

DAY TO DAY PRAYER GUIDE: NOVEMBER 2008

Saturday 1 November 2008

Missions focus: Prayer for SA missionaries in Thailand

They write: We were encouraged that God is busy building His church in Thailand. It is also the time that many young men enter the priesthood with the aim of finding enlightenment as they are taught in Buddhism teachings. God remains faithful and regularly provides opportunities to share with Thais who are open to listen and consider Biblical truths. Trust with us that many will put their faith in Christ as Lord and Saviour. (Joseph and Edwina Charles, P.O. Box 15, Sisatchanalai 64130, Sukhothai, Thailand. E-mail: jecharles2003@yahoo.com). Give thanks to the Lord for this testimony. Continue to pray for their work, their family and health. Also pray for young men to find Jesus in their search for spirituality.

Prayer focus on the Persecuted Church

For the next thirty days we will focus on 30 of the 50 countries where Christians are persecuted. For more information, you can also visit: <http://www.opendoorsuk.org/resources/country-profiles.asp>

1st on World Persecution List: North Korea

Overview: Everyday life remains harsh for millions. For the fifth year in a row, this is the world's most difficult country in which to be a Christian. More were arrested in 2006 than in 2005. Now up to 500,000 Christians are suffering in prison camps, many are tortured and some face death. Some take enormous risks to flee to China. If successful, they may be returned by China to face prison camps and worse in their own country.

Prayer: Pray that Christians living in North Korea would stand firm during this relentless persecution. Ask God to reveal Himself in miraculous ways to Kim Jong-il and the North Korean government. Pray that those who have been arrested, tortured and put in labour camps will know God's presence, His love, peace and intervention.

Sunday 2 November 2008

Memorise

I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord. They will be my people and I will be their God, for they will return to me with all their heart (Jer.24:7).

Bible translation focus (cont. from 26 Oct.)

Step 5: Publication: After field testing and revision, the text undergoes careful proofreading and editing to prepare it for typesetting, printing and mass distribution.

(Website: http://www.wbtc.com/site/PageServer?pagename=Bible_Translation_Process). After such a long time of translation, this is the final challenge. Pray for teams to remain focused and diligent in completing the task. Pray that each and every mistake and correction will be seen and tended to. Ask for God's presence to guard the proofreading, editing, typesetting, printing and effective distribution of each and every Bible completed in each language. Please pray that not one Bible will go to waste or be destroyed, but accomplish the purposes of God in the people He prepared it for.

2nd on World Persecution List: Saudi Arabia

Overview: Under the kingdom's strict interpretation of Islamic law, 'apostasy' (leaving Islam) is punishable by death. Public non-Muslim worship is prohibited. Nearly all the Christians who live in Saudi Arabia are expatriate workers. In 2006 four East African Christians were arrested when meeting for worship. Accused of 'preaching to Muslims, planting churches and gathering ladies and gentlemen together for prayer', they were held for over a month in poor conditions and then deported.

Prayer: Pray for Saudi Arabian converts to Christianity to grow in their relationship with the Lord Jesus. Praise God that Christian communications – radio, satellite, television and Internet – now make it possible for Muslims to hear the gospel.

Monday 3 November 2008

Salvation focus: Attorneys and advocates

Teach me your way, O Lord and I will walk in your truth, give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name (Ps.86:11).

These people exercise enormous influence in the restoration of righteousness and justice. They are often tempted not to do what is right for the sake of ego, money or prestige. Pray for many advocates and attorneys that do not know the Lord to wholeheartedly come to the Lord and that they will pursue the truth and righteousness above their own desires. Ask that they will love righteousness and truth (**Eph.5:8-9**).

3rd on World Persecution List: Iran

Overview: President Ahmadinejad's regime and the possibility of Iran acquiring nuclear weapons are attracting global attention. Shariah law is implemented and although Christians belong to a recognised religious minority guaranteed religious freedom, they have reported imprisonment, harassment and discrimination because of their faith. Some Muslim converts to Christianity have been arrested and held in custody for several weeks, then forced to pay large sums for bail.

Prayer: Praise God for Hamid Pourmand's release in July 2006, after he had served 22 months in jail, having been falsely accused of keeping his faith secret. Pray for Christian groups targeted last year for spreading their faith among Shiite Muslims. Pray for Muslim-background Believers who face the death penalty for becoming Christians.

Women-2-Pray: In the eye of the storm with God

May my cry come before you, o Lord; give me understanding according to your word (Ps.119:169).

Years ago, one of our student friends got married before all of us. After some time we had a small reunion and shared snippets about our lives. We wanted to know everything about married life and she told us many things. The one thing she told us that I remember best of all was: *God showed me that when my husband comes home, I should be a harbour in the storm for him, rather than a storm in the harbour!*

As women we are often under a lot of pressure and much is expected of us. We are the first ones to rise and often the last ones to retire. Today God is asking you and me the same question: Is your life creating a storm or are you like a haven? You do not need to be married to desire or cultivate this quality in your life. The following thoughts will hopefully inspire you to realise the importance of 'time-out with God' in the life of a woman. Time-out with God causes us to breathe again, to think straight and most importantly, to hear God's voice clearly on the very issues that often drive us to become a storm, even sometimes a destructive tornado! The only safe way to weather the storm, is to find the eye of the storm and in our case, this means time-out with God, entering into His presence.

Change the way you view time:

1. **Quiet time:** It is not a luxury, it is a necessity. Start by setting 30 minutes aside at least once every two days. Have a notebook at hand and just begin to write down the things on your mind. After writing them all down, start praying about them. The more often you can take this time out, the more peace will come to your heart and mind as you pour out your heart to God. I find writing my prayers down helps me contemplate God's opinion and I receive clear guidance on the issues I bring before Him. Something else might work better for you, but at least try it for 2-3 months.
2. **Fasting:** From food if that is how the Holy Spirit directs you. BUT - more than anything though – stop running around! Change your habits, if necessary. Take a deliberate decision to walk and not run, to finish your tea before doing the next thing, in essence, SLOW DOWN! I know we can do three things at once, but try doing one at a time for at least one day a week! Even when we just slow down in our physical actions, more peace comes into our hearts. Doing a little bit of planning of our daily activities will also not hurt.
3. **Bless someone:** It does not need to be an elaborate action. When you pass by your husband, kids, a friend, or a colleague at work, just quickly place your hand on their head or shoulder and say, *Bless you*. Thus you bring them to a standstill for a moment, they think about God, wondering why you did something like that. Except for that, it is a good habit and it makes you an obedient servant of the Lord Jesus! (**Num.6:24-27**). Ask God to show you how you can do acts of kindness without it taking up a lot of time or effort. You can also bless people silently when you pass their offices or pass a school, or you could bless people like your children and friends in prayer, even if they are not close by.

4. **Time-out:** It is not always possible, but see if you can take a day off or set half a day aside at least once in six months just to pray and worship God. Try to arrange this with your husband, family or friends. Go to a place where no one will disturb you and switch off your cell phone. Take your Bible, a notebook and some worship music or your musical instrument. Begin your time with God by writing down the things on your mind or things that bother you. Then go into a time of extended worship, for as long as your heart desires. Now begin to praise the Lord for His goodness and take care to write down what He shows you from your time of worship. Spend the rest of your time in simple extended reading from your Bible and praying for things that come to mind.
5. **Keep it up:** Take care of yourself by taking time-out with God regularly.
6. **Give it up:** Which are the things that wear you down most? Take time today and write them down. Search your Bible for God's promises regarding fear, doubt, strife etc. Now write down these promises next to each of your concerns. Begin to speak the truth of God's Word over your life. Declare, according to the promises of God, the life of God, the truth of God and the love of God over your challenges and problems. Lay them down at His feet and when you find yourself carrying them again, lay them down again until you are completely freed from these burdens. As new burdens come up, add them to this list. Whatever you do, do not let them remain 'un-prayed' about!

God our Father and Lord Jesus Christ, I dedicate my time, my body, my mind, will and emotions to you. Please help me to slow down, to bless others, to take time out with You and to give up and let go of those things wearing me down. Teach me Your ways which are higher than mine. I desire a deeper relationship with You Lord Jesus, please show me the way. Help me plan my time and give me wisdom on how to spend my energy in a way that will glorify You. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

Tuesday 4 November 2008

12th on World Persecution List: Somalia

Overview: Plagued by political instability, if not anarchy, there is no constitutional or legal protection of religious freedom in Somalia. Islam is the official religion and social pressure is strong to respect Islamic tradition, especially in some rural areas. At least six Christians were killed for their faith in 2006. Most had Islamic backgrounds and were killed after this was revealed.

Prayer: Pray for a new era of stability and peace in Somalia. Pray for Christians who practise their faith in secret, that they will find fellowship and grow in their faith. Some children of Somali Christian refugees who fled to Kenya have allegedly been kidnapped by Muslim relatives and taken back to Islamic institutions in Somalia for 'rehabilitation'. Please intercede for them.

Wednesday 5 November 2008

Biotech centre to combat diseases

The *Centre for Proteomic and Genomic Research (CPGR)*, the first of its kind in South Africa, has opened at the University of Cape Town's medical campus, giving local researchers a powerful new tool for combating a variety of diseases. Research is currently focused on finding a new and improved molecular diagnostic marker of diseases such as malaria, leukaemia and colorectal cancer and is assessing the possible health risks associated with e.g. the development of genetically modified plants. (Website: <http://www.southafrica.info/about/science/cpgr-070408.htm>). Give thanks to the Lord for new research development projects such as these. Pray for each person involved, to have a revelation of God's wisdom for significant breakthroughs in this area of research. Ask that many will be convinced of God's sovereignty as a result and be saved.

4th on World Persecution List: Maldives

Overview: This multitude of tiny islands is one of the least evangelised countries on earth. All citizens are Muslim. It is prohibited to practise any other religion. Shariah law is observed. Islam is considered to be an important tool in stimulating national unity and maintenance of the government's power. Conversion from Islam is prohibited. Converts can lose citizenship. No churches can be opened, though foreigners are allowed to practise their religion in private as long as they do not encourage citizens to participate.

Prayer: Uphold in prayer the handful of indigenous Believers who keep their faith secret. They need great wisdom. Ask God to grant the authorities a miraculous revelation of Jesus Christ. Bibles cannot be imported – apart from a copy for a tourist's personal use. Pray that God's Word would be made available to the Maldivian people.

Thursday 6 November 2008

6th on World Persecution List: Yemen

Overview: The constitution guarantees freedom of religion but also declares that Islam is the state religion and that Shariah is the source of all legislation. The government allows expatriates some freedom to practise their faith, but Yemeni citizens are not allowed to convert from Islam. Converts from an Islamic background may face the death penalty if they are discovered. Last year several Christian converts were arrested and physically harmed because of their faith.

Prayer: Pray for God's protection over the handful of converts from Islam who face the death penalty if they are discovered. At least one convert gave in to severe pressure to renounce his new faith. Pray that he would know God's presence and forgiveness. Ask God to reveal Himself to many others.

Friday 7 November 2008

Global stewardship focus: Finance ministers' and Central Bank governors' meeting: Salvador, Brazil November 8-9, 2008

The members of the G-20 are the finance ministers and central bank governors of 19 countries: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. (Website: <http://www.g20.org/G20/>). Lift up in prayer each person represented on this board, pray that those not knowing the Lord will be saved; ask for God's wisdom and agenda to prevail over the next two days and for them to effectively address issues on the table.

5th on World Persecution List: Bhutan

Overview: Officially, the Christian faith does not exist and Christians are not allowed to pray or celebrate in public. Even house gatherings involving several families are forbidden by the government. Religious workers are denied visas to enter Bhutan and the import of printed religious matter is restricted, with only Buddhist texts allowed in. Society exerts strong pressure to comply with Buddhist norms. Harassment and pressure by Buddhist extremists occur in certain areas.

Prayer: Praise God that in July 2006 two imprisoned Bhutanese Believers were released. Pray for those in authority, pray for Buddhist officials who pressurise and assault Christians. Christian leaders need God's guidance and protection as they help Christians to stand firm.

Saturday 8 November 2008

17th on World Persecution List: Vietnam

Overview: The government is keen to paint a positive picture of human rights and religious freedom. In practice a system of registration is used to keep religious groups under strict control. In the Central Highlands, evangelical Christianity has been seen as linked to independence movements: a government document indicates their aim is to 'manage, limit and reverse' the growth of the church in this region. Reports are that arbitrary arrests, harassment and fines continue.

Prayer: Pray for Christians in remote regions where persecution is intense – they need God's strength and wisdom. Pray for *Open Doors* workers who provide Christian literature, including the new children's Bible. Ask God that all churches will be allowed to stay open so all Believers may worship feely.

Church focus: *International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church (IDOP)*

The *IDOP* is a global day of intercession for persecuted Christians world-wide and first started in 1996. From a core group of approximately 7,000 churches, the *IDOP* has grown to be the largest prayer day event of its kind in the world. Its primary focus is the work of intercessory prayer and citizen action on behalf of persecuted communities of the Christian faith and also to encourage prayer for the souls of the oppressors, the nations that promote persecution and those who ignore it.

In November we focus in prayer on the *Persecuted Church*. International statistics show that an estimated 150,000 Christians are martyred every year. More than 200 million Christians are restricted from living out their Christianity. There is a growing onslaught on Christianity world-wide. More and more countries are accepting legislation that creates greater difficulty for Christians to live out their faith and restricts them from gathering freely. There are also continuous efforts to ban the Bible.

This year the *IDOP* falls on 9 & 16 November. (Website: <http://www.idop.org/>). Join millions of Christians to pray for the *Persecuted Church* this year.

Sunday 9 November 2008

Memorise

I have posted watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; they will never be silent day or night. You who call on the Lord, give yourselves no rest and give him no rest till he establishes Jerusalem and makes her the praise of the earth (Isa.62:6-7).

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8th on World Persecution List: Laos

Overview: A desperately poor communist state, the constitution provides for religious freedom, but local officials can interpret and implement this as they choose. The regime places limitations on the number of churches that are allowed to be open and regularly closes churches, especially in the countryside. Believers are watched closely. But there are signs of improvement: last year persecution was less brutal than before. Yet at least ten Christians are still in prison because of their faith.

Prayer: Praise God that the Laotian church is growing despite persecution and pressure. Pray that those in prison will stay faithful and witness boldly. Ask God for safety for all who work with and through church leaders to strengthen the church.

Monday 10 November 2008

Salvation focus: Secretaries

Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways, we do not use deception, nor do we distort the Word of God (2 Cor.4:2). There are thousands of secretaries at work every day across the country. They often have access to very personal information of their bosses and those with whom they associate. In too many cases secretaries have been using this information in a wrong way to their own benefit. In so many cases the boss and secretary become involved in a relationship. Pray for the salvation of secretaries not knowing the Lord, that they will find their joy and protection in the Lord, that they will lay their emotional burdens at God's feet and that they will receive their healing and comfort from the Lord where necessary. Ask that they will live pure and holy lives and will not become involved in wrong physical relationships at work that are devastating to marriages and families.

7th on World Persecution List: Afghanistan

Overview: As fighting with the Taliban continues, large areas are outside government control. There are no churches, few Christians and open evangelism is effectively illegal. The new constitution guarantees freedom of religion, but prohibits laws 'contrary to the beliefs and provisions of Islam'. One Believer, Abdul Rahman was spared execution for apostasy, ruled mentally unfit to stand trial. His case sparked the arrest and further harassment of other Afghan Christians.

Prayer: Pray for Afghans who turn to Christ – they are often pressured by family and society to return to Islam and may face repeated verbal abuse, intimidation, beatings, unemployment and even imprisonment. Ask God for courage and protection of church leaders, both spiritually and physically. Pray for all who share the gospel in word and deed.

Tuesday 11 November 2008

9th on World Persecution List: Uzbekistan

Overview: Since the suppression of the Andijan uprising in 2005, relations with Western countries have deteriorated. Television portrays Christians very negatively: they are seen as followers of a Western religion or an extremist sect. Thus the few thousand Uzbek Believers are under great pressure. In 2006 many expatriate Christian workers were deported. A new law punishes the printing of religious books with three years in prison.

Prayer: Pray for Muslim-background Believers pressured to deny their new faith, who are publicly humiliated and hounded out of their homes and jobs. Pray for God's anointing on teachers and students at seminars and Bible schools. Ask God for the safe printing and distribution of Bibles and other Christian materials.

Wednesday 12 November 2008

10th on World Persecution List: China

Overview: There is a degree of controlled freedom in official churches, but most Chinese Believers belong to unregistered house churches and are liable to fines, arrest, torture, labour camps and even death. In 2006 there were fewer raids on house churches but more forced closures and demolitions than in 2005. New tactics saw house-church leaders detained for longer, with church members freed after short interrogations: thus there were fewer arrests but there was greater pressure on leaders.

Prayer: Praise God that the church is growing – some estimate there are 20,000 new Believers in China every day. Pray for their protection from false teaching. Pray that God will call, equip and strengthen more pastors, evangelists and Sunday-school teachers. Ask that God will soon answer the prayers prayed over China during the *2008 Olympic Games*.

Thursday 13 November 2008

11th on World Persecution List: Eritrea

Overview: Most Christians belong to the Orthodox Church. The government severely restricts freedom of religion for unregistered groups, including the relatively small evangelical churches. More than 2,000 Christians are imprisoned, some in shipping containers, without official charges or access to any judicial process. Many have been beaten and physically abused by police. Two were tortured to death two days after their arrest for holding a religious service in a private home.

Prayer: Remember those in prison and their families who wait anxiously for news. Pray for wisdom, strength and courage for church leaders and their congregations in the face of intimidation. Ask God to change the hearts of those in power so that they will rule with justice for the good of all Eritreans.

Friday 14 November 2008

Mental health focus: Gambling addiction

Compulsive gambling starts out as recreation and slowly progresses to the point where it has serious consequences for both the gambler and his/her family. Compulsive gambling affects the gambler threefold: mentally, physically and spiritually, with its main symptom being that of denial and its major characteristic loss of control. Availability and accessibility determine the number of people who will gamble. The more accessible the facilities, the greater the number of people who participate and the greater the risk of becoming addicted. (Website: http://www.health24.com/mind/Sexual_dysfunction/1284-1300,14269.asp). Lift up in prayer those addicted to gambling, whether at casinos, clubs or any other venues. Ask God to open their minds to the truths and realities of such behaviour and make them willing to really seek help. Pray for labourers to this harvest of people who need much help to be delivered from their compulsive behaviour.

13th on World Persecution List: Turkmenistan

Overview: Since independence in 1991, Turkmen have revived their Islamic heritage. There are only around 2,000 Turkmen evangelical Christians and they often face fines and imprisonment for meeting together. The lack of Christian resources, fellowship and teaching has left many feeling isolated and discouraged. Christians are threatened, denied employment, harassed and beaten. Churches are closed, confiscated or destroyed. Christian students are prevented from attending university.

Prayer: Pray that the young church would grow and be strengthened amidst the current hardships. Pray that God would give wisdom and guidance to those translating Bibles and Christian materials into several languages. Ask God

to provide for all the needs of Christians who are unemployed, abused and discouraged.

Praying for the felt needs of people

To pray for the felt needs of people, those things that people are struggling with from day to day in the 'real world', is one of the greatest privileges of Christians and one of the greatest opportunities to show people that we care for them and love them and that Jesus cares for them and loves them. Less than 10% of all people are at any given time ready for a conversation about Jesus Christ and their salvation, but nearly 97% of all people are at any given time ready that you can pray for them for their felt needs, problems and challenges that they experience at that specific point in time. Very few people will refuse a prayer and a prayer of blessing, especially if they have specific needs. This is also true for people from other religions like Hindus, Buddhists and Muslims. We want to encourage you to do this on a regular basis – pray for the felt needs of Christians and non-Christians with whom you have contact every day.

A few guidelines on how to do this:

1. Do not make it an issue. As you meet people and they share some of their needs, concerns, difficulties, problems, challenges, etc., simply offer to pray for them.
2. It is best if you can pray for them right there and then. Do not wait till you are at home before you pray. It is good for them to experience someone caring for them in prayer and it is good for you too, by having the courage to do so.
3. Ask the person if he or she would mind you praying for them and then pray a very simple prayer. Do it in a discreet way so that you do not embarrass the person. Do not pray in a loud voice and with much demonstration or many words.
4. When you see the person again after a day or a few days, ask how he/she is doing and whether there is any progress regarding the issue you prayed for. Maybe the door is open for you to pray with them again, or you can simply say that you will continue to pray, as the Lord leads you. At this point in time you can even give the person a Scripture verse to encourage him/her.
5. It is always good to pray a prayer of blessing when you pray with someone. Pray for God to intervene in the person's situation and ask God to bless the person. Often Christians are afraid that if we pray that God will bless someone we overlook their sin (in cases where people are living in sin). This is not so. When you pray that God will bless someone, you pray that God in His wisdom will come and convict that person of sin and that He will comfort, heal, re-direct and show them His ways.
6. So many people want to make use of such opportunities to 'lead the person to the Lord' (trying to save the person during or even before the prayer) – don't do it unless the Lord specifically directs you to do it. Just pray. God will work in His own way. People first need to experience genuine love and compassion before they will open up to the gospel of salvation. Most people only make a commitment to follow Jesus Christ after 8-11 positive contacts with Christians!
7. Make it a daily habit to pray for people. Listen to them. Seek out opportunities to 'apply' prayer to their felt needs.
8. You can also do more than just pray. When someone's car has broken down, offer to take the kids to school. If there is illness in the home, take some food or offer to do the laundry. There are just so many opportunities. We need to pray and do. Sometimes we cannot do anything for the person and then we just pray for them. At other times we can pray for them *and* do something that will show that we care for them.

Praying for sick people

When Jesus sent out the disciples, He commanded them to preach the gospel, heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead (**Matt.10:7**). As disciples of Jesus, we have a clear command to go and heal the sick. In **Mark 16:17-18** we read: *And these signs will accompany those who believe... they will place their hands on sick people and they will get well.* The most basic way of healing the sick is simply to pray for them. We also read in **James 5:14** that we must pray for the sick and anoint them with oil. Let us take every opportunity to pray for the sick. Do not feel intimidated or afraid to do so. God listens to the prayers of ALL His children. Yes, it is true that God gives a gift of healing to some people, but that does not mean that all the other people cannot and must not pray for the sick. Come in simple faith to the Lord on a daily basis and ask for the healing of your friends, family and other sick people – and see how God answers.

1. Do not look at or feel intimidated by the illness of the person you are praying for. Simply look to God and ask Him. Do not try to pray extremely 'spiritual' prayers. Simply lift up your heart to God and pray a simple prayer.
2. In some cases you may feel to anoint a person with oil and then pray for them. You can use something like olive oil. Just put a little bit of oil on the forehead of the person and ask the Lord to heal him/her. (You can also explain to the person why you are doing that).
3. When you pray for a person, when prompted by the Holy Spirit, you may ask the person if his/her life is right with God – if there are any unconfessed sins, any bitterness or unforgiveness or issues that need to be settled. Help the person to deal with those things before you pray for them. God works in different ways. Sometimes, especially in the case of unsaved people, God will heal the person and the healing will show the person that God cares and these types of miracles often bring people to faith in Christ Jesus.
4. There are different ways God can use to heal people: 1. God heals by the laying on of hands. 2. God heals by anointing with oil and prayers of faith. 3. God sometimes heals people by means of Holy Communion. 4. God heals people in answer to intercessory prayer for them. 5. God can use doctors and medicine to heal people. 6. God also heals when the individual prays for his/her own healing. Remember that it is God who does the healing, how and when He chooses and His desire is to heal!
5. Familiarise yourself with some of the basic Scripture references about healing and bring those promises in prayer before God's throne when you come boldly to His throne of grace to ask for help. In **Exodus 15:26** the Lord calls Himself Yahweh-Ropheka which means: The Lord who heals. This is God's name, this is who He is and this is what He can do and wants to do for us. Pray to God who calls Himself Yahweh-Ropheka when you pray for the sick. *He said, 'If you will listen carefully to the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in his sight, obeying his commands and keeping all his decrees, then I will not make you suffer any of the diseases I sent on the Egyptians; for I am the Lord who heals you.'*
 - He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases (**Ps.103:3**).
 - He heals the broken hearted and bandages their wounds (**Ps.147:3**).
 - Don't be impressed with your own wisdom. Instead, fear the Lord and turn away from evil. Then you will have healing for your body and strength for your bones (**Prov.3:7-8**).
 - Yet it was our weaknesses Christ carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down. And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins! But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed (**Isa.53:4-5**).
 - These miraculous signs will accompany those who believe: They will cast out demons in my name and they will speak in new languages. They will be able to handle snakes with safety and if they drink anything poisonous, it won't hurt them. They will be able to place their hands on the sick and they will be healed (**Mk.16:17-18**).
 - The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free (**Lk.4:18**).
 - Are any of you sick? You should call for the elders of the church to come and pray over you, anointing you with oil in the name of the Lord. Such a prayer offered in faith will heal the sick and the Lord will make you well. And if you have committed any sins, you will be forgiven. Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results (**Jas.5:13-16**).

Saturday 15 November 2008

14th on World Persecution List: Comoros

Overview: The constitution provides for freedom of religion, but this is violated in practice. In May 2006 the newly-elected President pledged an Islamic 'green revolution'. The same month four of the tiny evangelical Christian minority were imprisoned for three months. The police beat them to get them to denounce their faith. Muslim fundamentalists reportedly demanded their execution for the 'crime' of being involved with Christianity. This was a new level of pressure against Believers.

Prayer: Pray that church leaders will be inspired and equipped for their task. Pray that the President and his government will soften in their stance against Christianity. Pray for the safe distribution of Bibles and materials.

Sunday 16 November 2008

Memorise

But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him and by his wounds we are healed (Isa.53:5).

Prayer focus on Bible translation: Why an *Easy-to-Read Version*?

The *Easy-to-Read Version* of the Bible was initially prepared to meet the special needs of the deaf and was first published as *The English Version for the Deaf*. Unlike their hearing peers, most deaf children have not acquired a large spoken vocabulary by the time they reach school age. This makes learning to read a much more difficult task for them. For many the knowledge of sign language influences their acquisition and use of spoken language. With the help of consultants familiar with deaf communication patterns, the translators of *The English Version for the Deaf* attempted to match those patterns in English as closely as possible. Give thanks to the Lord for this work. Ask that many deaf and those with hearing problems will continue to benefit from this translation. Ask that it might be of benefit also to people whose first language is not English.

18th on World Persecution List: Chechnya in Russia

Overview: The level of persecution in the Chechen part of the Russian Federation has resulted in it being identified as a specific problem. No Chechen can change faith publicly and women especially face severe difficulties if they do so. There are very few evangelical Christians and new converts face harassment by relatives or the authorities when their faith is discovered. Last year some fled Chechnya as a result, while others tried to keep a low profile.

Prayer: Pray for healing and reconciliation between Russians and Chechens – most Chechens assume Christians are Orthodox and therefore Russian. Pray for many Believers that are isolated and suffer pressure from relatives. Pray for effective and fruitful nurturing of Chechen Believers.

Monday 17 November 2008

Salvation focus: Municipal workers

How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! (Heb.9:14). There are thousands of municipal workers country-wide who are up and working early almost every morning of the week to remove rubbish from our suburbs, or who are cleaning and grooming the public spaces of cities and towns. Ask that they will be faithful and diligent in their work and not participate in strikes. Pray for them to have a revelation of the blood of Jesus that also washes away their sins and purifies them so that they may stand before God. Pray that each one will have a personal revelation of the power of God's Spirit working in us and also of the Lord Jesus Christ.

15th on World Persecution List: Pakistan

Overview: Islam is the state religion in Pakistan. Accusations of blasphemy are a constant threat to the significant Christian minority – death is the prescribed sentence for anyone found guilty of denigrating Mohammed. Arrests and imprisonment for blasphemy take place without a warrant or bail. Ill-treatment in custody is common. Judicial proceedings may take years, suspects are often murdered.

Prayer: Praise God that death sentences have always been overturned by higher courts. Praise God that in January 2007 a Pakistani court acquitted a Christian 'blasphemy' suspect on grounds of mental instability, while another Christian facing the same charge was released on bail. Pray for God to raise up intercessors to continuously cry out for spiritual breakthroughs in Pakistan.

Tuesday 18 November 2008

Education focus: SA plans for more universities

South Africa plans to increase the number of tertiary institutions in the country in an effort to ensure that 20% of people aged between 18 and 25 are enrolled in the higher education system by 2015. Education Minister Naledi Pandor said the system would have to take on more than 100,000 extra students between 2010 and 2015 if the government was to reach its target. (Website: <http://www.southafrica.info/about/education/highered-291107.htm>). Pray for capacity constraints to be addressed effectively so that the expected target of 820,000 can be reached by 2010. Give thanks to the Lord for efforts taken to raise the education level in our country.

19th on World Persecution List: Egypt

Overview: The Coptic Orthodox Church is a reminder of a great Christian heritage, but now non-Muslims face discrimination under Egyptian law. There is no legal provision for conversion from Islam to another religion and Christians from a Muslim background face many problems. Many Christians are being pressured or encouraged to convert to Islam. The situation is particularly difficult for Christians from a Muslim background. The government makes it difficult to repair or build church buildings.

Prayer: Pray for Christian women who are married to Muslims – that God would strengthen them and enable them to witness for Him. Pray for the provision of materials, finances, leaders and workers for the Egyptian church and for effective teaching and discipleship. Pray for the safety of Muslim-background Believers.

Wednesday 19 November 2008

24-7 Focus: *Jericho Walls International Prayer Network*

Please pray today for each volunteer working at the different offices of *Jericho Walls International Prayer Network* across the country. Ask for their safety, strength and health. Also pray for God to provide in their practical and physical needs. Over the past few months, the printing and posting process of the *Jericho Walls Daily Prayer Guide* has really improved. Give thanks to the Lord for answering our prayer. Continue to pray that the vision to see at least one 24/7 prayer watch in every country in Africa will be fulfilled by God. Ask for every prayer seminar to have a lasting effect and help people to grow in their personal relationship with God. (*Jericho Walls International Prayer Network*, Private bag X22, Lynnwood Ridge, 0040. Tel.: 012 365 3213, fax: 012 365 3214. Website: www.jwipn.com or e-mail: info@jwipn.com).

25th on World Persecution List: Myanmar (Burma)

Overview: Myanmar has been an oppressive military dictatorship since 1962, condemned globally for its abuse of human rights. Its ruling regime, the State Peace and Development Council, is shaped by the nationalistic slogan 'One race, one language, one religion'. Underlying the practice of the 'one religion' – Buddhism – Christians are systematically abused in a campaign of discrimination, restrictions and persecution, particularly those from ethnic minority groups.

Prayer: Pray for strength for Burmese Christians to stand firm under the pressures to convert to Buddhism. Pray for God's presence to be tangibly felt by Christians in the ethnic states, particularly Chin, Kachin, Karen and Karenni states, where they constitute a significant proportion of the population and suffer the most overt and violent persecution.

Kids-2-Pray: Bibles everywhere, please Lord!

Imagine life without the Bible. How would you know the story of God's love and **forgiveness**? How would you know what God wants you to do? How would you know about prayer? The Bible is like a light that shows us the path through life. But almost 400 million people don't have the Bible in their own language. Most of these people are children. Many languages don't have the translation of even one Bible verse. That's because some languages don't have an alphabet. If there is no alphabet, there are no written words. And if there are no written words, there's no Bible. The good news is that hundreds of people all over the world are working as Bible translators. They take the words and thoughts of the Bible and write them in the words of another language. Some translators are missionaries who go to distant countries to live with the people there, learn their language and help with Bible translation. Will you not think about praying for these matters Monday to Friday?

Ask your parents to find you a big world map. See if you can find India, China and Africa. Every evening, or whenever you remember, put your hand on these countries and pray for each person living there to come to know the Lord Jesus and have a Bible of their own.

1. **Understanding:** Lord, I ask for Your Spirit of wisdom and revelation to rest on Bible translators so that they can do their work well (**Isaiah 11:2, Proverbs 2:6**).
2. **Protection:** Father, protect the Bible translators from danger and illness. Deliver them from evil people that want to do them harm (**Psalms 16:1, Proverbs 18:10, 2 Corinthians 11:26**).
3. **Distribution:** Father, may every person without a Bible soon have one of their own which they can read and that those who cannot read, will be able to listen to the Bible on CD or cassette.
4. **Labourers:** Send people to translate the Bible for those who do not know You, because they can't believe in

someone they have not heard about (**Romans 10:14,17**).

5. **Thanksgiving:** Forgive me for taking the Bible I have for granted and not reading my Bible enough. I rejoice in Your Word—it's worth more than money (**Psalms 119:14,72**).

Thursday 20 November 2008

26th on World Persecution List - Sudan (North)

Overview: Following the peace settlement that ended decades of civil war, the North and South now have separate constitutions. There is significantly less religious freedom in the North, where Islamic law are applied to all. The government promotes free Islamic education with the aim of encouraging children and parents to follow Islam. Christians in the north find it difficult to get permission for an official place of worship.

Prayer: Pray that peace will be maintained and that the government will implement greater religious freedom for Christians as promised in the peace agreement. Pray for Muslim-background Believers who need discipling and encouragement. Pray for renewal, forgiveness, reconciliation and commitment to the Lord for the Sudanese church.

Friday 21 November 2008

21st on World Persecution List – Iraq

Overview: Religious tensions continued to rise in Iraq during 2006. There are many reports of increased violence, specifically against Christians. Many Iraqis see the West as Christian and assume that Christians are collaborators. In 2006, several Christians were murdered, abused or kidnapped. Churches have been fired upon and bombed, demonstrations were held and threats expressed towards non-Muslims in Baghdad.

Prayer: Pray for protection of Iraqi Believers. Ask for safe printing and distribution of Bibles and other Christian materials to Iraqi Christians. Many church leaders are leaving the country. Pray for encouragement for the Christians left behind. Ask God to grant peace and security to Iraq's people.

Saturday 22 November 2008

22nd on World Persecution List – Azerbaijan

Overview: There are now Azeri evangelical churches and possibly 20,000 Azeri Believers in the country – a 50-fold increase since 1990. Christianity is associated by locals with Russian imperialism and the Armenian occupation of much of Azeri territory. Post-independence openness to the gospel has been countered by resentment, rising nationalism, legal restrictions on evangelism aimed at Muslims and the propaganda of the Islamists.

Prayer: Praise the Lord for the growth in the number of Azeri Believers since 1990. Pray that the hindrances faced by Christians would be removed and that many Azeris will find peace with God. Also ask for a strong church with an effective witness to the majority Muslim population – in humility, sensitivity and love. Pray for God to send more workers and for fruit on their work.

Sunday 23 November 2008

Memorise

For you have been my hope, O Sovereign Lord, my confidence since my youth. From birth I have relied on you; you brought me forth from my mother's womb. I will ever praise you (Ps.71:5-6).

Prayer focus on Bible translation: Illiteracy and Bibles

The *Easy-to-Read Version* has also recently undergone a major revision precipitated by a number of factors. First of all, the target audience has changed. Although the *English Version for the Deaf* still meets the needs of the deaf community (and for that reason will still be published as is), most of the distribution of the *Easy-to-Read Version* is now geared toward evangelistic outreach to the hearing, whether domestic (such as ministries to prisons, the homeless or children) or foreign. Some of the characteristics of the version for the deaf that needed to be changed for the hearing were obvious. (Website: <http://www.wbtc.com/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=6003>). Please pray for this process, especially in other languages as well. Ask for God's supernatural intervention for His Word to become real and personal to illiterate people. Praise God for new translations on a 3rd grade reading level available to 1.2 billion people.

29th on World Persecution List – Brunei

Overview: The Bruneian government requires that citizens have to be Muslim before they can apply for certain jobs. Decrees in the 1990's banned the public celebration of Christmas, import of Christian literature and contact with Christians in other countries. Outreach to Malays is not allowed, but the government offers incentives for people to convert to Islam.

Prayer: Pray that the Bruneian people will begin to search for the living God. Ask that expatriate Believers (foreigners in Brunei) will find opportunities to share their faith and also find favour to receive the extension of their visas and permits and to work in Brunei. Pray that the Bruneian government will soften its attitude towards evangelism and worship.

Monday 24 November 2008

Salvation focus: People working with water purification

... but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life (John 4:14). Pray for the salvation of unbelieving engineers, government officials and workers responsible for water purifying works in the country. Ask that they will understand that God wants to purify them from sin and as they do their work that they will understand that Jesus gives living water. Ask that they will do excellent work, take responsible decisions and have the ability to effectively address the current threat of water not adequately being purified.

28th on World Persecution List – Cuba

Overview: The Catholic church is by far the largest group in this country. In the early years of Fidel Castro and Communism there was strict control on church activities and repression of religious freedom. Since 1990, pressure has lessened and the 1992 constitution declared discrimination against Christians illegal. Periodic harassment of Christians continues however. It is almost impossible to register churches and obtain building permits. There are about 900 legal and 15,000 illegal house churches.

Prayer: Praise God for each person involved in a house church and for them to have courage despite the fact they do not obtain favour to operate legally. Pray for Raul Castro and his government, for a new openness to and acceptance of the gospel. Pray for the children who have extra-mural school activities deliberately scheduled on Sunday mornings to keep them from Sunday school. Ask God to give pastors and church leaders His words when they are being interrogated.

Tuesday 25 November 2008

16th on World Persecution List – Qatar

Overview: The constitution provides for freedom of worship and forbids discrimination based on religion, but it remains illegal to present the gospel to Muslims. The expatriate (foreigners in Qatar) Christian community have been permitted to rent space for public worship and legal status has been given to many Christian denominations, but there are very few Qatari Believers. The publication, import and distribution of non-Islamic religious literature are banned. Individuals can however import Bibles, but only for personal use.

Prayer: Praise God that religious materials for use at Christmas and Easter are now readily available in shops. Ask that Arabic Bibles will also become readily available. In public schools Islamic instruction is compulsory – pray that Qatari children will come to know the saving grace available in Jesus Christ.

FOCUS ON INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE

All people have an influence on other people, good or bad. Yet, there are people that are most influential, impacting the lives of millions of others on a global scale. Not all of them serve the Lord Jesus at all. In this short overview, we chose 10 out of a 100 of those voted the most influential in the world for 2008. We need to pray for them, that their hearts will turn to give glory to God for what they are doing and to become God's instruments to turn millions of people to consider Jesus Christ as their Saviour. Let us not grow weary of persevering in prayer for these and many others like them. As you pray through these few pointers, will you not consider encouraging others to begin praying for these and other influential people to unashamedly turn their lives to Christ and acknowledge that Jesus is Lord and submit to His Lordship.

1. **The Dalai Lama** – 72 years old – is seen as the leader of Buddhists. Ask for the Father to vividly reveal Jesus

Christ to this man through the working of the Holy Spirit. Fast and pray for his radical salvation unto Christ before he dies and that he will acknowledge that Jesus is Lord and submit to His Lordship.

2. **Kevin Rudd** – 50 years old – elected Prime Minister of Australia in November 2007. For years Australia's government refused to apologise to Aborigines for past wrongs done to them – most notably, the systematic removal of children from their parents in the 1970's. When elected, his best substantive act was to issue a formal apology to Aborigines in general and to the surviving members of stolen generations, their families and relatives. Ask for this man to have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus, to have favour with his people and to be successful as a ruler.
3. **Muqtada Al-Sadr** – 34 years old – Shi'ite leader in Iraq. He appeals to the poor Shi'ite masses and thereby controls the stability of southern Iraq. He is able to control the coalition war-fighting situation and also disrupt Iraq's political progress as provincial elections are coming up. He is in a position to alter world events. Pray for this man to have visions and dreams of the Lord Jesus so that he will be able to help bring peace in the Middle East, give his life over to Jesus and become an ambassador for the Kingdom of God in Iraq.
4. **Baitullah Mehsud** – in his mid 30's - a Pakistani tribal leader. He is suspected to be the mastermind behind the Bhutto assassination. In his first television interview he claimed to be planning violent attacks on certain western nations. The Pakistani government will have to take some action at the threat this man poses. Cry out to the Father for the salvation of this man. Also ask for the salvation of his followers and for them to bring change that will glorify God in the lives of their followers.
5. **Oprah Winfrey** – 54 years old - popular talk-show host with an international audience. She has been working for 20 years, building a relationship with her viewers and readers. She influences millions as many agree with even her slightest opinion. Ask for Oprah to come to know the Jesus she knows about. Ask that this will have a major impact on the way she presents her programme and conducts her life. Pray that her testimony will convince millions to choose Jesus as the one and only God they serve.
6. **Kaká** – 26 years old - remarkable young soccer star from Brazil. Named both FIFA World Player of the Year and European footballer of the year in 2007, he is now a star. And he is devoted to his faith as an evangelical Christian. He has talked publicly about becoming a minister when he retires from the game. After winning the European Champions League final last year, he took off his jersey to reveal a T-shirt that read: I BELONG TO JESUS. Give thanks to the Lord for the bold testimony of this man. Pray for him to remain steadfast in his faith, not to fall into temptation and for many to choose Christ because of his testimony.
7. **Sheik Mohammed al-Maktoum** – 58 years old - ruler of Dubai. Ruling the country on his own since 2006, he has transformed this desert emirate into a major global hub for business, finance, trade and tourism, making Dubai an internationally recognised synonym for success in the Middle East. Dubai is just one of the states of the United Emirates. Earnestly pray for this man's radical salvation, the salvation of his immediate family and those with them in positions of authority. Ask that their testimony will spill over to the other states, drawing millions into the Kingdom of God.
8. **Jacob Zuma** – 66 years old - running for president in South Africa. His pro-poor rhetoric resonates well with many ordinary South Africans who have not benefited from Mbeki's business-friendly policies. Ask God to grant this man the revelation of Jesus Christ the Son of God, the supreme ruler over the entire universe. Pray that he will submit completely to God's sovereignty and bring radical change to every bit of his life, personal, political and serve as an example for millions.
9. **Madeeha Hasan Odihaib** – 37 years old - former seamstress in Iraq. Four years ago, this mother of two and seamstress turned district council member and took three sewing machines, leveraged them into 60 sewing machines and built a business, sewing hospital sheets and flags. She now employs 100 women in Iraq which is suffering one of the worst humanitarian crises ever. Pray for the radical salvation of this woman and all of her employees.
10. **Larry Brilliant** – 64 years old - helped eradicate smallpox. He has since worked with the United Nations to combat blindness in the developing world. His grasp of science makes him one of our leading social entrepreneurs. Ask for this man's salvation and his testimony to touch the sphere of his influence. Ask for God's favour on his life to see more significant breakthroughs in his field in his life-time. Pray that many will accept Christ as Lord because of the work he does.

(Facts only were taken from double issue, TIME magazine, 12/05/2008, pp. 29-90. Prayers are suggested by the writer of this article).

Health focus: Changes in pharmaceutical sector

The *Department of Health* has proposed new measures to revive the local pharmaceutical manufacturing industry, including speeding up the registration of new drugs. Currently the time taken for the registration and approval of drugs and clinical trials in South Africa is four times longer than international benchmarks. (Website: http://www.busrep.co.za/index.php?from=rss_&ArticleId=4364977). Pray about this situation. Also ask that pharmaceutical companies will do away with all practices of corruption and manipulation in their ranks and for many to turn their lives over to Jesus Christ. Pray that more affordable medicine will be made available to the public soon.

23rd on World Persecution List – Libya

Overview: The government is tolerant of other religious groups, but prohibits evangelism aimed at Muslims. Persecution of Christians comes from the authorities and also local people and relatives. The majority of Christians are expatriate (foreigners in Libya) workers. Those who become Christians from a Muslim background experience many difficulties. Non-Arabic Scriptures can be imported but Arabic Bibles are strictly forbidden.

Prayer: Pray for enduring courage for Libyan Christians. Ask God for Christians to mature and to be equipped to lead and disciple their congregations. Ask for God's presence to shield Christians whose families and neighbours disown them because they convert from Islam. Also pray that Arabic Bibles will become more readily available to every Libyan and for the restriction to be lifted.

Thursday 27 November 2008

Family focus: *Family and marriage Society of South Africa (FAMSA)*

The family is the nucleus of society and when it weakens or crumbles the stability of the entire community is adversely affected. It is thus imperative to initiate and co-ordinate resources to maintain a healthy and happy marital and family life. Social workers with specialised training are employed to assist the community and *FAMSA* provides a high standard of selection and training for these volunteers. (Website: <http://www.famsa.org.za/about.asp>). Give thanks to the Lord for this and other ministries. Pray for success in their work to help and meet the needs of many troubled marriages. Ask God to raise up people who will cry out to Him for breakthroughs in marriages and families in our country night and day.

32nd on World Persecution List - Nigeria (North)

Overview: This is a crucial time for a nation that elected a Muslim president in April 2007. Twelve northern states, where Muslims are a majority, have imposed Islamic law in the past six years. Outbreaks of violence have claimed many lives and dozens of churches have been destroyed. In 2006 Christians were attacked, some killed, churches were burned down, homes and shops destroyed, creating many displaced people and increasing the physical and geographical separation between Christians and Muslims.

Prayer: Pray for the Nigerian church in the northern states to continue to reach out with the gospel and the love of Christ under continued difficult circumstances. Ask for Christians who have suffered in the recent violent attacks – that God will heal them, enable them to forgive and provide for all of their needs. Pray for the authorities to act with peace and justice.

Friday 28 November 2008

Health focus: *Alternative HIV treatments*

Twenty years into the pandemic, people are looking for new ways to live with HIV and for some alternative medicine has become part of the answer. (Website: <http://www.iolhivaid.co.za/index.php?fSectionId=&fArticleId=4361554>). Having tried many schemes (education, contraception etc.), it is evident that it does not really make a difference in the number of people still becoming infected. Let us cry out for the salvation of people living immoral and ungodly lives, that God will open their eyes to the realities of their lifestyles and cause them to cry out to Him and turn from these ways. Pray especially for HIV/AIDS orphans to be cared for and in particular that the church will increasingly take up their responsibility in this regard.

33rd on World Persecution List – Djibouti

Overview: The constitution declares Islam to be the state religion, but also provides for freedom of religion in general. The government respects this right in practice and does not sanction those who ignore Islamic teachings or practise other faiths. Religious groups must register, but in 2006 (unlike previous years) there were no reports that groups were denied this right. There is no legal prohibition against open evangelism, but it is discouraged.

Prayer: There are very few evangelical Christians in Djibouti. Pray that their witness may be effective and fruitful and that Believers who are isolated and suffer pressure from Muslim relatives for their faith will be strengthened in the Lord. Ask God to open the door to effective evangelism and discipleship of new Believers.

Saturday 29 November 2008

30th on World Persecution List – India

Overview: In the largest democracy in the world, seven states now have anti-conversion laws, which are being increasingly used by Hindu ultra-nationalists to harass Christians. Reports of threats against pastors, false arrests, beatings and even murder have been increasing, now averaging one incident every three days. Many of the Dalits, the 'untouchable' (lowest) caste of Hinduism, are converting to Christianity. This is one reason why Hindu nationalists are targeting Christians.

Prayer: Praise God for the thousands of Dalits that are now converting to Christianity. Ask for them to be discipled, to each obtain a Bible and grow in a strong personal relationship with the Lord Jesus. Pray that Christians will receive justice and be given the same treatment as Hindus by the government. Ask that pastors and church leaders who lack training will receive the education they need. Also lift up in prayer *Open Doors* co-workers delivering Christian materials, resources and training leaders.

Sunday 30 November 2008

Memorise

You are awesome, O God, in your sanctuary; the God of Israel gives power and strength to his people. Praise be to God! (Ps.68:35).

Prayer focus on Bible translation: Proper wording in Bible translation

In one English translation, **John 20:2** says, 'They have taken away the Lord and we don't know where they have laid him.' In the Bontoc language of the Philippines, to show that someone has died, two changes are necessary. It needs to read like this: 'They have taken away the Lord's body and we don't know where they have put it.' Otherwise, it sounds as if Jesus did not really die. Pray for translators to be aware of the best wording to convey meaning accurately. (Website: www.wycliffe.net).

36th on World Persecution List - Sri Lanka

Overview: After two decades of civil war between the Hindu Tamil Tigers and the government of the Buddhist Sinhalese majority, violence has erupted again. Churches are sheltering hundreds of refugees, prompting retaliatory raids by the army. Since Buddhist monks began their anti-conversion law campaign in 2002, violent mobs have attacked over 160 churches. As civil war and religious harassment merge, Christians fear further abuses of religious liberty.

Prayer: Pray for a decisive end to the civil war, that peace may come to Sri Lanka. Pray that anti-conversion legislation will not be passed and that churches and individuals will be protected from attack. Pray for God to reveal Himself to Buddhist monks. Praise God for the courageous witness and great compassion of the church in Sri Lanka.

PRAYER ACTIVITY IN THE EASTERN CAPE

HOW DID YOUR PRAYER WATCH START?

Over the years there have been various independent prayer groups operating under the banner of prayer in the Metropolis. It was however, after two conferences during 2001 and the establishment of the *Christian Transformation Network* five years ago, that the network emerged in its present form. The first organised effort was the mobilisation of prayer teams in certain geographical regions where a coordinator was assigned for every region. At first prayer initiatives were left in the hands of the regions and coordinators, but gradually these were more centrally coordinated. With the help of church leaders, congregational coordinators and teams were assigned and they met for a monthly breakfast during which preparation was done and initiatives discussed. The local presentation of the *Global Day of Prayer* in regions resulted in 'fraternals' (groupings of spiritual leaders) all over the metropolis where church leaders started taking responsibility for the prayer movement. This laid the foundation for the establishment of 24/7 prayer watches in which church leaders playing a vital role. Currently more than 40 churches have already committed themselves to 24/7 prayer. 24/7 Prayer was selected top priority of the transformation network's activities for 2008 and also of this year's *Global Day of Prayer*. Congregations are invited to each take one day per week or at least one

day per month to pray for 24 hours.

Prayer for the South African Police Services (SAPS) and Correctional Services

On 17 August 2005, at a gathering held for the local *Transformation Network* and the SAPS, the station commander and two prayer leaders of the Sophiatown-SAPS came to share their testimonies. As a result of this, the then *Provincial Police Commissioner* requested the *Transformation Network* to establish prayer groups at all the stations within the metropolis. This goal was reached within a period of one year. At present 22 police stations are reached by prayer teams. Prayer teams are accountable to the local police chaplains as well as the coordinators of the network.

Opportunities within the *Correctional Services* also arose. Prayer teams are currently mobilised to visit a prison every week. The level of trust between the prayer network and both the SAPS and *Correctional Services* is of such a nature that the network is regularly invited to other prayer gatherings and also to give spiritual assistance to personnel.

WHAT TIPS CAN YOU GIVE OTHERS ON STARTING A PRAYER WATCH, OR THOSE WHO MIGHT BE STRUGGLING?

A basic infrastructure and dedicated staff who run a daily office is a necessity, especially in bigger centres like ours. An umbrella management with geographical coordinators works well. A network is built and maintained on the grounds of the relationship of mutual trust that develops and grows between role-players over a period of time. This means sacrifice, hours and hours spent in meetings, discussions, visits, telephone calls and correspondence. Meeting on a regular basis is essential and the frequency is determined by the initiative.

WHAT MUST ONE GUARD AGAINST?

At all costs avoid the perception that a prayer movement is the domain of individuals or a group of people. Establish the principle that churches and ordinary members hold the key to a successful geographical prayer movement. Prayer leaders are under the authority of their local leaders and the congregation coordinators must be thoroughly enlightened as to their role and function. The prayer team must at all times be in support of their spiritual leaders, submitting to them and mindful of an attitude of criticism, the wish to dominate or to manipulate them.

DO YOU SEE YOUR PRAYERS BEARING FRUIT?

We see doors opening. Schools, police stations, prisons, government departments, businesses and many more doors are busy opening. You can walk in anywhere and ask the people if you can pray for them and there will be a positive response. Many will ask that you come back and others want you to stay. If only we had enough people for the work! Church unity has grown remarkably the past few years and cooperation is getting better by the day. On the economic front there is strong growth in tourism, both foreign and domestic tourism. More and more tourists are using Port Elizabeth as a destination and departure point for their holidays. Something we might also take note of is that we have had only one short power failure this year! There is power in prayer!

CONTACT DETAILS

Transformation Christian Network – Nelson Mandela Bay, tel.: 041 581 5726. Contact Pierre van Wyk at 083 370 3592 or Joan Keeling at 084 766 2270.

Monday 1 December 2008

Salvation focus: Nursing personnel

Praise the Lord, O my soul and forget not all his benefits who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases (Ps.103:2-3). In general, nursing personnel is not paid well. They work long hours and have a lot of contact with people in trouble, pain and trauma. Let us pray for their salvation, that they will do their work with the necessary responsibility, ethics and with diligence. Ask that they will understand the truth of deliverance and that they will be sensitive to share the gospel with patients, pray for them and bring hope to the hundreds they care for every month. Ask that the life of Christ in them will help them not to become clinical in their work, but to see every person as a unique human being.

Global health focus: World AIDS Day 2008

World AIDS Day's focus is to appeal to governments, policy makers and regional health authorities to ensure that by 2010 they meet the many targets that have been set in the fight against HIV and AIDS. (Website: <http://www.avert.org/worldaid.htm>). Please pray that all sectors of society such as families, communities and civil society organisations - and not only governments – also take the initiative and provide leadership on AIDS. Pray for the church to take up her position according to God's purposes.

Tuesday 2 December 2008

Youth focus: Beginning of the SA holiday season

This week the schools will be closing for the holiday season. Please pray for children who will now be home alone, not to become involved in harmful practices like taking drugs and alcohol 'just for fun'. Ask that they will have a hunger and thirst after good things and especially for exploring the Word of God and sharing and praying together with friends about issues that bother them. Please pray for their protection (especially for the matrics) from considering or attempting suicide - ask that they will not be successful at this.

Evangelism focus: New radio station for Yao people

An exciting FM Radio station project (20 km from the southern shores of Lake Malawi) is set to bring Christian broadcasting to eighty thousand rural Yao people. It was literally built up from the ground, using local resources and labourers and became operational in September 2008. Give thanks to the Lord for establishing this work. Pray for the staff and for wisdom in research to reach more people more effectively. Also for the provision of radios to the poor, so they can hear the gospel. (*FEBA Radio South Africa*. P.O. Box 26270, Gezina, 0031. Tel.: 012 335 5708, fax: 012 335 8134. Websites: www.febaradio.co.za , www.febc.org or e-mail: febasa@corpdiel.co.za).