



barnabasprayer

Barnabas Aid – bringing hope to suffering Christians

To help you
pray for suffering
Christians

**January/February
2023**

barnabasaid.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

SUNDAY 1 Lord God and Heavenly Father, on this Lord's Day – the first day of the new year – we re-affirm our commitment to You. We are no longer our own but were bought at a price. Therefore we pray that You will make us ready for service, for obedience, and – if it is Your will – for suffering. Grant that we will be faithful, steadfast and content in whatever circumstances You ordain for the glory and honour of our Triune God, we pray in the Name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.
(1 Corinthians 6:20; Philipians 4:12)

MONDAY 2 The world around us appears to be more uncertain and volatile than ever before, yet the trials and troubles that face us today are those of which the Church was forewarned in the Bible. Conquest, war, famine and death are all prophesied in Scripture, as is the persecution of the Church that began in the earliest days of Christian history and will persist until Christ returns (Revelation 6:1-11). While, therefore, all these things are concerning, we may rest in the knowledge that God is not caught off guard or surprised. Pray for increased confidence that the Lord remains in sovereign control, and that He will

preserve the Church of Christ according to His promise (Matthew 24:13).

TUESDAY 3 Extremists in India say that religious conversions coerced using force, fraud or allurement are “a nationwide problem”. This was the claim of an activist who has requested that India's Supreme Court direct the federal (central) government to implement a nationwide anti-conversion law – a law that criminalises religious conversions solicited through force, fraud or allurement. The court in turn has asked the federal government to submit a response to the petition. Previous petitions by the same activist to the Supreme Court and the Delhi High Court against religious conversion have been dismissed for lack of evidence and because India's constitution upholds the right to religious liberty. Give thanks for Indian courts' willingness to uphold the rights of Christians to share their faith, and pray that this latest petition will also be rejected.

WEDNESDAY 4 Continue to pray for Christians in the 11 Indian states that have passed anti-conversion laws that criminalise religious conversions solicited through force, fraud or allurement. Church leaders have argued that these laws violate Article 25 of the Indian constitution, which guarantees freedom

of religion. This is especially so in states such as Karnataka and Gujarat that have a much broader definition of allurement than other states, including – in the case of Gujarat – the promise of divine blessings. In these states, therefore, simply sharing the Gospel could be considered a form of allurement. Ask the Lord to give wisdom to church leaders and all Christians in responding to these laws. Pray that the laws will be applied fairly, and not become a means for extremists to stir up increased hostility towards Christians or make unfounded accusations against them.

THURSDAY 5 Give thanks for a decision of the High Court in Odisha, India, that upheld the life sentences of four extremists who murdered a church minister in 1999. Among the extremists was Dara Singh, who led a mob that attacked and killed Dibakar Parichha, a church minister in eastern Odisha. Dara also led the mob that killed Australian missionary Graham Staines and his two young sons, and murdered a Muslim trader named Shaik Rahaman, in separate attacks that same year. Join Indian Christians in praising God that the court has taken seriously the violent persecution of Christians and other religious minorities.

FRIDAY 6 Praise the Lord that the eternal, unchangeable God, who made heaven and earth, did not remain aloof from His creation. Rather, in grace and mercy the second Person of the Godhead was made incarnate, bringing light and life to the world (John 1:4-5,9). Give thanks that Jesus of Nazareth, our Lord and Saviour, was willing to undergo suffering and violent opposition, so that His people who have suffered and endured persecution

know that they are following where their Saviour has already led. Pray that our Father God, who led the Magi by a star to worship the incarnate Son of God, will continue to lead His people in worship, guiding and sustaining us until we reach our journey's end in Christ our Lord, in whose Name we pray.

SATURDAY 7 Give thanks to God that in the closing weeks of 2022 the Egyptian government announced that another 125 churches and church-affiliated buildings had been granted licences. This new batch means that so far 2,526 churches out of the 3,730 that applied for licences in 2016 have now had their applications approved. Prior to the repeal of Ottoman-era restrictions on church buildings in 2016 it was almost impossible for Christians to gain permission to construct or renovate a church. Pray that the supportive stance of President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi's government towards Egypt's Christians will continue, and that more churches will gain licences in 2023.

SUNDAY 8 **Father God, we think of the acute need facing so many of our brothers and sisters around the world as we begin this New Year. Many face violence and threats of violence because of their faith. Others suffer extra poverty and deprivation because they are Your children. We ask that You will preserve Your children through persecution, restrain the hands of those who seek to harm them, and bless the work of those seeking to provide food, water, medicine and all manner of aid to Your suffering people, for we ask in the Name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.**

MONDAY 9 Christians in Pakistan are vulnerable to false accusations of “blasphemy”, as simply stating certain Christian beliefs can be construed as “blasphemy” by zealous Muslims. Lower courts usually favour the testimony of Muslims, in accordance with sharia (Islamic law), while judges are often reluctant to acquit those accused of “blasphemy” for fear of reprisals. Give thanks that Pakistan’s Supreme Court has recognised that “blasphemy” charges are often malicious and unfounded. Pray that Christians facing such allegations will be acquitted, and that Pakistani courts at every level will exercise courage and sound judgment in assessing such cases.



A Pakistani widow receives a Barnabas-funded food parcel

TUESDAY 10 Barnabas supports 1,608 poor Christian families in Pakistan with food and other essential supplies each month. Each parcel includes staples such as rice, wheat flour, lentils, tea, cooking oil, salt, spices, toothpaste and soap. Family income that would otherwise be spent on food can now be released for other vital needs such as medical treatment, children’s education, the repayment of loans or much-needed home improvements. Give thanks that through God’s grace and supporters’ generous giving Barnabas is able to provide

Christian families across Pakistan with food and essential hygiene items. Pray that the Lord will continue to direct our project partners to those most in need and transform lives.

WEDNESDAY 11 “The hospital does not look damaged, rather it looks regenerated!” exclaimed a Christian health worker in Pakistan. He was marvelling at the Barnabas-funded repairs to Tank Christian Hospital, its church and Sunday school hall following catastrophic flooding in Pakistan between July and September 2022. Give thanks to God that the minority Christian community in Tank, traumatised by the severity of the floods, has been uplifted and encouraged by the quality and efficiency of the restoration work. Praise the Lord that the hospital is operational again and that, through its healing ministry, the light of God continues to shine.

THURSDAY 12 Two Buddhist monks, a local government official and two other people interrupted a Sunday morning worship service in Siyambalanduwa, Sri Lanka claiming that they had received a complaint that a secret worship service was being held at the premises. They inquired from the pastor if the church was registered and requested the registration documents. The pastor informed the police about the incident the following day and confirmed that the church is registered. Such instances are common in Sri Lanka, even though registration for places of worship is not a legal requirement. Pray that harassment of worshippers and disruption of services in Sri Lanka will cease. Ask that the Lord will give wisdom to pastors and church leaders as to how they may continue

to meet for worship and conduct their regular activities.

FRIDAY 13 Islamism in Muslim-majority Bangladesh has been growing, with jihadi movements going through “a phase of recruitment and fundraising” and one Al Qaeda-linked group “recruiting robustly in Bangladesh”. Islamist propaganda, economic downturn and youth unemployment, and the perception of poor governance are all factors in radicalising young Muslim men. Pray for the authorities in Bangladesh, that they will have success in combating religious extremism. Intercede for the small Christian community of Bangladesh, that they will be able to live and worship in freedom and safety.

SATURDAY 14 Jihadi groups are growing more active in the West African nation of Benin, with Islamists linked to both Al Qaeda and the Islamic State (IS, ISIS, ISIL, Daesh) active in the northern regions that border Burkina Faso and Niger. Nearly half (around 49%) of the population of Benin is Christian, while Muslims represent just over a quarter of the population and the rest practise other religions, including Traditional African Religion. Christians, however, are a minority in the Muslim-majority north of Benin. Pray for our brothers and sisters as Islamists increase their activities, asking that the LORD will preserve them from harm and continue to provide for them even amidst their enemies (Psalm 23:5).

SUNDAY 15 **Heavenly Father, we lift up before You our brothers and sisters who face the daily threat of terrorism. We pray for their protection against those who seek to instil fear. We particularly remember those driven**

from their homes in northern Nigeria, the Sahel, Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of Congo. We ask that Your people will stand firm as Your representatives when faced with extremists. Please enable Your children to know that they are chosen by You and that You will strengthen, help and uphold them with Your righteous right hand. We ask in the Name of the One who triumphed over terror and evil, our Lord Jesus Christ. (Isaiah 41:10)

MONDAY 16 “Our efforts have been fruitless,” said a Christian farmer in northern Kenya, “due to wild animals invading our farms and eating everything – hippos, elephants and buffalos. Families have been struggling with nothing to eat.” The invasion of wild animals devouring the farmers’ limited crops adds to the prolonged drought, which is biting ever deeper. Children in northern Kenya have already begun to die of hunger. Barnabas Aid is continuing to feed Christians in the region where they are a minority and often do not get help from the main aid agencies. Pray that the Lord will direct His people in supplying aid to the region and reach those most in need.

TUESDAY 17 “The LORD’s ravens have brought them food! To God be the glory!” Our project partner, recalling God’s miraculous provision for Elijah (1 Kings 17:4), describes the “overwhelming joy” of a faithful Namibian Christian couple on receiving food for their community. Through Barnabas Aid’s food.gives programme 20 tonnes of food and other aid were delivered to 6,000 Christians in the Kunene region in north-west Namibia in September. The marginalised, semi-nomadic Himba people move across the

region throughout the year in search of water. Namibia is the driest country in sub-Saharan Africa, especially vulnerable to harsh weather patterns. Thank the Lord for the provision of this aid at the right time, and pray that He will continue to use food.gives to provide for impoverished Christians in Namibia.

WEDNESDAY 18 “I am the most blessed of the girls of my generation,” said Dawandala, a young Christian woman forced to flee jihadi attacks in northern Cameroon. She was one of 100 displaced Christian women given 50 Barnabas-funded sewing machines to share in pairs to make a living and support their families. Dawandala added that, God willing, she plans to purchase another sewing machine next year with the profits from her venture. “God bless the donors,” she continued. Give thanks for the gracious and patient endurance of Dawandala. Pray that we learn from her example and rejoice in hope, be patient in our tribulations and constant in our prayer (Romans 12:12).

THURSDAY 19 Lift up to the Lord believers in the troubled north-eastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). In a recent incident, Islamist militants killed at least 11 people, including a pastor, in a Christian village in the province of North Kivu. An additional 20 people were unaccounted for following the raid, in which 25 houses were destroyed. Pray that those who have lost loved ones, and a congregation that has lost its minister, will be comforted by the Lord. Pray that He will bring violence to a swift end so that our brothers and sisters can live and worship in peace.

FRIDAY 20 “The terrorists prevent people from farming. Granaries and barns have been destroyed in many villages. They carry away all the cattle.” A Barnabas contact summarised the parlous state of Burkina Faso where Islamist groups are estimated to control at least 40 per cent of the country and two million people have been forced from their homes. Army Captain Ibrahim Traore, the country’s interim president following a coup on 30 September, warned that Burkina Faso’s very existence is in danger from Islamist militants. Ask the Lord to bring peace to Burkina Faso. Pray that Christians stand firm in their faith, looking to God as their Rock and their Refuge. Ask for Divine wisdom to direct the country’s authorities so that they find a solution to the violence.



Christians in Chad have been left destitute by widespread flooding

SATURDAY 21 Seven villages in the Leo Chiefdom, Chad, were attacked by terrorists who killed 50 villagers and caused scores to flee. When the survivors later returned to their home villages, they found their homes destroyed, burned to ashes along with many grain stores and five church buildings. Shortly afterwards the heaviest rains for 32 years brought devastating floods, forcing people to move from one village to another by canoe in search of shelter and food. Give thanks that Barnabas is providing for 4,000 Christian families left homeless and

destitute by floods and terrorism, and that our brothers and sisters in Chad will be able to rebuild their lives.

SUNDAY 22 Our Father in Heaven, we ask You to comfort Christians in many countries who have lost homes and livelihoods, even loved ones in natural disasters. Strengthen our brothers and sisters in Pakistan, Nigeria and Chad who have fled their homes because of rising floodwaters. We pray for the provision of food, water and medicine for those in the Horn of Africa experiencing famine conditions. Please help those still rebuilding their lives months after the cyclone in Madagascar and typhoon in the Philippines. Thank You that You are the God who restores. Just as You intervened to preserve Your people through famine in Egypt, we ask You to restore Your people again. We ask in the Name of Your beloved Son Jesus Christ. (Psalm 80:1-3)

MONDAY 23 Christianity in North Korea remains illegal, and actions as simple as praying or owning a Bible can result in whole families being imprisoned, and believers facing torture and death. All religions and ideologies other than the official state ideology of *juche* (self-reliance) are outlawed in this repressive authoritarian regime, but Christianity is especially despised for its supposed association with the West. Pray for secret believers in North Korean society, and for those facing untold horrors in prison and labour camps. Ask that the rulers of North Korea will be as King Manasseh of Judah, who began by committing “detestable sins” and shedding “so much innocent blood that he filled Jerusalem from end to end” (2 Kings 21:11,16), but afterwards

repented of his sins “and told Judah to serve the LORD” (2 Chronicles 33:12-16).

TUESDAY 24 The leadership of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM), China’s official Protestant church, has published a new five-year plan for the Sinicisation of Christianity to coincide with the 20th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Sinicisation means to make Chinese, but can also be a means of pressuring churches to conform to the CCP’s ideology of “socialism with Chinese characteristics”. TSPM chairman Xu Xiaohong said that Christianity must remove from itself the “stigma of foreign religion”. Pray that TSPM pastors and church leaders will be granted wisdom to preach faithfully the unchanging Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ rather than the political ideas of either the Western world or the communist authorities.

WEDNESDAY 25 “Each faith has the freedom to teach their own youth,” asserted Alangaram Arokia Sebastian Durairaj, a senior church leader in Khandwa, Madhya Pradesh, India. “We were doing nothing illegal nor criminal.” He was commenting after extremists held up a bus carrying Christian children to a three-day Christian conference in October, claiming that the event was being organised to convert attendees by force. After a thorough investigation police found the extremists’ claims baseless, but the disruption caused the conference to be cancelled. Pray that Christians in Madhya Pradesh will receive Divine wisdom in dealing with false accusations of illegal conversions. Ask that the authorities will dismiss such claims and that Christian children’s legitimate spiritual education will not be disrupted further by incidents of harassment.

THURSDAY 26 Lift up in prayer Christian converts from Islam in Muslim-majority Uzbekistan, who face increased hostility from extremists in the own communities, including relatives and former friends. In some cases, husbands have forced their wives and children out of the family home, leaving them with no shelter and nowhere to go. Such incidents take place even as pressure and persecution from the authorities has been reduced. Ask that our brothers and sisters will be comforted with the words of our Lord, that “everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life” (Matthew 19:29).

FRIDAY 27 Give thanks for Christian converts from Islam in one part of a Central Asian country who abound in the joy and hope of the Lord, despite hostility from their Muslim relatives and neighbours (Romans 15:13). The majority belong to underground churches and risk arrest if they meet for worship.



One of 30 Christian children in Albania who received shoes and clothes from Barnabas

Their one safe meeting place is a centre used for church retreats, which belongs to a registered church. More than 3,500 Christians met in the camp in 2021 alone. They celebrated God’s word together, ignoring the worship hall’s

leaking roof, cracked flooring and state of disrepair. Pray that the Christian community will be further strengthened and grow following Barnabas-funded renovations to the worship hall.

SATURDAY 28 “This project was proof that God hears our prayers,” said an Albanian pastor after Barnabas supporters provided 30 impoverished children with shoes and clothes to enable them to go to school. Muslim-majority Albania is among the poorest countries in Europe, and Christian converts are among the poorest of the population. Families struggle to pay school fees, or equip their children with the clothing and materials they need for school. Many Christian children are at risk of not having an education at all. Pray that Christian children grow in their love of Jesus. Ask that they receive a good education, enabling them to break free from poverty and to strengthen the Church.

SUNDAY 29 Lord Jesus, we remember Your followers throughout the world who are imprisoned today because of their love for You and their loyalty to the Gospel. Help us to stand with our brothers and sisters as though physically present with them in their suffering. We pray that they will receive encouragement that, through their faithful witness, the light of Your truth is reaching the darkest places. Please enable Christians in prison to serve as ambassadors, despite their chains, to convey Your message by their lives and words. Fortify them with the witness in their spirit that Your Word is never in chains. (Hebrews 13:3, Colossians 4:18)

MONDAY 30 Give thanks for a court ruling in favour of a Greek church in Istanbul, Turkey. The European Court of Human Rights held that the rights of the church had been violated when the Turkish authorities refused to allow it to register a large plot of land that has been in the church's possession since at least 1936. The court further ruled that Turkey must pay \$8,350 in costs and expenses to the church. Pray that the ruling will act as an encouragement to the Turkish authorities to respect the rights of the country's small Christian community.

TUESDAY 31 Pray for a congregation in the province of Banten, Indonesia, who have been denied permission to construct a new church building by the local authorities. Legal difficulties are created by a 1975 agreement that prevents the building of churches in the locality, while anti-Christian prejudice has also played a part in the decision to deny the building permit. In recent years Indonesia has seen a rise in hard-line Islamist ideology. Give thanks that figures from Indonesia's central government have been supportive of the church's application, and ask that the church will be able to construct a suitable building in which our brothers and sisters can meet for worship.

February

WEDNESDAY 1 Since the Myanmar military coup, which took place two years ago today, many Christians have been killed and thousands displaced from their homes by the Tatmadaw (Myanmar military). The Tatmadaw has for many years persecuted the Christian-majority Chin, Kachin and Karen ethnic groups, as

well as the large Christian communities in Kayah and Shan states, and the Muslim-majority Rohingya, but anti-Christian violence has worsened since the coup. Soldiers have attacked Christian villages and camps for internally displaced persons with artillery, laid mines around civilian areas, and desecrated church buildings. Pray for an end to violence in Myanmar, and that the LORD will be a shelter for His people in time of trouble (Psalm 9:9).

THURSDAY 2 A church building in Moebye, Shan State, Myanmar, was occupied by Tatmadaw (Myanmar military) soldiers, who then laid mines around the building to prevent anybody from using it after they had left. Prior to the occupation, heavy shelling of the town killed a seven-year-old boy and destroyed around 100 homes. The area had already suffered military attack – more than 5,000 people were forced to flee their homes in June 2021. Pray that targeted attacks on Christians in Myanmar will cease. Ask that those displaced from Moebye and elsewhere in Myanmar will find safe havens from which they can rebuild their lives.

FRIDAY 3 Rice crops in Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar have been diminished by both flooding and conflict this year, a situation that could worsen the global food crisis given that South-East Asia accounts for 40% of the world's rice exports. Thankfully, at the time of writing, the rice harvest in Thailand and Vietnam has been unaffected. Pray that the Lord will ensure the continued production of rice in this region, as well as other food staples around the world, so that people in South-East Asia and elsewhere will receive their food at the proper time

(Psalm 145:15). Pray also for our Christian brothers and sisters in these countries, living as minorities and facing a variety of challenges.

SATURDAY 4 A coalition of more than 200 charities, aid agencies and non-governmental organisations has estimated that one person dies of hunger every few seconds. In an open letter the coalition stated, “Fifty million people are now just one step away from starvation.” Cry out to God on behalf of hungry people around our world, especially Christians who in many places are among the first to suffer and the last to receive help. Pray that God, who promises to provide for the needs of all His believing children (Philippians 4:19), will bring an end to the global food crisis. Until then, pray that He will continue to bless the work of Barnabas Aid’s food gives programme in reaching the hungry with food.

SUNDAY 5 Sovereign Lord, we pray for Christian lawyers entrusted with defending Your people who face unjust accusations because of their faith in You, as well as lawyers of other religions who are willing to represent persecuted Christians. We ask for wisdom, discernment and clarity of judgment for advocates in Pakistan to defend robustly those accused falsely of “blasphemy”. We pray for insight for lawyers representing Christians in Iran arrested for belonging to “house churches”. Please grant them and others worldwide skill in defending the weak, poor and oppressed. May the supreme Advocate, the Holy Spirit, bring to mind truths that will lead to successful outcomes for all

who love the Lord Jesus Christ, in whose Name we pray.
(Psalm 82:3–4, John 14:26)



Naser Navard Goltapeh [Image credit: Article 18]

MONDAY 6 Praise the Lord that prayers for Iranian Christian convert Naser Navard Goltapeh have been heard. Naser was unexpectedly pardoned and released from the notorious Evin Prison in Tehran on 17 October, and he has now returned home. Naser, 61, served nearly five years of a ten-year sentence for “acting against national security with the intention to overthrow the regime”. Give thanks for Naser’s freedom and ask that God will restore him after his long ordeal. Pray that other Christians imprisoned for their faith will also be released, and for the continued safety of all Christians in Iran, especially during this period of tension and instability. Ask that the government will be moved to see Christians as an asset to their society in turbulent times (Matthew 5:16).

TUESDAY 7 One of the tactics applied by the Iranian authorities to halt the spread of Christianity is to send Christians into internal exile, hundreds of miles from their home province, for years at a time. Christian converts Miss Maryam Mohammadi and Mr Abbas Soori, both

in their mid-40s, were given sentences of two years' internal exile and banned from travelling abroad, for membership of a "house church" (see *Barnabas Prayer*, November/December 2022, 14 November). Pray that the Lord will comfort them both, and other Christian converts similarly sentenced, in their social isolation. Ask that what man intended for evil, God will turn to good (Genesis 50:20).

WEDNESDAY 8 The authorities in Saudi Arabia have reportedly increased the number of executions carried out, with at least 128 people executed in 2022, nearly double the number executed the previous year. No Christians are known to be among those executed, but it remains a capital offence to leave Islam and Saudi Christians are therefore liable to the death penalty as apostates from Islam. Christians may also be among those vulnerable to charges of blasphemy, another capital offence. Pray for secret believers in Saudi Arabia, asking that the Lord will sustain them and keep them from harm.

THURSDAY 9 Praise the Lord for the safe arrival in Jordan from the UK of a 20-ft shipping container laden with food, gives boxes filled by Barnabas supporters. The first of these boxes were given to Christian refugees from Yemen, and the remainder to Christian refugees from Iraq and Syria. All had fled religious persecution or conflict in their homelands. Jordan shelters 760,000 refugees – the second highest number in the world – which puts an enormous strain on food supplies, and essential services. Refugees are not allowed to work and the vast majority rely solely on aid from churches and NGOs. Pray that the needs of the refugees will

be met, and that the joy of the Lord will continue to be their strength in these days of trial (Nehemiah 8:10).

FRIDAY 10 "When I help them, they see the face of Jesus," said our church partner in Lebanon who distributes Barnabas-funded aid to desperate Christians suffering as a result of the country's continuing economic, social and healthcare crisis. In our latest aid programme we provided four months of food and hygiene items for 950 Christian families (approximately 4,100 people). We also provided funding for medicines, and gave money to families most in need to help them pay essential bills. Lift up our brothers and sisters in Lebanon and pray that though hard pressed on every side, they will not be crushed, and though perplexed they will not despair (2 Corinthians 4:8).



A pupil at St Aphrem's School in Bethlehem displays her model of Noah's Ark

SATURDAY 11 "This is a place where our babies are cherished with the love of Jesus Christ," said a parent with children at St Aphrem's School in Bethlehem. "We are sure that the Lord is present in this blessed institution and providing His care and blessings." Give thanks for this school in a city where Christians

live as a minority. For almost 20 years the school, built mainly with Barnabas funding, has been providing a Christian education to children, the majority from Christian families, in a safe and secure environment. Pray that St Aphrem's will continue to help children to grow in knowledge and in the love of the Lord for many more years to come. Give thanks for the donations of Barnabas supporters that allow the school to offer minimal fees to children from poor Christian families.

SUNDAY 12 Heavenly Father, we rejoice that many children around the world enjoy the benefits of an education guided by Christian values. We pray Your blessing on all learners in Christian schools that they may discern Your truth and Your ways, and follow them with commitment. We thank You for dedicated Christian teachers, skilled and willing to train up children in the right path. We ask that headteachers will use their responsibility wisely to make decisions that enable their schools to prosper and to shine as beacons of light in their communities. We ask in the Name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. (Proverbs 22:6, Colossians 2:3)

MONDAY 13 "Without your help and generosity, most of our brothers and sisters would have had to spend this winter in the cold and dark." These were the words of one of our Ukrainian project partners after Barnabas Aid funded the provision of 700 wood-burning stoves for around 4,000 people. Many Christians in Ukraine are among the estimated 15.7 million people who are in urgent need

of humanitarian assistance. The great need resulting from the ongoing conflict in Ukraine has been worsened by the harsh winter. As well as stoves, Barnabas has already helped to provide 1,176 wheelchairs; will shortly transport a large donation of medical supplies such as first aid kits and defibrillators; and has sent another 11 pallets of food and mixed aid to add to the 350 tonnes that had already been delivered before the winter. Give thanks to the Lord for this continued aid and practical support for our Ukrainian brothers and sisters.

TUESDAY 14 A huge consignment of life-saving personal protective equipment (PPE), shipped by Barnabas Aid's medical.gives initiative to Tanzania, is being deployed to protect health workers from a deadly new threat as well as from Covid-19. Just days before the consignment donated by the Irish government arrived, the country had been put on alert against ebola. The cost of transporting the equipment to Tanzania and to four other African countries (Kenya, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe) was paid for by Barnabas Aid's medical.gives initiative. Give thanks for the safe and timely arrival of the PPE in Tanzania. Pray that the country, and other affected countries in Africa, will succeed in preventing an ebola outbreak. Ask for guidance for health teams in all five nations in optimum use of the PPE.

WEDNESDAY 15 Repression of Christians in Eritrea shows no signs of softening, with an unknown number of believers – perhaps around 160 – enduring much hardship and suffering in Eritrea's prisons. The East African nation remains one of the world's worst countries for persecution of Christians, and since 2002

all Christian denominations other than Eritrean Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Lutheran (and all other religions apart than Sunni Islam) have been banned. In recent months even those authorised denominations have come under government pressure. Pray for all of our brothers and sisters in Eritrea, especially those in prison, asking the Lord to strengthen and sustain them.

THURSDAY 16 Praise God that two more Christian “Chibok girls” have been found. Yana Pogu and Rejoice Sanki were recovered by the Nigerian Army, who were conducting operations against Islamist terrorists in Borno State. Yana was found with her four children (two boys and twin girls) while Rejoice was discovered with two children. The two girls – now women – were among 276 abducted from a school in Chibok, Borno State, by Boko Haram in 2014. Give thanks for the rescue of Yana and Rejoice and their children. Ask that they will recover from the physical, spiritual and emotional trauma of their ordeal. Pray for more than 100 “Chibok girls” who are still held by Boko Haram.

FRIDAY 17 “There is still no breathing space for communities in southern Kaduna. Terrorists, jihadists, bandits and armed herdsmen have continued to plunder and wreck communities.” This statement by Awemi Maisamari, President of the Southern Kaduna People’s Union, followed a raid in Kaduna State, Nigeria in which suspected Islamist militants abducted 43 people, including worshippers from a church service. Ask that the Lord will comfort those who are being held captive, and that they will be released safe and unharmed. Pray that He

will bring to an end the campaign of terror being waged against Nigeria’s Christians.

SATURDAY 18 A Barnabas Aid contact has reported that Islamist attackers in Nigeria often seek out and kill the heads of Christian communities in order to create terror and chaos. In one example, Islamist gunmen attacked a Christian-majority community in Plateau State, killing three people, including the head of the village Salisu Idris. Five members of Salisu’s family were also abducted. Pray that those taken captive will be released, safe and unharmed. Ask for the Lord’s protection over Christian communities in Plateau State, and that the authorities will receive guidance in bringing an end to the relentless violence.

SUNDAY 19 **Father God, we pray that You will send revival to Your Church, that the truth of the Bible will be proclaimed boldly by Your people, and that there will be a turning back to You across the world, both where there is full freedom of religion and where it is restricted. “Revive your work in these years; make it known in these years. In your wrath remember mercy!” (Habakkuk 3:2, CSB)**

MONDAY 20 Continue to pray for Christians in Nigeria who are still bearing the brunt of widespread Islamist violence. Recently, the monarch of the Christian-majority Atyap Chiefdom in Nigeria’s Middle Belt revealed that 245 people have been killed and 623 houses razed by suspected Fulani Islamist militants since early 2019. Dominic Yahaya – who holds the traditional title of Agwatayap – said that almost all the villages within his domain had experienced assaults. “Massive attacks have occurred in villages

whereby people were killed and houses and properties were burned,” he said. Pray for the Lord’s hand of protection over His suffering and persecuted people.

TUESDAY 21 Tensions may rise in Nigeria over these next few days, as the nation prepares for its presidential election on 25 February. Nigeria’s ruling party has controversially selected a so-called Muslim-Muslim ticket – that is, both the party’s presidential candidate and his vice-presidential running mate are Muslims. This violates a convention in Nigerian politics that of a party’s presidential and vice-presidential candidates, one should be a Muslim and the other a Christian. Church leaders in Nigeria fear a situation in which Christians will not be represented at the top of government. Pray for a peaceful election, an outcome that will not harm Christians already vulnerable to Islamist violence, and that believers will be good and faithful witnesses of Christ at this time of political turmoil.

WEDNESDAY 22 The ancient Christian community of Afghanistan appears to have died out by the fourteenth century owing to successive waves of Arab and Mongol invasions from 1001 AD onwards. The return to power of the Taliban in September 2021 threatens to do the same to a new generation of Christian converts. Afghan Christians face the death penalty as apostates from Islam if discovered, and so must live as secret believers if they are to survive. Many have fled into neighbouring countries, but these Muslim-majority lands are not safe for converts either. Give thanks that Barnabas Aid has so far helped 54 Christians (ten Christian families) to settle in Brazil. Continue to

intercede for our brothers and sisters who remain in Afghanistan, who share in the poverty and destitution of that country as well as risking their lives for their faith.

THURSDAY 23 Islam is the declared state religion in Algeria but the constitution guarantees freedom “to exercise worship”, if exercised in accordance with the law. According to a 2006 ordinance, the National Commission for Non-Muslim Worship can grant permits for churches, but so far none have been issued, despite repeated requests by churches. Furthermore, on spurious safety grounds following inspections of church buildings, more than 20 churches have been ordered to close since the beginning of 2018, but only three are known to have been granted permission to reopen. Cry out to the Lord that the closure of churches will be halted. Pray that the authorities will issue permits for church buildings and that sealed church buildings will be re-opened.

FRIDAY 24 “We have never experienced before what we now experience,” a Christian contact in Burkina Faso told Barnabas as he described attacks by Islamist militants on farms and villages. After a long and relentless campaign of terror, much of it targeted against Christians, the militants now control more than 40 per cent of the country. Thousands of lives have been lost as a result of the insurgency, two million people have been forced from their homes and, at the time of writing, at least 6,000 schools were shut. Cry out to the Lord to bring peace to Burkina Faso. Pray that the Lord of hosts will be a strong tower for His people (Proverbs 18:10).

SATURDAY 25 The Christians of Chad – representing just over a third of the population – routinely suffer discrimination from the Muslim majority. Although modern Chad is a secular state, with a separation between state and religion, the Muslim majority dominates Chadian politics, civil service, armed forces and business. Uneducated Christians are still vulnerable to exploitation, and Muslim cattle raiders try to grab their land. The government also permits the practice of sharia law, despite Chad being officially a secular country. Pray that Chadian believers will look to the Lord to be their strength and the portion for ever (Psalm 73:26).

SUNDAY 26 Our God of justice and mercy, we pray for Christians who suffer as victims of violence and injustice. We ask You to protect those for whom the threat of violence is a daily experience, whether from authorities, hostile local communities or extremists. We remember Your people who have been displaced, and often bereaved through raids on their communities in Nigeria, Mozambique and other countries in Africa. We pray for Christians in South-East Asia ejected from their homes because of their faith in You. We lift before You believers in Pakistan whose devotion to You is falsely labelled as “blasphemy”. We entrust them to You, the faithful, righteous God of the whole world, who will always will do right, in the name of Your holy and righteous Son Jesus Christ. (Proverbs 16:8, Genesis 18:25)

MONDAY 27 At the 20th Chinese Communist Party National Congress in October 2022, President Xi Jinping’s election to lead for a third term signalled that repressive measures against Christians were set to continue. Recent tightening of controls on the Church include the requirement, since March 2022, of government authorisation for religious activities that are conducted online. Since June 2022 the state has increased oversight and regulation of the finances of churches and other places of worship. Pray that Christians will grow in resolve and strength even as restrictions against them are tightened. Ask that authorities will understand that Christians are a force for good in Chinese society and stop suppression of the church’s activities.

TUESDAY 28 The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is a Christian-majority (around 90%) land of great suffering. There are rich mineral deposits, including the world’s largest reserves of cobalt, but this has become the cause of much hardship rather than prosperity. The cobalt mines are places of violence – church leaders who seek to minister to the miners face fearful reprisals if they are seen to disrupt work. Child labour is common. Efforts to reform the sector have led to little if any change. This hardship and violence is another cause of suffering alongside jihadi violence that affects especially Christians in north-eastern DRC. Ask the Lord to bring to an end to Islamist and other violence in DRC. Pray for the success of efforts to reform and better regulate mining.



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