

30. CHINA cont – pray for **Pastor Jin Tianming**, pastor of **Shouwang Church** also in Beijing. They began holding outdoor worship services when evicted from their church building. Then church leaders and members were arrested, and Pastor Tianming remains under house arrest.

31. HONDURAS – pray for **Michael Miller** who has lived in Tegucigalpa, capital city of Honduras, for nearly 20 years after graduating from Wheaton College. He founded the **Micah Project**, a Christian home for boys living on the street. Gangs are pervasive in the city and demand extortion fees from businesses. The police force is also notoriously corrupt. Michael says that the American church has an untapped potential to help Hondurans and Central Americans tap into another kind of life. “It all starts with spiritual life”, he says. Pray also for **Kurt Ver Beek**, a Calvin College professor who lives in Honduras and founded **AJS – the Association for a More Just Society**- to try to lower the risks of living in Honduras. The Christian group researches issues related to poverty, violence and corruption and works to address underlying problems. They have seen a decline of the murder rate because of their work.

Pray from Psalm 5-

O Lord, lead me in Thy righteousness because of my foes;
Make Thy way straight before me.
There is nothing true in what they say;
Their inward part is destruction;
Their throat is an open grave;
They flatter with their tongue.
Hold them guilty, O God;
By their own devices let them fall!
In the multitude of their transgressions thrust them out,
For they are rebellious against Thee.
But let all who take refuge in Thee be glad,
Let them ever sing for joy;
And mayest Thou shelter them,
That those who love Thy name may exult in Thee.
For it is Thou who dost bless the righteous man, O Lord,
Thou dost surround him with favor as with a shield.

Even so , come quickly, Lord Jesus.
Amen

SOURCES:

CHURCH IN CHAINS; CHRISTIAN SOLIDARITY WORLDWIDE; CHRISTIAN TODAY; OPEN DOORS; PRISONER ALERT;
RELEASE INTERNATIONAL; VOICE of the MARTYRS; WORLD MAGAZINE; WORLD WATCH MONITOR

But indeed, for this cause I have allowed you to remain, in order to show you My power, and in order to proclaim My Name throughout all the earth. Ex 9:16

STANDING IN THE GAP

for the Persecuted Church

August 2018

- 1. NIGERIA** – pray for **Esther Joseph**. Her daughter is one of the original Chibok girls kidnapped by Boko Haram and is still missing. Other girls remain in captivity as well. “We are still in pain. We hope that God gives us a reason to celebrate when all the daughters are back,” says Yakubu Maina, spokesperson for the Chibok parents.
- 2. BRAZIL** – After the largest international bribery case in history implicated nearly one third of Brazil’s senators and almost half of their governors, October’s presidential race is Brazil’s most uncertain election in decades. Brazil also has tens of millions of its people in poverty, the world’s highest rate of firearm homicides, the second highest consumption of illicit drugs, millions in bondage to spiritism, and the Catholic Church is in massive decline. Yet the evangelical population exploded from 2 million to 51 million from 1960-2010, and Brazil has become one of the leading mission-sending nations in the world. Pray for spiritual maturity though-out the rapidly-growing evangelical church, for the Spirit of God to transform lives within the sprawling urban slums, and for missionaries to be sent to the roughly 130 tribes unreached by the Gospel.
- 3. NIGERIA** – 200 Christians were recently murdered in a three-day killing spree led by Muslim Fulani militant herdsman in several villages surrounding the city of Jos. Pray that God will be near the broken-hearted. Pray that the attackers will be brought to justice. Pray that God will strengthen the church in Jos to be light in the darkness.
- 4. INDIA** – praise God for the surprise announcement by a nationalist chief minister of a state in north-east India that he will ensure that a law preventing conversions from one faith to another is repealed. Pema Khandu, a Buddhist who heads the nationalist BJP-lead state government in Arunachal Pradesh, made the announcement to an audience of more than 2,000 Catholics. Taw Tebin, president of the Arunachal Pradesh Catholic Association said, “This law has always remained a threat to Christians. The declaration by the chief minister is a big relief for the Christian community.”
- 5. MEXICO** – pray for the church and the family of **Pastor Lalo Garcia** who was murdered by unidentified assailants believed to be members of the drug trade in the troubled city of Juarez, just across the border from El Paso, Texas. The pastor’s 24 year old son, **Abraham**, was murdered in 2009. In 2010, his daughter, **Griselda**, was kidnapped and he was forced to pay a ransom to secure her release. Jorge Rodriguez, Director of Religious Affairs for city government said, “These criminal groups are affecting the whole city and especially the Christian community.” The government does not have the means to tackle organized crime.
- 6. ERITREA** – pray for **Matthew**, an Eritrean leader of a refugee church. When Matthew’s faith was discovered, he was imprisoned in a military camp. Once released, he made the difficult decision to flee his country.
- 7. JORDAN** – pray for **Maran**, who leads **Al Hadaf**, a community center ministering to refugees from Iraq and other areas. Pray for wisdom for Maran and the hearts of women and children who are working through their trauma at the center.
- 8. INDIA** – pray for Christian widow **Chandan Devi** and her 4 children. She lost her husband, Aadarsh, when extremists attacked and killed him because he was a Christian. After his death, she fled her village and now lives in seclusion.

9. **INDIA** – pray for **Pastor Dependra Prakesh Maleywar**, 58. He was recently arrested and accused of forcible conversions. He was released on bail after a week. Extremists also went to the homes of recent converts and threatened to expel them from the area if they did not recant their faith. Pastor Maleywar has worked as an evangelist with the church of north India for 17 years and has led **St Thomas Church** in Mulhera for 5 years.
10. **KENYA** – pray for **Karen Agagno** who along with her 7 children continues to share the Gospel in her Muslim village 15 years after her husband died. Her husband, Henry, built the church in the village and now one of their sons leads the church.
11. **SUDAN** – pray for **Pastor Matta**, a front-line worker in Sudan's war torn Nuba Mountains despite the Sudanese government's violent attempts to eradicate Christians from the region. He continues to joyfully proclaim the Gospel in one of the darkest corners of the world.
12. **ETHIOPIA**- pray for **Temesgen Mezemir**, 24, the leader of an Evangelical fellowship group. His appeal of his prison sentence for 'causing outrage to religious peace and feeling' has been denied, and he has been sentenced to 7 months in prison.
13. **EGYPT** - pray for the Coptic Christian **Ibrahim Ayad** from Ezbed Ragy village. He saw his wheat fields set on fire just 4 days after he was accused of planning to turn his house into a church. Since there is no church in the village, Ayad has hosted a Sunday School at his home for the past 4 years, led by church ministers from El-Fashn.
14. **KYRGYZSTAN** – pray for **Pastor Miran** and his church of mostly former Muslims. Local officials have ordered them to cease Sunday worship services. They were told, "You will not be able to live and carry out your ministry here." Christian converts from Islam are growing in Kyrgyzstan. Converts face pressure from family, friends, and the wider community.
15. **CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC** – The Catholic Church in CAR is again in shock after the killing of the Vicar General of Mambari, in the center of the country on July 6. Father Firmin Gbagoua, 52, was fatally wounded when unidentified gunmen stormed the presbytery of St Joseph's Cathedral of Bambari. Father Gbagoua had been at the front line of interreligious efforts between Christians and Muslims. His killing is the latest in a series of attacks targeting Catholic priests in CAR.
16. **NIGERIA** – Fulani herdsmen burned down the **COCIN Worship Building**, including the pastor's house in Kakuruk village. Pray for President Buhari to put an end to the devastation.
17. **RUSSIA** – pray for 2 African medical students from Jesus Embassy Bible Centre, a Pentecostal Church in World Cup host city Nizhny Novgorod. **Kudzai Nyamarebvu** and **Nosise Vusiwe Shiba** were charged with 'illegal missionary activity' and have been deported and fined for appearing in videos of worship services posted on social media. The church was also fined.
18. **INDIA** – pray for a group of 16 Indian tribal Christians who are in police custody, accused of 'conversion by inducement', after visiting another tribal family in the eastern state of Jharkhand to talk to them about Christianity.
19. **CHINA** – continue praying for **Alimujiang Yimiti**, 44, who is serving a 15-year sentence in China and was recently reported to be 'in a peaceful and stable state physically and spiritually.' He is allowed to call his family once a month and says it is his 'happiest moment' .
20. **THAILAND** – The global rescue mission of the 12 boys and their coach stranded in a flooded cave inspired the world. But the people of Thailand remain in spiritual darkness. 99% are unreached by the Gospel with a mixture of Buddhism, folk animism and occultism holding them captive. Roughly 1 million children are child laborers and 40,000 minors are sold into the sex trade. HIV/AIDS infection rate is Asia's highest. Pray that the Thai people will be rescued out of darkness into His marvellous light (1 Peter 2:9)
21. **ALGERIA** – praise God that 3 Protestant churches previously closed down by authorities have been allowed to re-open. These were 3 of the 6 churches closed down in Nov 2017. However, on July 11 the building used by a Protestant church in the small town of Riki in the north-east province of Bejaia was sealed off by police on the grounds that it does not comply with the 2006 ordinance governing non-Muslim worship. Churches and individual Christians in Algeria have faced increased harassment in recent months raising concern that these pressures signal a "coordinated campaign of intensified action against churches by the governing authorities," according to the Christian advocacy group Middle East Concern.
22. **INDIA** – pray for the **Missionaries of Charity**, an order of nuns founded by Mother Teresa. The government has ordered inspections of all childcare homes run by the Kolkata-based order in response to a charge of suspicion of child-trafficking. There is concern that the scandal is being used to discredit the order, and by extension, Christians in India at a time of worsening discrimination and marginalisation of Christians.
23. **EGYPT** – pray for **St Karas the Anchorite Coptic Orthodox Church**. A mob attacked the church in July protesting its legalisation as the only church in Ezbet Sultan Pasha village, where about 20% of the population is Christian. The church was built in Sept 2016.
24. **TURKEY** – continue praying for **Pastor Andrew Brunson** who was imprisoned in Oct 2016. His trial, continued July 18, was again delayed until Oct 12. The ruling came as a bitter disappointment to Andrew and his family and friends, especially as hope had been raised in the days leading up to the latest court hearing that Andrew would be released on bail. According to his lawyer, Ismail Cem Halavurt, Andrew should have been granted conditional release as the investigation is now complete, but the head judge refused to acquit him or grant him conditional release. When the judge asked Andrew to reply to the witnesses making vague, unsubstantiated accusations, he said, "My faith teaches me to forgive, so I forgive those who testified against me."
25. **IRAN** – pray for **Ramil Bet Tamraz**, the son of an influential pastor silenced by the Iranian government. Ramil has been handed a four-month jail sentence for his involvement with illegal house churches. He was sentenced for 'acting against national security.' Ramil is a Christian from an ethnic Assyrian background. He was arrested along with 4 of his friends, all of whom had converted from Islam.
26. **CHAD** – pray for Christians in Chad as Chadan authorities have installed a sultan in the south Moyen-Chari region, increasing fears of further marginalisation of the Christian population.
27. **CHINA** – pray for churches in China as the government campaign against house churches hits Christians in Beijing, as well as other prominent churches in the Henan province where authorities have shut down 100 house churches this year:
28. – pray for Beijing's **Zion Church**, founded in 2007 with 50 members and now each Sunday about 1,600 worshippers attend one of the 14 services across Zion's eight locations. Authorities have targeted Zion since the government implemented new religious regulations in February, pressuring its leaders and church members to stop meeting.
29. – pray of Zion's **Pastor Ezra Jin**. He explains that the trouble began on April 10 when the building's landlord, the Beijing Property Management Company, informed the church that it would install surveillance cameras in the church's 2 auditoriums to prevent over-crowding. Zion refused and five days later the landlord returned to announce he would cancel the church's lease despite a contract that allowed Zion to stay until 2023. "We are not afraid; we know that no matter where God leads, we will obey," Jin says. "But there are still some people among us who are weak and may falter when faced with pressure from their family. Please pray for them."

