrator of this horrific crime that he might find the truth in Christ and recognize the atrocity he has committed. (Source: International Justice Mission)

International-- In 1984, 155 nations joined together to ratify the United Nations Convention prohibiting the use of torture. However, a recent report reveals that more than half of these very same countries are violating this convention through the use of various forms of torture including electrocution, beatings, and sexual abuse of detainees in their countries. Pray for the victims of torture, who are often violated even before they have been tried for criminal activity, and many of whom who are being held merely for their religious or political beliefs. Pray especially for 5 countries that have been particularly identified as having serious issues with torture within their police, security, and military forces: Mexico, the Philippines, Morocco and Western Sahara, Nigeria, and Uzbekistan. Pray that reform would be swift and effective in each of these settings, and that governments would use their power and authority to protect their citizens and foster the greater well-being of their populations. Pray that the international community would remain vocal and unrelenting in their calls for justice and accountability around the globe. (Source: Amnesty International)

Iran-- Please pray for three Iranian Christians, Mohammad Roghangir, Abdolreza Haghnejad, and Suroush Saraie, who were arrested at a prayer meeting and have been sentenced to prison. Please pray that they would be treated with kindness and dignity while imprisoned, and that they would have a fruitful harvest even in their difficult surroundings. Pray for their protection and early release, and for comfort and aid for their families. (Middle East Concern)

Cuba-- On July 2nd, Communist Party officials demolished the home and church of Pastor Esmir Torreblanca in Santiago de Cuba. They broke down the door and started destroying and confiscating their possessions in the middle of the night while the pastor and his family were asleep. Thanks be to God that the whole family is safe. Please pray for a new home for Pastor Esmir and his family, as well as a location for their congregation to worship in safely. Pray that the government of Cuba would grant

freedom of religion to its citizens and that many would turn to Christ. (Christian Solidarity Worldwide)

India-- Please pray for the one hundred Christians who were recently attacked in Chhattisgarh. They had issued a complaint with the authorities because they had been denied food rations on account of their Christian faith. After investigators came to look into the situation, extremists attacked the Christian community. One was told he should be killed for his faith in Jesus. Praise God that they stood strong and did not deny their faith. Pray for complete healing for those that were injured, including one who was in a coma. Pray for the community's future protection, and that God would bring many of their neighbors to faith in Christ. In addition, pray that God would supply enough food for them while it is being withheld. (Release International)

Nigeria-- During this terrifying time of frequent, violent attacks by Boko Haram, please pray for the church at large in Nigeria. The terrorists have attacked church buildings on Sunday mornings, killing worshippers and demolishing buildings. Pray for the believers to stand strong in their faith, to reach out to their neighbors with the Gospel, and to have Christ's miraculous love and grace for their enemies. Pray that members of Boko Haram would turn to the living God and be saved, and repent of all these atrocities. Also, as the kidnapped school girls are still held captive, please continue to pray for their protection and release. (BBC)

Israel-- Pray for the ministry of Musalaha, especially during this time of military conflict, as it seeks to reconcile Messianic and Palestinian Christians. Please pray for unity of believers in Israel, as Jesus prayed before He went to the cross, and pray that their example of reconciliation would be a light to draw the lost to salvation. Pray for protection and safety and a quick end to the violence and war. (Open Doors, Musalaha)