

THE AID AGENCY FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH  
[www.barnabasfund.org](http://www.barnabasfund.org)

# barnabas prayer

TO HELP YOU PRAY FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH



JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2012

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. Thank you for your understanding.

## January

**Sunday 1** Barnabas Fund is “The Aid Agency for the Persecuted Church”. Please pray for our team in this new year as we tell the untold story of God’s persecuted people throughout the world and seek to transform their lives with hope and practical aid. Pray too for our many project partners who seek to build God’s kingdom in the face of anti-Christian pressure and hostility. Give thanks for all that the Lord has already enabled us to achieve, through the generosity of our supporters, and pray that He will continue to guide and empower us in His service. Pray for the relief and strengthening of suffering Christians everywhere. “Thus far the Lord has helped us” (1 Samuel 7:12).

**Monday 2** Where Christians are persecuted for their faith they are sometimes forced to flee their homes and even their countries. For example, the past decade has seen huge numbers of Iraqi Christians displaced within Iraq or into neighbouring countries, while in recent years many Eritrean Christians have fled into Egypt and beyond to escape the severe persecution at home. Christian converts from Islam in Muslim-



Christian children in Kenya receive food aid supplied by Barnabas Fund

majority countries may have to go abroad to avoid violence or even death at the hands of family or community. Pray for all believers who have been driven from their homes or homelands by anti-Christian hostility, that wherever they go they may find the Lord to be their rock, their fortress and their deliverer (2 Samuel 22:2).

**Tuesday 3** “We are witnessing manna from heaven,” said a hungry Christian in East Africa after receiving food from Barnabas Fund’s project partners, who continue to work around the clock to help hungry Christians in the region. More than 82,000 Christians have been helped (at the time of writing) in drought-affected areas of Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. Often the food arrived just in time. Some Christians who received aid told our project partners that they had completely run out of food and were close to desperation. They cried with joy and relief when they then received the bags of food. Pray that the food will sustain these Christians through the difficult months ahead. Ask the Lord for perseverance and inventiveness for our project partners as they bring food to hard-to-reach areas.

**Wednesday 4** The home of a church elder, situated within a church compound in Garissa, north-eastern Kenya, was hit by a grenade on 5 November 2011. The blast killed the elder's son and a member of the church choir and injured a woman and her two grandchildren. A spokesman for the national police said that the attack may have been religiously motivated and that sympathisers of the Islamist terrorist group al-Shabaab may have been responsible. Ask the Lord for a full recovery for the three people injured by the explosion and for swift rebuilding of the premises. Pray that the Christian community in Garissa will be able to reach out to the Muslim majority in the city with Christ-like love and compassion.

**Thursday 5** Pray for Christian converts from Islam in Somalia, who live out their faith in total secrecy and under the constant threat of assassination by Islamic militants. In September 2011, Juma Nuradin Kamil, a Somali Christian, was murdered in south-western Somalia by al-Shabaab. His body was found with his severed head placed on his chest. He is just one of many martyred by this ruthless organisation in recent years. Pray for the protection of Christians in Somalia, and ask the Lord to turn the hearts of their persecutors away from violence and bloodshed.

**Friday 6** President Omar al-Bashir of Sudan has confirmed his government's plans to adopt a completely Islamic constitution and strengthen sharia law in the country. On 12 October he declared, "Ninety-eight per cent of the people are Muslims and the new constitution will reflect this. The official religion will be Islam and Islamic law the main source." His announcement further threatens the freedom and security of the many Christians from the newly independent South Sudan who still live in Sudan, as well as the small

number of Christian northerners. Some Christian pastors have already been warned not to hold services on pain of death, while others are closing their schools and considering emigration to the South. Pray that Christians in Sudan will stand firm in their faith and that their freedoms will not be restricted even more severely.

**Saturday 7** A team of eight young men who were preaching the Gospel on the streets in Andhra Pradesh, India were arrested in September 2011. When a large and hostile crowd gathered, the police failed to disperse them, and they then took the Christians into "protective custody". But the mob then pressured the police to take action against the young men, accusing them of engaging in "religious conversion", and a case was registered against them. Conversion is a sensitive issue for many Hindus in India, and some states have introduced laws that forbid it by means of "force", "fraud" or "inducement". Pray for these faithful evangelists, that the Lord will enable them to speak His Word with great boldness (Acts 4:29).

**Sunday 8 Pravin Togadia, General Secretary of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), a Hindu nationalist organisation in India, has called for a new constitution that allows the "beheading" of anyone who converts Hindus. His remarks, made at a rally for VHP workers, included further inflammatory statements, and follows calls from other Hindu extremists for the prohibition of conversions. Attacks against Christian individuals and communities in India are often linked to accusations that they are converting Hindus. Pray that the freedom of India's Christians to share their faith will be upheld.**

**Monday 9** Pray for the family of Saqib Masih, a 22-year-old Pakistani Christian, who was shot dead as Muslims took over some land allocated to a Christian village by the government. He was killed on the spot, and 37 people, including children, were seriously injured when a mob of around 60 Muslims descended on the village in Mian Channu, Punjab, on 5 October. The land had been illegally sold to two Muslims, who arrived with armed accomplices to claim it. They attacked the female members of one family, and as other villagers rushed to their aid, the assailants opened fire on them. The police arrested 13 men. Pray that the land will be restored to the village and that the community will recover from this onslaught.

**Tuesday 10** Zubaida Bibi (35), a Christian mother of four, was killed on 12 October by a Muslim colleague after she resisted his attempt to rape her at the factory where they worked in East Karachi. He followed her into the bathrooms, which she was going to clean, and locked the door behind them. When he attempted to assault Zubaida sexually, she cried for help, at which point he pulled out a dagger and slit her throat. She died at the scene, and the man was arrested at the factory. Christian women and girls in Pakistan are very vulnerable to sexual and physical attack by Muslims. Pray for Zubaida's family, that they will be comforted and cared for, and that her murderer will be brought to justice.

**Wednesday 11** The government of the Maldives has tightened still further its powerful grip on religious practice in the islands. Spreading any religion other than Islam, and carrying or displaying books on non-Muslim religions, were already illegal under the country's repressive Religious Unity Act. But now new regulations have imposed penalties of up to five years in jail for anyone found guilty of preaching anything

except the state-approved version of Islam. The small number of Christians in the Maldives suffer ostracism and serious discrimination, and any who dare to share their faith are now in danger of legal reprisals. Pray that the Lord will give them courage and hope as they seek to live faithfully for Him.

**Thursday 12** In their unrelenting efforts to quash the spread of Christianity in Iran, the authorities are devising ever more cruel means of harassing Christians. In one case reported in September 2011, a child was taken hostage by the security forces in a bid to coerce the Christian parents to make a statement against Christians in prison. The couple had adopted the child after years of waiting for a legal adoption, and the emotional stress of the ordeal made the Christian woman so unwell that she had to be taken to hospital. Pray that this family will be comforted and allowed to resume their lives together without fear of further harassment.

**Friday 13** Give thanks to God for the courage and boldness of Iranian house church leader Noorollah Qabitzade, a convert from Islam to Christianity, who was imprisoned after being arrested on Christmas Eve, 2010. He has resisted intense pressure to renounce his faith and instead tried to share the Gospel with other prisoners. He was promised freedom if he would sign commitments pledging not to evangelise, repenting his decision to leave Islam and renouncing his Christian faith, but he refused. At his first court hearing, he was threatened with the death penalty. Pray that the Lord will continue to give him strength to stand firm, and for his swift release from prison.

**Saturday 14** Continue to pray for Iranian pastor Youcef Nadarkhani, who was sentenced to death for apostasy in November 2010. At the



**Noorollah Qabitzade, an Iranian church leader and convert from Islam, has resisted pressure to renounce his faith (Source: Mohabat News)**

time of writing, his case had been referred to Iran's supreme leader for a decision. This unusual move indicates how much is at stake for both Pastor Nadarkhani and the country, which has been criticised on the international stage over his death

sentence. The church leader has repeatedly refused opportunities to renounce his faith in order to secure an annulment of the charge. Thank God for Pastor Nadarkhani's courage, and pray that the international pressure on Iran will result in his acquittal and freedom.

**Sunday 15 Please continue to pray for our Christian brothers and sisters in Syria in these uncertain times. According to the United Nations, more than 3,500 people have died during months of anti-government protests in the country. Most Christians have not been involved, as the churches have been generally well treated under the regime of President Assad, despite being subject to various restrictions. But some believers have been killed, and all are facing the menacing possibility of a new government dominated by Islamists. Pray that the current international efforts to restore stability to Syria will succeed, and that future political change will benefit and not harm the Christian community.**

**Monday 16** Christians in Saudi Arabia are living out their faith in one of the most conservative Sunni Muslim countries in the world. Their government claims that none of its citizens are Christians. Although this is not correct, only the Lord knows the true numbers of Saudi believers, as most keep their faith secret because of the likelihood of severe persecution and possibly death if their conversion from Islam becomes known. There are also millions of foreign workers living in the country, many of whom are Christians. Pray that Christians living in Saudi Arabia will be able to stand strong in their faith despite the severe restrictions and hostility they face, and that they may experience God's comfort and nearness at all times.

**Tuesday 17** Pray for Christians in Zambia following the election of a Christian president, Michael Sata, in September 2011. MPs have been challenging him to state publicly that he will follow the Zambian constitution, which states that Zambia is a Christian country. Zambian Muslims are establishing successful schools for children who have dropped out of education; the children do not have to convert to Islam to attend, but the schools give Islamic teaching and create an Islamic ethos, and some students are becoming Muslims. Give thanks that the Gospel is also being proclaimed boldly in Zambia today, and pray that the freedoms of the country's Christians will be protected by the new government.

**Wednesday 18** Mosques are springing up rapidly in France. The present total is more than 2,000, and the head of the Grand Mosque of Paris recently called for this number to be doubled to meet growing demand. Another 150 are already under construction. Although it is right for Muslims to have places to meet, this need is often exploited by Islamists, who see the building of new and magnificent mosques as part of their

long-term strategy to assert the superiority of Islam and eventually to Islamise the West. Pray that the authorities in France and throughout Europe will have wisdom in responding to requests for new mosques, and that they will resist attempts to impose a more Islamic character on Western society.

**Thursday 19** Alaa Alsaegh, an Iraqi convert from Islam to Christianity living in the United States, was violently attacked in October 2011 because of a poem he wrote about the Jewish Holocaust. The Iraqi immigrant had expressed his pain over the loss of six million Jews at the hands of the Nazis. While he was driving through St. Louis, Missouri, two men forced his vehicle to a standstill. They opened his door and carved the Star of David on his back with a knife, telling him not to publish any more poems. Alaa said afterwards that his attackers may have been Somali Muslims. Pray that the attackers will be identified and brought to justice, and that Alaa will receive strength to continue expressing his faith.

**Friday 20** At a meal hosted by non-Muslim minorities in Turkey in late 2011, the Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, admitted the injustices suffered by non-Muslims and declared, "Those days are no more". He promised that the country's new constitution would correct the discrimination that they have had to endure. His statement followed an announcement that assets seized from the country's Christian and Jewish minorities since 1936 would be returned and compensation paid for confiscated property that had been sold on. But anti-Christian feeling runs very deep in Turkish society, and the reality and extent of the government's commitment to change is very uncertain. Pray that Turkish Christians will be protected from attack, and that the authorities will follow through on their promises.

**Saturday 21** Scores of young Christians in Tajikistan were eager to learn how to start their own business and find their way out of poverty when they were given the opportunity to take a five-day course sponsored by Barnabas in their local church. Twenty-nine of the 37 students who handed in a business plan received a loan from their church. They started small businesses, including selling watermelons, washing cars, and repairing electrical household appliances. Praise God for this opportunity for Christians in the poorest of the former Soviet states to become self-sufficient. Pray that more Christians will be able to start their businesses as the first group repay their loans.



**Young Christians in Tajikistan learn how to become self-sufficient with help from Barnabas**

**Sunday 22** New legislation was passed in October 2011 that severely restricts freedom of religion in Kazakhstan. All religious groups must now re-register with the state and provide detailed information about their original leaders, activities and beliefs. Any new place of worship will require the approval of national and local authorities, and the distribution of religious literature will be allowed only in specified places. Evangelism amongst children has been restricted, while the range of violations punishable under the religion law has been widened. Pray that Christians in

Kazakhstan, who are severely affected by this repressive new legislation, will find their strength in the Lord (1 Samuel 30:6) and grow in their faith despite all discouragements. Ask the Lord to work in the hearts of the Kazakh leaders so that they repeal these laws.

**Monday 23** In September 2011 the Post Office Customs Division in Uzbekistan confiscated a shipment of Christian books sent to a member of an unregistered church in the capital, Tashkent. Earlier in the year a court had ordered thousands of Bibles imported to Uzbekistan to be sent back at the Bible Society's expense. A former employee said that it was "hard or even impossible" to import literature in the Uzbek language. The hard-pressed churches of Uzbekistan could be greatly blessed by good Christian literature, but the authorities impose strict censorship on Christian books sent into the country, as well as on their production and distribution. Pray that these repressive restrictions will be relaxed, and that the Lord will build up His Church in Uzbekistan (Ephesians 2:19-21).

**Tuesday 24** Christians in Iraq continue to be victims of violent and targeted physical attacks. On 30 September 2011 the body of Emmanuel Hanna Paules was found in Kirkuk. It appears that he had been strangled and shot. Another Christian, Bassam Eshoo, was shot dead by a group of unknown assailants in the restaurant where he worked in Mosul on 2 October 2011. Three other Christians were taken hostage by unidentified gunmen in September 2011 and released only after a large ransom was paid a week later. Pray that God will protect those who put their trust in Him and be their shield and buckler (Psalm 91:4-6). Pray that the plans of those who intend to harm them will be foiled and that their persecutors will recognise Jesus' saving power.

**Wednesday 25** Lift up in prayer Pastor Jamal, who was taken from his home in the autonomous region of Iraqi Kurdistan, in July 2010 and (at the time of writing) is held in a special prison for terrorists. For days on end he was left blindfolded and handcuffed in solitary confinement, receiving very little food and water. His captors regularly interrogate him on why he has left Islam for Christ. Sometimes he is put in the general area of the prison with the hardcore terrorists. There he continually witnesses to his faith in Jesus, and as a result some prisoners have come to faith. Please pray for Pastor Jamal's safety and swift release. Ask the Lord to empower him during his ordeal and that He will continue to use him for the work of His Kingdom.

**Thursday 26** Praise God that permission has been granted and land donated by the regional governor in Dohuk, Iraqi Kurdistan, to build a church. This is the second new church in Iraq since the 2003 US-led invasion. Governor Tamar Ramadhan gave two acres of land to Christians in October 2011 for building a multi-purpose centre. The complex will include a church, seminary, medical clinic and Christian school, and the first phase of the building is scheduled to be completed this year. Northern Iraq, where both churches will be situated, has become a refuge for thousands of Christians who have been forced to flee their homes in Baghdad and other Iraqi cities because of targeted violent attacks against them. Praise God for these symbols of a Christian presence in Iraq, and pray that the Lord may protect and bless the congregations.

**Friday 27** "We are an Islamic country. We take the Islamic religion as the core of our new government. The constitution will be based on our Islamic religion." These words from Mustafa Abdel Jalili, leader of the Transitional National Council in Libya, on 22 October were greeted

with cries of “Allahu Akbar” (“god is great”) from his enthusiastic audience. Jallili also said that laws opposed to sharia would be abolished and called for an Islamic banking system. It seems increasingly likely that the brutal regime of Colonel Gaddafi will be replaced by a strongly Islamic government, and this poses a grave threat to the few Christian converts from Islam in the country. Pray for their protection, and also for wisdom for Libya’s expatriate Christians in the new political climate.

**Saturday 28** The first elections held in Tunisia since the revolution of January 2011 brought bad news for the country’s isolated and vulnerable Christians. The Islamist Ennhada party emerged with the largest share of the vote and won over 40 per cent of the seats in the national constituent assembly. Its victory will give it a dominant role in shaping the new political landscape, which is now likely to have a more openly Islamic character. Many of the few hundred indigenous Christians are already secret believers, and their safety will be endangered even further by a mainly Islamist regime. Pray that the Lord may overrule Tunisia’s future for the good of His people. “God is king over the nations; God sits on his holy throne” (Psalm 47:8).

**Sunday 29 Pray for a congregation in Tai’an, Shandong province, China, whose church building is facing demolition. Although the church belongs to the officially approved Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM), property developers have secured government backing for the demolition, despite the fact that the buildings are designated as protected national historical landmarks. One wall of the church compound has already been pulled down; when**

**some elderly church members tried to stop the destruction, they were beaten to the ground. The church has launched an appeal, but TSPM churches are subject to tight control by the authorities and have little defence against arbitrary decisions of this kind. Pray that the Lord will strengthen the church at this time of uncertainty.**

**Monday 30** “Believers have passion and joy in their hearts. We give thanks to God, for He has granted us hope and faith, has restored us from weariness, and has enabled us to trust Him alone,” says a recent statement from Shouwang Church in Beijing, China. Continue to pray for our valiant brothers and sisters, who have continued to meet in the open air to worship the Lord despite persistently harsh treatment by the authorities. Many believers have been detained at the venue, on their way there, or even because the police suspect that they intend to go. The church was evicted from its meeting-place in April 2011 by the government, which had previously pressured



Shouwang Church in Beijing, China has worshipped outside for months in all weathers (Source: [www.chinaaid.org](http://www.chinaaid.org))

property owners not to sell or lease premises to them. Pray that the Lord will honour the faithfulness of His people and that they may soon be granted a safe place to worship.

**Tuesday 31** In August 2011 a South Korean pastor died in a suspected poison needle attack after smuggling runaways from North Korea to safety. Christians in North Korea are thought to number at least 400,000, but they are cruelly persecuted: they live in constant danger of imprisonment and torture in the regime's notoriously brutal labour camps, and even of execution. Those who try to help them escape across the border do so at the risk of their lives. Pray for deliverance for our brothers and sisters in their distress, and that the Lord will protect those Christians in neighbouring countries who reach out to help them.

## February

**Wednesday 1** Twenty-two children of Arab Christian workers who minister in a Middle Eastern country are receiving a Christian education thanks to support from Barnabas. State schools in this country are often in extremely poor physical condition, classrooms are overcrowded, and under-qualified staff teach by rote. Islam is heavily promoted, and the memorisation of extensive passages from the Qu'ran is compulsory. Discrimination against non-Muslim children is often open and aggressive. One of the Christian mothers said, "My son is so thankful. He was so frustrated with the national curriculum, but now he feels motivated to learn and enjoys school." Give praise that these Christian children can receive a Christian education and pray that they may grow up into mature believers.

**Thursday 2** At least 25 people were killed and hundreds injured when Christian protestors were brutally assaulted in Egypt on Sunday 9

October. Video footage showed military vehicles charging at Christians who were demonstrating in Cairo against the torching of a church (see 3 February) and other injustices. They were also shot at, beaten and dragged through the streets by soldiers, Islamist attackers and plain-clothed thugs. Although Muslims were among the aggressors, some were also reportedly present to defend the Christians from the security forces. Adding insult to injury, generals from the ruling Supreme Council of the Armed Forces blamed Christian protestors for the violence, and denied that troops had fired at protestors and rolled over them in military vehicles. Pray for all those who were bereaved and injured in this attack, and ask that Egyptian Christians will be treated justly as equal citizens.

**Friday 3** The protest in Cairo was sparked by the destruction of St George's Church in Aswan province on 30 September 2011. Muslims, angry about renovation work that was being carried out on the dilapidated building, had previously threatened to demolish the church. A mob descended on St George's after Friday prayers and demolished the dome, walls and columns before torching the building. Other property owned by Christians was also burnt. This incident was the latest in a long line of violent attacks on Christians in Egypt, which have intensified since the revolution. Pray that the Lord will encourage the congregation that has lost their building and provide them with alternative premises in which to meet and worship Him.

**Saturday 4** Since the fall of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in February, hard-line Islamist groups that his regime had kept on a tight leash have grown in strength and influence. At the time of writing, they were expected to emerge with the largest share of the vote in the first parliamentary elections since the revolution. Key figures from the leading party, the Muslim Brotherhood, have

made statements revealing their intention to implement sharia law, which would be a very worrying development for Egyptian Christians and also for the revolutionaries who wanted to see Egypt become a secular democracy. Pray that the country will not become an Islamic state and that all citizens will be fairly represented in the new political order.

**Sunday 5 Just as Paul worked as a tentmaker while bringing the Gospel to others (Acts 18:2-4), so nine recent Bible school graduates in Senegal learned a practical skill to support themselves in their ministry while also receiving a solid nine-month Biblical training. Support from Barnabas made this possible. Every weekday morning the students immersed themselves in theological training, and in the afternoons they learned skills such as farming, baking and breeding livestock. Pray that God will inspire and lead them as they work and witness amongst non-believers in Senegal, where the overwhelming majority is Muslim. Ask the Lord that their Muslim neighbours will respond with faith to their message.**

**Monday 6** On 3 November a prayer meeting was drawing to a close at a church in Tabak Village, Kaduna State, Northern Nigeria, when gunmen burst into the building. They opened fire on the congregation, which was made up mainly of women and children. Two women died at the scene, and twelve other people were wounded, some critically. The next day six churches in the mainly Christian neighbourhood of Jerusalem in Damatura, Yobe State, were bombed as part of a wider series of attacks by the militant Islamist

group Boko Haram. One minister said that gangs of young men were roaming the streets throwing improvised bombs into church buildings. Pray that God will comfort His people in their grief and distress.

**Tuesday 7** “Whomever we kill, we kill because Allah says we should kill and we kill for a reason.” With these words the spiritual leader of Boko Haram urged his followers to carry out more assassinations and bombings. The group is fighting to establish an Islamic state in the North of Nigeria, and in 2011 its violent campaign claimed the lives of more than 240 people. Tensions have been particularly high since April, when Muslims went on the rampage in protest against the re-election of the country’s Christian president, unleashing their rage against Christian targets among others. Pray for order and stability in Northern Nigeria, and that Boko Haram will not succeed in its objectives.

**Wednesday 8** Converts from Islam need clear Christian teaching specially designed for them and a safe place to ask questions. In Burundi 108 Christians from a Muslim background received a five-day foundational Christian training course through a grant from Barnabas Fund. Much of what they learned was new to them, especially to 60 who had found the Lord very recently. Our project partner writes that the sharing of testimonies were a “great blessing and inspiration to all of us”. Give thanks that the faith of these Muslim-background believers was strengthened through solid Biblical teaching tailored for them. Pray for God’s leading as they witness for Christ among their Muslim friends.

**Thursday 9** Since June 2011 when the government of Burma (Myanmar) broke a 17-year ceasefire with the Kachin Independence Organisation, which controls Kachin state,



**Christian converts from Islam in Burundi who received Biblical teaching sponsored by Barnabas**

Burmese soldiers have raped, tortured and killed civilians, and used people for forced labour. Around 30,000 Kachin people have been displaced as the army plunders villages and sets homes alight. Many have been forced to live in temporary shelters at makeshift camps on the Chinese border, surviving on meagre rations. Over 90% of the 1.2 million Kachins are Christians. Pray for peace in Kachin state and that those who have lost homes and loved ones will soon be able to start rebuilding their lives.

**Friday 10** "Everyone was screaming. I saw fiery sparks and, near the entrance, a man dead on the ground... People around him were splattered with blood." A worshipper at the Bethel Injil Sepuluh church in Solo, Central Java, Indonesia, recalled the terrible scenes after a suicide bomber detonated his explosives on 25 September 2011 as the congregation were leaving after a service. Only the bomber was killed, but 28 people were injured. Islamists who want to destroy Christianity from Indonesia and bring the whole country under sharia law have been waging an often violent campaign against Christians in recent years. Pray for the church members as they recover from their ordeal and

that Christians in Indonesia may find God to be a very present help in their trouble (Psalm 46:1).

**Saturday 11** Radical Muslim groups in Indonesia are forcing the shut down or demolition of numerous church buildings. More than 50 have been closed in the last two years, in most cases as a result of Islamist pressure. The official reason given was that the buildings were unlicensed or lacked the minimum number of worshippers, but Christian leaders have asked, "Why is this only applied to the Christian churches and not to other places of worship?" In another instance of blatant discrimination by the authorities, a church in Bogor, West Java, has had to meet in the open air for more than three years after its building permit was revoked, and local authorities have rejected a court order to re-open the church. Pray that Christians in Indonesia will persevere in their worship despite these pressures, and that they may be treated on equal terms with the country's Muslim majority.

**Sunday 12** **Christians in south-east Asia have been caught up in the acute suffering caused by the worst floods to hit the region for 50 years.**

**Hundreds of people, many of them children, were killed, and millions were forced to flee their homes, saw their livelihoods swept away, or had to live without sufficient water, food or sanitation. The waters, which were produced by unusually heavy seasonal rains, wreaked their havoc across six countries. Barnabas Fund sent urgently needed aid to some of the Christian victims in four countries. Please pray for all affected by the floods and especially for our Christian brothers and sisters as they recover from their devastating losses and start to rebuild their lives.**

**Monday 13** When thousands of the mainly Christian Hmong people of Vietnam held peaceful demonstrations in 2011 calling for land reform and religious freedom, the army killed at least 63 of them; hundreds were injured or taken away on trucks. And a report from Human Rights Watch accused the government of “tightening the screws” on Christians from another ethnic group, the Montagnards, imprisoning members, closing churches and forcing believers to renounce their faith publicly. The Communist government sees Christianity as a Western religion and a potential threat to their authority, so they exercise strict control over the country’s Christians. Those who belong to ethnic minorities are particularly vulnerable to persecution. Pray that the Lord will give His people faith and strength to withstand this harsh treatment and that the authorities will grant them greater liberty to practise their faith.

**Tuesday 14** Pray for Christians in Nepal, who often have nowhere to bury their dead. Local communities in this mainly Hindu country sometimes object to Christian graves, and relatives are forced to dig up bodies and find new

places to bury them. Some Christians have even had to dispose of corpses in secret. In February 2011 further Christian burials were forbidden in the grounds of a Hindu temple that the churches have used for decades. Since then the government has granted no new burial grounds to the Christians, despite much persuasion and a large Christian demonstration in the capital, Kathmandu. Praise the Lord that the number of Christians in Nepal is growing; pray that the authorities will not see them as a threat and will address their need for burial places.

**Wednesday 15** A 12-year-old Pakistani Christian girl, Amber, was abducted, raped, and forcibly married to one of her Muslim assailants. Thank the Lord that she managed to escape after an eight-month ordeal during which she was subjected to daily sexual and physical assaults by her “husband” and another man. But though free, Amber is not safe, and her family have been forced into hiding as the attackers seek to hunt them down. The police have refused to register a case against the offenders and instead told Amber’s parents to hand her over to her husband.



**Amber, aged 12, was raped and forcibly married to her Muslim captor**

Pray that the Lord will be for her a rock of refuge and a strong fortress to save her (Psalm 31:2).

**Thursday 16** Pray for Faryal Bhatti (aged about 13) and her family, who have been forced to leave their home in Havelian, Pakistan, after she accidentally misspelled a word at her school on 22 September 2011. When answering a question, Faryal inadvertently misplaced a single dot in one word. This turned the word *naat*, which refers to praise of Muhammad, to *laanat*, which means “curse”. Enraged Muslims demanded that she be brought before a court for violating the country’s “blasphemy laws”. Despite her explanation that the mistake was without malicious intent, and some Muslim leaders speaking out in her defence, Faryal was expelled from her school and her family threatened and evicted from their home. Ask for the Lord’s blessing and protection of Faryal’s family as they rebuild their lives elsewhere. Pray that the government of Pakistan will abolish the controversial blasphemy laws.

**Friday 17** Hindu radicals in Kandhamal district of Orissa State in India hoisted their saffron flag on the construction site of a new church on 6 October 2011. The incident, which took place during a Hindu festival, was provoked by the gathering of building materials by local Christians, and brought the work on the site in the village of Bakingia to a standstill. The previous church had been destroyed during the anti-Christian violence by Hindu militants in Orissa in 2008, but the community had started rebuilding after receiving compensation from the government. Pray that further extremist violence against the Christians of Bakingia will be prevented, and that they will be able to rebuild their church and worship in peace.

**Saturday 18** “The life of the Christians has become vulnerable and people are living in constant fear of being attacked and reviled.”

These were the words a church leader in Bangalore wrote to the chief minister of Karnataka state, India, after yet another Christian building was vandalised on 2 November 2011. More than 400 incidents of anti-Christian violence have been recorded since 2007, when the Hindu nationalist BJP took control of the state government. In September 2008 there were 37 instances in just two or three days, and attacks on individuals and churches have continued ever since. Pray that the state government will take firm action against those responsible for the violence, and that Christians will stand firm under pressure.

**Sunday 19 Churches in Russia that do not have a permanent building of their own are especially vulnerable to harassment from the authorities. Increasing numbers are being fined or threatened for holding meetings for worship that have not been specifically approved by the authorities. Leaders can be prosecuted even when their churches are registered and meeting regularly in rented premises. Around half the prosecutions are successful; these attract negative publicity for the churches and put their legal status at risk. Some leaders say that the position of Protestant Christians is more precarious now than in Communist times. Pray that all Christians in Russia will have freedom to meet and worship the Lord without unfair restrictions.**

**Monday 20** Pray for patient endurance for the churches of Azerbaijan as they face the prospect of draconian new penalties for a range of Christian activities. Under proposed amendments to the country’s Criminal and Administrative

Codes, those who produce or distribute religious literature that has not been vetted by the state could be sent to prison for five years or be liable to a fine of nearly nine times the official minimum wage. Fines are also set to increase for a range of other offences. These changes come on top of much stricter registration requirements for churches introduced in 2009, which have left hundreds of groups still awaiting government approval. Pray especially for Cathedral of Praise Church in the capital, Baku, which has still not been allowed to re-register despite winning a long legal battle against the state.

**Tuesday 21** Pray for Christians in Kyrgyzstan following the country's presidential election in October 2011. This was the first such election under the new constitution, which was introduced after a mass uprising in 2010. Since then the government has been too weak to enforce the country's repressive religion law, and some Christian groups have enjoyed more freedom than they expected. Pray that new President Almazbek Atambayev will not start to enforce the law more strictly and that it will eventually be repealed. Pray too that he will govern in the interests of all the people of Kyrgyzstan and that the discrimination suffered by Christians will be relieved.

**Wednesday 22** Please continue to pray for vulnerable Afghan converts from Islam to Christianity, who live their lives in real danger of death. The government has threatened to execute anyone convicted of apostasy from Islam, and sometimes the Taliban and other armed groups gruesomely murder converts in accordance with sharia. Some Christians flee abroad, but if they are refused refugee status by the UN they have no defence against deportation back to Afghanistan. The estimated 1,000 to 3,000 Afghan Christians are all converts. Pray for

their protection, and that the authorities will look with compassion on their plight. Pray too that the religious freedom promised by the Afghan constitution will become a reality.

**Thursday 23** "God is on the throne and He reigns!" wrote an Algerian Christian leader to Barnabas Fund following the historic decision last year to grant official recognition to the country's Protestant Church Association (EPA). Local police had issued an order to stop his church's activities, but after it produced legal evidence of its membership of the EPA, the Ministry of Interior promised to contact the police and tell them to leave the congregation in peace. Give thanks that EPA churches now have some protection against harassment by zealous local officials. Pray that God will glorify His name and build His kingdom in Algeria (Psalm 46:10).

**Friday 24** Praise the Lord that a ministry worker among young children in Azerbaijan has successfully undergone an urgent operation, funded by Barnabas, for removing exceptionally large benign tumours from her womb. The doctors were amazed that she survived the operation. During her seven days of recovery in hospital she continually witnessed about how she found freedom in Christ after leaving Islam. After she gave copies of the Jesus film and Christian cartoons to patients and nurses, others came in to ask for the films for themselves and their relatives. By the end of her treatment she had handed out 130 Christian DVDs! Pray for a full recovery for her from this major surgery and that those who have watched the films will also come to know Jesus as their Saviour.

**Saturday 25** Islam wields powerful influence in Bangladesh, leaving the country's small Christian community highly exposed to discrimination and violence. They are commonly disadvantaged

in education and employment, and several have been martyred in recent years. Muslim extremists are also demanding the introduction of “blasphemy laws”; Christians have suffered grievously under such legislation in Pakistan. They also share in the general scarcity in one of the poorest countries in the world, which is especially prone to devastating floods and cyclones. Pray that the Lord will uphold His people as they seek to serve Him in the face of these challenges, and that He will empower the brave Bangladeshi evangelists who share their faith boldly with others.

**Sunday 26 Lift up to the Lord the family and friends of a Christian teenager who was beaten to death on 16 October by Muslim classmates at**



**Ayman Nabil Labib, an Egyptian teenager who was beaten to death by his classmates (Source: [www.aina.org](http://www.aina.org))**

**his school in Egypt after he refused to conceal his cross tattoo and necklace. Ayman Nabil Labib (17) was set upon after his Muslim teacher told him to remove or cover up the cross tattoo on his wrist; he refused and instead revealed that he wore another cross under his clothes. Some Muslim students then beat him savagely; he died at the scene.**

**Two Muslim students were arrested and charged. Pray that justice will be done for this brutal murder.**

**Monday 27** “They want to wipe out our ethnic group and force us to become Buddhists like them, speak like them and become one of them.” These were the words of a Kachin leader in response to the latest onslaught by the Burmese military. Soldiers have raided and destroyed churches, and fired at and detained worshippers. In some places severe restrictions have been imposed on Christian activities; churches in Phakant township were told that Christians must request permission, at least 15 days in advance, to conduct a range of simple activities, including reading the Bible, conducting a Bible study, holding Sunday school, prayer and fasting. Pray that Christians in Kachin will be left in peace to worship and serve the Lord, and that He will give them strength and endurance in the face of ongoing persecution.

**Tuesday 28** An exhibition tour of Chinese Bibles in the United States in October and November 2011 was denounced by a US-based Christian human rights group as a “political propaganda show” to cover up the Chinese government’s persecution of Christians in the country. China Aid Association contrasted the picture presented by an exhibit showing Bibles being printed and distributed throughout China with cases of “house church” Christians (i.e. those from unregistered churches) being arrested and sentenced to prison terms for doing precisely the same thing, as well as other examples of anti-Christian persecution in the country. Thank God for the availability of His Word in China, but pray that the international community will challenge the Chinese government about its treatment of Christian citizens.

**Wednesday 29** Christians in Colombia who live in areas of the country that are under the control of armed paramilitary or guerrilla groups face much persecution. These illegal armed gangs force pastors to stop preaching, harass and kidnap them and extort large sums of money. Every year 20 to 30 pastors are assassinated in different parts of the country, and on average 200 churches are forcibly closed down every

year. Christians are regularly targeted because they are seen as a threat to the groups' ambition to exercise total control over local communities. Ask the Lord to comfort and empower Christians who are confronted by paramilitary violence. Pray that the government-supported demobilisation of these organisations will be successful and that their oppressive power will soon be broken.

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Cover: Christian women in Kenya receive emergency food aid from Barnabas

  
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