

Prayer Diary

September 2007



OpenDoors

"May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me." – John 17:23

Latin America

Saturday 1 September – MEXICO

Christians in the community of San Cristobal de las Casas are being threatened for preaching, and the pastor has received death threats. Pray they will be allowed freedom to share their faith. Ask God to fill their hearts with His peace.

Sunday 2 September – COLOMBIA

Please pray for Nelson, a Christian brother who lives in Antioquia state. He is suffering from severe heart problems brought on by threats from insurgents. He also witnessed crimes committed against believers.

Monday 3 September – COLOMBIA

Christian brothers who were once part of illegal armed groups are viewed by the insurgents as 'deserters' and are persecuted as a result. Their lives are in danger so please pray for God's protection to be with them.

Tuesday 4 September – CUBA

Please pray for the salvation of many Cuban people. Pray specifically for the provinces of Matanzas and Guantanamo where the traditional culture makes it particularly hard for people to receive the Good News.

East Asia

Wednesday 5 September – CHINA

Pray for continued inspiration and creativity for the team producing Open Doors' Book-By-Book Bible study video series, designed to help Chinese believers understand more about the history and background of each book of the Bible. Five books of the minor prophets have been completed, with three more scheduled for completion this year.

Thursday 6 September – PHILIPPINES

Pray for Saripa who is ministering to families of believers from Muslim backgrounds. Pray that God will protect her every time she visits them in their homes to encourage them.

Friday 7 September – BHUTAN

Pray for a sister in the Lord who recently lost her husband and a six-year old child after fire destroyed their little mud house. Her four-year old suffered third

degree burns and the doctor has given up on her.

This sister only recently came to know the Lord.

Please pray for God's comfort and presence to carry her at this time.

Saturday 8 September – INDIA

Please pray for Pastor Laxmi Narayan Gowda, representative of the Global Council of Indian Christians in Hessarghatta area of Bangalore in Karnataka state. He was assaulted by a mob of about 100 people on 7 June 2007 and told to leave the area or face dire consequences. Please pray for strength for him and his family.

Sunday 9 September – SRI LANKA

Pray for the National Pastors' Conference scheduled for the first week of October where discussions will cover the roles and responsibilities of Christian leaders and workers in a hostile environment and how they can continue with integral mission. Also pray for Open Doors' partner in Sri Lanka – the National Christian Evangelical Alliance of Sri Lanka – for the staff's safety and health especially for those working in war-torn north and eastern areas.

Middle East

Monday 10 September – AZERBAIJAN

Pray for the Baptist church in Aliabad and for other small churches in the region. Pray that God will equip the leaders and that these churches will attract new believers whilst encouraging and teaching more mature Christians.

Tuesday 11 September – TURKMENISTAN

Pray for the release of Yevgeny Polotov, a Russian citizen aged 36, who was arrested on 19 May 2007. Pray for God's comfort and presence for Yevgeny and his wife Nadezhda in these uncertain times.

Wednesday 12 September – TURKEY

Hakan Tastan and Turan Topol, Muslim converts to Christianity who face charges of 'insulting Turkishness', had a fourth court hearing on 12 July where a state prosecutor asked the judge to dismiss all charges. Today the verdict is expected to be given. Please pray the charges will be dropped. The two men were

harassed on 1 July when summoned to an administrative district authority office in Istanbul and ordered to pay fines of £230 for 'collecting money without approval' (unrelated to the current case). Ask for God's presence to sustain these men.

Thursday 13 September – MUSLIM WORLD

Today marks the first day of Ramadan – the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar when Muslims believe that the Quran was "sent down from heaven." For the next month, the Prayer Diary will focus on interceding for the Muslim world. As millions of Muslims commit themselves to fasting and prayer during Ramadan, please pray they will have an irrepressible hunger for Jesus Christ and discover Him as the only Way, Truth and Life.

Friday 14 September – MUSLIM WORLD

For many Christians in Muslim-dominated areas, the month of Ramadan is very difficult, especially for secret believers. There is a spiritual pressure in the air and historically, Open Doors has heard of many Muslim-background believers (MBBs) who fall away from their faith during this month. Please pray for Christians to stand firm.

Saturday 15 September – MUSLIM WORLD

During Ramadan, many Muslims have been visited by Jesus in dreams and visions, finding him to be the Truth. Ask the Lord to reveal Himself to many – labourers and leaders, mullahs as well as women, children and older people. Pray that Muslims will receive a portion of Scripture in their language, and will meet someone who can show them the love of Christ.

Sunday 16 September – MIDDLE EAST GENERAL

Pray for the political situation in the Middle East. Ask God to protect His Church and enable the Gospel to flourish and spread freely.

Monday 17 September – LIBYA

Although the numbers of indigenous believers are few, give thanks to the Lord for new believers in Libya. Pray that the Lord will encourage them through fellowship with others and that they will receive their own copy of the Bible or New Testament.

Tuesday 18 September – ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIAN AREAS

Pray that God will help church leaders to pastor their flocks. Also pray for stability and peace in the region and more openness to the Gospel among people who have yet to see the truth in Jesus Christ.

Wednesday 19 September – EGYPT

Please pray for the Marriage Enrichment Workshop for pastors and their wives which will be attended by 25 couples. Also pray for families of MBBs who are preparing their children for the new school year. Ask God to protect those youngsters as they attend Muslim schools.

Africa

Thursday 20 September – ETHIOPIA

Muslim authorities are forcing Christians to stop church services in the area of Silte. Church leaders who allegedly refused to comply were imprisoned. Pray that government authorities will realise churches are not a threat to society and deserve fair treatment. Ask for God's help for believers to remain strong in Christ when facing opposition from authorities.

Friday 21 September – ETHIOPIA

MBBs in Hosanna area, southern Ethiopia, are under pressure from Muslims who claim the area belongs to them. They don't want 'faithless' people to live there. Muslims beat and chased Christians from their village during April when Christians tried to put a fence around a piece of land to be used for constructing a situations to stand firm in their faith and not be tempted to retaliate.

Saturday 22 September – NORTHERN NIGERIA

The governor of Kano state has announced that Shariah (Islamic) law will form the basis of all administrative and official functioning in the state. He said there will be no return and no stone will be left unturned. Christians expect to suffer as a result. Please pray for the Church to grow spiritually in spite of the loss of religious freedom.

Sunday 23 September – NORTHERN NIGERIA

Christian teachers in Gombe state have lived in constant fear since the murder of Christianah Oluwasesin by Muslim students and extremists on 21 March after a student accused her of desecrating the Quran. Pray that Christian teachers will be courageous despite their fears, set godly examples to pupils and remain faithful to biblical principles.

Monday 24 September – NORTHERN NIGERIA

Christians in Tafawa Balewa have faced numerous attacks from Muslim militants. Recent reports state that gun shots were heard from a nearby Islamist training camp at night and militants also burnt down three houses during April. Open Doors conducted a 'Standing Strong Through the Storm' seminar during July. Please pray that the lessons learnt by those who attended will help them in the days ahead.

The Gulf

Tuesday 25 September – ARABIAN PENINSULA

Pray for Jamal from a particularly closed country. He often crossed the border and drove many miles to try to find a Bible but in vain. After months of searching he found a study Bible in a Christian bookstore in a neighbouring country and clutched it closely to his chest. Pray that he will persevere in his search for the truth as he studies God's Word.

Wednesday 26 September – ARABIAN PENINSULA

Convicted of Christian activities, some 15 tentmakers in

a small country have been sent back to their countries by the authorities in recent years. Some were beaten, threatened or interrogated. Pray that the testimonies they shared with others will have planted Gospel seeds in this closed country. Pray also for protection and wisdom of the remaining tentmakers.

Thursday 27 September – SAUDI ARABIA

Ask for God's Spirit to make the Lord Jesus known, even to Saudi royals, the religious police (*muttawa*) and Islamic scholars. Thank God for Islamic scholars who study the Scriptures in search of evidence to reject it, but are instead convinced of its truth. Some face harassment. Pray for their protection and further spiritual growth. Also ask God to enable outreach in Saudi Arabia and that workers will seize the opportunities that God opens up.

Friday 28 September – IRAN

Over the summer there has been increased pressure exerted by the government on house churches. There have been many arrests and at least one person died of his wounds after being tortured. It is also becoming more difficult for Christians 'on the road' who daily risk their lives and the safety of their families. Please intercede for Iran and for Christians there, letting the Holy Spirit guide your prayers.

Saturday 29 September – HOMEFRONT

The UNITE events take place today. Pray that those who attend the Forum and the Evening Prayer Celebration will be challenged, encouraged and inspired to unite in love and action with the Persecuted Church.

Sunday 30 September – RAMADAN

Every time you hear about Muslim countries in the news during the Muslim month of Ramadan, remember that what you are hearing about will probably impact Christians in those areas, so please be prompted to pray for them. When you pray, remember that Ramadan can be a tense time for Christians there. For those whose livelihoods depend on selling food, they have to decide whether to trade and thereby publicly announce their non-observance of Ramadan, or to not trade and lose income. Every day will also pose difficulties for Christian children in state Islamic schools.

Please pray for:

- Opportunities for Christians who share Ramadan meals with Muslim friends to share the gospel

- Protection of Muslim-background believers; that their faith would hold firm during this time
- Protection for Christians as they share the Gospel with their Muslim friends
- Strength for Christians during Ramadan, especially for Christian children attending Islamic schools and for Christian food sellers
- Muslims to discover eternal life in Jesus Christ – "Now this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." (John 17:3)

Give thanks for answered prayer

In February's Women's Ministry News and in August's *Frontline*, we asked you to pray for Asya Muhammad (Christian name 'Maria'), aged 15, who was sentenced to five years' juvenile detention.

In July 2006 Maria's uncle attacked her and, when she freed herself from his beatings, she stabbed him in self-defence. Sayeed died instantly and Maria's grandparents are demanding her death in return, and £25,000 blood money.

Maria's plea to her father when he visited her in jail was "Daddy, please pray for me."

We continue to urge Maria's worldwide Christian family to pray for her, while also writing letters to encourage her.

On 26 July, Compass Direct reported that Iraq's Kurdish regional high court reduced the teenager's sentence from five years to three and a half. After reviewing the case for over two months, the court in Erbil upheld an earlier decision by Dohuk's juvenile court that Maria was guilty of killing her uncle, though she acted in defence of herself and others. Clearing her of the original conviction for 'premeditated murder', on 30 April the court reduced Maria's sentence to reflect 'non-premeditated intentional killing'.

- Praise God for this improvement to Maria's sentence
- Maria is the only female minor in prison. Please ask God to protect her and that she will continue to trust the Lord amid her difficulties and know His forgiveness for killing her uncle
- Also pray for Maria's mother, father and younger brother Chuli.