

NOVEMBER 2023

“And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness.”

Acts 4:29

PRAYERPOINTS

THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

The Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church is November 5, 2023. This is an opportunity for individuals and churches to unite in prayer for believers around the world who are persecuted for their faith. This month we will focus on praying that God will use their witness to inspire gospel transformation among the lost. Will you join us?

EVEN AS PERSECUTION RISES, A SOUTH ASIAN PASTOR PERSISTS IN PREACHING THE GOSPEL

In a part of South Asia, Hindu extremists are working to eradicate Christians. Sanjay, a South Asian pastor, is working to reach the lost. Persecution among Christians there has increased dramatically over the past year due to rising extremism. In Sanjay's city, a pastor was put in jail because of false allegations that he was forcing people to convert, which is a crime in his country. The increased persecution has also increased fear among believers there. A lot of people have stopped sharing the gospel - but not Sanjay. He leads several groups and churches, and travels to share the gospel with unreached people groups nearby. He hasn't always been this bold in his faith. He came from a nominal Christian family, and Sanjay didn't follow Jesus until after he finished college. After becoming a Christian, he met Journeyman missionaries who were passionate for Bible study and evangelism. They showed him a different way of doing ministry than what he had ever seen before. They taught Sanjay about being wise and trusting that God would be with him when persecution



A believer in South Asia holds a Bible. IMB Photo.

came. When it finally came, Sanjay was ready. He remained faithful to share the gospel. His ultimate love for the Lord poured out to the lost. There are endless opportunities to begin ministry in South Asia. But Sanjay is one person. He has been asking God to raise up more leaders for local churches. God has answered that prayer by providing two men whom Sanjay started training earlier this year, just as he had been trained. They have already planted multiple new churches.

Pray for more leaders to rise out of God's church in South Asia. Ask God to provide for Sanjay and his family and sustain them.

ANSWER TO YOUR PRAYER

Last June, we prayed for Hakka people in East Asia who have heard the gospel but hesitated to follow Jesus because of the risk of persecution and family pressure to worship ancestors and temple gods.

Thank you for praying! This year, an elderly couple accepted Christ, put away their idols, and stopped ancestor worship. Hakka elders have great influence over their family and neighbors. Now these new believers can influence their community with the gospel.

1 THE PERSECUTED CHURCH. Pray Ephesians 6:11-12. "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."

2 NORTHERN AFRICAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN PEOPLES. Grace has been experiencing panic attacks from mounting family pressures and expectations, and she does not have believing community around her. Pray that Grace will trust the Father with her burdens, worries, health, and provision of fellowship with followers of Jesus.

3 IRANIANS IN TURKEY. As Peter and Eden wait to be accepted as asylum seekers, they faithfully share Jesus with their neighbors. Authorities are threatening their asylum status, demanding they stop sharing their faith. Pray for Peter and Eden as they boldly and wisely live in their community.

4 DISPLACED INDIGENOUS OF BOGOTA, COLOMBIA. Mark is an Indigenous believer living with his family in a shelter for displaced people. Pray that he will be a witness to others in the shelter. Ask God to protect him amid persecution for his faith. May he overcome every spiritual attack, relying on God and His word.

5 CHOPI OF SOUTHERN MOZAMBIQUE. Naomi is a new believer who has suffered great persecution from her family. Ask God to help her mature in faith and remain steadfast and immovable in the face of persecution. Pray that

the local church would support her well in the absence of support from her family.

6 THE PERSECUTED CHURCH. Pray that believers "may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Colossians 1:9-10).

7 DEAF PEOPLES. After Sadie, a Deaf believer in West Africa, was baptized, her mother locked her away without food for three days and pressured Sadie to renounce her faith. Sadie remained true to Jesus. Her mother released her. Pray as Sadie's mother still threatens the Deaf believers.

8 NORTHERN AFRICAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN PEOPLES. Several Muslim-background believers are being held, interrogated, and persecuted for their faith in Jesus. Pray for all of them to stand strong in their faith, proclaim Jesus as Savior to their captors, and be released soon, all for His glory.

9 EUROPE. Across most of western Europe, persecution is not from the government but from family and friends. Please pray for those who are seeking the Lord but fear repercussions from their loved ones in the form of shaming and isolation.

10 ASIA-PACIFIC RIM. Believers in a rural minority group have been denied government benefits and schooling for their children. Some have been beaten. Yet they will not give up their faith because they say Jesus means everything to them. Ask God to encourage them.

11 MUSLIMS OF NORTHEAST INDIA. Pray for new believers in Northeast India who are delaying baptism because they fear persecution from their Muslim communities. Ask the Holy Spirit to give them confidence in Christ and boldness to be baptized. Ask God to draw their friends and families to Himself.

12 KARAMOJONG OF UGANDA. Pray for the believers in Kaabong, as they have been under intense spiritual attack and persecution. Pray for humble hearts that abide in Jesus and hunger for His presence and clarity amid conflicts. Pray that their love for one another, as His church, will cover over a multitude of sins.

13 MIXTECS OF GUERRERO, MEXICO. The gospel is spreading like wildfire among the Mixtec people. But it isn't easy for them to give their life to Christ due to fear of persecution from their community. Pray for them to abide in Christ. Pray for others who are hearing the gospel and counting the cost.

14 NORTHERN AFRICAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN PEOPLES. Pray for young men who gather to listen to the Afar audio Bible. Community leaders instructed their families to withhold food from them until the men return to Islam. Pray that these men will understand the Bible, believe the good news, and hold fast no matter the cost.

15 THE PERSECUTED CHURCH. Pray James 1:2-3. "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness."

16 KYRGYZ OF SOUTHERN KYRGYZSTAN. Groups of new believers are being mentored by other believers. Pray that God will allow the newer believers to overcome their fear of persecution and share the gospel with the lost. Ask God to nurture in them a vision for starting new churches in other communities.

17 NORTHERN AFRICAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN PEOPLES. There is a believing father and son in a farming village. The son has learned by example not to be ashamed but to speak up for what is true. In doing so, he is being persecuted by fellow students and teachers. Please pray for open hearts and discernment on how to share.

18 WASSULU OF MALI, GUINEA, AND COTE D'IVOIRE. Pray for a group of Malian evangelists and their families as they continue boldly sharing the gospel with the Wassulu even in the face of persecution. Jihadists have infiltrated local areas. They are targeting Christians and making it difficult to reach the Wassulu.

19 MUSLIMS OF NORTHWEST INDIA. Maajid is a new believer from a nomadic people group and very active in sharing the gospel. At a wedding, he prayed in the name of Jesus, but then he was immediately beaten by other guests. Pray for Maajid as he remains steadfast in his new faith, even amid persecution.

20 KURMANJI KURDS OF TURKEY. Spiritual strongholds and intense persecution have prevented gospel access among the Kurmanji Kurds.

Still, God is drawing people to Himself. As people find and read the Scripture online, pray that they will understand and believe the gospel. May God build up His church.

21 MEBO OF LAOS. A young couple was incarcerated for sharing the gospel in a restricted area. The wife was released first, but the husband remained in jail for some time in desperate need of medical care. Pray for his full recovery and for their continued passion for sharing the gospel.

22 THE PERSECUTED CHURCH. Pray that believers will "not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. [May they] rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28).

23 NORTHERN AFRICAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN PEOPLES. Several men spent time in prison for their faith. Praise the Lord for giving them enough courage to comfort other prisoners. Pray for the men and their families to heal emotionally from the ordeal; pray that they will help others in their country who face persecution.

24 ABIDJAN, COTE D'IVOIRE. New believers in a Muslim neighborhood are experiencing persecution from their neighbors. Pray that these new believers will find strength in God's Word and share it with all boldness (Acts 4:29). Pray that the hearts of their persecutors will be changed.

25 THE PERSECUTED CHURCH. May believers who are suffering persecution intimately know God in the way that 2 Corinthians 1:3 describes. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord

Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort."

26 EUROPE. Persecution comes in all forms. Pray for evangelical churches in Italy who meet resistance from authorities to being recognized as a church because they don't have statues and religious icons. Pray for evangelical church leaders in Italy.

27 NORTHERN AFRICAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN PEOPLES. Pray for Ali, an Afar believer whose family placed him under house arrest in an attempt to save him from community persecution for his faith. He reads his Bible for hours every day. Ask that he will be encouraged today, and pray for his family to believe the good news.

28 DEAF PEOPLES. Pray for Deaf Senegalese believers as they translate Scripture. Some have experienced persecution from Muslim family members and have had their lives threatened. Pray for more Deaf in Senegal to see the gospel signed to them, and to boldly share it once they receive it.

29 PEOPLE OF THE UPPER PLAINS OF KARNATAKA, INDIA. Pray for believers in Karnataka as they hear of other fellowships that have faced persecution. Pray that instead of fear, they will recognize and rejoice that this persecution is only happening because more and more people are coming to faith in Christ.

30 THE PERSECUTED CHURCH. Pray Acts 4:29. "And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness."

A BELIEVER IN MYANMAR HELD AT GUNPOINT, REFUSED TO RECANT

In Myanmar, Kahd and his family huddled nervously at gunpoint along with nine other Silver Palaung families. They had an agonizing choice to make – recant their new faith in Jesus and bow down to the two monks who sat before them or be dragged off to a crude jail for execution. Beside them were a few people from a nearby tribe who came to the Palaung village months ago, preaching the good news of Jesus. Soldiers pulled those people away, forced them to pay a large fine, and pushed them out of the village with threats to never come back. Slowly, the terrified Palaung families began caving to the pressure. One by one, they recanted their faith until the soldiers reached Kahd and demanded his answer. Kahd refused to bow down. His family boldly proclaimed their allegiance to Jesus Christ. Soldiers grasped at them, but Kahd and his family deftly escaped. They fled into the surrounding jungle, knowing they could never return to their village. They eventually reached a new location, where local believers are helping them get reestablished.



A Palaung man hiking in the remote mountains of Myanmar. IMB Photo.

Pray for Kahd and his family as they seek to rebuild their life and grow their faith. Pray also for believers in Myanmar who are laboring to share the gospel with the Palaung people amid heavy persecution. Pray for the gospel message to be so treasured among the Palaung people that it will be worth any price.

Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church

November 5

More than 360 million Christians worldwide suffer high levels of persecution and discrimination for their faith. That's a staggering 1 in 7 believers.

You can make a difference through prayer.

Learn more at imb.org/persecuted

Week of Prayer for International Missions

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**REACHING
THE NATIONS,
TOGETHER.**