



Prayer for the Persecuted Church for March 28, 2025

Prayer for the Persecuted Church: Our Best Practices

Our focus in this hour is on prayer for the global church, not ourselves or our local issues. We can talk and even pray for those other things after prayer meeting is over at 1:00 p.m.

We strive to start our prayers by 12:10.

We are blessed to have a growing number of praying people join us. Let's all offer short prayers throughout our prayer time, allowing time for everyone to pray out loud if they wish. We are blessed by prayers when we can hear them, but silent prayers from our people are as valued as spoken ones.

Thank you for praying for the persecuted church. Encourage friends to pray, too!

Pray for imprisoned or kidnapped Christians

CHRISTIANS IN PRISON: This list is only a sample: CAMBODIA: Theary Seng; CHINA: Lian Xue Liang, Lian Chang Nian, Fu Juan, Li Jie, Hang Xiaodong, Yan Hwa, Goa Zhisheng, Wang Yi; Hao Zhiwei, Zhang Shaojie, Li Juncai, Lian Xu Liang; ERITREA: Mussia Ezas, Dr. Kify Gebremeskel, Kidane Weldou, Haile Nayzgi; INDIA: Sarju Prasad, Pastor Sawan; KAZAKHSTAN: Pastor Maximov; NORTH KOREA: Zhang Wen Shi PAKISTAN: Zafar Bhatti; VIETNAM: Nguyen Nang Tinh, Nguyen Trung Ton

KIDNAPPED VICTIMS: Raymond Koh, Gilbert Biswas, Leah Sharibu, Sarah Atef, Joshua Hilmya & wife Ruth Sitepu, Hormoz Diril.

from Voice of the Martyrs

Global Prayer Guide: NORTH KOREA

OVERVIEW:

North Korea was once a thriving center of Christian worship. Pyongyang, the capital, was known as “the Jerusalem of the East” in the early 1900s because of its 2,000-plus churches. But decades of rule by an oppressive regime, currently led by Kim Jong Un, has forced Christians to worship in underground settings. The communist-inspired dictatorship is founded upon Juche, a distinctly North Korean religious ideology that requires worship of and subservience to the Kim family. Christianity is considered subversive and is brutally opposed. Anyone discovered to be a Christian or to have expressed any interest in Christ or the Bible is considered an enemy of the state. The gospel is still proclaimed in North Korea through various creative means, including shortwave radio and

bold evangelists who risk their lives to smuggle Bibles and discipleship resources into the country.

Major Religion:

The North Korean government allows for no religious freedom, requiring all North Koreans to follow the Juche religion.

Persecutor:

If discovered, Christians face harsh persecution from the government and from members of the community, who are required to serve as government informants. Even those who are aware of Christian activity but do not report it to the government are punished as enemies of the regime.

What It Means To Follow Christ In North Korea

Christians are sent to prison and labor camps, where they are starved, overworked and tortured. The government's requirement that

all North Koreans act as informants applies even to families, as children are taught to spy on their parents from a young age. Therefore, North Korean Christians must be extremely careful in what they say, what they do and even how they pray. When a Christian is discovered, the government punishes the entire family in order to encourage reporting on family members. Despite the threat of persecution and heavy social pressure, Christians in North Korea hold firmly to their faith. Christian and secular analysts estimate that about 30,000 Christians are currently suffering in prison and labor camps.

Access To Bibles:

Owning a Bible or even portions of Scripture is extremely risky in North Korea. Nevertheless, bold Christians work to bring God's Word to the North Korean people, few of whom have ever had access to Scripture because of the regime's unceasing efforts to restrict access. Most of North Korea's underground Christians have found that memorization is the safest and most effective way to keep God's Word. Give Bibles

VOM Work:

VOM provides Bibles via creative smuggling operations, broadcasts the gospel over a special radio network and ministers to North Koreans wherever they are found. Give to VOM's Global Ministry

Prayer Requests:

- *Pray for the wisdom of front-line workers ministering to North Korean defectors in South Korea.*
- *Pray for the bold Christians who are working to bring God's Word to the North Korean people.*
- *Pray that Christians who receive Bibles smuggled into North Korea will grow in their knowledge of God's Word.*
- *Pray for Hyun-Ok, a Christian in South Korea who is reaching out to other North Korean defectors through Bible study.*
- *Pray for the effectiveness of Christian radio broadcasts into North Korea.*

From International Christian Concern

Historic Ruling Annuls Forced Marriage of Shahida Bibi

3/17/2025 Pakistan — A civil court in Pakistan's Punjab province has delivered a historic ruling, annulling the forced marriage of Shahida Bibi, a Christian girl abducted at age 11 and subjected to years of coercion and abuse.

International Christian Concern (ICC) praises this decision as a rare triumph against the epidemic of forced conversions and marriages plaguing Pakistan's Christian minority while commending the extraordinary courage of the judges who defied extremist threats to secure justice.

- *How to Pray: Praise God for this ruling and pray for Shahida as she heals from years of coercion and abuse.*
- *Pray for an end to the forced conversions and marriages plaguing Pakistan's Christians.*

Satanic Message Found at Vandalized Catholic Church in Kansas

3/19/2025 United States — Federal and local authorities are investigating a possible hate crime after a Catholic church in Wichita, Kansas, was vandalized, and a Satanic message was left behind.

According to the Wichita Police Department, officers who responded to the burglary at St. Patrick Catholic Church on Saturday morning found "extensive vandalism," including hate speech, and damage to statues, candles, and glass.

- *How to Pray: Pray for the church to continue to be a light in its community and to forgive the attacker.*
- *Pray for the attacker to repent and put his trust in Christ.*
- *Pray for the planned Satanic event to not materialize and for those organizing it to hear the gospel.*

3 Iranian Christians Receive Severe Prison Sentences

3/20/2025 Iran — As extreme Christian persecution continues in Iran, three Christian converts in the nation received a combined total of nearly 42 years in prison on March 8 for practicing their faith.

Narges Nasri, who is currently pregnant, Mehran Shamloui, and Abbas Soori were arrested in early November 2024 when authorities raided their homes in Tehran. All three converts were members of house churches.

- *How to Pray: Pray for Narges Nasri, who is currently pregnant, Mehran Shamloui, and Abbas Soori.*
- *Pray for their physical and mental health.*
- *Pray for them to continue sharing the gospel while in prison but also pray for their release.*
- *Pray for their families and their churches.*

Syria's Transitional Constitution to be Based on Islamic Law

3/11/2025 Syria — After a brief drafting process that lasted less than two weeks, Syria has announced an interim constitution to guide the country for the next five years.

The document is intended to act as a framework while the government prepares for regular elections in 2030 and follows a national dialogue last month that gathered representatives from around the country to discuss the path forward.

- *How to Pray: Pray for true protection of religious freedom in Syria.*
- *Pray that Syrian Christians continue to follow Christ's example and share the gospel when and where they can.*

From Mission Eurasia's Prayer Initiative

On March 30, Bridge Church in Mogilev, Belarus will celebrate its fifth anniversary. Many young people participate in School Without Walls (SWW) through this church. A special gathering is planned for friends, colleagues, and acquaintances of this church.

- *Please pray for opportunities to introduce people to the church and share the gospel through this celebration.*

Please pray for Dima who has been held as a prisoner of war in Russia for almost three years. His sister is in Poland and has shared that other prisoners of war who were released have mentioned that Dima encouraged them and helped them during their captivity.

- *Please pray that Dima would continue to shine the light of Christ in this dark situation and please pray for his release.*

Please pray for the completion of our Bridge to Peace and Reconciliation pilot project in Israel that is designed to foster peace and understanding between Arabs and Christians, and provide tangible and spiritual assistance to more than 5,000 families in need, especially those were forced to evacuate as a result of the war.

Please pray for our ministry leaders in Moldova as they develop a new vocational guidance course for young leaders.

- *Pray that this resource will become a valuable tool for the Next Generation across Eurasia, helping young leaders discern their calling, career path, and role in both church and society.*

Praise God for answering prayers for Eva, the daughter of Ilia Kirtok from Mogilev, Belarus. Eva has needed surgery to correct a

condition affecting her eyes called strabismus. The surgery has been scheduled to take place soon.

- *Please pray that Eva will stay healthy until the surgery, that the doctor will be available on the scheduled day, and that the surgery will be successful.*

Open Doors Canada Prayer Calendar

Friday 28 | Libya

Libya remains a country divided, with two groups grappling for control.

- *Pray this tension won't boil into a war that would further endanger believers.*

Saturday 29 | Brunei

- *As our local partners start some new projects, pray that all the plans will be guided by the Holy Spirit and that all involved will be united in the strength, knowledge, and resources they need to carry out their work well.*

Sunday 30 | Eritrea

This past year saw another mass arrest of Eritrean Christians. Pray these believers — and others like them — will be kept from all harm and ultimately, freed.

- *Pray for the families of Christians whose loved ones have been arrested and imprisoned. Pray that God will provide for them in all their daily needs.*

Monday 31 | Indonesia

- *Pray that God will give courage to Christian students in public schools who are being bullied by their peers because of their faith. Pray for strength to respond to persecution with a Christlike attitude.*

Thursday 27 | February Bhutan

Power and water have been cut off from Pastor Rajen's home after he used it to host church meetings. He had sought permission but it was denied, and there's nowhere else for his church to gather.

Tuesday 1 | Saudi Arabia

- *Pray with a sister in Saudi Arabia: "Pray for Saudi believers. May God give them strength, protection, joy and peace and open the door for us to meet other believers to pray together."*

Wednesday 2 | Iran

- *Pray for your sisters in Iran in difficult situations: those who are imprisoned for their ministry; who suffer from domestic violence; the widowed or divorced; and women whose husbands are jailed for their faith.*

Thursday 3 | Yemen

One Christian woman in Yemen asks us to pray: "May our Lord be with the people of Yemen and help them in disasters and war.

- *Pray for Yemenis that they would know the path of truth."*

Barnabas Aid Prayer Diary March/April 2025

FRIDAY 28

At least three Christians were killed in separate attacks in Cabo Degado, northern Mozambique in the opening weeks of 2025. In two of the incidents fighters with machine guns from Islamic State Mozambique (IS-M) raided villages. In the other, on Sunday January 19, IS-M militants captured "an infidel Christian" and subjected him to an execution-style killing. IS-M is estimated to have killed more than 1,800 Christians in northern Mozambique since the beginning of an insurgency in October 2017.

- *Pray that the Lord will protect His people as He has promised (Proverbs*

2:8), and that He will bring even those who persecute the church to repentance.

SATURDAY 29

Nine people, including seven children, were killed when the Myanmar military (Tatmadaw) bombed a church in Kachin State near the border with China in late 2024. Eleven others were critically injured. In January 2025 international experts raised concerns about the deteriorating condition in Myanmar, noting the disproportionate impact of military action on marginalized groups such as Kachin, Chin and Karen Christians, as well as Rohingya Muslims.

- *Pray that the Lord will comfort our brothers and sisters who are mourning the loss of loved ones in Kachin State.*
- *Ask for an end to the targeting of civilians.*

SUNDAY 30

- *Lord Jesus Christ, we cry out to You, our Prince of Peace, as we consider the suffering caused by various wars and conflicts around the world.*
- *We recognize that true peace can be achieved only with Your peace in human hearts and ask You to direct warring parties onto pathways of peace and righteousness.*
- *We ask You to work through those who trust in You to bring about peaceful resolution to these conflicts.*
- *Please protect Christians and others caught amid hostilities not of their making and direct those displaced to refuge and support, for we ask in Your Holy Name. (Isaiah 9:6)*

MONDAY 31

The church in Nepal has taken significant strides in the last few decades with an estimated 1.5 million believers in the former

Hindu kingdom, despite laws opposed to such growth. A ban on “hurting religious sentiment” is interpreted to make any public expression of faith in Christ illegal. It is also prohibited to seek to convert a follower of a religion that has been “practiced since ancient times,” affording protection to Hindus and Buddhists but excluding Christians, most of whom are recent converts.

- *Pray that the church will continue to grow despite such obstacles, and that Christians will be granted justice where facing baseless accusations of forced conversions. April*

TUESDAY 1

The West African nation of Niger is still recovering from floods that displaced 1.1 million people in the closing months of 2024. Niger was already struggling with food shortages, with an estimated 3.3 million facing food insecurity levels rated as “crisis” level or worse. The floods destroyed an estimated 470,000 acres of cultivated agricultural land.

- *Pray that the Lord will provide for the humanitarian needs of those suffering in Niger, and particularly the small Christian community who are at greater risk from the Islamist terror groups who control regions of the country.*

WEDNESDAY 2

“I lost everything in the attack that destroyed our village and that pained me, but what I missed most was not having my Bible which was destroyed in the fire.” These were the words of Mshelia, a Nigerian Christian among many forced from their homes by Islamist violence. Thank the Lord that Barnabas was able to provide 1,470 Bibles to communities impacted by Islamist attacks in Borno, Kaduna and Plateau states. “Barnabas Aid has given us the Word of God,” said Mshelia.

- *Pray that His Word will be a source of strength to His people (Psalm 119:28).*

THURSDAY 3

North Korea's communist regime categorizes citizens according to their perceived loyalty to the state. All followers of religion, especially Christians, are automatically classified as "hostile" and worthy of punishment, even execution. Believers must keep their faith secret to avoid arrest, imprisonment and torture and death in labor camps.

- *Pray that the church will still serve as a light in the darkness, even without any public demonstration of faith, in what is routinely identified as the most dangerous place to be a Christian.*
- *Pray for those experiencing the harsh conditions of labor camps that God will grant them strength, comfort and enduring communion with Him.*

From Open Doors

Note: Originally published last November, much of these prayer requests are still prayers that need praying.

20 prayers for persecuted children and their families

Meet Moryom: Every day, 9-year-old Moryom must face people in her Bangladesh community who are against her family because they are followers of Jesus. People in Moryom's village know her well, mostly because her father is a pastor in this majority-Muslim area and her mother is an adult literacy teacher. That familiarity often works against her. For example, she must walk two miles to and from school because her Muslim classmates won't let her ride in the rickshaw with them. No matter how many hurtful things people say and do, Moryom takes all of it to God in prayer and chooses to forgive them.

Meet Combarry*: At a very young age, she had to learn that life can be unfair, especially if you're a Christian, young and female. Each characteristic adds another layer of vulnerability. When her village in Burkina Faso was attacked by Islamic militants, 13-year-old Combarry* and her family fled

their home. Living as displaced people, school was no longer an option for the young girl. Unfortunately, education often moves to the back burner for displaced families. Instead, shelter and food become the priority.

Meet Ailin*: She is the only hearing person in her family as both her parents are deaf. This puts her at an immediate disadvantage because where she lives in Central Asia, many people see deafness as a curse from Allah, leaving those unable to hear and their families vulnerable to abuse. Added to that, being a Christian goes against clan identity, which says that being born in their part of Central Asia means someone is Muslim. As such, Ailin's wider family opposed their faith, so they reported them to the authorities. Police became involved and interrogated Ailin and her mother after discovering Christian literature in their house.

Moryom, Combarry and Ailin represent millions of Christian children and families throughout the world who are targeted—in their schools and communities—because they follow Jesus. Children are often the most vulnerable persecuted Christians—and they are also the future of the Church.

As God's people, we have a responsibility to pray for these littlest voices of persecution and their families, especially as they approach the holidays—a time when children are particularly vulnerable and can feel isolated from their communities. They may not be able to celebrate the birth of Christ at all, or they may be forced to do so secretly. For some young believers, Christmas may be the one time of year when they can celebrate with Christian kids their own age—but always with the knowledge that they will return to a life of isolation.

They need to know they are not alone.

That's why we're sharing 20 prayers for persecuted children and their families. We hope you'll commit to praying with us each day and inviting others to pray these prayers with you.

For unto us a child is born ... And He shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace ... (Isaiah 9:6).

Pray these 20 prayers with us...

1. Often, school is a difficult place for children in Christian families, exposing them to bullying, isolation and even shame. Pray for true friends for children like Moryom, Combarry and Ailin. Pray that God would place people in their lives at school whom they can trust.

“My classmates don’t allow me to play with them at school. They say, ‘You’re a Christian! We will play with you only if you come back to Islam.’”

2. Pray for God’s protection over them as they walk to school and church. These simple walks can be times of trepidation for vulnerable children. We continue to hear how children are often bullied and even attacked on their way to attend class and church. Like Moryom, their identification as Christian limits their opportunities for rides and walking with other classmates.

3. When children are discriminated against at school, our local partners tell us that they can be at greater risk of dropping out or renouncing their faith in Jesus. Pray 2 Timothy 1:7 over Christian children who are persecuted for their faith: “For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.”

4. In Muslim-majority countries, some Muslim parents have taught their children to hate Christians from a young age. Pray that children who grew up hating Christians would experience the love of Jesus.

5. Christian children can be used as pawns to target their families. In Bangladesh, a Muslim neighbor poured hot water on a boy because his parents left Islam. Pray for healing and comfort for this family—and all families who face these types of risks.

6. Our partners ask us to pray with Julie, a young Christian girl living in a poor and unsafe neighborhood in Cairo, Egypt. Being bullied at school often leads to depression.

7. Pray with Rumana* for protection. She is a young Christian girl in Bangladesh and because she follows Jesus, people have thrown bricks at her on the way to Sunday school. Pray for her resilience as she follows Jesus in a hostile place.

8. Through counseling and a supportive community, Julie is learning to navigate her challenges. Pray that she and Christian children throughout the world will always know their value in God’s eyes.

9. Persecutors, especially extremist groups, know that if they can damage families and their children, they can destroy the next generation. Today, pray for the future of the Church.

10. Pray for the growth (both deep and wide) of Open Doors’ work with children. Pray for the children and their families, and the workers who serve them. Pray that the worldwide Church would be moved to support this vital ministry.

11. Open Doors’ on-the-ground partners work closely with children of the persecuted church. They provide trauma counseling and camps where children can find healing. Pray for these servants. Pray that God would give them the words and show them how to reach hurting children. Pray that the Holy Spirit would be at work.

12. Pray for resilience as children follow Jesus in places hostile to their faith. Ask God to show them how He is working in their lives and is always with them. Pray they would have opportunities to be disciples and learn the power of His Word.

13. Pray for Christian children in sub-Saharan Africa and throughout the world who are growing up without a father or mother due to extremist attacks. Pray they will be supported by faithful men and women in their local church.

14. As Christmas nears and the absence of loved ones is magnified, ask God to give families the courage to remember and share about their missing loved ones. Pray that they would know and be comforted by the hope of Heaven.

15. Often, Christian boys must take up financial and parental responsibilities at a young age if their father has been killed or chased away. Pray they will know and trust their heavenly Father.

16. Pray for children who are living displaced from their homes in places like Nigeria because it’s no longer safe for them

to stay in their village. Pray that God would keep His hand on them and empower them to face the temptations they encounter. Pray for opportunities for education and for a local church inside or outside the camp.

17. Pray for the children and families in Israel, Gaza and Lebanon and all those who live in global conflict areas. Ask God to calm them with His comfort and give frightened parents discernment for the next steps to protect their families.

18. Pray for the future dreams and aspirations of Christian children. Moryom dreams of being a teacher. Pray they can study well at school and ask God to give them the opportunity and resources to fulfill their dreams.

19. Pray that Christmas would be a time of celebration for persecuted children and their families. Ask God to bring peace and reconciliation to their communities.

20. Pray that they would put their hope and trust in God, knowing that He is making all things new. Father, we know that You are good God who loves and cares for His people. We thank You for how You work in seen and unseen ways. I pray, God, that You would be so close to Your children who follow You at such great risk. Give them Your comfort, Your strength and Your peace that transcends our human understanding. May they be acutely aware that You are making all things new and that You are with them every day as they face hostility for their faithfulness. In Your Son's name, I pray. Amen.

**representative names used for security reasons*

From International Christian Concern

USCIRF Releases Annual Report on International Religious Freedom

3/26/2025 United States (International Christian Concern) — The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) released its annual report on Tuesday, providing an update on the status of religious freedom worldwide.

Hundreds of religious freedom advocates, including International Christian Concern (ICC)

staff and members of Congress, gathered on Capitol Hill for the report's release.

In USCIRF's latest report, the commission maintained most of its recommendations from 2024, advising the U.S. Department of State to list 16 countries as Countries of Particular Concern (CPC) and 12 others for its Special Watch List (SWL). These designations potentially carry severe penalties and are used to encourage countries to improve their treatment of religious groups. USCIRF also recommends that the State Department designate seven entities as Entities of Particular Concern (EPC) for their egregious violations of religious freedom.

Among USCIRF's list for EPCs is Boko Haram, an Islamic terrorist group that has been responsible for tens of thousands of Christian deaths in northern Nigeria. The State Department included Boko Haram in its 2023 EPC designations but failed to address the Nigerian government's own religious freedom violations by refusing to designate it as a CPC. USCIRF has recommended Nigeria for CPC status since 2009, a designation that has become a point of tension in recent years.

USCIRF's report also calls for the State Department to designate Afghanistan, India, and Vietnam as CPC — countries left off the State Department's most recent CPC designations.

Notably, USCIRF recommended Azerbaijan for the lower tier SWL designation despite having recommended it for CPC designation in 2024. USCIRF Commissioner Vicky Hartzler, a former member of Congress, expressed dissent with the Commission's decision to recommend Azerbaijan for an SWL designation, stating she believes "the designation of Country of Particular Concern is more fitting."

The report also celebrated international religious freedom successes from 2024, including the State Department securing the release of 135 political prisoners in Nicaragua and the release of American Pastor David Lin from two decades of imprisonment in China.

"ICC is particularly grateful for USCIRF's focus on the persecution of our Christian brothers and sisters around the world," said McKenna Wendt, ICC's advocacy manager. "USCIRF's report is an invaluable resource for the international religious freedom community. I

enjoyed reading about the great successes of the last year while building toward a future in which religious freedom flourishes across the world.”

From a Family for Every Orphan

Please Keep Praying for Ukraine

March 3, 2025

Last Monday, February 24, marked the three-year anniversary of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. These past three years have been beyond heartbreaking for our Ukrainian brothers and sisters. But since day one you have been a source of God’s love to those who have been affected.

Your prayers have empowered our Ukrainian partners to provide critical services to the most vulnerable children and families impacted by war. In fact, your prayers have helped:

- **Families and Children Heal:** More than 91,000 children and families have received psychological aid and counseling, helping them heal from the unimaginable trauma they have experienced, and giving them their sense of stability back.
- **Deliver Essential Aid:** Hundreds of thousands of families have received urgent humanitarian aid: food, clothing, and medicine, ensuring they have the basics they need to survive.
- **Rescue Children:** Your continual prayers have been a part of the effort of rescuing 693 children from Russian abduction and reuniting them with their families.

Your prayers gave hope when it was needed the most. Our partners continue to help reunite families, provide aid, and rescue and evacuate children and families from combat zones and Russian-controlled territories. And your prayers have played a key role!

Nikolai Kuleba, a trusted partner of AFFEO for more than 12 years, said, “Thanks to the support of AFFEO...families who have endured pain and separation receive psychological and spiritual support, rebuild relationships, and discover the power of faith. Together, we help people find safety, healing, and a fresh start, bringing hope even in the darkest times.”

As we continue to pray for God’s peace, we remain steadfast in our mission, knowing that with you praying by our side, together we can continue to protect and care for Ukraine’s most vulnerable children and families. Please also join us in prayer that that a just and durable peace would return to this land.

Thank you so very much for your faithfulness, and the difference you are making in so many lives!

Prisoner Profiles

from Voice of the Martyrs

Li Juncai

Arrested February 2019 in China

Prisoner Details

Pastor Li Juncai of the Yuanyang County Central House Church in Xinxiang, Henan Province is currently serving a prison sentence of five and a half years after protesting the government’s attempts to remove the cross atop his church building in 2019.

Mass removals of crosses from church buildings began in Henan Province in 2018, with police removing at least 4,000 crosses over the course of a year. Even the crosses of government-run churches were removed, and smaller churches were completely shut down. It is rare to see a cross in Henan province these days.

When authorities brought a crane to remove the cross from Pastor Li Juncai’s church on Feb. 20, 2019, a group of Christian senior citizens, mostly women, met the plainclothes policemen and their crane. The Christians sang hymns and prayed while attempting to keep the authorities from taking the cross. Police beat and arrested the protestors before forcing the church gate open and removing the cross. Pastor Li Juncai told the workers they should proceed according to the law and that he opposed the removal of the crosses. He was arrested and accusing of disrupting public service.

The next day, Religious Affairs authorities removed signs from inside the church building and forced church members to fly China’s national flag from the front of the church. Many churches are now required to do the same,

along with hanging an image of President Hu Jingpin in the sanctuary and installing security cameras facing the congregation.

Pastor Li Juncai was charged with embezzlement and obstructing government administration, sentenced to five and a half years in prison and given a fine of more than \$7,000 USD.

The Yuanyang County Central House Church was a government-run Three-Self church until 2013, when it merged with a local house church. Each week, they served approximately 700-800 people.

Zhang Wen Shi

North Korea

Arrested Nov 2014

Zhang Wen Shi, also known by his Korean name and title as Deacon Jang, is an ethnically Korean Chinese citizen who lived in Changbai, China, a town on the border between China and North Korea. He worked alongside Korean-Chinese pastor Pastor Han Chung-Ryeol, ministering to the North Koreans who crossed the border into Changbai.

Though it is illegal to cross into China without permission, North Koreans often visit Chinese border towns to purchase goods for reselling in North Korea, to seek medicine or other help, and to conduct business. Near Changbai, North Koreans gather herbs on the North Korean side of the mountain and then take them into Changbai to sell at the market and bring the money back with them to North Korea.

Deacon Jang regularly hosted these visiting North Koreans for days and weeks at a time before they returned to North Korea, giving them warm clothing, feeding them and providing supplies they might need for their return to North Korea. He saw this as his Christian duty to welcome the stranger, clothe

the naked and care for the sick. As a believer, he also shared about his faith to those who were willing.

A number of these North Koreans accepted the message and became Christians. Some returned to Deacon Jang's home repeatedly for more Bible training, and Deacon Jang and Pastor Han also taught them how to share their faith with their loved ones. Their goal was always to see North Koreans return home.

In November 2014, Deacon Jang was kidnapped from China and put in a North Korean prison. Fifteen months later, Pastor Han was lured from his home and brutally stabbed to death in Changbai.

Deacon Jang was sentenced to 15 years in prison for his ministry to the North Korean people. Since his imprisonment, a number of other prisoners have either encountered Deacon Jang in prison or heard a report about him.

We urge you to write to the North Korean Ambassador to the United Nations on his behalf and respectfully ask for his release, using his Chinese name. Our field workers in the region advise that you keep the letter brief and limit the request to the following: We request the return of Zhang Wen Shi to China.

Note: Because North Korea does not participate in the international postal system, it is not possible to send letters to North Korea.

VOICE OF THE MARTYRS urges us to write to the North Korean Ambassador to the United Nations on Deacon Zhang Wen Shi's behalf and respectfully ask for his release, using his Chinese name. Our field workers in the region advise that you keep the letter brief and limit the request to the following: We request the return of Zhang Wen Shi to China. Instructions are on this webpage:

<https://shorturl.at/bVZU6>