



# barnabasprayer

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

To help you  
pray for the  
persecuted  
Church

MARCH/APRIL  
2022

[barnabasfund.org](https://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.**

## March

**TUESDAY 1** Give thanks for the remarkable escape of the remaining twelve members of a group of 17 Christian missionaries and children (including a 10-month-old baby) abducted by an armed gang in Haiti. The workers from the US-based Christian Aid Ministries were kidnapped on 16 October shortly after leaving an orphanage where they had ministered to the children. They successfully slipped away from their captors during the night of 15 December. The five other members of the group were previously released on separate occasions in November and December. Miraculously, the captive Christians were able to open a door that was kept closed and blocked, and make it out of the small room in which they were being held, without their guards noticing. Praise God for the missionaries' deliverance and pray for their full recovery from the ordeal.

**WEDNESDAY 2** While some Christians in Afghanistan – first-generation converts and their children – were able to flee to neighbouring countries, many more were compelled to go into hiding as the Taliban swiftly overran the country in August 2021. Many of these Afghan believers are still trapped inside the country, in mortal danger from the Taliban, who had said that under their Islamist rule Christians must re-convert to Islam, leave the country, or be killed. The believers are constantly moving around within Afghanistan, from one house to another, fearing that even their relatives might betray them to the authorities. Please pray for the Lord's protection for our Afghan brothers and sisters and that Barnabas contacts will continue to be able to get practical aid to them.

**THURSDAY 3** Finding places in which to gather for worship is an extremely tough challenge for Algeria's Christians. Many church buildings have been closed and physically sealed on spurious administrative grounds. Three churches in the city of Oran were forced to close last year after draining legal battles. The three are among at least 20 churches forcibly closed since late 2017, most of which remain sealed. Ask the Lord to grant wisdom to His people as they lodge appeals against closures and that these buildings will once again be open for worship. Pray that where physical and legal barriers seem impossible to overcome, God's people will trust Him to find a way.

**FRIDAY 4** In November 2021 church leaders in Armenia expressed deep concern about increased Azerbaijani aggression on the border between

the two countries. It looked as if the Azerbaijani forces might try to seize more of Armenia's territory, thus precipitating a full-scale war. Pray to the LORD who makes wars cease to the ends of the earth, asking for His protection for our Armenian brothers and sisters, and that any plans of Azerbaijan that threaten their peace and safety will come to nothing (Psalm 46:9).

**SATURDAY 5** Pray for God's blessing on the income-generating projects which Barnabas is funding to help very poor Christians in Bangladesh support their families. Some families have received livestock such as goats, pigs, chickens, ducks or calves and some have been given start-up costs to establish a small village grocery shop. Ask that these micro-businesses will grow and thrive and that the Christians also will grow in their knowledge and love of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**SUNDAY 6** Father God, we pray that You will continue to protect Your people facing violence in many different parts of the world. Restrain the hands of the hostile governments, terrorists and even family members who would seek to do physical harm to Christian believers. Please sustain the faith of those who face such violence, that they may draw near to You in time of need. We pray in particular for those in Myanmar still grieving after the Myanmar army's shooting and burning of 35 people in a Christian community on Christmas Eve 2021. Please grant those who mourn the peace that transcends all understanding. In Jesus' Name we pray. (Philippians 4:7)

**MONDAY 7** As converts from Islam, Fulani Christians are viewed as

traitors by Muslim extremists and are especially likely to be targeted by the jihadists who are escalating their campaign of violence across Burkina Faso. Give thanks for the faithfulness of our Fulani brothers and sisters in the face of extreme danger that has forced so many to flee their homes and fields. Ask that they will have courage and perseverance knowing that God will meet all their needs according to the riches of His glory in Jesus Christ (Philippians 4:19).



Displaced Fulani Christians in Burkina Faso receive Barnabas-funded food aid

**TUESDAY 8** "God is love, God is love, God is love!" Honorine exclaimed when she saw the water shoot out of the bore-well in Madakar in the far north of Cameroon. Barnabas supporters have funded the digging of five wells and the drilling of five bore-wells in villages in this region, which suffers greatly from Boko Haram attacks. The water supply is vital for hundreds of Christians displaced by the violence, including many widows and orphans. Many people struggle to find drinking water, especially in such mountainous areas, often travelling miles, spending a whole day just to fill a 25-litre can of water. Lift up needy and persecuted Christians in the far north of Cameroon in prayer and ask that they will experience their heavenly Father's provision and protection.

**WEDNESDAY 9** As government restrictions on Chinese Christians increase, and their access to the Scriptures becomes increasingly difficult, pray that the Holy Spirit will be at work amongst them, teaching them all things and reminding them of everything that Jesus has said to us (John 14:26). Praise God that when the Chinese Church was cut off from outside links in 1949 for many decades, it did not die but grew tremendously while enduring great persecution. Pray that our Lord will continue to build His Church in China.

**THURSDAY 10** On 4 January the Egyptian Cabinet committee overseeing the process of granting licences to churches approved the application of a further 141 churches.



A Barnabas-funded microloan enabled Egyptian Christian widow "Ruth" to set up a small poultry business and become self-reliant

This was the 22nd batch of registrations and it brought the total number of licensed churches to 2,162 out of the 3,730 that applied following the repeal of Ottoman-era restrictions on church buildings in 2016. Congregations are allowed to worship in unlicensed church buildings pending completion of the official process. Praise the Lord that Christians in Egypt have a period of respite from pressure, and can worship Him freely.

**FRIDAY 11** Our heavenly Father knows which of His children are today suffering in Eritrean prisons and labour camps, just because of their love for His Son Jesus Christ. Most people are held without charge or trial and have no way of knowing how long their detention in appalling conditions will last. Yet some have spoken of feeling happier in prison than before their arrest, when they were waiting and wondering all the time when their arrest would come. Pray that during their harsh incarceration they will be able to fix their eyes on Jesus, draw comfort from His Spirit and be a channel of blessing to others.

**SATURDAY 12** Ethiopian children are dying of starvation in hospital in Mekelle, the capital of the predominantly Christian region of Tigray. Families who have trekked for days in the hope of finding food and refuge in the city tell of surviving on nothing but roots and leaves. These are the innocent victims of terrible conflict in the region, which has resulted in widespread displacement and hunger. Cry out to the Lord for an end to the violence. Pray that deliveries of humanitarian aid are given safe passage so that food reaches people in desperate

need. Pray also for aid that Barnabas has sent to Christians who have fled from Tigray to other areas of Ethiopia.

**SUNDAY 13** Lord Jesus, we thank You for Your unfailing love for children and how You affirm that the Kingdom of God belongs to such as them. We pray for Christian children who have suffered much through persecution. We lift to You those forced into exile such as 12-year-old Alina and her family from Iraq as she adjusts to life in the UK after the loss of her mother and months of hardship moving from country to country. Please draw near to Alina and other Christian children and establish them in their faith as they face such challenges. May they grow in resilience and learn to trust You more and more. (Matthew 19:14)

**MONDAY 14** “Every Sunday is a day of terror and trauma for Christians, especially those belonging to those small churches,” said a church leader in Madhya Pradesh, India. His words reflect the rising number of attacks against worship services and prayer meetings by extremists, often linked to false accusations against the Christians of unlawful conversions. Pray that the voices of moderate and peaceable elements in Indian society prevail over the hostility of the militants. Ask that Christians will be able to attend prayer and worship without fear, especially on the Lord’s day.

**TUESDAY 15** Praise almighty God for His protection of Christians in Indonesia over the Christmas period, a heightened time of risk from Islamist extremist attacks. Give thanks for the actions of the government of President Widodo in deploying almost 180,000 police officers to provide an earthly

guard for churches and public places over Christmas and New Year (often wrongly perceived in non-Western countries as a Christian festival).

Pray against the advance of Islamist extremism, asking the Lord to cause the terrorists to repent of their thoughts and actions.

**WEDNESDAY 16** In November 2021 an Iranian court in the south-western city of Dezful acquitted eight Christian converts accused of “propaganda activities in favour of anti-regime groups”. Esmaeil Narimanpour, Mohammad Ali Torabi Shangari, Masood Nabi, Alireza Varak-Shah, Hojat Lotfi Khalaf Juy, Mohammad Kayidgap, Mohsen Saadati Zadeh and Alireza Roshanaei Zadeh were all found not guilty. The judge ruled that “religious conversion” is not criminalised in Iran’s Islamic Penal Code. His verdict concluded that, while conversion from Islam was against Islamic law (sharia) and would be punished in the afterlife, it was not illegal according to Iranian law. Give thanks for this amazing decision and judicial ruling and pray that it will set a precedent for other court cases against Iranian Christians from a Muslim background.

**THURSDAY 17** Iraq, a country which has been riven with violence and instability for many years, is at the time of writing taking the first steps towards establishing a new government. The Iraqi parliament met on Sunday 9 January to choose a new Speaker. The parliament had a month from that day to choose a president, who would then appoint a new prime minister. The election results in October 2021 led to

violent clashes that left two dead and more than 125 injured. Pray that the process of forming the new government proceed peacefully, and that the new government will take effective steps to protect Iraq's beleaguered Christian community and ensure their equal treatment with the Muslim majority.

**FRIDAY 18** Kazakhstan started the year with a wave of violent protests and riots. At the time of writing the unrest has died down, but the violence resulted in at least 164 deaths. Protests began on 2 January over rising fuel prices, but rapidly expanded into wider anti-government demonstrations. Russian troops were called into the country to help restore peace but soon withdrew. Pray for Christians in Kazakhstan that they will be kept safe amidst the turmoil and political instability, and that they will be salt and light in their society.

**SATURDAY 19** Lamu County, Kenya is a mainly Muslim area, bordering Somalia and the vast Somali grazing lands of Kenya's Garissa county. An enclave inside Lamu, inhabited by Christians of the Kikuyu tribe, was attacked in early January, with about six people killed. The perpetrators were thought to be from the Somali Islamist terrorist group, Al Shabaab, as well as local Islamists. Favour from the central government of Kenya has created great jealousy by others in Lamu against the Kikuyu Christians. Pray for all who mourn loved ones murdered in this attack, which was apparently designed to instil fear, and ask that, with God's help, they may set an example of true forgiveness, as they forgive their attackers (Matthew 6:14).

**SUNDAY 20** Lord Jesus Christ, we pray today for Afghan Christians who have fled overland into neighbouring countries to escape the Taliban who are seeking to kill them because they love and follow You. Thank You for their faith that endures despite many dangers. May they be comforted knowing that You also fled the danger of death as an infant with Your parents, and suffered rejection and abuse in Your earthly life. We pray that these brave Afghan believers may soon be granted permission to settle permanently in safer countries, where converts from Islam are not persecuted or despised but welcomed as Your people.

**MONDAY 21** Kyrgyzstan's Issyk-Kul area draws many visitors to its huge saltwater lake, but this beautiful region is also strongly Islamic and one of the worst parts of the Central Asian country for anti-Christian persecution. When the pandemic stopped tourists coming in 2020, the economy of Issyk-Kul was devastated. Work dwindled and prices climbed. Through the local churches, Barnabas has helped hundreds of the poorest Christian families with basic food, fodder for their animals or coal for heating, during the freezing winter months. Pray that that they will continue strong in the Lord and that the Lord will add to their number as more Muslims turn to Him.

**TUESDAY 22** It is now more than two years since Laos passed its "Law on the Evangelical Church" giving Christians the right to conduct services, preach throughout the country and maintain contacts with believers in other countries, but these freedoms are not well protected by local authorities in the more remote parts of the country. At the

same time, a 2017 decree prohibiting “associations” from disturbing the “social order” or “national harmony” is sometimes used to persecute Christians. Pray that the non-Christian majority in Laos may see Christians as a positive influence in society, welcome their presence, and allow them to practise their faith freely.

**WEDNESDAY 23** The Libyan Ministry of the Interior warned its citizens in December not to celebrate Christmas or New Year’s Eve (often believed by Muslims to be a Christian festival). Restaurants and cafes were threatened with closure if they marked New Year’s Eve and the police seized Christmas trees of all shapes and sizes that were on sale in shops. Until recent years, many Libyan Muslims celebrated New Year’s Eve and Christian expatriates were able to celebrate Christmas. Pray for grace, peace and hope for Christians in Libya as restrictions grow; most of the Christians are migrant workers and refugees, but there are a small number of Libyan converts from Islam.

**THURSDAY 24** On 15 December French forces withdrew from the city of Timbuktu in central Mali, part of the ongoing withdrawal of the French military from this troubled Sahel nation. The French-led campaign against Islamist terrorists in Mali and the surrounding countries is due to finish at the end of this month. Meanwhile the Malian government, which came to power in a military coup in August 2020, promised to hold elections on 27 February. Pray for wise and just rule in Mali, with peace, stability and equality. Ask that the Lord will protect the small minority

of Christians, only about 2% of the mainly Muslim population, who suffer persecution despite Mali’s secular constitution.

**FRIDAY 25** Lift up to the Lord the small but growing number of Christians in Mauritania, an African nation once reputed to be the only country on earth with no known indigenous believers. Give thanks that Christian groups were able to provide aid to needy people during the Covid crisis, which demonstrated the love of Christ and lessened hostility towards believers. Pray that the Muslim majority will be inspired by the steadfast faith of Mauritanian Christians and that more will turn to Him, despite the great dangers that converts face in this country where the law lays down a mandatory death sentence for apostasy from Islam.

**SATURDAY 26** A pastor in the Macomia district of Cabo Delgado, northern Mozambique, was abducted and decapitated by Islamist extremists on 15 December. The Islamists ordered the pastor’s widow to carry his head in a sack to a district police station and report the murder. Pray that the Lord will comfort our sister in her grief and terrible distress after this experience. The incident was yet another act of brutality in a region that has suffered the most shocking violence in the last few years, while under the control of the Islamist organisation Ahlu Sunnah Wa-Jama. A combination of Mozambican, Rwandan and South African forces started to drive the Islamists back in the latter part of 2021. Pray for an end to violence in northern Mozambique.

**SUNDAY 27** Lord God and Heavenly Father, we lift up to You all those You have called as pastors and evangelists, who share Your Word and the Gospel of Your Son in dark and difficult circumstances, who build up believers and bring others to the joy of salvation. We ask that the Holy Spirit will attend them, giving their words power and sustaining their faith in spite of the troubles and dangers they face. Please continue to work mightily through the ministry of Your servants, extending “a kingdom that will never be destroyed” but will “endure for ever”. We pray this in Christ’s Name. (Daniel 2:44)

**MONDAY 28** Violence by the Myanmar military (Tatmadaw) against Christians and others shows no signs of ceasing. In Christian-majority Chin State, the military repeatedly shelled the town of Thantlang between late October and late December last year, destroying seven church buildings in four attacks. The persistent attacks on church buildings, after the population had fled the town and bringing the attackers no apparent military advantage, seems to show the hatred of the Tatmadaw towards Christians and other religious minorities in this Buddhist-majority country. Ask the Lord, for whom nothing is impossible, to change this hatred into love.

**TUESDAY 29** At the end of 2021, nine Christians in Hindu-majority Nepal were facing charges under that country’s anti-conversion law. The law came into force in 2018, making it illegal to attempt to convert a follower of a religion “being practised since ancient times”. This is interpreted as a religion passed down through at least three generations, thus protecting

Hindus and Buddhists but excluding most Nepali Christians, who are either first- or second-generation believers. The law also bans “hurting religious sentiment”, a vague wording that makes almost any public Christian activity potentially illegal. Pray that the charges against the nine Christians will be dropped. Pray also that Christianity, which has grown from almost nothing in the last 70 years, will cease to be seen as a new and alien religion in Nepal.

**WEDNESDAY 30** Niger is a very poor country, in recent years hovering near or at the bottom of the Human Development Index. The Christian community is estimated at only 0.4% of the population. Most of the churches are in Tillabéri, which is part of the “tri-border” region where Niger meets Mali and Burkina Faso. In the tri-border region there is so much jihadi violence that more moderate Muslims have created a militia to defend themselves. Many on both sides of the conflict have died. Pray that the Lord will be a shield and shelter for the Christians in Tillabéri and enable them to be peacemakers. Thank the Lord for the Nigerien government’s commitment to religious freedom.

**THURSDAY 31** Give thanks for the release of more than 60 Christians abducted from Emmanuel Baptist Church, Kakau Daji in the Chikun Local Government Area (LGA) of Kaduna State, Nigeria, on 3 December. During the attack on the church two Christians were killed and one injured. On the same day, also in Chikun LGA, some 200 to 300



Fulani extremist gunmen invaded the community of Ungwan Gimbiya, a few kilometres from Kakau Daji, killing two people and abducting more than 50 villagers. Attacks on Christian communities in Kaduna State are numerous. Pray that believers in Kaduna State and across the troubled North and Middle Belt of the country will stand firm in their faith and will have grace to forgive their attackers.

## April

**FRIDAY 1** December 2021 marked the ten-year anniversary of Kim Jong Un's rule in North Korea. It was originally hoped that Kim might bring reform to the repressive communist nation, but instead authoritarian rule has persisted. Christians are among those who bear the brunt of North Korean tyranny. Any action, including praying or reading the Bible, that identifies a person as a Christian can lead to imprisonment, torture and abuse, not just for the believer but for his or her entire family. Pray that the Lord will strengthen His suffering people in North Korea, enabling them to endure their persecution and be faithful, if necessary, unto death.

**SATURDAY 2** Give thanks for answered prayer for the reversal of the June 2021 decision to nationalise the historic Edwardes College in Peshawar. In January 2022 the renowned Christian higher education institution was returned to Church of Pakistan control. Christians are thrilled that the Christian character of the college can now be restored, and expressed gratitude for the global Church's prayer

support. The Church now has 75% control over the institution and the guarantee that the Principal will be a Christian. Pray that Edwardes College will shine as a beacon of excellence and of the Christian faith and ask for God's wisdom and guidance for the Principal.

**SUNDAY 3** Our Father in heaven, we lift up to you Christian women and girls living in contexts of persecution and marginalisation who are often doubly despised because of their faith and because they are female. O Father of Compassion, please provide for their daily needs and shield them from harm. We pray especially for widows and their children who, in some countries, are so vulnerable without their husband's earthly protection. Give thanks to the LORD for sustaining the fatherless and the widow. We ask this in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Psalm 146:9)

**MONDAY 4** Armed FSB officers disrupted a Christian conference in the Russian town of Ramenskoye, near Moscow, on 2 December, confining attendees, including children, in the conference building for around ten hours. The majority of attendees were charged with an "administrative offence" – an act considered to violate "the rules and norms" of the Russian Federation – because the Christian ministry that had organised the event had been declared an "undesirable" foreign organisation. "We pray for and bless Russia," said a church leader who was at the conference. "We want to serve for the good of our country." Pray that Russian Christians will not be treated with suspicion by the authorities, but will have opportunity to do good to their beloved motherland.

**TUESDAY 5** For the second year running, Christmas trees and decorations were on sale openly in Saudi Arabia last December, a significant change in a country where any public sign of following a non-Islamic religion used to be strongly forbidden. The majority of Christians in Saudi Arabia are expatriates from India and the Philippines. Indian Christians were thrilled to hold a big Christmas celebration at the Indian consulate in Jeddah, the first time they had done so (although Western expatriates — who are punished less severely than Asians — have been in the habit of celebrating Christmas in private compounds). Ask the Lord that this softening of attitudes in Saudi Arabia will continue, and that the tiny community of Saudi Christians, at present compelled to be secret believers, will soon be able to enjoy freedom of worship.

**WEDNESDAY 6** About one in four people are at risk of severe hunger because of drought in Somalia, a land also ravaged by decades of war. Aid agencies estimated that, following three consecutive seasons of poor rainfall, about 4.6 million people will need food assistance by next month, May 2022. “It is an unprecedented disaster that is coming,” warned an international aid agency. Amongst the almost 100% Muslim population is a small Christian community of converts and their children. Many have been murdered for their decision to follow Christ and all who remain are in severe danger. As they face this threat, on top of all the other challenges of life in Somalia, pray that the Lord Jesus will wonderfully fill them with hope, peace, joy and love. Ask that they will shine like stars in

their society as they hold firmly to the word of life (Philippians 2:15-16).

**THURSDAY 7** Sri Lanka is facing an economic and agricultural crisis that the government is struggling to manage. A Sri Lankan Christian reports that the cost of living has increased, while many have lost jobs. Power outages occur every day and there is often no gas for cooking. Because of changes to the formula for the gas piped to homes, gas explosions have become more likely — at least two people have been killed in such explosions. The lack of fertiliser means that the country may run short of rice and vegetables. Pray for the whole of Sri Lankan society, especially the small Christian minority, that God will supply all their needs.

**FRIDAY 8** “I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, ‘My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.’” (Isaiah 46:10). Sudan is in political turmoil and, at the time of writing it looks as if the period of military rule will be extended. Praise God that His purposes will stand and pray that His people in Sudan (about 3% of the population) will not be afraid but will trust in Him. After a generation of strict Islamic rule and persecution, the country began in 2020 to take steps towards equality, peace and freedom of religion. Pray that calls for a return to a strict interpretation of Islam will be resisted, whatever shape government takes over the coming months.

**SATURDAY 9** Christians in north-east Syria face pressure from three sources: Turkish military airstrikes, the local Kurdish Muslim population and the

terrorist violence of Islamic State (IS, ISIS, ISIL, Daesh). The whole Syrian population is suffering as the economy stands on the brink of collapse, with nine out of ten people living in poverty. In the misery of the civil war's aftermath, sanctions imposed by the US make reconstruction of war-damaged facilities impossible. Pray that the Lord will have mercy on this country, which was for most of the 20th century a place of safety, stability and respect for Christians. May His people be a channel of blessing and hope to all around them.

**SUNDAY 10** Almighty God, we pray for converts to Christianity who endure violence and injustice because of their faith in You. Thank you that You know what each one is facing today. We pray in particular for Roksari Kanbari in Iran, who was still recovering from the trauma of intensive interrogation by state security agents and a jail sentence when she was summoned again to face the same charge, even at the age of 64. Be close to her, O LORD. Give her courage and perseverance. Be a rock and a fortress for Roksari and all converts who suffer for Jesus, in whose Name we pray.



Roksari Kanbari, in Iran, says her only "crime" is her belief in Jesus Christ

**MONDAY 11** Concerns have been raised for the safety of Christians in Tajikistan as, for the first time since 1937, a national census has included a question about religion. It is believed that the census results, which are due to be published later this year, may make it easier for believers to be identified. Tajikistan is more than 90% Muslim, and one of the most religiously conservative of the Central Asian states. Christian congregations are already subject to government surveillance, including inspections of churches, while converts are at particular risk of violence and death. Pray that the census results will not make it easier for extremists, whether in government or in the community, to persecute the Church.

**TUESDAY 12** At the time of writing Turkey is facing an economic crisis, with inflation running at its highest level since 2001, the Turkish lira dropping in value, and public opinion turning against President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The risk of political turmoil or crisis is great, particularly as, with presidential and parliamentary elections scheduled for June 2023, Erdoğan seems to be seeking to strengthen his grip on power while opposition forces work to undermine him. Pray that in the midst of uncertainty Turkey's small and beleaguered Christian community will be kept in perfect peace as they steadfastly trust in the Lord (Isaiah 26:3).

**WEDNESDAY 13** Elections held in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) in January were won by the ruling National Unity Party (UBP)

with an increased number of seats but still not quite an outright majority. With 24 of the 50 seats in the TRNC's parliament the UPB will have to form a coalition with another party in order to govern. It is closely allied to President Erdoğan of Turkey. The TRNC, a breakaway state recognised only by Turkey, is beset by economic woes and has been hard hit by Covid-19. The population is estimated at 99% Muslim. Pray for the oppressed Christian community of the TRNC, asking that, if it is His will, the new government will look more kindly on the Christians.

**THURSDAY 14** In Muslim-majority Turkmenistan there are just 20 registered church buildings (places where it is legal for Christians to gather for worship). In recent years no new churches have gained registration, meaning that many congregations are operating unlawfully when they meet for worship. Yet Barnabas Fund contacts report that, though the registration process is restrictive and onerous – for example, the requirement that churches must have a minimum of 50 members before applying – often it is “the churches that do not seek or are afraid to apply for registration”. Please pray that pastors will be more courageous and active in this matter.

**FRIDAY 15** As we remember today our Lord's death on the cross for our sins let us pause to give thanks for those who have laid down their lives for Him. Thank the Lord for the life of Nitish Kumar, a teenage convert in Bihar, India, who died in September 2021 from injuries sustained as the victim of an acid attack carried out by radical nationalists after he refused

to stop holding prayer meetings. Pray that relatives and friends left behind by Nitish and other heroes of our faith will draw strength from remembering their example and draw comfort from knowing that their loved ones now wear a martyr's crown in heaven.

**SATURDAY 16** Praise our healing Saviour Jesus Christ for the dedication of Christian doctors, nurses and volunteers who have cared for hundreds of seriously ill Covid patients in their own homes in Uzbekistan, where hospitals have struggled to cope. Team members have put aside the danger of infection to themselves to treat patients severely ill with breathing difficulties, often providing them with oxygen concentrators, some funded by Barnabas supporters. Thanks to the team's voluntary efforts, the lives of many Christians and Muslims were saved.

**SUNDAY 17** Christ is risen! Alleluia! Lord Jesus, we celebrate Your triumph over death today and acknowledge You as the risen Lord of life. Thank You that You are our living hope because You have conquered the power of the enemy and are now seated at the right hand of the Father, interceding for us. We rejoice that hope does not disappoint us because God's love has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit He has given us. We pray that our persecuted brothers and sisters suffering for Your Name's sake will be strengthened by this living hope. We ask this in Your Name and for Your glory. (Romans 8:34, 5:5)

**MONDAY 18** At this time, with the continuing effects of Covid-19, global insecurity, wars and rumours of wars,

and the many natural disasters hitting our planet, some of which have had devastating effects on vulnerable Christians, pray to the Lord who holds the nations in His hands that His resurrection power will turn people and their leaders to peace and stability. Pray that they will beat their swords into ploughshares and will not train for war anymore (Isaiah 2:4). Ask that He will extend His Kingdom and will comfort His people and give them hope.

**TUESDAY 19** Recent months have seen a wave of anti-Christian persecution in various parts of India with extremists disrupting church meetings, burning Christian literature, attacking schools and assaulting worshippers. Yet faithful Christians continue to worship and witness, and non-Christians continue to be drawn to Christ. Pray for the strengthening of our brothers and sisters across India and that the Church will continue to grow both in states where there is much persecution and in those where there is freedom and safety.

**WEDNESDAY 20** A recent survey in Karnataka state, India, looked into complaints of forced conversions to Christianity. But the survey was abandoned after officials spoke to 46 Christian families who had converted to Christianity and found no evidence of coercion to convert to Christianity. The administrative officer said that the families were “in a much better place now and believe the new faith is the reason for their wellbeing”. Praise God for the vibrant witness of our brothers and sisters in Karnataka and ask that they will continue to experience His encouragement in their walk with Him. Pray that attempts to introduce

or tighten anti-conversion legislation across India will be defeated.

**THURSDAY 21** A suicide bomber attacked a crowded restaurant in Beni, Democratic Republic of Congo on Christmas Day. The bomber tried to enter the crowded restaurant, where many people had gathered to celebrate Christmas, but was stopped by security guards. He therefore detonated himself at the entrance, killing at least six other people including two children. Over 20 were injured. It is thought the bomber came from an Islamist group called the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). Pray that other members of the ADF, considered the deadliest militia in the region, will meet with the Prince of Peace and next Christmas will be worshipping Him as Lord and Saviour, not trying to destroy His followers.

**FRIDAY 22** Give thanks for answered prayers with the release of two more students kidnapped from Bethel Baptist High School in Nigeria. At the time of writing just one student is still being held out of the 121 young people who were abducted by an armed gang that stormed the school in Kaduna State in the early hours of 5 July 2021. Pray for the swift release of this last student. Praise God for the inspirational example of the school's head boy (aged 17), who was released in November after becoming seriously ill. He had refused earlier offers of release, stating he would not go free while any other student was still being held.

**SATURDAY 23** Give thanks for the life and ministry of Pastor William Siraj, shot dead by a Muslim gunman in

Pakistan on Sunday 30 January. The attack happened as he was driven home from Sunday morning service at a small church near Peshawar where he had ministered for more than 20 years. Pray for the family and all who mourn our faithful brother and ask that they be assured he has received the Crown of Life (Revelation 2:10). William was the older brother of Barnabas Fund's Pakistan coordinator, Wilson Saraj. Pray for physical, emotional and spiritual healing for the church's senior pastor, Patrick Naeem, who was driving the car and was wounded in the attack.

**SUNDAY 24** Father God, we give You thanks that there is increasing official recognition of the Armenian Genocide, the remembrance of which is observed by Armenians around the world today. Thank You that an increasing number of governments are officially recognising as genocide the violence which killed 3.75 million Armenian and other Christian minorities in the Ottoman Empire. Please take our human efforts, that may seem to us small and weak and futile and use them powerfully to prevent such terrible tragedy ever occurring again. We pray this in the Name of the Lord Jesus.

**MONDAY 25** At least 28 people were killed and 57 houses burned down in an attack by Islamist extremists against the Christian community of Yith Pabol, Aweil East county, South Sudan, in early January. Bishop Joseph Mamer Manot said on 6 January that “massive displacement has happened, and the humanitarian situation is alarming as food and other property have been burned down into ashes, leaving survivors with no shelters, no food and

no safe drinking water”. The incident was one of many attacks against South Sudanese Christians by Arab Muslims from the Republic of Sudan, along the disputed border between the two countries. Ask that the Lord will comfort those who grieve and provide for those who have lost so much, as well as bringing peace to this troubled land.

**TUESDAY 26** Church leaders in Pakistan condemned the killing in Sialkot, Punjab of a Sri Lankan factory manager who was accused of “blasphemy”. On 3 December, Priyantha Kumara – a Buddhist – was beaten and tortured to death by an angry mob of Muslims, who then set his body on fire. “We are feeling helpless in front of ignorant and religious fanatics,” said Akmal Bhatti, a Christian and chairman of Minorities Alliance Pakistan. “The survival of Pakistan depends on making its citizens humane and peaceful,” he added. The appalling incident led to widespread outrage, including from Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan. Pray that these tragic circumstances will lead to greater protections for Christians and other religious minorities.

**WEDNESDAY 27** Zafar Bhatti, a Pakistani Christian who was convicted of “blasphemy” in May 2017, was sentenced to death by Rawalpindi District Court on 3 January 2022. Bhatti, who has been fighting to clear his name since his arrest in 2012, appeared in court as part of an ongoing appeal against the life sentence he received when first convicted. The court, however, upheld the 2017 conviction, and further ruled that the proper sentence for “blasphemy” against Muhammad, the Islamic

prophet, was death rather than life imprisonment. Pray that a planned appeal against both the death sentence and the original conviction will succeed.

**THURSDAY 28** “Without Barnabas, my children and I would live on the streets and starve,” said Senegalese widow Mariétou, a Christian convert from Islam. Her husband, also a convert, died of Covid, leaving her with no means to support her children. Her parents refused to help unless the family became Muslim again. Pray that all converts around the world, especially convert widows like Mariétou who are so vulnerable to discrimination and persecution, will know God as their ever-present help and strength (Psalm 46:1). Mariétou was one of 12 convert widows, in similar situations, whom Barnabas helped to set up in their own small businesses and become self-reliant.



Barnabas provided Mariétou with a sewing machine to set up in business as a seamstress

**FRIDAY 29** An estimated 2.28 billion people are facing food insecurity in 2022 owing to a lack of reliable access to food in many parts of the world. The main reasons before the pandemic

were conflict, economic downturns and environmental disasters. While famine is an issue that affects all people, persecuted and impoverished Christians are often among the first to suffer. Beseech almighty God to give the hungry daily bread (Matthew 6:11) and ask for His protection for those who work tirelessly to feed people in desperate need.

**SATURDAY 30** “We especially want to thank the Barnabas Fund for their continued support, in Jesus’ Name.” These were the words of a community health worker in Matabeleland, Zimbabwe, after Barnabas Fund partners distributed ePap porridge to the desperately needy Christian community in November 2021. The distribution is part of Barnabas Fund’s food.gives initiative, in which food is being sent to malnourished Christians. In January 2022 18 tonnes of ePap was delivered to Christians in Madagascar, while the first container of dry food from our warehouse in Swindon arrived safely in Pakistan. Give thanks to the Lord that He is providing for His hungry children, and pray that He will use food.gives to help many more around the world.



Children in Zimbabwe have been revitalised with ePap

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