



barnabasprayer

BARNABAS AID - BRINGING HOPE AND AID TO SUFFERING CHRISTIANS

To help you
pray for the
persecuted
Church

JULY/AUGUST
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.

July

FRIDAY 1 Anita Dauda had only just regained the use of her legs after an Islamist attack six years ago on her village – Kagoro in Kaduna State, Nigeria – when her life was cruelly snatched away. Anita was among 32 Christians slaughtered by Fulani extremists in a violent assault on Kagoro on Sunday 20 March. Her mother and brother were also among the dead. Anita's story demonstrates the relentless nature of anti-Christian violence in Nigeria. Pray that the Lord will move mightily in that land, protecting His people, restraining evil, and bringing even the terrorists to repentance and faith.

SATURDAY 2 More than 13,000 Nigerians – the vast majority of them Christians – have been killed in attacks by Fulani extremists between 2009 and 2021, according to a recent report. Few of the perpetrators have ever been brought to justice. Ask that the Lord will grant wisdom, courage

and determination to the Nigerian authorities to take action. Intercede for our brothers and sisters that they will find that “the name of the Lord is a fortified tower; the righteous run to it and are safe” (Proverbs 18:10).

SUNDAY 3 Lord Jesus, we lift up before You Christians suffering throughout the world as victims of violence and injustice. We pray that You will draw close to those who have suffered at the hands of regimes whose policies are opposed to Your Gospel and of communities that have chosen to persecute Your people. We ask that You will preserve Christian believers around the world from violence, yet remember Your words that we should expect servants to suffer in like manner to the Master. Please enable Your saints to glorify You by their testimony. (John 15:20; 1 Peter 4:19)

MONDAY 4 Religious freedom conditions in Eritrea remain among the worst in the world. Eritrea's Marxist government recognises only three Christian denominations as official – Eritrean Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Lutheran – and all others are banned from practising their faith in public. There are estimated to be around 160 Christians imprisoned for their faith. Believers report being beaten, denied food and water, and blocked from receiving medical attention – these conditions show no sign of improving. They may be in prison for many years without being tried or even charged. Call on the Lord for the release of all Eritrean Christians in prison for following Him. Pray that the government will turn from its repressive policies and allow believers of all denominations to worship in peace.



Christians in northern Kenya are among 20 million facing starvation in the Horn of Africa

TUESDAY 5 “This is one of the hardest times we have experienced,” wrote Kenyan Christians to Barnabas. Northern Kenya is experiencing its worst drought since 1981. Four successive rainy seasons have failed in this Muslim-dominated part of Kenya, where Christians are usually left out when government food relief is distributed. Barnabas is sending food aid to our brothers and sisters there. It is estimated that 20 million people in the Horn of Africa are at risk of starvation owing to worsening drought. Pray for all to be fed. Pray for rain.

WEDNESDAY 6 Give thanks for the release of nine Egyptian Christians who were arrested after a peaceful protest. The nine were among about 70 people protesting against the refusal of the authorities to grant permission for the rebuilding of a church in Ezbet Faragallah village, Minya governorate, Upper Egypt that was destroyed in 2016 in a fire. The church, which was granted legal status in 2011, is still waiting to hear if the Minya governorate has granted a reconstruction permit. Pray that permission will be given so that the 800 Christians in Ezbet Faragallah

once again have a church in which to worship.

THURSDAY 7 Egyptian church minister Arsanios Wadid, 56, was stabbed to death in April as he supervised an outing for about 35 young people from his church in Alexandria. Nehru Abdel-Moneim Tawfiq, a 60-year-old former member of an Islamist terrorist group, has been convicted of premeditated murder. The court has issued a preliminary death sentence against him, which has been referred to the Mufti of Egypt, the country’s most senior cleric. Pray for comfort for Arsanios’ grieving family, friends and congregation. Pray that Nehru Abdel-Moneim Tawfiq will come to realise that what he did was displeasing to God and will turn to Him for full forgiveness.

FRIDAY 8 Praise the Lord that Egypt registered a record batch of 239 licences granted to churches and church-affiliated buildings in April – at time of writing the largest single batch since a government committee was set up five years ago to oversee the process. This 23rd batch brought the number of churches granted licences to 2,401 out of the 3,730 that applied for registration after a new Law for Building and Restoring Churches removed Ottoman-era restrictions on church buildings in 2016. Pray that this momentum will continue and that the committee will clear the remaining backlog of 1,329 applications as swiftly as possible. Ask that the situation of the minority Christian community in Egypt will continue to improve.

SATURDAY 9 Yet another Algerian church has been closed by the

authorities, the seventeenth building belonging to the officially recognised group of Algerian Protestant churches to be forcibly shut down since November 2017. The closure of the Aouchiche Church's building in the port city of Béjaïa is based on a 2006 ordinance requiring permission for a building to be used for non-Muslim worship. Pray for Algerian church leaders to persevere in the face of increasing threats to churches. Ask that, if it is the Lord's will, the campaign of church closures will cease, for those churches closed to be re-opened, and that Christians will be able to live and worship in peace and freedom, including the congregation of 300 who worshipped at Aouchiche.

SUNDAY 10 Lord God and Heavenly Father, we bring before You believers around the world who are hindered through persecution from meeting with other believers to worship You. Some have seen their church buildings sealed, and their congregations dispersed. Some are imprisoned for their belief; some must keep their faith hidden from family and friends; some have no church to be a part of. Please bless each one who would love to meet for worship on this Lord's Day, that they who are "lonely and afflicted" will know Your caring, sustaining presence with them through all their trials and difficulties, for we ask in the Name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. (Psalm 25:16)

MONDAY 11 "I find my refuge in this wonderful school," says Rafael, a young pupil with special needs at St Aphrem's School, Bethlehem. "I do not feel anywhere more happier." The school, which is supported by Barnabas, provides a good Christian education

for 650 students – the overwhelming majority of whom are from Christian families. Bethlehem Christians face many difficulties living as a minority in a non-Christian society and the school is a safe and secure place in which children from even the poorest Christian families can learn. Give thanks that St Aphrem's School is maintaining Biblical values among young people and safeguarding the Christian presence in Bethlehem for generations to come. Pray that the work of the school, founded almost 20 years ago, will continue long into the future.

TUESDAY 12 Small improvements in religious freedom continue to be reported in the extremely strict Islamic Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. One recent reform has included the removal of some intolerant content directed at religious minorities in school textbooks. However, the government continues to forbid any public non-Muslim worship, and Saudi Arabia remains a country where Christians can meet only in secret and could potentially face execution for leaving Islam to follow Christ. Pray that the authorities will introduce further reforms and allow greater freedom of worship for both expatriate and indigenous Christians.

WEDNESDAY 13 Give thanks that the situation for Christians in parts of Iraq continues to improve. More than 500 people attended an Easter Sunday service at a rebuilt church in Batnaya in the Nineveh Plains, the historic centre of Iraqi Christianity. A Christian school has also re-opened. This region was ruled by hard-line extremist group Islamic State (IS) from 2014 until 2017. Believers who were able to escape

their strongly Islamist rule fled for safety – now an estimated 40-50% of Christians have returned. Praise God that so many believers have been able to return to their homes. Give thanks that the attitude of the Muslim community towards Christians – which hardened during the IS occupation – has softened, and pray that Muslims will continue to feel amicable towards their Christian neighbours.



Anooshavan Avedian [Image credit: Article 18]

THURSDAY 14 At the time of writing Rahmat Rostampour, an Iranian Christian convert from Islam, remains in prison, his exact whereabouts unknown. Rahmat was arrested after an early morning raid on his home in which Bibles were also seized. His wife Azar was later interrogated but released without charge. Pray for the swift release of Rahmat and protection for his family at this uncertain time. Ask that the Lord will sustain His people in Iran and fill them with faith in Him as they encounter pressures to deny Christ.

FRIDAY 15 An Iranian-Armenian pastor Anooshavan Avedian was sentenced to ten years in prison for running a Farsi (Persian)-speaking “house church” in Tehran. He was also sentenced to serve a further ten years of “deprivation of social rights” (e.g. severe restrictions

on employment) when released. Two members of the church, Abbas Soori and Maryam Mohammadi, both Farsi-speaking converts, were also sentenced to ten years’ deprivation of rights. The Iranian authorities permit Armenian-language Christian worship, but not worship in Farsi, the national language, as Farsi-speaking Christians are converts from Islam. Pray for the success of appeals that all three are lodging against the verdicts. Ask that the Iranian authorities will soften their stance to allow Farsi-speaking believers to worship freely.

SATURDAY 16 Turkish attitudes towards Armenian Christians appear to be softening. An Armenian Christian, who often travels to Turkey for work, reports that on his travels Turks have told him, “I am so sorry for what my people did to your people.” Between 1893 and 1923 some 1.5 million Armenians were killed in the Ottoman Empire in a policy of extermination of Christian minorities. Pray that a more peaceful and tolerant attitude will prevail, including within the government of Turkey, and that this will encompass not just Armenian Christians but Turkish Christians who have converted from Islam.

SUNDAY 17 Sovereign Lord, we lift up Your Church in Turkey, a land from which 78 foreign pastors have been deported since the beginning of 2019. We ask that the trust of Your people in Turkey in Your resourcefulness and provision will be undiminished, even when they face the loss of their church leaders. We pray that You will both intervene to stop deportations and raise up strong Turkish pastors. We ask in the Name of the Good Shepherd, our Lord Jesus Christ. (John 10:11)

MONDAY 18 The persecution of ethnic-minority Christians by the Myanmar military (Tatmadaw) continues unabated. Chin, Kachin and Karen believers are among those who have suffered marginalisation and violence over the course of many decades. Their situation has worsened since the 2021 coup that restored direct military rule over the country, to the extent that a recent report has likened their treatment to the genocide perpetrated by the Tatmadaw against the Muslim-majority Rohingya. Ask that the faith of the Lord's flock will be sustained, even in the face of such deadly opposition.

TUESDAY 19 "It's so sad," said a Christian woman. "I was in tears when I saw smoke coming out from my village as my house was also burned down." She was one of thousands of Christians who fled the latest attack on the historic Myanmar Christian village of Chaung Yeo in the Sagaing Region. At least 320 out of the village's 350 homes were burned in the raid on 20 May. Two months earlier soldiers shot dead a 55-year-old man and his son as they tried to flee a previous Tatmadaw attack on the village in which ten homes were burned down and the church pulpit set on fire. Pray for protection for God's people in the region who patiently endure persecution by the Tatmadaw (Revelation 14:12).

WEDNESDAY 20 In the 12 months to the end of March 2022, Barnabas Aid gave practical support to around 26,000 Myanmar Christians. Believers are forced from their homes because of attacks by the Tatmadaw, which has even launched airstrikes and artillery bombardments against IDP (internally

displaced persons) camps. The annual rainy season (June-October) brings further challenges, but our project partners travel by motorbike or on foot to distribute rice to IDPs in remote, flood-prone areas. Pray that the Lord will guide Barnabas partners seeking to distribute aid across unforgiving terrain. Ask that He will provide for Christian IDPs within Myanmar, and refugees who have crossed over into Thailand, India and Bangladesh.

THURSDAY 21 Seng Aloun, a Christian widow, is struggling to raise her children alone. The family of 12 were driven from their village in southern Laos after an arson attack on their home in February. This incident followed attacks on her deceased husband's coffin in December 2021 by local Buddhists angered at the family's practice of a "foreign" religion. Pray that the authorities will act on repeated promises to find the arsonists, cease their harassment of Seng Aloun and her children and concentrate their efforts on finding them a permanent home.



South-east Asian Christians received Bibles and rice from Barnabas

FRIDAY 22 Isolated Christians living in the mountains of a South-East Asian country received Bibles alongside aid distributed through Barnabas partners. They are persecuted as an ethnic minority and, because the government views Christianity as a “Western” religion, Christians face restrictions on activities including preaching, teaching and publishing. Barnabas provided 100 Christian families with sufficient rice to help them survive after the failure of their harvest. Bibles in the local language were also distributed – for many it was the first Bible they had ever owned. Pray that the Lord will richly bless His people with insight into His precious Word. Ask that He will sustain them throughout the hardship they face.

SATURDAY 23 Muhammad Kace, a Muslim-background Christian in Indonesia, has been sentenced to ten years in prison after being found guilty of “blasphemy”. Kace, formerly a Muslim cleric, was accused of making disparaging remarks about Muhammad, the prophet of Islam. Following his arrest in August 2021, Kace was brutally beaten by other prisoners, an attack that prison authorities allegedly tried to keep hidden. Pray for the safety of Kace while he remains in prison, and for the success of his appeal against the lengthy sentence.

SUNDAY 24 Heavenly Father, we bring before You our brothers and sisters adapting to new lives in new countries. We pray for Shafqat Emmanuel and his wife Shagufta Kausar who endured several years on death row in Pakistan on false charges of “blasphemy” but are now in a safe country. Please help them to adapt to a new culture and language, and assist

them to testify to Your deliverance as they seek to live for You. We ask the same for others who have faced similar trauma, in Jesus’ precious Name. (Psalm 34:4)

MONDAY 25 The Indian state of Karnataka has passed an anti-conversion ordinance, barring religious conversions solicited through force, fraud or allurement. Anti-conversion laws can result in believers being harassed or arrested for simply sharing their faith in Jesus Christ. Unlike the laws passed by other Indian states the ordinance is only temporary – it will lapse within six months if not approved by the state legislature. Ask that anti-conversion legislation will ultimately be withdrawn and that Christians in Karnataka will oppose the ordinance wisely while it remains in force. Pray that the government’s decision will not lead to increased hostility towards Christians and unfounded accusations of forced conversions.

TUESDAY 26 Extremists have alleged that a Christian high school in Bengaluru (Bangalore) in Karnataka, India, is forcing non-Christian pupils to read the Bible. As a result of the allegations Clarence High School is now under investigation by the Karnataka Education Department. The school points out that consent for Bible study is gained from parents or guardians when children join the school. Pray that all attempts to repress Christians will not succeed, and the school leadership will find favour from God and the government to continue its service to the community as a Christian high school. Ask that the commitment of Christian students and staff to the Word of God will be strengthened.

WEDNESDAY 27 Extremists in Karnataka are also trying to prevent the work of Christian chaplains in the state's prisons. A prison visitor claims to have found a Bible in a non-Christian prisoner's cell. The alleged discovery led to extremists alerting local police and demanding the immediate suspension of all Christian chaplains. Christian leaders point out that other religious literature is freely distributed in prisons. Pray that extremist groups will be prevented from suppressing God's Word and that Christian prison visitors in Karnataka will be able to continue this valuable work unhindered.

THURSDAY 28 Praise God that the Supreme Court of India emphatically rejected a petition by an extremist group for the creation of a committee to monitor Indian Christian missionaries and local evangelists. The petition was based on the allegation that Christian missionaries and evangelists are seeking converts through force, fraud or allurements. In a declaration published on 25 March, the bench of two Supreme Court Justices told the extremists, "You are actually disturbing the harmony with these kinds of petitions." Give thanks for the Supreme Court's decision and pray that it will serve as a precedent to deter any future extremist attempts to oppress Christians in India.

FRIDAY 29 The National Christian Evangelical Alliance of Sri Lanka documented 31 incidents of violence and intolerance against Christians in the first quarter of 2022. More than half of these incidents involved public officials demanding that churches prove they have the legal right to meet for worship, or attempting to close

down worship services either in church buildings or private homes, even though the law does not in fact require official registration for places of worship. Pray that harassment of Christians by public officials will cease, and that the Lord's people will be free to worship and practise their faith.

SATURDAY 30 Hunger and deprivation in Sri Lanka are the worst in living memory as a result of the country's economic collapse, which has come on top of the suffering from the Covid crisis. Inflation is soaring and this has been compounded by recent crop failures. Fuel shortages and power cuts of up to ten hours a day are also severely impacting the livelihoods of day labourers, leaving them unable to earn an income. The very poor, including many Christians, are suffering the most. Pray for them all, especially our brothers and sisters. Ask that they will be joyful in hope, patient in affliction and faithful in prayer (Romans 12:12). Pray for the smooth delivery of aid being sent by Barnabas to vulnerable Christians in need.

SUNDAY 31 Thank You, dear Lord Jesus, for the rapid growth of Your Church in Nepal. Please strengthen and sustain our Nepali brothers and sisters amidst the opposition of various kinds that they face. Give them courage, hope, perseverance and a faith that will not fail. May Your Holy Spirit guide them with wisdom as to how to proclaim the Gospel in the context of current legal restrictions. Please raise up new leaders for congregations whose pastors succumbed to Covid-19, and may each of Your followers in Nepal know the reality of Your promise to be with them always. (Matthew 28:20)

August

MONDAY 1 Almost a year since the Taliban takeover, Christians in Afghanistan (converts from Islam and their children) are still at severe risk of death for apostasy. Believers remain in hiding due to threats from both the Taliban government and the Afghan militant group affiliated to Islamic State (IS, ISIS, ISIL, Daesh). Taliban rule also places believers at greater risk of violence and death at the hands of the local community, including Muslim relatives and acquaintances. Since mid-2021 the Taliban have said that Christians must leave, re-convert to Islam, or face death. Pray that the Lord will sustain the faith of those who cannot leave, empowering them to overcome evil. Ask that He will work mightily to “protect them from those who malign them” (Psalm 12:5).

TUESDAY 2 At the time of writing there remain many Afghan Christians who have sought refuge from the Taliban in neighbouring countries. However, these Muslim-majority countries are not safe places for Christian converts from Islam to make a permanent home. Barnabas Aid continues to provide practical support to our brothers and sisters, including working to help them settle permanently in safe countries where they can rebuild their lives. Pray for the success of these efforts, and that the Lord will restrain the hand of any who plan to do harm to the Afghan refugees.

WEDNESDAY 3 Pakistan is undergoing a period of political turmoil. On 10 April the National Assembly passed a no-confidence vote in then Prime Minister

Imran Khan, immediately removing him from office. He was replaced by Shehbaz Sharif, who has been leader of the opposition since 2018. Imran Khan, who had been very supportive of Pakistani Christians, blamed the US and Western powers for his political demise, alleging a “foreign-funded” conspiracy to bring him down. Pray for peace in Pakistan, and that the Christian community will not suffer the consequences of political rhetoric and accusations. At times of national crisis, Christian minorities often suffer suspicion and hostility from the Muslim majority.

THURSDAY 4 A Pakistani Muslim man was arrested after desecrating a cross on top of a church building in Lahore. The man attempted to break the concrete cross, then sat on the cross and chanted the Islamic phrase “Allahu Akbar” (God is the greatest) for half an hour. Praise God for the restraint shown by Christians in response to this act of desecration and ask that their calm will be a powerful witness to their Muslim neighbours. Pray that the Pakistan authorities will take steps to protect Christians and other minorities from discrimination and harm.

FRIDAY 5 “May God bless Barnabas ... and may they keep doing their work to change lives of poor people,” said Pakistani Christian brick-kiln worker Asif after we paid off the debt he inherited from his father that kept him bonded to his employer. Now he can afford to give his two children the education he never had. Asif is among 474 Christian families whose debts have been cleared recently by Barnabas, making a total of 1,475 families freed

since the project began in 2017. Give thanks to God that so many families have been freed from bonded labour and pray that we can release many more of our impoverished brothers and sisters. Pray for an end to the exploitation of Christian workers in Pakistan.



Zafar Bhatti, who has been imprisoned for nearly ten years

SATURDAY 6 Concerns are growing for the health of Zafar Bhatti, a Pakistani Christian who has spent nearly ten years in prison after being accused of “blasphemy”. The physical wellbeing of Zafar, who is diabetic and suffered a heart attack in September 2020, is said to be deteriorating further, and his lawyers are applying for his release on medical grounds. Zafar was convicted of “blasphemy” in 2017 for allegedly sending texts insulting Muhammad, the prophet of Islam, on a phone that was not even registered in his name. He was handed a death sentence in January 2022. Pray for the success of Zafar’s application for his release on medical grounds, and ask that the death sentence will not be carried out.

SUNDAY 7 O Jesus, Light of the World, we ask You to bring clarity to many facing

difficult choices in countries where freedom is severely limited. Please guide Christians in China to be loyal to the truth and wisely navigate government regulation of their activities. Please enable North Korean brothers and sisters to weigh up each action under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, even while having to keep hidden their belief in You. Please direct Christians living as oppressed and despised minorities to sense when and how to let their light shine and be channels of Your grace. (John 8:12)

MONDAY 8 Voters in Kenya will tomorrow go to the polls in presidential and parliamentary elections. In previous years Kenya’s elections have been marred by violence – more than a thousand people died in riots that broke out following the 2007 election. Kenya also faces the threat of the Somalia-based Al Shabaab, an Islamist group who have declared Kenyan Christians to be enemies who should be subjugated, converted or killed. Furthermore, northern Kenya is among the parts of the world bearing the brunt of the global food crisis. Pray that elections will take place peacefully, and that whoever is elected will be granted wisdom to deal with the problems of terrorism and food poverty.

TUESDAY 9 For 20 years Cana Girls’ Rescue Home in Kenya has provided a safe Christian refuge for girls fleeing female genital mutilation (FGM), child marriage, sexual abuse or other dangers. It offers them loving care, spiritual support and a Christian school education. When Cana opened in 2002 it provided shelter to five girls; however, thanks to the donations of Barnabas supporters, it has been able to grow and

offer protection to 247 girls. Give thanks to the Lord for the loving Christian care of the Cana team who have transformed the lives of so many abused and vulnerable girls. Pray that the work of Cana will continue for many more years to come. Ask for an end to the abuse and exploitation of young girls in Kenya, especially the practice of FGM.

WEDNESDAY 10 Four years of repeated droughts, followed by five destructive tropical storms in the first three months of this year have devastated Madagascar, especially the south. Tuberculosis (TB) is ravaging the population, even though it is easily treatable by modern medicine. Malnutrition weakens the immune system and therefore infectious diseases like TB spread fast. But TB reduces the absorption of nutrients by the body, so the weakened body becomes more susceptible to disease, creating a “vicious cycle”. Pray for the success of Barnabas Aid’s two-year rolling programme to provide 234 tonnes of nourishing ePap porridge for more than 79,000 Christians across the 22 regions of Madagascar, that this will increase their strength and health, enabling them to fight disease.

THURSDAY 11 Togo appears to have suffered its first Islamist terrorist attack. Eight soldiers were killed when the suspected jihadists attacked an army post in northern Togo in the early hours of 11 May. Other countries in this region of West Africa already suffer persistent Islamist violence. Togo is one of the smallest countries in West Africa, where almost half of its population of eight million is Christian. Call on the Lord, our rock and our refuge, to

protect Togo from Islamist terrorists (2 Samuel 22:3-4). Ask that He will keep our brothers and sisters in perfect peace, their minds steadfast, as they trust in Him (Isaiah 26:3).

FRIDAY 12 North Korea remains one of the world’s worst countries for persecution of Christians and abuse of human rights in general. The totalitarian government controls every aspect of its citizens’ lives, and religious believers are all considered hostile to the state. Actions as simple as attending worship, owning a Bible, or teaching your own children about Jesus can result in whole families being imprisoned and subjected to horrendous torture and abuse. Call out to the Lord to do a mighty work in this dark land, that, like the rulers of Nineveh, the rulers of North Korea will “call urgently on God” and “give up their evil ways and their violence” (Jonah 3:8).

SATURDAY 13 Pastor Alimujiang Yimiti (49), a Uyghur convert from Islam, has now spent 14 years in prison in China. Alimujiang was arrested in February 2008, charged with anti-state activities, and later sentenced to a 15-year prison term. Despite imprisonment he is in good spirits, and it is hoped he will be released from prison next year. Pray that Alimujiang will indeed be released in 2023, and that he will have a joyous reunion with his wife, Gulinuer, and two sons. The younger was only a toddler when his father was arrested.

SUNDAY 14 Lord God and Heavenly Father, we bring before You the Church in China, which is increasingly burdened with government restrictions. We think especially of the requirement that churches gain a licence from their provincial

government in order to share information online. Thank You that churches are applying for these licences, and that some have succeeded in gaining the necessary permission to continue sharing the Gospel message through the internet. We pray for those whose applications have been rejected, and others who are unable to apply, that You will grant wisdom to them in how they can adapt their ministry and continue “proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah”, for we ask it in His Name. (Acts 5:42)

MONDAY 15 In some parts of the world, it is difficult for those in Christian ministry to undertake pastoral and theological study. Sometimes even theological books and Bible commentaries are hard to find. The Oxford Centre for Religion and Public Life (OCRPL), the academic branch of Barnabas Aid, is helping such leaders by providing low cost opportunities to study. Several OCRPL students have now gained their doctorates and two of their theses are being prepared for publication as books, so that their research can benefit many other church leaders. One thesis is from Nigeria, the other from South Sudan. Pray that the Lord will guide all the students, who continue with their ministries while they study, that their researches may help to build up His people and extend His Kingdom.

TUESDAY 16 The Shepherd’s Academy (TSA), the undergraduate section of OCRPL, is set to expand its work across Africa, with five new study centres in Kenya, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Uganda and Zambia. The aim of TSA is to provide training opportunities – whether full bachelor’s degrees, certificates and diplomas, or short courses – to Church

leaders in the Global South who would otherwise be unable to get the teaching and ministry training that they need. Pray for the success of this expansion, that through these new study centres many Church leaders will be equipped to be faithful and effective “shepherds of God’s flock” (1 Peter 5:2).

WEDNESDAY 17 Islamists are “mercilessly killing Christians”. These were the words of a Ugandan church leader after a spate of violent attacks in north-eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) by an Islamist group called Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). At least a dozen people were killed on Sunday 3 April in an attack on the village of Masambo. More than 80 people were killed in March in ADF attacks in North Kivu and Ituri provinces. Many others were forced to flee for safety in Uganda. Pray for the Lord’s protective shield around our brothers and sisters in north-eastern DRC and an end to violent Islamist extremism there. Pray for churches in western Uganda as they seek to help thousands of refugees who have fled across the border.

THURSDAY 18 “Your intervention has strengthened us in our faith in the Lord,” said Mama Laya, a grandmother who was among 152 Christians of all ages in Burkina Faso evacuated to a place of safety and given food, Bibles and medicines by Barnabas. This was after they had lived in hiding for more than six months from the jihadi gangs who have brought death and destruction to the impoverished West African nation. Give thanks to God for the courage of the church volunteers who put their own lives in danger to

drive through the bush and discreetly take the Christians to safety. Praise the Lord for His protection over them and the families they rescued as well as for their unshakable trust in Him. Ask for peace in this troubled land.

FRIDAY 19 “When will this killing of innocent people in Kaduna stop?” asked a pastor after suspected Fulani militants attacked four Christian communities in Kaura Local Government Area on Sunday 20 March, killing 32 residents and two military personnel. Only days earlier 40 residents from another Christian village in Kaduna had been abducted. Call out to the Lord for comfort for those grieving the loss of loved ones, and pray that the kidnapped will sense God’s mighty protection and power in the ordeal they face and that they will be released unharmed. Pray that both national and state governments will be guided as to effective strategies to prevent further attacks and overcome evil.

SATURDAY 20 “I have been troubled since the resurgence of these attacks because of its devastating effects. I pray that God lift this hardship.” These were the words of His Royal Highness Ronku Aka, ruler of the Irigwe nation and a retired pastor, after Islamists killed 12 Christians in Irigwe Chiefdom, Plateau State, Nigeria. The violence continued on Palm Sunday as Islamist gunmen riding motorcycles killed at least 80 and abducted more than 60 from ten predominantly Christian villages in southern Plateau. Call out to God for His protection over the Irigwe people and other Christians facing attacks in Plateau State. Ask for His comfort for those bereaved and healing to the injured.

SUNDAY 21 Lord God and Heavenly Father, we thank You that Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, is “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief”, who experienced horrendous suffering on behalf of His people. We rejoice that our High Priest empathises with us in our weakness, since He also has been tempted and tested as we are, yet without sin. Though we tremble at the thought, we are grateful that it pleased You to “crush him and cause him to suffer”, to make “his life an offering for sin”. May these amazing truths strengthen us as we face suffering of any kind, for we ask it in His holy and precious Name. (Isaiah 53:3 AV; Hebrews 4:15; Isaiah 53:10)

MONDAY 22 Eight villagers were killed by suspected Boko Haram militants in May in Kautikari, a community in Borno State, Nigeria, that has been repeatedly attacked by Islamist militants. “The insurgents always come and do whatever they want, and go back to come back another day,” lamented a resident. Only weeks before terrorists had struck another village in the area, killing Christian Godwin Abari and abducting his sister and five other Christian girls. Ask the Lord to draw close to the grieving families of Godwin and the eight Christians killed in Kautikari and pray that the abducted girls will be released soon. Pray that our brothers and sisters will remain strong and courageous, knowing the Lord will be with them always (Joshua 1:9).

TUESDAY 23 Praise the Lord for the success of Christians Lydia Pogu and Joy Bishara, two of the 276 Chibok schoolgirls abducted by Boko Haram in Nigeria in April 2014. The two cousins were among the 160 who subsequently escaped and they have gone on to

complete their masters degrees in the United States. Lydia recalls that the terrorists told her that school is “taboo for women”. They “warned us that if we go back to school they will come for us,” she said. Initially Lydia was too scared to go back to school, but God had different plans for her. Lydia aims to become a human rights lawyer, while Joy hopes to start a community support agency in Chibok. Pray that the women will use their knowledge to realise their dream of helping others and serving God. Pray for more than 100 Chibok girls who have not returned home, and for their families who also continue to suffer.

WEDNESDAY 24 Pastor Raphael Opawoye, Secretary of the Christian Association of Nigeria in Niger State, called on believers to pray for the release of 45 people abducted by bandits during a two-day raid. Among those abducted was Leo Raphael Ozigi, a church minister who was taken while on his way home from Sunday worship in the village of Sarkin Pawa. “We call on Christians in the state and Nigeria as a whole to pray for his safe return as well as others also kidnapped by the bandits,” said Pastor Opawoye. Intercede for all 45, that the Lord will sustain them to endure their ordeal for as long as they are held, and that each one will be released without harm.

THURSDAY 25 Barnabas Aid has helped 200 South Sudanese Christian families living in a refugee camp in northern Uganda to become self-sufficient by enabling them to grow their own food. Each household (supporting an average of seven people) received six tins of seeds, farming tools and training on

the cultivation crops including okra, cabbage, tomatoes and local green vegetables sukuma and dodo. A project partner said that this aid will strengthen the refugees’ faith, because it “has come from a Christian organisation and through the church”. Praise God for the opportunity to provide for both physical and spiritual needs.

FRIDAY 26 A pastor in Gezira State, Sudan, was sentenced to serve one month in prison after an attack by Islamist extremists on a church service he was leading. A judge decided to hand a one-month sentence to both Pastor Estefanos and his attacker for “disturbing the peace”, despite the fact that the pastor and three members of the church required medical attention for their injuries sustained in the attack. The attackers also damaged Bibles and furniture. Pray that these Islamist extremists will come to see their own need of the Christ whom they are persecuting (Acts 9:5). Ask the Lord to mightily protect His people in Sudan.

SATURDAY 27 “This is God!” exclaimed Ketrina. “Every day I think of what to eat but for this month I will sleep peacefully.” Ketrina and her family were among many poor Christians in southern Malawi struggling to find food after a lack of rainfall caused crops to fail, leaving them hungry. Barnabas supporters provided maize, beans and salt for 733 households, including for Ketrina and her family. Lift up in prayer poor Christians in need in Malawi and ask that God will meet all their needs according to the riches of His glory in Jesus Christ (Philippians 4:19). Pray that the rains will return to sustain their crops.

SUNDAY 28 Father God, we pray for Your people in Nagorno-Karabakh after the desecration of another Armenian church building in that region. Please bring comfort to the former congregation of the Church of the Holy Resurrection, and all Armenian Christians in this region and beyond, and soothe their pain at seeing their Christian heritage damaged or destroyed. May we all remember that our Lord Jesus Christ “serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by a mere human being”, and that this heavenly tabernacle can never be desecrated, for we ask it in His Name. (Hebrews 8:2)



Vital aid from Barnabas about to be unloaded in Ukraine

MONDAY 29 Give thanks for the distribution of food and other essentials to Christians in Ukraine. By mid-May nine lorries had left our warehouse in Swindon, UK, each laden with supplies, and reached Romania for onward transportation into Ukraine. Containers from Canada, the United States and New Zealand have also been shipped to Ukraine with more on their way. Pray that this precious aid will continue to reach our brothers and sisters safely and that the Lord will protect drivers as they journey through dangerous

terrain. Ask that He will encourage and energise Barnabas partners tasked with distributing aid and caring for those traumatised by the conflict.

TUESDAY 30 Cry out for our brothers and sisters in a strongly Islamic region of Kyrgyzstan where anti-Christian attacks are rising because of the increased radicalisation of local Muslims. Hostility towards Christian converts from Islam has increased and spread to include violence towards ethnic Christians. The church has suffered repeated attacks at night by Muslims throwing stones, and church leaders have become increasingly concerned for the safety of worshippers. Thank the Lord that a new iron fence around the church and newly installed CCTV camera system provided by Barnabas appear to have deterred further attacks. Pray that our brothers and sisters fix their thoughts on Jesus and will not lose heart (Hebrews 12:2-3). Ask that hostility towards them will cease.

WEDNESDAY 31 Rejoice with Iraqi Christians that two severely damaged church buildings in Mosul are being repaired by UNESCO with funding from the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The churches, like many others, were damaged by militants from Islamic State (IS) during the period 2014-2017 when IS captured and occupied Mosul and surrounding parts of Iraq. Christians are very appreciative of the fact that an Islamic country such as UAE is paying to repair the churches (and also a mosque). Pray that other wealthy Muslim-majority nations will follow the example of UAE and help restore the church buildings of Mosul.

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**Front Cover: Our project partners have faced many obstacles in their
mission to deliver aid to displaced Christians in Myanmar**