



barnabasprayer

BARNABAS FUND - AID AGENCY FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH
BRINGING HOPE TO SUFFERING CHRISTIANS

To help you
pray for the
persecuted
Church

JANUARY/
FEBRUARY 2022
barnabasfund.org

Thank you for your prayers for our persecuted brothers and sisters in Christ, which make such a difference to them. We sometimes have to change or omit their names for security reasons, and we have only limited space to share their stories. But the Lord knows the people and places we are praying about. Please do not feel limited by the specific prayer requests, but pray as you feel led. On each Sunday we have provided a set prayer; please feel free to use these in their current form, to adapt them as you prefer, or to use the information they contain to frame your own prayers.

January

SATURDAY 1 At the start of 2022, after nearly two years of great suffering across the globe due to Covid-19 and other factors, praise God that Jesus is the same yesterday and today and forever (Hebrews 13:8). Let us pray that we, along with persecuted Christians who face discrimination, harassment, injustice and violence in addition to the other challenges, may continue to trust unwaveringly in Him. Ask that the Holy Spirit will help us to keep Jesus central in our lives, so that we can face the new year without fear or anxiety but with confidence, walking daily with Him.

SUNDAY 2 **Be close, dear Jesus, to all who are despised and rejected by their society because they trust You as their Saviour and follow You as their Lord. Comfort with Your presence those who face mockery and contempt from all around them, who are falsely accused or whose actions and motives are misunderstood. May they be encouraged by remembering that You also bore**

disgrace when You lived on earth, and that You understand their hurt and distress. May they remember at all times that they are sons and daughters of the King of kings, redeemed and beloved, for whom a place in heaven has been prepared. (Hebrews 13:13)

MONDAY 3 Many Pakistani Christians work in dirty, high-risk, low-pay jobs such as cleaning sewers. One is Michael Masih who, on Sunday 3 October, was sent, without any protective equipment, to clear a dangerous sewer in Sargodha. While underground he lost consciousness due to the toxic gases, so two more Christians were ordered to go down and rescue him, also without proper equipment. Faisal and Nadeem managed to get Michael out but then a strong current swept them away. Emergency services refused to help because touching the Christians would make them ritually “unclean”, so a fourth Christian, Shahbaz, was sent down. He found his two colleagues dead. The men’s employer, Sargodha Metropolitan Corporation, said afterwards, “Whatever happened that night, it was Allah’s will. The corporation carries no fault.” Pray that this shocking event will result in better treatment for poor Christians in Pakistan. Michael’s eyesight and lungs were damaged by his ordeal, apparently permanently, but pray that God will heal him.

TUESDAY 4 “We miss him so much,” said Mariam after her husband Nadeem died in a sewer (see above). “But God has called him to his breast, and we thank God for His gift of heaven.” Praise God for Mariam’s strong Christian faith and pray that He will be close to her in the difficult days that lie ahead. She draws comfort also from remembering

that her husband died saving the life of another man. Anum, widow of Faisal who also perished in the sewer, recalls how her husband had been very ill but had to go to work that night because otherwise he would have lost his job. Faisal's sister believes that his Muslim boss had purposely forced Faisal to work on a Sunday because it is a Christian holy day. Ask the Lord to comfort the widows, children and extended families of Nadeem and Faisal.



Faisal Masih's grieving relatives

WEDNESDAY 5 The minimum age for marriage in Pakistan is 16 (or 18 in Sindh province) but a judge at the Lahore High Court has set aside the law of the land and ruled that a girl can be married as soon as she reaches puberty because by then she will generally have the required mental capacity. He explained that this is in line with Islamic teaching. On this basis he refused the request of a Christian family that their 14-year-old daughter, Chashman, be returned to them, after she was abducted, converted to Islam and married to a Muslim man. This legal ruling sets an alarming precedent, as many Christian and Hindu underage girls in Pakistan

are kidnapped and forcibly married to Muslim men. Chashman's father, Gulzar Masih, has said he will appeal against the judge's decision. Pray that his appeal will succeed.

THURSDAY 6 Christians, Hindus and Buddhists in Bangladesh joined together to call for greater protection for the country's non-Muslim minorities. The rally on 23 October followed a wave of violence by radical Islamists against Hindus. Christians also are sometimes violently attacked. Hindus are about 9% of the population, Christians and Buddhists far fewer. Pray that the authorities will be able to stop the trend to violence. The rally also called for greater participation in the government by representatives from the minorities. Pray that this will also be forthcoming.

FRIDAY 7 Several people were wounded and one was killed when gunmen opened fire during a Sunday morning church service on 26 September in Gabaciwa, Kaduna State, Nigeria. Pray for the Lord's healing touch on those who were injured. Kaduna's governor, a Muslim, strongly condemned the "evil attack targeting innocent citizens" adding that the attack was intentionally divisive and the perpetrators were "leveraging religious sensitivity". Pray that Governor El-Rufai will be able to turn his supportive words into effective action and stop the constant attacks on Christians in Kaduna.

SATURDAY 8 On the same day as the attack in Gabaciwa (see above) gunmen attacked Madamai and Abun villages in Kaduna State, Nigeria, killing 34

people, mainly women and children. Thirteen of the dead were from the same family. The villages are in Kaura Local Government Area, which is 95% Christian. Several houses were set ablaze and other property destroyed. Pray that the bereaved and other survivors will be given grace to obey their Saviour's command to love their enemies and pray for those who persecute them (Matthew 5:44).

SUNDAY 9 Lord Jesus, we bring before You the turbulent land of Nigeria. We thank You for the faithfulness of Your people despite great danger and suffering, particularly in the north of the country where they are a small minority and the Middle Belt where they endure much violence. We pray that You will comfort those bereaved in raids by militants and provide for those whose homes and livelihoods were destroyed. We ask that these attacks will cease and that those who follow You will remain steadfast in their faith, knowing that their labours for You are not in vain. (1 Corinthians 15:58)

MONDAY 10 Pastors in India's Madhya Pradesh state are facing false accusations that they have illegally converted Hindus to Christianity. Two pastors spent 16 days in jail in September 2021 having been accused. They were leaving a prayer meeting at the home of a believer in Satna district when they were beaten by extremists and then arrested by the police. The two were eventually released on bail when the house owner filed an affidavit refuting the false accusations. The state's law forbids the use of fraud, force or allurements in such conversions but Christians are often falsely accused

of using such methods. Ten months ago Madhya Pradesh increased the maximum prison term for such offences from three to ten years. Pray that the charges against the two pastors will be dropped.

TUESDAY 11 On 31 October, again in Satna district (see above), Indian Pastor Biju Thomas experienced an apparent attempt to trap him when, it seems, extremists staged a fake "conversion" by planting a non-Christian in a worship service. This man claimed he had been taken to the church for conversion, but neither the pastor nor his church members had ever seen him before. Pastors in Madhya Pradesh are now arranging to document the names of all the Christians attending church services so that such traps cannot be set again. Pray that genuine seekers may still be able to find the Lord.

WEDNESDAY 12 Some Christian women from Ladamila village, Odisha state, India went to fetch water for cooking and washing for their four families. The majority community would not let them use the well, so the women filled their containers from the paddy field. After they got home, a hostile group of men and women burst into their houses, beat the Christians and threw away the water the women had collected. The four Christian families fled. Two days later they returned to Ladamila and found their homes had been destroyed. The other villagers told them that they were no longer allowed to live in Ladamila because they had become Christians. Pray that these brave believers will be filled with peace, joy and hope as they look forward to the day when Jesus will lead them to springs of living water and

God will wipe away every tear from their eyes (Revelation 7:17).

THURSDAY 13 “You will be hated by everyone because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved” (Matthew 10:22). The village council of Mangapat Sirsai village (population 700) in the Indian state of Jharkhand agreed on 17 September to ban three Christian families from accessing the common land where cattle are grazed and to exclude them from social gatherings. Any villagers who failed to stick to this boycott were to be fined. The aim was to pressure the three families into returning to the Sarna belief system of nature-worship followed by all the other villagers. Pray that the three Christian families, who had converted from Sarna a year earlier, will stand firm and that other Sarna-followers will become followers of Jesus.

FRIDAY 14 Church leaders in Kyrgyzstan notice a declining interest in the Word of God, except among the deaf, who are still eager to “hear” the Gospel. Many deaf people and those with a speech impairment are turning to Christ and being baptised. Ministry leaders have organised seminars in local churches to train many volunteers in sign language. Praise God that in our day “the deaf hear the words of the book” (Isaiah 29:18 AV) and that when they hear they believe and call on the Name of the Lord and are saved (Romans 10:13-14). Pray that they will grow in their new faith, and not be dismayed by the persecution that they are likely to face in Kyrgyzstan and the ongoing suffering of their disabilities.

SATURDAY 15 The economic situation in Kyrgyzstan continues to deteriorate. Many businesses have closed and people

cannot find work. It is even harder for those who have left Islam to follow Christ, as the Muslim majority often refuse to employ them. To make things worse, 2021 was a very dry year, and many crops failed in the extreme heat. The price of hay rose so high that families had to sell their livestock because they could not feed them. Please pray for better rains in 2022 and for livelihoods for our brothers and sisters, most of whom live in rural parts of the country. Pray also that Christians in the region will have a thankful and trusting attitude that draws non-Christians to our heavenly Father.

SUNDAY 16 Sovereign Lord, we ask You to guide Your people in Uzbekistan in view of the restrictions with which they live daily, restrictions that make many ordinary Christian activities illegal. Be with those who share the Good News with others, and protect them from prosecution for this forbidden action. Watch over those who gather in private homes for group Bible study, and protect them from raids by the police as such meetings are banned. Give Christian leaders great wisdom in organising special Christian events, for which the authorities require full details. We ask for Your direction in Jesus' Name.

MONDAY 17 Church leaders from Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan met together in September for a leadership conference on the theme of “Blessed are the peacemakers” (Matthew 5:9). Thank the Lord that those serving Him in the hostile context of Central Asia could meet and be encouraged and built up. Many church members are emigrating from these countries because life is

so hard, but the Lord is adding new believers, including from the Muslim majorities, so that many churches find that their numbers remain stable. Praise God for this and pray that pastors will have wisdom to care for their ever-changing flocks.

TUESDAY 18 At the time of writing, Barnabas Fund is working with the governments of three countries in three different continents, seeking a safe place for permanent settlement for hundreds of Afghan Christians who fled their country when the Taliban gained power five months ago. Pray that the Lord will open the way in His perfect timing for these faithful and courageous believers. Pray also for their protection and for peace in their hearts as they wait in neighbouring countries, which are also fairly dangerous for them as converts from Islam and their children.

WEDNESDAY 19 While the eyes of the world were focused on events in Afghanistan last year, Turkey escalated its airstrikes in Syria and Iraq, the targets being mainly Christians and other minorities (Kurds and Yazidis). Turkey's military campaign, which is supposedly against terrorists, has continued in Syria despite signing a ceasefire agreement in October 2019. Indeed, in the first year after signing the agreement the Christian region of Tel Tamer was targeted every month. Pray that 2022 will be a time of respite for the long-suffering Christians of Syria and Iraq. The Turkish attacks of 2021 reminded them of the genocide a century ago under the Turkish Ottomans and of the 21st century attacks by Islamic State (IS, ISIS, ISIL, Daesh).

THURSDAY 20 January is usually the coldest month in Lebanon and there can be snow on Mount Lebanon, where many Christians live. The ongoing fuel crisis was bad enough in the summer, but now with short hours of daylight and the cold weather, people are suffering greatly. Both food and medicine are in very short supply. As politicians blame each other, the country is collapsing economically and socially. Some expect a new civil war to break out. Pray that the Christians of Lebanon will be peacemakers and hope-bringers at every level of society. Ask that our merciful Lord will restore and rebuild Lebanon, that it may resume its role as a place of safety and freedom for Christians in the Middle East.

FRIDAY 21 A bill to recognise the Armenian Genocide has been introduced into Israel's Knesset (parliament). If passed, it would also establish an annual memorial day on 24 April, which is already observed as Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day in several countries. At the time of writing, the bill still requires approval from the Knesset Presidium (the speaker and deputy speakers) in order to be scheduled for a first reading. Pray that the Lord will guide this bill through to become law and that, as more and more countries recognise the genocide, the possibility of any repeat will become smaller and smaller.

SATURDAY 22 On 25 October 2021 Egypt's President al-Sisi announced the lifting of a nationwide state of emergency which had been imposed more than four years earlier after bomb attacks on two major churches on Palm Sunday 2017. The bombings killed at least 65 people and injured

126. The lifting of the state of emergency reflects that the country has become more stable and secure. Praise God for this progress and pray that there will be no more bomb attacks on church buildings. The situation of Christians in has improved in many ways under al-Sisi's rule.



Young Egyptian Christians participating in a discipleship programme

SUNDAY 23 Lord Jesus Christ, we pray for Christians who could suffer greatly just for meeting together to worship You. We lift to you our brothers and sisters in Saudi Arabia who could be beaten and deported, or in Eritrea and North Korea who could face years in harsh prison camps. We pray for those in Iran who have been released from jail on condition they never meet with other believers. We remember before You secret Christians, whose love for You is known only in heaven, and who dare not tell anyone on earth for fear of violence from their own relatives. May each one feel Your presence with them today.

MONDAY 24 “Please pray for us! We are being held hostage, they kidnapped our driver. Pray pray pray. We don’t

know where they are taking us.” This WhatsApp message was sent by an American missionary in Haiti on 16 October as a group of 17 North American Christians, including five children, were being kidnapped by a notorious gang called the 400 Mawozo, which has a history of targeting religious groups. The 16 Americans and one Canadian had been in Haiti to build an orphanage and were on their way to the airport to fly home. At the time of writing they are still hostages, so let us “pray pray pray” for them, as the WhatsApp message urged.

TUESDAY 25 Thank you for your prayers for the 16-year-old Indian Christian boy who was severely burned when acid was thrown on him, apparently because he would not stop holding daily prayer meetings in the family home. The Lord has now taken our brave brother to his heavenly Home, where there is no death or mourning or crying or pain (Revelation 21:4) and where he will see face to face the One to whom he prayed so faithfully when he could see Him only dimly as in a mirror (1 Corinthians 13:12). Ask that the grieving family of Nitish Kumar will be comforted. They all converted to Christianity in about 2019.

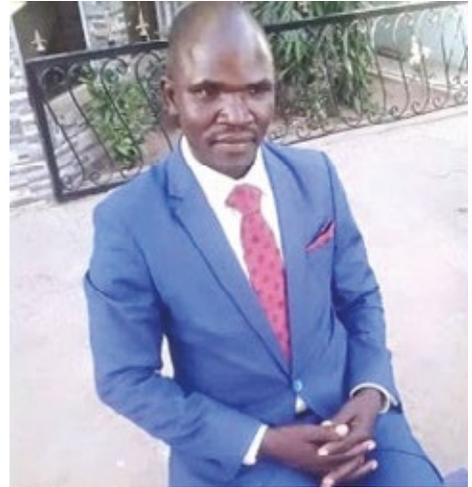
WEDNESDAY 26 It was 11 a.m. on Sunday 17 October when extremists forced their way into Bairidevarkoppa Church in Karnataka state, India. The intruders sat down and began to sing non-Christian bhajans (Indian worship songs). They claimed the church was carrying out forced conversions, which the church denies. Pastor Somu Avaradhi and some of his congregation tried to stop the disturbance but suffered minor injuries (Pastor Somu was hospitalised). A member of the local legislative assembly

then organised a roadblock protest to demand the arrest of Pastor Somu, who was duly detained by the police, questioned and released. One man filed a complaint against the church, claiming that he had been taken there to be converted. The church denied it and filed a complaint against the intrusion. Pray that the complaint against the church will not be upheld and that the Christians will be able to worship the Lord in freedom and without fear.

THURSDAY 27 “Glory be to God. Five of our Bethel Baptist High School students and the matron ... have just been released to us this evening, October 8.” This was the statement issued by the president of the Nigerian Baptist Convention, announcing the sixth batch of students released by the gunmen who had stormed the Christian boarding school in Kaduna State on 5 July 2021, and kidnapped around 120 students. At the time of writing at least four students were still being held. Please keep praying until the last captives are free (Isaiah 61:1).

FRIDAY 28 Pastor Yohanna Shuaibu “was hunted and gruesomely killed at his duty post and his wrong was that he was a servant of the Lord,” said the Hausa Christian Foundation, Nigeria, after Pastor Yohanna died from multiple machete blows inflicted on him by a mob of Muslim extremists who burst into his home in Massu village, Kano State, on 22 September 2021. The mob went on to burn his home, church and a school for Hausa Christian children (for which he had raised funds). Pastor Yohanna had also helped provide boreholes for Christian communities who were denied access to government-provided water sources, and under his leadership a faulty

water source at the local mosque was refurbished by the Christians. Aware that an attack was likely, Pastor Yohanna and his family had fled the day before but then returned so he could evacuate the schoolchildren. The Hausa ethnic group is mainly Muslim. Pray that God will bring much fruit from the death of our brother Yohanna (John 12:24).



Pastor Yohanna Shuaibu. “You fought a good fight and won the race, your crown awaits you,” said the Hausa Christian Foundation after his martyrdom

SATURDAY 29 Five gunmen invaded an early morning Sunday service at Okedayo, Kogi State, Nigeria, on 19 September. They killed one worshipper and abducted three. One of those abducted, Chief Julius Oshadumo, was killed in the crossfire when a rescue attempt was staged a fortnight later. His wife, who had been wounded in the attack, was still in hospital on the day her husband died. A Nigerian church leader, commenting on the continuing anti-Christian violence in Nigeria, had said the previous month that “all human authorities have woefully failed us”. But

we have Jesus, to whom “all authority on heaven and earth has been given” (Matthew 28:18) and a LORD whose compassions never fail (Lamentations 3:22). Pray for Divine intervention to deliver Nigerian Christians from those who plan to hurt and destroy them.

SUNDAY 30 Heavenly Father, we pray for the availability of Your Word throughout the world, especially in the countries whose governments try to suppress it. We lift before You Bible translators and pray for discernment in their painstaking labours. We ask that people groups without clear translations of the Scriptures in their own languages will soon have access to the Truth. We know that “Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.” Please feed Your persecuted people with this spiritual food to strengthen them to endure. We ask in the Name of the Living Word, our Lord Jesus Christ. (Matthew 4:4; John 1:14)

MONDAY 31 Government officials in Laos promised new homes to five Christian families who were evicted by village leaders more than a year ago when the Christians refused to renounce their faith. Afterwards their homes were torn down. But at the time of writing, no new homes have been provided. The matter has been referred repeatedly backwards and forwards between the local authorities, the village chiefs and the Christians, but still the families are living in makeshift shelters near the forest. Remembering that Jesus warned, “Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head” (Luke 9:58), pray that the Lord will provide proper homes for these families if it is His will.

February

TUESDAY 1 The current military government of Myanmar (Burma) has now been in power for a year during which time it has repeatedly cracked down on mass protests and on the mainly Christian ethnic minorities. Recently it has also been putting pressure on telecoms companies to activate spyware on the phones of 18 million citizens. This would allow the dreaded Tatmadaw (Myanmar military) to eavesdrop on private communications. The Tatmadaw has been responsible for many violent attacks on Christian communities over the last six decades. Pray that the telecoms companies will not yield to the pressure.

WEDNESDAY 2 When the Myanmar military shelled the town of Thantlang in mainly Christian Chin State on 30 October, more than 160 homes and three church buildings were damaged or destroyed, but there were no casualties because most of the residents had already fled after earlier artillery strikes. Thank the Lord that no lives were lost and pray that our brothers and sisters who have lost their homes may be comforted by remembering that “here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come” (Hebrews 13:14).

THURSDAY 3 Praise God for answering prayers regarding three ethnic-Kachin pastors in Myanmar who had been arrested for leading prayers for peace. They were released on 18 October 2021 after nearly four months in prison awaiting trial. They were part of a group of 1,136 prisoners released “out of respect

for the humanitarian cause” three days after the chief of Myanmar’s military government had been banned from attending a summit of the Association of South-East Asian Nations. Rejoice that our God can work through many different ways to bless His people.

FRIDAY 4 A politician from PAS, an Islamic political party in Malaysia, has called on his party to provide more funds for dawa (Islamic mission) in the Malaysian state of Sarawak on the island of Borneo. Sarawak is the only Malaysian state where Christianity is the largest religious group. Pray that the Christians of Sarawak, many of whom are very poor, will stand firm in their faith and cling to Jesus, their Lord and Saviour.

SATURDAY 5 Muhammad Kace, an Indonesian Christian who used to be a Muslim cleric, produces many YouTube videos that are critical of Islam and its teachings. In August 2021 he was arrested for allegedly insulting Muhammad, the prophet of Islam. While in prison he was brutally beaten by another prisoner named Napoleon Bonaparte (sic), formerly a senior police officer who is serving a sentence for corruption. According to Mr Kace’s lawyer, the attack was facilitated by prison officials. The lawyer also says that Mr Kace’s comments were in response to a Muslim commentator who made insulting remarks about Christianity and was not arrested for it. Pray that the Lord will protect Muhammad and keep him safe and bless his faithful Christian witness.

SUNDAY 6 **Lord God, the righteous Judge of all the world, we pray today for Christians facing hostile questioning by earthly authorities, whether in law**

courts or under torture, and for those who expect to experience this in the future. Please keep them from all worry about what to say. May the Holy Spirit give them the right words, and may our brothers and sisters have the assurance that it is He who is speaking. May their witness and testimony work powerfully in the hearts of their accusers and all who hear. We ask in the Name of the Christ. (Mark 13:11)

MONDAY 7 At the time of writing, Stephen Masih is still in prison in Pakistan, accused under the “blasphemy law” of having made derogatory remarks about the Islamic prophet Muhammad in March 2019. This carries a mandatory death penalty according to the Pakistan Penal Code. Stephen, a Christian, suffered permanent brain damage when he had typhoid at the age of ten. In jail, he has been attacked by Muslim prisoners so was moved to a cell on his own. On 21 October international human rights experts called for all charges to be dropped and for his urgent release, saying that they were “seriously concerned by the persecution and ongoing detention of Mr Masih on blasphemy grounds, and by his treatment at the hands of the judicial and prison authorities who are aware of his psychosocial disability and health condition”. While experts call on the Pakistani authorities, let us call on the Name of the LORD to save our brother’s life (Psalm 116:4).

TUESDAY 8 Since the Taliban gained control of Afghanistan in August 2021, the TTP, a very similar Islamist extremist organisation in neighbouring Pakistan, has increased its violent activities near the Afghan border, apparently emboldened by the success

of the Afghan Taliban. The TTP's first goal seems to be to re-take control of the rugged tribal regions along the border. Pray for the protection of Christians in these north-western border areas of Pakistan, who would be a main target of the TTP (sometimes called the Pakistan Taliban) and pray that the Pakistani armed forces will be able to prevent the extremists from gaining control of territory.

WEDNESDAY 9 Nine Pakistani Christians were injured, three of them critically, when a group of Muslims opened fire on 29 October as the Christians were watering their fields in Trikhani village, Punjab province. It was apparently part of an ongoing effort to force the Christians to sell their land to the Muslims and at a very cheap price. Trikhani village was founded by missionaries and the farmland was donated to the poorest families, who handed it down through the generations. In Okara, another Punjab village, two Christian brothers were killed earlier in the month and several others suffered gunshot wounds in a dispute over irrigation. Pray that the Lord will comfort those who mourn and restore the wounded to full health. Violent attacks against Christians are becoming more common in Pakistan despite the affirmation of Christians by senior government figures. Pray that the trend towards greater violence will be reversed.

THURSDAY 10 "I prayed all the time and sought God's help. My prayers got answered when one day I happened to meet the team of Barnabas Fund," said Yasroon Hanif, a Pakistani Christian who had had to give up school and try to find

work to support his family when his father lost his job due to the Covid lockdown in 2020. But it is very difficult for unskilled Christians to get work in Pakistan because of the discrimination they face. Barnabas Fund enabled Yasroon to get apprenticed to a barber. He is now so skilled that he is earning a regular wage and able to help his family. Barnabas is currently supporting over 500 young Christians in apprenticeship schemes in Pakistan. Pray that each one will flourish in their chosen profession and be a great witness to colleagues and customers.

FRIDAY 11 Africa has become the new "centre of gravity" of Islamic State (IS, ISIS, ISIL, Daesh), the Islamist militant group which used to be focused in the Middle East. Many violent Islamist groups are active in West Africa and East Africa. A Russian paramilitary group called Wagner is operating in several African nations, creating a further threat to peace and security. Five of the world's ten "extreme hunger hotspots" are in Africa, partly because of repeated natural disasters. China has provided badly needed infrastructure, but is likely to reduce its lending to Africa and thus trigger a new economic shock. There are, however, hundreds of millions of vibrant Christians in Africa. Pray with them for God's hand to be over this vast continent, and for continued Church growth.

SATURDAY 12 "Citizens are being killed like chickens with only press statements as consolation," said Pastor Joseph Hayab, chairman of the Kaduna branch of the Christian Association of Nigeria, after bandits attacked the Sunday service at a church in Kaduna State on 31 October, killing one man, injuring another and abducting a number of the

worshippers. On 26 September, gunmen had killed 35 people in attacks on two other churches in the same state. Pray that the authorities in Nigeria will be able to bring an end to the ongoing violence in the northern part of the country, in which Christians are often targeted.

SUNDAY 13 Lord Jesus Christ, we thank You that we serve a God who has authority over the wind and the waves, whose arm is endowed with power and whose hand is strong. We bring before You our brothers and sisters and others experiencing famine conditions in southern Madagascar because of long-term drought and we ask that You provide for them. Please direct the food aid that is sent to the hungry, and provide the rain that is needed to make the land fruitful again. May Your people never give way to despair but continue to trust and rejoice in You. (Matthew 8:26-27; Psalm 89:13)

MONDAY 14 In November 2021 it was estimated that 2.5 billion people (nearly a third of the world's population) lacked an adequate supply of food. Of these, one billion were facing malnutrition, and of these 45 million were on the brink of famine. Globally, 22% of children under the age of five were stunted due to lack of nourishment. Ask the Lord's help for all trying to tackle this enormous problem, in both the short term and the long term. Barnabas Fund's food.gives initiative ships food to some of the hungriest Christians in Africa and Asia. Praise God for all the Barnabas supporters who are donating dry foodstuffs and pray for their speedy and smooth delivery and distribution.



food.gives provides nourishing ePap for some of the hungriest in Zimbabwe including many children. The micronutrients in the ePap give them strength and energy for school

TUESDAY 15 Thank the Lord that another 63 churches and church-affiliated buildings were licensed on 7 November by an Egyptian Cabinet committee. This, the 21st batch of registrations, brings the total number of newly licensed churches to 2,201 out of the 3,730 which applied following the 2016 repeal of Ottoman-era restrictions on church buildings. Congregations are allowed to worship in unlicensed church buildings pending completion of the official paperwork. This process has completely changed the position of Christians in Egypt, so many of whom were previously worshipping in unlicensed churches and therefore acting illegally. Pray that these changes of attitude “at the top” will be embraced by the grassroots of Egyptian society, which still includes some Muslim extremists who are opposed to Christians having many places of worship.

WEDNESDAY 16 Praise God for further positive news from Egypt. The country's Administrative Court has agreed to refer the case for removing the religion box from national identity cards to the State Commissioner's Authority for expert legal advice. This box is often used as a way of discriminating against Christians. It also causes major problems for converts from Islam to Christianity, who find it virtually impossible to change their ID cards to show their new faith, which in turn makes it difficult for them even to go to church.

THURSDAY 17 Two brothers in Alexandria, Egypt, have been jailed for life for killing a 47-year-old Christian shopkeeper called Ramsis Hermina. The brothers, famous locally as fanatical Muslims who often harassed Christians in their neighbourhood, stabbed three Christian shopkeepers on 10 December 2020, a few hours after the brothers' sick mother had died. Ramsis succumbed to his wounds in hospital, but the other Christians survived. Nasser and Ali al-Sambo will spend at least 25 years behind bars. Pray that during this time of suffering the Prince of Peace will reveal Himself to these men of violence. Pray too that their punishment will be a deterrent to other radical Muslims in Egypt, causing them to refrain from attacking Christians.

FRIDAY 18 The Australian Egyptian Forum Council has become the latest organisation to urge the Australian government to recognise the Armenian Genocide of a century ago. Its president said, "Accurate characterisation of

the events as genocide will ensure the healing of open wounds for current and future generations of Armenian-Australians living with this trauma." Continue to pray that the Australian government will agree to recognise as genocide the terrible atrocities in which 3.75 million Armenian, Assyrian, Syriac and Greek Christians died. At the time of writing, Barnabas Fund's petition on this issue is with the Foreign Minister, Sen. Marise Payne.

SATURDAY 19 A Christian software company has been forced to remove its Bible app from the Apple App Store in China after failing to gain permission from the Chinese authorities. The Olive Tree Bible app includes the text of the Bible as well as Bible study tools and reading plans. (A Quran app was removed from the App Store at the same time.) Pray that Christians in China will be able to read the living and active Word of God (Hebrews 4:12) even though it is becoming increasingly difficult to access either digital or printed Bibles there.

SUNDAY 20 **Thank you, heavenly Father, for the faithful endurance of Christians in North Korea, standing firm in the faith despite the severe punishment it can bring on them and their loved ones if the authorities discover that they follow Your Son. Give them grace moment by moment, especially those who are right now in terrible labour camps, tortured and starved. We also pray for those who persecute them, especially as North Korea goes through a time of even greater hunger than normal, that you will soften their hearts and enable them to hear Your voice. We ask in the Name of Jesus.**

MONDAY 21 Ethnic-minority Christians have suffered violence in Buddhist-majority Myanmar for decades, but in the last year, since the military coup in February 2021, it has got worse. “The coup has affected our ability to safely and freely worship,” said an ethnic-Chin pastor. “People worry that they will be attacked or bombed while they are praying.” Pray for our brothers and sisters in Myanmar that the peace of God, which transcends all understanding will guard their hearts and minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:7). Ask, in the words of the old hymn, that as they “turn their eyes upon Jesus ... the things of this world will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace.”

TUESDAY 22 Four homes and a church building in Falam township, Chin State, were set on fire by Myanmar’s military (the Tatmadaw) on 13 October. Hundreds of residents fled into the jungle. Many other churches in Chin State had been camped in by soldiers, who distressed the Christians by drinking alcohol in the churches, performing other disrespectful acts and destroying church property. Pray that somehow the soldiers will be moved and changed by their time amongst the Christian Chin, even though they view them as the enemy. The number of Christians among the Chin people grew from 35% in 1966 to 90% in 2010, which was a period of much persecution. Pray that they will continue to consider that their present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed (Romans 8:18).

WEDNESDAY 23 When the Tatmadaw shelled a church building in Pekhon township, Shan State, Myanmar on 9 November, windows and pews were

damaged but, thankfully, there were no casualties. The attack came five months after another attack on the same church, which caused the death of a six-day-old baby. His mother had fled into the forest to escape the attack, and when heavy rains came her new-born son fell sick and died. The November shelling was part of a spate of Tatmadaw attacks on churches and other Christian sites in Shan State, which is about 10% Christian. Pray for Myanmar Christians that after this testing they will come forth as gold (Job 23:10).

THURSDAY 24 Sri Lankans who have left Hinduism to follow Christ face many difficulties, not only while they are alive but even after they have died. When a Christian woman died in the village of Karukkamunai last year, the village committee pressured her two daughters into allowing the funeral to be carried out according to Hindu customs. This is a recurrent problem in the eastern coastal region, especially in rural areas. Sometimes villagers exhume the bodies of Christians from burial grounds controlled by local Hindu temples and simply discard them. While we know that we shall have imperishable, glorious spiritual bodies in heaven (1 Corinthians 15: 42-44), such treatment causes immense distress for the bereaved. Pray that Hindu extremists in Sri Lanka will cease this persecution of converts.

FRIDAY 25 About 200 extremists, armed with iron bars, burst into the morning service at a church in Roorkee town, Uttarakhand state, India, on Sunday 3 October. They first damaged the CCTV cameras, then snatched the phones of the

Christians, before the women in the mob attacked the female church members while the men smashed the furniture and musical instruments. Because of Covid regulations the congregation in the building numbered only twelve while other church members were watching by video call. The church had been in existence for over 30 years and had good relations with non-Christians. Since its pastor died of Covid in 2020, church members had kept it running. The police have registered a complaint against six members of the mob and another complaint against ten church members who are accused of trying to convert someone by allurement and force, which the church denies. Pray for justice for our Christian brothers and sisters.



The vandalised church in Roorkee

SATURDAY 26 Radical extremists in Karnataka state, India, forced their way into a Christian worship service on Sunday 7 November, locked Pastor Lema Cherian and at least 30 members of his congregation into the prayer hall, and then called the police saying that the pastor was conducting illegal conversions. The police sent everyone home and declined to make any arrests. Karnataka does not yet have any anti-

conversion legislation but the state's chief minister has said that it will be introduced. The mere suggestion seems to have emboldened the extremists. Pray that Karnataka's legislators and law-enforcement will work to preserve freedom of religion and will not introduce the proposed law.

SUNDAY 27 Lord Jesus, who asked for the little children to come to You, we pray for Christian children around the world who have known trauma and suffering because of their faith in You. We lift up victims of social ostracism, injustice, violence or kidnapping, recognising that many have been compelled to grow up very quickly through adverse circumstances. We pray that they will never lose their childlike trust in You or their freedom and joy in following You. Though despised by many around them, may they know how precious they are in Your sight. (Matthew 19:14; Luke 18:17)

MONDAY 28 On 18 March MPs in the UK's House of Commons will debate a bill to recognise as genocide the mass slaughter of Armenians a century ago in the Ottoman Empire, to establish an annual commemoration of the genocide, and to incorporate teaching about it into the National Curriculum. Please pray that the bill will be passed on 18 March, after which it faces several further stages before it would become law. Humanly speaking, there is unlikely to be enough parliamentary time for the bill to be passed before the next general election. But nothing is impossible for God, so please pray that this long overdue recognition will be given. Thank Him for all the Barnabas Fund supporters who signed a petition on this last year.

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