

January 2024 Prayer

And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

—Ephesians 3: 17b-21

The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it. The world and all its people belong to him.

—Psalm 24:1

International—Give praise and thanks to the Lord for the release in 2023 of a number of believers imprisoned for their faith in Christ, including Saheeb Zaman Fadaee, Yasser Mosayebzadeh, Yusef Nadarkhani (Iran), Alimujiang Yimiti (China), Nguyen Bac Truyen (Vietnam), Bishop Fikremariam Hagos Tsalim, Father Mihretab Stefanos (Eritrea), and Professor Solomon Tarfa (Nigeria). Pray for their minds and bodies would be healed from their ordeals and their faith strengthened. Pray for all those around the world who continue to languish in prisons for their Christian faith. (*Source: CSW; Voice of the Martyrs*)

Philippines—Please pray for the families of the 4 people killed in the Philippines when a Christian gathering at a Mindanao State University was bombed on December 3rd. Pray for healing for the 50 that were injured in the bombing while simply gathering to remember the Lord in the southern city of Marawi. Please pray also for the perpetrators to be convicted of this evil act and to repent and turn to the Lord for salvation and forgiveness. (*Source: Amnesty International*)

Egypt—On the evening of 18 December, an extremist mob attacked Christian homes, businesses, and their church building site in Al-Azeeb village in Samalout, Minya Province, Upper Egypt. The region is home to approximately 30,000 Coptic Christians who had no local place to worship, had been commuting distances to go to church, and had just been granted a permit to build their own local church. Attackers stormed the work site while workers were there, threw stones and Molotov cocktails, and set fire to houses and livestock of believers in Al-Azeeb. Please pray for Christians in the village who have been injured and lost homes, livestock, property, and their means of support. Pray that they will not be fearful of even going outside, will be strengthened in their faith, and begin again their efforts to build a place of worship. Pray for the extremists who have perpetrated this violence. Pray that their hearts would be released from hate and that they would find repentance and faith in Christ. (*Source: CSW*)

Nigeria—Please pray for protection and rescue for the 150 people who were recently kidnapped in northwest Nigeria. They were targeted because militants want to eradicate Christianity from their villages. Gunmen on motorcycles attacked four villages, killed one person, and kidnapped over 150 in order to demand a ransom and to instill fear in the community. Please pray that these persecuted Christians would hold fast the name of Jesus and not deny the faith, that they would be faithful maybe even unto death for they will receive the crown of life. Pray that God would give them love for their

persecutors and patient endurance and strength to persevere in the faith amid suffering, fixing their eyes on Jesus who suffered for them and the glory that awaits them. (Source: Reuters)

Pakistan—Please pray for the family and friends of 20-year-old Farhan Ul Qamar in Pakistan who was recently shot in his home by an extremist claiming hatred for Jews and Christians. The attacker, Muhammad Zubair, climbed into the family's house through a window and shot Farhan three times, then refused to allow his family to come near the young man. He died on the way to the hospital after the attacker left. Please pray to the Lord who is named Father of mercies and God of compassion, and in the name of the Lamb who has been slain, the King of kings who was flogged, blindfolded, beaten, and mocked and then carried his cross toward the place of his execution. Pray for this grieving family to see this tragedy in the light of eternity, and pray that Muhammad Zubair would recognize the evil of his actions and repent to the King of kings. (Source: Voice of the Martyrs)

Democratic Republic of Congo—Please pray for comfort and strength for the families of the 14 Christian farmers who were beheaded while working in the fields. Extreme militants, who want to rid the area of Christ followers, wielded machetes to attack the laborers and then burnt down homes in the village. Pray that these mourners would trust in Jesus who suffered in agony, nailed through his hands and feet to a cross - the Lord of glory and Prince of peace who chose to be weak and chose to suffer though he had all power to destroy his enemies. Pray that His power would enable them to love their enemies who so brutally robbed them of their loved ones. Pray that these militants would be miraculously turned around to follow Christ. (Source: International Christian Concern)

Zambia/International—According to the World Health Organization, “Climate change is directly contributing to humanitarian emergencies from heatwaves, wildfires, floods, tropical storms and hurricanes and they are increasing in scale, frequency and intensity. Research shows that 3.6 billion people already live in areas highly susceptible to climate change. Between 2030 and 2050, climate change is expected to cause approximately 250,000 additional deaths per year, from undernutrition, malaria, diarrhea and heat stress alone.” These extreme consequences of climate change most intensely affects the poorest and most vulnerable among us. In their faith-based efforts to alleviate poverty among children and local communities and to be good stewards of God's creation, World Vision has partnered with the Zambian government, and a corporate subsidiary of Pepsico planted 1,000 indigenous and 500 fruit trees at five schools in Chongwe district. This was part of an initiative to end deforestation and re-covering one million hectares of land in Zambia with trees. A UN report indicated that Zambia suffers the second highest deforestation per capita in the world. The tree planting program is meant to reverse the droughts and flooding which are especially bad in Chongwe district, worsening poverty and humanitarian crises in the region. Give thanks for the responsible and proactive cooperation of business and government entities, and that a Christian organization can participate directly in this effort. Give thanks that World Vision can increase their impact and their influence for Christ in Zambia through this project. Pray that the Heavenly Father would continue to move the hearts of leaders to intervene in dire situations, that He would continue to protect the vulnerable, and that people would increasingly act in ways that honor His creation. (Source: World Vision)

India—Pray for protection over our brothers and sisters in India. Pray particularly for the ministry of Pastor Samuel who works among some of the poorest in rural India. Villagers resist the Gospel because they fear that their idols will be angry with them if they turn to Christ, but many have chosen to follow Jesus and are now persecuted. Some have been denied work, access to the village well, and even permission to walk on the roads. Others have been beaten and have had their houses destroyed. And yet, despite the pain and fear, they have refused to forsake Christ. They say they are willing even to die for him. And their numbers are growing: recently 72 new believers were baptized. Pray that the church

in India would continue to grow in number and in strength and faith. Pray for protection against the enemy. And pray for encouragement for Pastor Samuel and others like him to not give up. (Source: *International Christian Concern*)

North Korea—Please pray for perhaps the darkest place on earth, where entire families are imprisoned when a single family member is caught with a Bible. They are starved and often beaten in these work camp prisons. Please pray that secret gatherings of believers would be undiscovered and safe. Pray that they would have opportunities to safely share the gospel with those who have never heard the truth. Pray for God to convict and soften the heart of the ruling Kim family. Pray, placing persecuted Christians in the nail-scarred hands of our risen King. And pray that they would trust Him and remember that He already has the victory through the blood of His suffering. Pray that God would show them that it's worth taking up their cross to follow him because he is worthy and they will spend eternity with the good Shepherd in the heavenly city, where he will wipe every tear from their eyes. (Source: *Open Doors*)

Vietnam—For more than a decade, a ministry of ex-pat Christians in Hanoi—Hanoi International Fellowship (HIF)—have embarked on a citywide outreach called *Love Hanoi*. Leaders of the ministry connect with city and government officials and simply ask, “How can we show love to your city?” It has not only resulted in large-scale service projects and community workshops, but has made huge inroads with the government. Ten years ago, it would have been completely forbidden for Vietnamese Christians to attend foreign Christian churches. Restrictions on associations between native and ex-pat Christians have greatly loosened, and this past Christmas HIF hosted a huge Christmas Peace Festival that included music, family-friendly activities, talent shows, and evangelistic plays, which was attended by over 14,000 believers of many denominations. As many as 1,000 people also came to accept Jesus as their Savior. Amid all this, Hanoi officials in response hosted a dinner for the leaders of this ministry and event. Praise God that through acts of service and expressions of Christ's love, believers in Hanoi are demonstrating God's grace and pointing others to faith. Give thanks that even though persecution of Christians in Vietnam continues to be severe—it was number 25 on Open Doors' World Watchlist—these outreach efforts have also resulted in an improvement in how Christians are viewed and treated. Pray that God would continue to bless these efforts, to lessen oppression of all people in Vietnam, and that many more would place their trust in Jesus as Lord. (Source: *Hanoi International Fellowship*)