

Prayer Bulletin Aug/Sept 2023



Love of enemies

But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, you may be children of your Father in heaven.

Matthew 5:44

Dear brothers and sisters,

Jesus himself lived this and laid down his life for us. Loving our enemies is not something we can do in our own strength. But Jesus in us, in the power of the Holy Spirit, enables us to live this way. In this way, God becomes visible in our lives. As well as the power of His love over hate. It has already overcome many hearts - to this day. With Jesus in us, we are enabled to be good to people who mean us harm.

Our current concerns

UZBEKISTAN: Thanksgiving for a season of grace. For the last five years, there have been fewer government controls on Christian activities. We thank God for this season of grace and pray that it will continue. We also pray that churches will be able to register more easily in the future, as no new church has been officially registered in the last two years. Uzbekistan is suffering from water shortages. We pray for nationwide solutions as well as for the projects in the area. Let us also pray for Christian families; for strong marriages that can withstand the turbulence, and that the next generation will grow spiritually and learn from the past.

MAURETANIA/WEST AFRICA: The Miracle of the Body of Christ being established in this stronghold of Islam has provoked the foe. The young Mauritanian church is in crisis. The leaders approached us with a request for training in the faith and for intercession. We have been conducting Bible training online for them. These MBBs have been registering their names with us so that we have the opportunity and authority to advocate for them if the situation worsens. By the year 2022 over 100 MBB families from Mauritania had registered with Communio Messianica, representing 600 individuals.

IRAN: The Grip of the Ayatollahs and Mullahs is tightening even as they lose more and more credibility among the people. Iran lost a whole generation of young men in its futile war against Iraq. Now it is losing a generation of women to despair and its population to cynicism.

We have confirmation from various sources that a large number of mosques (up to 50 000 of the total 75 000, or two-thirds) in the country have been closed because no one attends them. We cannot verify reports that mosques are burning from any independent source, but it is not impossible, as the state massively suppresses reporting. Very little information about what is going on in Iran is being passed

on through the media. One thing is certain, Iranians are rejecting Islam and many are being transformed into Christ's image by His love, hope and grace, while others have become disenchanted with religion altogether. The number of Christian converts is estimated to have passed the 1 000 000 mark both within Iran and among the Iranian exile community. We are collaborating with many ministries serving the young underground church and the diaspora church, focusing especially on indigenous efforts.

The situation in Iran, particularly for women who resist compulsory hijab rules, is becoming increasingly daunting as the regime feels more and more threatened by the protests and civil disobedience. Just recently the "religious police" were reinstated after attacks on them by the protesting population had forced their withdrawal. In addition, the courts are handing down curious verdicts. One dissenting woman was sentenced to washing corpses for refusing to wear the "chador" and a well-known actress was required to undergo therapy to address her "antisocial personality disorder," a consequence of defying the hijab. These are among the peculiar verdicts issued by Iran's religious courts towards women who choose not to drape their upper body and head with an expansive covering.

We stand in prayer with the women (and men) of Iran who seek a life of fulfilment and freedom. A prayer for Iran partly taken from our partner *Heart4Iran*:

Dear Lord,

we lift the people of Iran up to you, especially the women who are striving for freedom against oppressive rules. We pray for their strength, courage, and resilience in the face of adversity. We ask that You protect them and guide them as they navigate this challenging journey.

We pray for the dawn of freedom to break in its full brilliance across this beautiful land. Lord, guide us as we stand with our brothers and sisters who long to be free, just as we do in our own countries.

Just as Your son Jesus Christ broke the chains of death, we humbly request Your intervention to break the chains of oppression. Let hope shine brightly in the hearts of the Iranian people, and give them a future filled with peace, justice, and freedom. May Your love pierce the darkness, illuminating the path to freedom. May Your peace calm the turbulences. May Your grace bring about transformation.

Father, we ask that you extend this inalienable right of freedom to our Iranian friends. Give them courage and resilience, empowering them to claim the blessings of liberty.

In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

Thank you for supporting us in prayer.
Shalom - May God's peace be upon you.
Yassir Eric and the team.

