

30. ERITREA cont – pray for **Negassi** who is raising his 4 children alone after his wife, **Fkadu**, and their 17 year old son were arrested in May 2017 after being accused of attending a prayer meeting. She was put in prison and died 3 months later. Negassi was threatened with imprisonment and decided to leave the country. He encourages us to pray for the Eritrean government rather than curse it for its hatred for Christians. “They don’t know what they are doing.”

Pray for Eritrean evangelical pastors and political prisoners locked in shipping containers in Mai Serwa prison camp outside Asmara, Eritrea:

Haile Nayzgi, Full Gospel Church, arrested 2004

Kidane Weldov, Full Gospel Church, arrested 2005

Kiflu Gebremeskal, Full Gospel Church, arrested 2004

Mussie Ezaz

Kale Hiwot, Word of Life Church, arrested 2007

Meron Gebreselasie, Massawa Rhema Church, arrested 2004

Grebremedhin Gebregiorgis, Eritrean Orthodox Church, arrested 2004

Pray for Eritrea’s president, **Isaias Afwerki**, who was raised in a Christian family. He became a rebel fighter in 1961 when Eritrea was annexed by Ethiopia. He studied in China, absorbing Chairman Mao Zedong’s strong arm approach to governance. When he returned to Eritrea, he founded his own Marxist revolutionary movement- the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front. They fought a 30-year battle for independence, defeated Ethiopia, and Isaias became President in 1993. His totalitarian tendencies became more pronounced with each passing year. In keeping with Marxist governmental policies, he also embraced atheism, replacing the Christian religion of his parents with a lust for absolute power.

Pray from Nahum 1-

A jealous and avenging God is the Lord;
The Lord is avenging and wrathful.
The Lord takes vengeance on His adversaries,
And He reserves wrath for His enemies.
The Lord is slow to anger and great in power,
And the Lord will by no means leave the guilty unpunished.
In whirlwind and storm is His way,
And clouds are the dust beneath His feet.

Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus.
The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you all.
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

First of all, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. 1 Tim 2:1,2

STANDING IN THE GAP

for the Persecuted Church

September 2018

- 1. IRAN** - pray for Iranian pastor **Youcef Nadarkhani** who was taken by force to Evin Prison after a violent raid on his home in the northern city of Rasht on July 22 after he had been sentenced to 10 years in prison. After forcing their way into the pastor’s home on a Sunday morning, authorities beat both Youcef and his son, **Daniel**, with an electroshock weapon.
- 2. TURKEY** – continue praying for **Pastor Andrew Brunson**, who was granted release from prison but is still under house arrest in Izmir. His next trial date is October 12, and he now faces up to 50 years imprisonment for ‘Christianization’.
- 3. EGYPT** - pray for the family of **Mahir Gorgis Tawfiq**, a 45-year-old father of 4 in the city of Beni Suef who died at a police station where he had gone to report threats from a Muslim man. The family believes he was beaten to death. The police said he died after falling into a coma due to his diabetes, but his family says he was not a diabetic. And they believe he was murdered.
- 4. AUSTRIA** – continue praying for **100 Iranian Christian refugees** who remain stranded in Austria after fleeing persecution in Iran more than a year ago. Praise God that the Austrian government has granted asylum to 4 of them. But the US government has rejected the other applications for asylum in the US where many of the refugees have family members. A federal judge has ordered that the US government reconsider the cases.
- 5. RWANDA** – pray for Christians in Rwanda as the Rwanda Governance Board has closed more than 8,000 churches, and the number keeps growing. The Board set new complicated compliance requirements at the beginning of the year that are seen as part of an effort by the government to make its aggressive secular stance clear.
- 6. SRI LANKA** – pray for **Nimal**, an illiterate brick-maker who has received death threats after his conversion to Christianity. Rising from poverty to set up a small business, Nimal now shares some of his income with his church. He says when he talks about his faith, many people mock and challenge him.
- 7. Tajikistan** - pray for **Aslan and Mahmed** who faithfully share the Gospel with people in their area; some even accept Jesus. As a result, officials summoned them to the police station where they were brutally beaten and fined. Pray for their safety and emotional and physical state.
- 8. INDONESIA** – pray for **Trinity**, one of the child victims in the church bombing last year. Her father says she is healing wonderfully, and loves to sing “I am happy to be God’s child.” Continue to pray for her healing.
- 9. CHINA**- continue to pray for churches in China as the government continues implementation of new religious regulations. Pray for **Bible Reformed Church** and **Pastor Huang Xiaoning** in Guangzhou which was forced to stop meeting for a third time this month following a police raid during which a number of Christians were arrested for questioning.
- 10. COMOROS** – pray for Christians in this southeast Africa island nation. On July 30, a referendum on constitutional reforms declared Sunni Islam the ‘religion of the state’. This will have a tough impact on the country’s small Christian minority, who number only a few thousand of the country’s roughly 825,000 population. The state also denies worshipping space for Christians.

11. **INDIA** – pray for Christian villagers in a rural district of India’s Maharashtra State. They have been told that one church will be closed down every week because they have been ‘destroying’ local tradition and culture by ‘luring’ others to convert to Christianity. Since July, over a dozen house churches have been attacked by local extremist groups across 5 villages within the Gadchiroli district. Christians have been told that if they pursue with Christianity, they will be cut off from local water supplies and will no longer have access to government-subsidized groceries. On August 5, Christian **Gallu Kowasi** was badly beaten by locals demanding he renounce his faith.
12. **CENTRAL ASIA** – pray for **Ulzhan**, an underground church leader who puts the Word of God into the hands of Central Asian believers through discipleship and training even at the risk of danger and imprisonment. “I am so grateful for your support and prayers,” Ulzhan says. “It is a great comfort to know that other people know about our difficulties.”
13. **INDIA** – pray for the family of **Anjali Masih**, a 9-year-old girl from an Indian family that recently converted to Christianity. She was gang-raped and murdered August 5 in Punjab State. There has been a rise of anti-Christian feeling in the area, which is predominantly Hindu and Sikh, since a number of families have converted to Christianity.
14. **SUDAN** – praise God that a Sudanese court has surprisingly ruled against the government in a case against the **Sudanese Church of Christ** after a long-standing dispute over ownership of the church property. The administration of the church properties has been returned back to the church.
15. **ETHIOPIA** – pray for the **Orthodox Church** in Ethiopia. 5 priests were killed and 10 Orthodox churches were damaged in August. Nine evangelical churches were also vandalized and looted, with 30-50 people killed. Pray for Ethiopia’s new Prime Minister, **Abiy Ahmed**, who has expressed concern.
16. **MEXICO** – pray for a **Mexican Pastor**, whose name is being withheld to protect him, who survived an assassination attempt in the notorious border city of Juarez in June. He says he was targeted because of his church’s work which is seen to negatively impact the efforts of the drug cartel.
17. **ERITREA** – the signing of a peace agreement in July by Ethiopia’s new Prime Minister and Eritrean President Afwerki raised hopes that human rights in Eritrea would begin to improve. Since then, however, at least 5 Pentecostal Christians have been arrested in the capital, Asmara, and several other Christians have gone into hiding.
18. **PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES and JORDAN** – pray for new groups forming within the Orthodox and Catholic churches of young people re-dedicating themselves to reading the Bible, praying, and following Jesus. They are calling out to their neighbors with the Gospel. One of the young people involved says, “If we were without Christ, we would be migrating. But we know that our calling is here, to be the salt and the light of this land.”
19. **KAZAKHSTAN** – pray for Kuzylorda’s **New Life Church and Pastor Serik Bisembayev**, who faces criminal investigation for ‘inciting discord.’ Anti-extremism police raided the church and halted Sunday worship.
20. **KYRGYZSTAN** – pray for Russian Christian, **Anya**. Although struggling with the stigma of not being married at age 30, she has grown to accept that God has something better for her than what she had planned for herself. She witnesses to her Muslim neighbors despite their taunts, and teaches Sunday School.
21. **SRI LANKA** – pray for pastors **Nalaka and Nalin**, 2 pastors who grew up Buddhists in Sri Lanka. Since becoming a Christian, Nalaka has been beaten by the police several times. He says, “But I did not fear them. I now fear God.”
22. **SRI LANKA cont- Nalaka** asks for prayer: “Please pray for our family. The strength within our family is vital to our ministry. Pray also for wisdom to speak when we go to new villages. I still have a great desire to start a rehab center. Please pray about that as well.”
23. **SRI LANKA cont- Nalin** asks for prayer: “Please pray that we will be able to finish building our home, so I can ask believers to meet in my home. Pray also for my children’s education, that it would not get interrupted. Pray also for our family’s safety. I have been trying out various small businesses to support my family. Pray that the Lord will help me.”
24. **ARABIAN PENINSULA** – In every country on the Peninsula, believers find ways to express their faith, to praise God, to read the Bible and to baptize new believers. Sometimes Christians can worship openly and other times they must do so in secret. Believers from many nations, ethnicities, traditions, and languages find ways to be the Body of Christ, to be salt and light:
25. **QATAR** – pray for Evangelicals and Coptic Christians who meet together for teaching and fellowship and encouragement. Every Friday, thousands of Catholics gather together to worship in Doha, the capital.
26. **CENTRAL ASIA** – pray for **Sergei**, a central Asian believer from a Muslim background. He became passionate about putting God’s Word into the hands of others. Police discovered he was distributing illegal Christian literature and demanded a bribe. After meeting with fellow believers to pray, he told the police, “The Bible has changed my entire thinking on this matter. I am not paying the bribe. I am choosing ‘the way of the cross.’” The latest reports are that the case was resolved without a bribe, and Sergei is still active in effective ministry.
27. **ERITREA** – Christians living in Eritrea, located in the Horn of Africa along the Red Sea, suffer some of the most horrific religious persecution occurring today. The Eritrean government zealously persecutes believers who openly share their faith or worship outside state-approved churches. Pray for **Yemane**, who after being drafted into the military at age 35, faithfully shared the Gospel with other soldiers. He was sent to a hole 6 feet underground with his arms bound 5 separate times for telling soldiers about Jesus. He then was sent to a military prison for 3 years. He continued to share his faith with fellow prisoners. He was then placed in solitary confinement; intense heat and dehydration triggered a stroke and he was unconscious for 14 days. The stroke left him paralyzed, and he was released because of poor health. He escaped to Ethiopia and asks for prayer: “Pray for my healing, so I can serve the Lord. Pray for the people of Eritrea, that they may be free.”
28. **ERITREA cont** – pray for talented Gospel singer, **Helen Berhane**. Motivated by Romans 1:16 (“For I am not ashamed of the Gospel”) she carried her Bible everywhere, telling people about Christ in the streets and in hospitals. In May 2002, the government banned many religious groups and silenced many church leaders. Helen was arrested during a Bible study held in her home and taken to prison. She was beaten and chained to a pole in the desert sun for days. She was released after 2 years and regained her ability to walk after therapy. She has been granted asylum in Denmark, where she continues her ministry work.
29. **ERITREA cont** – pray for **Mulu Suleman**. She and her husband, **Kiros**, were active church members when he was arrested in 2000. She heard nothing from him for several years, then learned he had been executed along with several other believers. Mulu was also imprisoned after continuing to attend church. She was repeatedly beaten and raped by prison authorities, then finally released after becoming seriously ill with HIV. She fled to Ethiopia. She wants the world to know how Eritrea treats Christians: “I want to support the church and help Christians inside Eritrea,” she said. “People are still dying in prisons.”

