



barnabasprayer

Barnabas Aid - bringing hope to suffering Christians

To help you
pray for suffering
Christians

March/April 2024

barnabasaid.org

Thank you for your prayers for our persecuted brothers and sisters in Christ, which make such a difference to them. We sometimes have to change or omit their names for security reasons, and we have only limited space to share their stories. But the Lord knows the people and places we are praying about. Please do not feel limited by the specific prayer requests, but pray as you feel led. On each Sunday we have provided a set prayer; please feel free to use these in their current form, to adapt them as you prefer, or to use the information they contain to frame your own prayers.

March

FRIDAY 1 Several of the ten church buildings in the Christian town of Qaraqosh in Iraq have now been repaired and rebuilt after the destruction wreaked by militants from Islamic State (IS, ISIS, ISIL, Daesh). It was almost ten years ago, in August 2014, when IS took Qaraqosh and its 45,000 Christian inhabitants fled. Most of the displaced are still living barely 40 miles distant (66 km) in Erbil, the capital of Iraqi Kurdistan. Pray that more will be able to return to their home town, and that those who have already returned will find employment. Qaraqosh is in the Plains of Nineveh, the ancient heartland of Iraqi Christianity.

SATURDAY 2 Hostility towards Christians is rising in Kazakhstan as the Muslim majority increasingly link nationalism to Islamic identity. Their long-standing dislike and distrust of Christian converts from Islam is therefore starting to be directed against all believers, not just Kazakh converts but also those from Russian and Ukrainian backgrounds. Kazakhstan has strict laws that restrict religious teaching, activities and registration. Churches may register only if they have 50 members locally, 500 regionally and 5,000 nationally – an impossibility for smaller

churches. Ask that Kazakh Christians receive the strength and patience to endure. Pray that hostility towards them ceases and that restrictions are reduced, allowing believers to worship freely.



Kazakh believers singing Christian songs

SUNDAY 3 Loving Father, we pray for all Christians who have been driven from their homes because of their belief in You. Whether they are seeking refuge within their own country or abroad, after having lost their possessions and livelihoods, we pray that they will remember that You are their rock, their fortress and their deliverer. Please give them guidance and strength to endure through persecution, war, natural disasters or whatever may have caused them to become homeless. Help them rebuild their lives once again in safety. In Christ's Name we pray. (Psalm 18:2)

MONDAY 4 “In these moments, when we pray for overcoming such adversities, the Lord listens, answers, directs and protects,” said “Marat” a Kyrgyz Christian. He was describing how his best friend, a Muslim, learning that Marat had decided to leave Islam and follow Jesus, said that he would shoot Marat in the head if he only had a gun. Zhumashbek said that men from his village repeatedly threatened to throw him in the river if he did not stop talking about his new Christian faith. Rahat said the whole village tried to eject him and his family when they became Christians. They also refused him water for his crops and would not let him graze his cattle. Pray for all Kyrgyz Christian converts from Islam, that the Lord will help them endure persecution and not be afraid.

TUESDAY 5 Christianity in Laos is viewed as a Western religion and believers are treated with suspicion and hostility. The situation is better for Christians in urban areas, but believers in rural areas face frequent harassment from local authorities and from their own communities. Ten Christian families, who were evicted from three villages in Samoei District, Saravan Province, in September 2023, have now been given new land in another place by the Lao authorities. Pray that they will be able to rebuild their homes and livelihoods in peace. Pray that the courage of these faithful believers and many other Christians in Laos will inspire others to stand firm in His Name.

WEDNESDAY 6 The regional war that began in October 2023 is, at the time of writing, causing great anxiety to people in Lebanon, around a third of whom are Christians. Insecurity is especially acute

among those in the south, from where many are fleeing. Lebanon is already sheltering about 1.5 million refugees, mainly from Syria, including Christians. The situation is putting additional strain on the country’s crisis-hit economy. Pray for peace in the region. Ask for guidance for Lebanon’s leaders in bringing the economy under control. Pray that our brothers and sisters seek refuge in the Lord (Psalm 34:4).



A Christian in southern Lebanon, with food aid from Barnabas for her family

THURSDAY 7 Most of the Christians in Libya have come from other African countries, either to work or to try to cross over into Europe to seek asylum there. A small number are Libyan converts from Islam. In the chaos and violence of strongly Islamic Libya, with two rival governments and innumerable armed groups, even the Christians with jobs live very difficult lives. They are poor and vulnerable. No one wants to rent premises out to tenants who would use them for Christian worship. Pray that this ever-changing Christian community may be able to comfort,

encourage and edify each other, finding strength and hope in the Lord.

FRIDAY 8 Remembering that “God is not a God of disorder but of peace” (1 Corinthians 14:33) pray for Mali, which observers fear may become a failed state. There have been four coups since 1991. Various armed separatist groups and jihadists oppose the government but the last UN peacekeeping troops withdrew at the end of 2023. In the midst of this, the small Christian community (2%) is trying to survive. Church leaders are abducted from time to time by suspected Islamists. Praise God for the release of German church minister, Hans-Joachim Lohre, who had lived in Mali for over 30 years. He was set free in November 2023 after a year in captivity.

SATURDAY 9 Approximately one million people in Christian-majority Mozambique are displaced, forced to flee attacks by Islamists in the north, or natural disasters. Jihadi onslaughts have taken the lives of around 1,800 Christians since 2017. Small wonder the worst-affected northern province, Cabo Delgado, is known as the “land of fear”. The Islamist militants boast of killing Christians. Ask that the bereaved are comforted, knowing their loved ones are with the Lord. Pray that the men of violence will have a life-changing encounter with the Prince of Peace. Ask that the many needs of the displaced are met.

SUNDAY 10 **Lord Jesus, we lift up to You church leaders, pastors and those who share your Word all around the world. In many countries, it can be lonely and even dangerous to be someone You**

have called to spread the Gospel or strengthen Your people. We pray for protection for these leaders as they face hardship and hostility for Your Kingdom. If they or their families are to suffer for Your Name, we pray that You will help them stand strong through all persecution brought against them. Please fill them with Your wisdom and vision. In Your most holy Name we ask.

MONDAY 11 Two church buildings in Myanmar were targeted with airstrikes by the Tatmadaw (Myanmar military) at about 10.15am on Sunday 7 January, in Khampat township, Sagaing Region. According to reports, at least 15 people were killed, including about eight children. Ask the Prince of Peace to bring an end to the attacks on Myanmar’s non-Buddhist ethnic minorities. Pray that Christians, who have endured violence from their country’s armed forces for some six decades, will be given grace to keep on loving their enemies and praying for their persecutors (Matthew 5:44).

TUESDAY 12 The Church is growing fast in Nepal and Christians are very active in evangelism. This is often resented by the Hindu majority as well as by Buddhists and followers of the animistic Kirat religion. They accuse Christians of being too aggressive in their outreach and of offering material help in return for converting to Christianity, especially after natural disasters. Pray that Christians will be both wise and bold as they share their faith and that the Holy Spirit will continue to be at work amongst the people of Nepal, bringing them to repentance and faith in Jesus as their Lord and Saviour.

WEDNESDAY 13 Niger, once among the more politically stable and religiously tolerant countries in the Sahel, has been engulfed by Islamist terrorism spreading across the region. The situation has become more uncertain following a military coup in July 2023. Many aid agencies have been prevented from operating in the country, increasing hardship within the population, including for its small Christian minority. Pray for strength and protection for Christians (Proverbs 18:10). Ask for guidance, wisdom and compassion for Niger's leaders.

THURSDAY 14 On Christmas Eve at least 295 Nigerian Christians were killed in coordinated attacks on 25 isolated villages in Plateau State. Warnings had been sent by the attackers beforehand, saying that the villagers would not be celebrating Christmas. On New Year's Day (often considered by other religions to be a Christian celebration) two villages in Borno State were attacked simultaneously, so they could not come to each other's aid. "The merchants of death came again and now we have 17 people to bury," said one pastor afterwards. Now, as Good Friday and Easter Sunday approach, pray that the Lord will disrupt the plans of any seeking to kill Christians on the days when they will specially remember the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

FRIDAY 15 North Korea's leader, Kim Jong-un, has announced that the unification of his country with South Korea is no longer possible. All the North Korean organisations tasked with reunification will be dismantled. The Korean peninsula has been divided

since 1953 when the Korean War ended. As no peace treaty was signed, the two Koreas have remained technically at war ever since. Now it looks as if war might become a grim reality again, with Mr Kim threatening a nuclear attack on South Korea and South Korea saying they will respond "multiple times stronger" to any provocation from the North. In the midst of this situation are the extremely prayerful Christians of South Korea and the extremely persecuted Christians of North Korea. Ask the Lord to give peace in the hearts of our brothers and sisters and to avert war between their countries.

SATURDAY 16 According to recent statistics, Pakistan has overtaken India as the country with the world's second largest Muslim population. The Christian minority is not growing as fast as the Muslim majority in Pakistan, and therefore the percentage of Christians has dropped, now estimated at between 2% and 3%. Please pray today especially for Christian women in Pakistan who are doubly vulnerable in Pakistani society, being both female and non-Muslim. Pray that they will be protected from abduction and forced marriage to a Muslim (which involves forced conversion to Islam).

SUNDAY 17 Sovereign Lord, pray for Christian women and girls who are often extremely vulnerable in places of persecution. We pray for those marginalised not only because they follow Christ, but also because of their gender. We pray for widows and those whose husbands are in prison, who are left with minimal or no support for themselves and their children. Please help them

to lean on You and know Your gracious provision. May they grow in their relationship with You first and foremost – their protector and strength – so that they can continue to proclaim Your Name and be a blessing and witness to those around them. In Jesus' precious Name we pray.

MONDAY 18 There appears to be a move on social media in Saudi Arabia to promote the ancient pagan goddesses who were worshipped in the Arabian Peninsula before the birth of Islam there. The aim seems to be to give the country a more nationalistic and less religious identity. One writer claimed that in pre-Islamic Arabian culture women “were the ideal, integrated entity” suggesting a contrast with women’s lowly status in Islam. In classical Islam, pre-Islamic times are despised as *jahiliyya* (the age of ignorance) and the idea of secularising Saudi Arabia seems almost inconceivable. Wherever this online debate arose from, pray that it will lead to greater freedoms for Christians, for women and for all who struggle in today’s strictly Islamic Saudi society.

TUESDAY 19 Somalia, the breakaway state Somaliland and their shared neighbour Ethiopia appear to be about to go to war. The issue is Somalia’s opposition to Somaliland being recognised as an independent country. Chaotic Somalia and stable Somaliland are both extremely dangerous places for Christians, especially converts from Islam. Ask the Lord to surround our brothers and sisters with His angels and protect them with the blood of Christ in the coming weeks and months.

WEDNESDAY 20 As Sri Lanka continues to grapple with economic and political turmoil, the plight of the poorest deepens, with inflation, lack of jobs and limited resources causing immense suffering. Members of the Christian minority (around 8% of the population) are among the very poor, and also face hostility from extremist Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims. Ask that our brothers and sisters remain strong and know that the Lord is with them wherever they go (Joshua 1:9).

THURSDAY 21 Many Christians are among the millions who have fled their homes in the Republic of Sudan (formerly North Sudan) to escape the civil war that erupted in 2023. There have been reports of multiple attacks on church leaders and church buildings, some of which have been looted, burned or used as military bases. The country’s small Christian minority had previously endured decades of severe persecution under the Islamist government of Omar al-Bashir before it was ousted in 2019. Praise the Lord for the steadfast faith of our longsuffering Sudanese brothers and sisters. Ask God to protect His people and bring peace to the country.

FRIDAY 22 Militants of Islamic State (IS, ISIS, ISIL, Daesh) are becoming more active again in north-east Syria. The north-west is the last remaining stronghold of the civil war rebels. At the end of last year, several parts of the country were bombed for various different reasons by Turkey, Israel, Russia and the USA. Pray for security and stability in Syria as well as a return to the good relations that existed between Muslims and Christians before the civil war began in 2011. Ask that

our Christian brothers and sisters may have peace in the Lord, remembering His words: “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).



Christian children in Hassakeh, north-east Syria, singing a Christmas carol. Not long afterwards, on the night of 17-18 January 2024, Hassakeh was bombed again by Turkey, damaging key infrastructure. “So now, no water, no fuel, no gas, no electricity – how are they going to continue living?” commented a Syrian Christian

SATURDAY 23 Children in Tajikistan are banned from attending religious activities, except for funerals. The mere presence of Christian children on church premises could be punished severely. Children may, by law, receive religious instruction only from their parents at home. This is just one example of the severe restrictions Christians must navigate in Tajikistan, where no new churches have been registered for more than a decade. Pray

for wisdom and guidance for Christian parents in teaching their children the faith at home. Ask that families will rejoice in the Lord always (Philippians 4:4) and that the Word of God will not be stifled.

SUNDAY 24 Lord Jesus Christ, it is such a joyful occasion when people decide to follow You as their Saviour and Lord. We give thanks that there are so many who come to You from other religions, often at great cost. We thank You for their courage and new-found faith, and pray that our brothers and sisters would be blessed beyond measure in their knowledge and passion when seeking more of You. We know they will likely encounter trials and suffering in their walk with You. We pray that they will be strengthened by the knowledge that You are also walking with them and will give them all they need to endure whatever they may face.

MONDAY 25 Local congregations in Turkey are facing many challenges including legal and administrative hurdles that could potentially lead to them being closed because of inadequate paperwork or accidentally unpaid taxes. Pray for God's guidance for those who handle such administration on behalf of their fellow-Christians that He will show them every detail they must attend to, so that nothing is neglected. Pray, too, that they will be granted favour in the eyes of the Turkish authorities.

TUESDAY 26 The Christian community in Turkmenistan is dwindling as more and more Russian-background Christians leave the country. Pray

for the Christians who remain, especially those who are converts from a Muslim background. In this strict and authoritarian country, they have little contact with the world outside Turkmenistan. Ask that, in their isolation, they may be all the more conscious of the Lord's presence and the reality of His promise, "I am with you always" (Matthew 28:20). Pray that they will be blessed with deep spiritual perception to see God in all the circumstances of their lives while they wait to see Him face to face in glory (Matthew 5:8).

WEDNESDAY 27 Christian communities on Uganda's western border are vulnerable to attacks by Islamists from the neighbouring Democratic Republic of the Congo. One of the worst was the massacre of 42 believers at a Christian boarding school in June 2023. Most of the dead were pupils. Jihadists also carried out the murders of a white tourist couple and their local guide in October 2023, boasting that they had killed "three Christians". Plots to bomb churches in Kampala and Butambala district in September and October 2023 were thankfully foiled by police. Ask that Christians remain strong and courageous, knowing the Lord will never forsake them (Deuteronomy 31:6). As the Muslim minority seeks to advance the place of sharia (Islamic law) in Ugandan society, pray that Christians will have wisdom about how to respond.

THURSDAY 28 Give thanks that the Uzbekistan authorities have become more tolerant towards Christians. In the early decades since its creation in 1991, the country was a repressive place for followers of the Prince of Peace.

However, since the 2016 election of President Mirziyoyev, state hostility towards Christian converts from Islam has lessened and their house meetings are no longer targeted by police. The number of converts and the number of churches granted official registration are slowly increasing. Pray that the remaining restrictions will be lifted. Ask that converts will be unmoveable in their faith, despite the hostility they face from the Muslim community (1 Corinthians 15:58).

FRIDAY 29 Father God, we are overwhelmed by the amazing grace You showed us at the Cross. You gave Your only Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who willingly offered Himself as a sacrifice to take away our sins. Help us never to forget that Jesus paid the ultimate price for us because He loved us. Help us also to remember that there are tens of thousands of faithful believers who have paid that price for their faithfulness to Him in our world today. We pray that, just as Jesus' death made a way back to You, the deaths of Christian martyrs will be an encouragement to us and to people who don't yet know You. We ask this in Christ's name.

SATURDAY 30 Please pray for a "Bible team" of six Christians who minister among the persecuted Hmong Christians in isolated mountain areas of Vietnam. They visit about 60 communities of poor farming families. In the rainy season (June to November), travel is hard and dangerous because of frequent mudslides. The team teach the Bible, pray with families, visit the sick, disciple local church leaders and encourage the believers to stand firm in

the faith despite the pressures they face. Barnabas Aid helps to support them.



Baptism in a remote mountain community in Vietnam

SUNDAY 31 Lord Jesus, we thank You that You are the way, the truth and the life and that we can come to the Father through You and You alone. We have eternal life because of what You did for us when You died and rose again. You were victorious over sin and death, and we praise you for sharing that glorious resurrection power with us. Thank you for Your promise that in heaven every Christian will have every tear wiped from their eyes. May this reality for today and wonderful hope for the future strengthen us and especially our Christian brothers and sisters living now with poverty and persecution, conflict and disasters, grief and displacement. Thank You that, even through suffering, we can rejoice in our risen Saviour. (John 14:6; Revelation 21:4)

April

MONDAY 1 African Christians were mobilised for urgent prayer after at least 15 believers in Mauritania were arrested in late November 2023, a country which has a death sentence for leaving Islam. A video of a baptism ceremony had become public. Praise God that by 18 December all the Mauritanian Christians (converts from Islam) had been released without charge. Praying Christians in other countries rejoiced at this answer to their intercessions and some asked for prayer to continue that the Mauritanian laws and structures which “criminalise being a Christian” will be repealed. Join them in praying for the day to come when Mauritians can openly worship the Lord Jesus and talk publicly about their faith without fear of punishment.

TUESDAY 2 Please pray today for Christians in Morocco, who are mostly converts from Islam and their children or grandchildren. The Muslim fasting month of Ramadan is in progress, during which it is illegal for Moroccan citizens or inhabitants to eat or drink in public during the daytime. A typical Ramadan day begins with drummers or the town crier blowing a horn to wake families for the pre-dawn meal. A cannon is fired to mark the beginning of the day's fast and an air raid siren in the evening marks its end. People go to the mosque more often than normal during Ramadan. In this situation, Moroccan Christians must be even more discreet than usual. Pray especially for those who follow Christ in secret without their families knowing, at this time when Muslims are expected to be extra devout in their religious observances.

WEDNESDAY 3 An Algerian church leader, Pastor Youssef Ourahmane, has partially won an appeal against a two-year prison sentence, which has now been reduced to one year. He had been charged with holding an unauthorised religious meeting in a building not permitted to be used for religious worship. The allegation arose because of some Christian families staying in a church compound with a chapel that had been sealed by the Algerian authorities. (At the latest count, 49 church buildings in Algeria have been forced to close by the authorities, leaving only about seven open.) Youssef is appealing to a higher court hoping for an even more favourable decision so that he will not have to go to prison at all. Pray for him, for Algerian Christians who are currently in prison, and for all the Lord's people in Algeria, that the difficulties they face will continue to draw them closer to each other and to God.

THURSDAY 4 At the time of writing, armed conflict in the Holy Land continues. As you pray about the situation, remember all who are suffering so terribly there, including the Christians of Gaza, who number fewer than a thousand. By mid-December, 20 of them had been killed and most of the rest were sheltering in two church buildings in the Old City area of Gaza. At that time, they still had some food stocks but needed medicines. Pray that they will know the Lord's presence with them and hear His words in their hearts: "Do not be afraid, little flock" (Luke 12:32).

FRIDAY 5 Mina Khajavi (aged 60), an Iranian Christian convert from Islam, was summoned on 3 January to present herself within five days at Tehran's

notorious Evin Prison to begin her six-year prison sentence. She was arrested in 2020 and sentenced in 2022 but deemed unfit to go to prison at the time because a car had run her over and broken her ankle. She now has metal plates in her ankle and walks with a limp. Two other Christians arrested with her have already been to prison and both were released early. Pray that Mina, too will be set free early.



Mina Khajavi [Image: Article 18]

SATURDAY 6 Esmail Narimanpour was arrested in Iran on 24 December, his house searched and Christian books confiscated. Esmail was among several Iranian Christians from a Muslim background who was cleared of "propaganda" charges in 2021 but subsequently required to attend classes on Islam. Pray that Esmail will be strong in the Lord and that, like the apostles, he will rejoice to be "counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name" (Acts 5:41).

SUNDAY 7 Lord Jesus Christ, we praise You for the growth of the Church in Iran, despite harassment and pressure by the Iranian authorities. Please be with Iranian Christians in prison today. Be with

those who have been released from custody but banned from meeting with fellow-believers. Be with those whose punishment is to be sent to remote places for internal exile. Give each one a special awareness of Your loving presence with them. Enable them to rejoice in You. Build them up in faith and understanding so that they will continue to stand firm and to glorify You in all they do.

MONDAY 8 Many Iranian Christians have fled pressure and persecution in their homeland only to find themselves detained in prisons and camps in Turkey. Pray that they will not become downcast, embittered or afraid and that their time in prison will be fruitful for the Lord. Ask that, in His perfect timing, they will be released and, if it His will, not deported back to Iran with all its dangers for Christians from a Muslim background and for Christians involved in ministry to Muslims.

TUESDAY 9 Today is the last day of the Islamic month of Ramadan, when Muslims fast between dawn and dusk, abstaining even from water. Many do so not only to keep the rules of their religion but also because they hope to draw near to God. Pray that those who long for a loving relationship with their Creator and the assurance of sins forgiven may come to know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

WEDNESDAY 10 According to the constitution of the Maldives, if a Maldivian leaves Islam to follow Christ they will lose their citizenship. Praise God for some indications of a softening of attitude in the Maldives on this point, even though the constitution

remains unchanged. Pray that this will progress further and that there will also be a relaxation of some of the other restrictions, which forbid any non-Muslim public worship, forbid church buildings and severely restrict the importation of Bibles. Ask that the Lord Jesus will sustain the faith of His people in the Maldives, whether Maldivian citizens or migrant workers from India and Sri Lanka.

THURSDAY 11 North-east India has a higher percentage of Christians than the rest of the country, with the states of Mizoram and Nagaland having large Christian majorities. This region of India also has higher poverty levels than the rest. The population is growing, but the number of jobs available is not keeping up. Agriculture is not very productive, due to lack of capital to invest, problems with storage, and lack of awareness of new farming technologies. Many young people, in search of employment, migrate to other parts of India, where they are often discriminated against and exploited. Ask for God's blessings on efforts to alleviate the poverty of our brothers and sisters in north-east India and pray that at the same time they will always be "rich toward God" (Luke 12:21).

FRIDAY 12 Your prayers for Musarrat Bibi, a Christian widow in Pakistan, and her Muslim colleague Mohammad Sarmad have been answered. Both were acquitted on 8 December 2023 of the "blasphemy" charges made against them in April that year. They were clearing out a storeroom at the school where they worked, and burnt some discarded papers, which their accusers said were pages of the Quran. Being illiterate, neither of them knew what they were

burning. Praise God that the judge at the court in Arifwala, Pakpattan, declared them innocent. A guilty verdict would have resulted in life sentences in prison.

SATURDAY 13 Barnabas supports 121 Christian schools in Pakistan of which 45 are for the children of impoverished Christian brick-kiln workers. At the time of writing, these 45 schools are helping 2,719 children to break free from the cycle of illiteracy and poverty that has trapped previous generations – children like Yashua. Until recently Yashua would have been expected to go to work in the brick kilns, where his father has laboured since childhood. Yet now Yashua is receiving an education, free of charge, at a Barnabas-funded school, helping him to move closer to his dream of becoming a doctor. Give thanks for the opportunities these schools give to Christian children to grow in their faith and knowledge. Pray that, as a result, poor Christian communities will be strengthened.

SUNDAY 14 Heavenly Father, we ask that You will protect the Christians of Pakistan, who are despised by society at large. May they know themselves to be the treasured possession of the Lord Almighty. Although, as a small and poor minority, they are weak and powerless, may they know that You are holding their hand and will help them. Despite the hardships of daily life and the constant possibility of being violently attacked or falsely accused, may they keep growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in Whose Name we pray. (Isaiah 41:13-14; Malachi 3:17; 2 Peter 3:18)



Christians in Jaranwala, Pakistan, praying. They had gathered in January 2024 to receive winter aid from Barnabas, which is continuing to assist many Christian families after a massive mob attack last year destroyed many Christian homes

MONDAY 15 Bangladesh has re-elected its Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina Wazed (aged 76). It is her fourth consecutive term in office and fifth term overall. The main opposition party had boycotted the polls on 7 January and refused to accept the result. Sheikh Hasina has done much to protect the rights of Christians and other non-Muslim minorities in Bangladesh. She has affirmed the equality of all Bangladeshi citizens and her government has paid for the restoration of 84 churches and part funded another 643 church building projects. Pray that these policies will be continued during her new term in office and for an end to the political unrest and violence that plagued the country in the run-up to the election.

TUESDAY 16 By the end of 2024 more than 50 countries, which together are home to half the planet's population, will have held national elections. In many nations, the treatment of Christians and other minorities depends greatly on the attitude of the individual at the top of the political hierarchy. Remembering that ultimately it is God who "removes kings and sets up kings" (Daniel 2:21), pray that He will work out His purposes through these elections.

WEDNESDAY 17 Praise God for the release from captivity of Treasure Ayuba (now aged 15). He had been kidnapped from Bethel Baptist High School, Kaduna State, Nigeria, along with 120 other pupils on 5 July 2021, when he was 12. All the other students were set free, in groups or individually, over the next six months, leaving Treasure by himself with the terrorists for nearly two more years. Pray for the healing touch of the Lord Jesus on His child Treasure, as he recovers in body, mind and spirit from his ordeal.

THURSDAY 18 Pastors continue to be a main target of terrorists in Nigeria. On 11 October 2023 Pastor David Musa was abducted on his way to his farm in Kogi State and shot dead three days later. On 17 November Pastor Amako Maraya in Kaduna State was shot dead and his wife Grace kidnapped when militants stormed their home. Grace was released on 20 November. Pray for their grieving families and their congregations, left like sheep without a shepherd. May they be encouraged by knowing that David and Amoko are honoured in heaven as those killed in the service of Christ (Revelation 6:11 ERV).

FRIDAY 19 Boko Haram terrorists attacked the Nigerian village of Geidam in Yobe State about 2.00 am on 5 January. At least six people were killed including Pastor Luka Levong and church treasurer Maina Abdullahi. Several houses and a church building were burnt down. Many other attacks like this are happening all the time in northern and Middle Belt Nigeria, where around 45,000 Christians have been killed since 2009. Pray that this constant assault will not “wear out the saints of

the Most High” (Daniel 7:25 ESV), and that God will give His children in Nigeria the strength and perseverance to endure.



Pastor Luka Levong, martyred on 5 January

SATURDAY 20 Please continue to pray for Barnabas Aid's petition “End the Genocide of African Christians”. The petition requests that the long-running, largescale anti-Christian violence in Africa be discussed at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Samoa in October 2024. The aim is to see how Commonwealth governments can work alongside African governments to equip and empower them to bring peace, stability and freedom from violence for Christians and other vulnerable communities. Ask that many signatures will be gathered and the petition will have a real impact. See barnabasaid.org/resources/africa-petition

SUNDAY 21 O Jesus, our dearest Lord and Saviour, we praise You for the continuous presence of your followers in Egypt for the last 2,000 years. Thank You for their faithfulness, despite centuries of persecution. Thank You also for the way in which pressures have eased off in the last few years, giving them some respite. Thank

You for the growing number of churches which have been granted registration and for the shrinking number of violent attacks against Christians. Please keep our brothers and sisters strong in You, whatever their earthly future holds.

MONDAY 22 More than 900 Iraqi Christians gathered to celebrate their faith at a three-day conference in Erbil, part funded by Barnabas. Another 450 believers watched on Facebook. The majority of attendees, aged between 17 and 40, had been forcibly displaced in 2014 from Mosul and the Nineveh Plains by Islamic State (IS, also called ISIS, ISIL, Daesh). The conference encouraged believers and helped them grow in their faith. Praise God for the steadfastness of our brothers and sisters who have endured so much because of their love of the Lord.

TUESDAY 23 Four people were killed and about 50 injured when a bomb was detonated at a church worship service in the southern Philippines on Sunday 3 December. Militants from Islamic State (IS, ISIS, ISIL, Daesh) claimed responsibility for the attack on the service, which was held in a university gymnasium in Marawi, on Mindanao island. Although Muslims are a minority in the Philippines overall, they are dominant in the south. Ask the Lord to comfort those who mourn and protect His people in the southern Philippines.

WEDNESDAY 24 Papua, the easternmost part of Indonesia, is rich in minerals, biodiversity and marine products. However, the indigenous people, who are mainly Christians, are poor. Their standard of living is one of the lowest

in Indonesia, and they are frequently attacked by the Indonesian military. Muslims from other parts of Indonesia (the most populous Muslim country in the world) are settling in Papua, thus weakening still further the voice of the Papuan Christians who are becoming a minority in their own provinces. Thank the Lord that He has a plan and a purpose for Papua and His people there and that no one can thwart Him (Isaiah 14:27). Ask that the needs of Papuan Christians will be met, especially for health care, which is very hard for many of them to access.

THURSDAY 25 “This is an answer to prayer,” declared our church partners as food.gives flew vitamin-enriched dried soup mix from the USA to poverty-afflicted Haiti. Once rehydrated, the mix provided at least 40,000 soup servings for hungry Christians at community centres, schools and other relief programmes. Barnabas also funded four flights carrying much-needed medical supplies to remote airstrips on the island, avoiding seaports controlled by criminal gangs. Give thanks for the safe arrival of the soup and medicines. Pray for strong leadership to restore law and order in Haiti.

FRIDAY 26 Please continue praying for nearly 120,000 Armenian Christian refugees, including 30,000 children, who fled their ancient homeland, Nagorno-Karabakh, when it was seized by Azerbaijan. Most of them are now in Armenia, a poor country struggling to meet the needs of the newcomers, who are crowded into the homes of distant relatives or staying in church halls. Barnabas is helping them, through the Armenian churches. The refugees

arrived exhausted, malnourished and traumatised, having endured a nine-month blockade which led to severe food shortages. “We live by the grace of God, giving glory every evening and morning. It gives us strength to cope,” said grandmother Anahit, one of the refugees. Ask God to guide them as they seek to settle down and find permanent homes and new ways to earn a living.

SATURDAY 27 Despite a law guaranteeing freedom of religion, there are parts of Belarus where Christians of certain denominations are distrusted and face a host of restrictive regulations. Belarussian believers, suffering in many ways themselves, are greatly moved to hear of the plight of other Christians. After a sermon from a Barnabas speaker, one woman emptied her wallet and offered the contents to the speaker. “But it is your last money,” he protested, aware that Belarus is a poor country. She responded, “Today I understood that there are people who are in a far worse situation than we are. Please, take this and give it to those who don’t have anything.” The Barnabas speaker could barely hold back his tears. Pray that generous and compassionate Christians in Belarus may know God’s blessing and provision in their own lives (Luke 6:38).

SUNDAY 28 Lord God, who knows and sees everything, we pray for Christians in prison in Eritrea, suffering from heat and cold, hunger and thirst, beatings and torture. Though they are forbidden to sing or pray aloud, enable them to sing and pray to You in their hearts. Although they are not allowed any religious books, may the Holy Spirit remind them of all that Jesus said.

We pray especially for pastors and theological students, often singled out for extra punishment or longer time in prison. May their love, joy and patient endurance glorify the Lord Jesus in Whose Name we pray.

MONDAY 29 At the time of writing, hundreds of people have already starved to death in a renewed food crisis in Tigray, northern Ethiopia. Predictions are that by mid-2024 it will be a near-nationwide emergency that could result in half a million deaths. The basic cause is drought, but Tigray has not recovered from a two-year war (2020-2022) which ravaged its infrastructure, making it particularly vulnerable. “People have accepted daily mourning and funerals, and they have understood that they are destined to die,” said an Ethiopian doctor in the city of Shire, lamenting that many Tigrayans had already given up hope. The people of Tigray are nearly all Christians. Cry out to the Lord on their behalf, that food aid will be delivered and rain will fall, in the right amounts, wherever it is needed in Ethiopia.

TUESDAY 30 Please ask God’s blessing for Barnabas Aid’s new initiative “Opportunity Africa”. The aim is to help Christian communities in Africa to become resilient and self-sufficient in the face of anti-Christian violence and increasingly frequent natural disasters caused by weather extremes. God willing, Opportunity Africa will include infrastructure such as water and solar power, start-up costs for sustainable agriculture and other livelihoods, local medical projects, and human capacity-building through training of many kinds. Pray that He will guide us in everything.

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Front Cover: A poor Christian convert from Islam in Kyrgyzstan
sustained with food provided by Barnabas