



Voice^{of the}
Martyrs

PERSECUTION
& PRAYER
ALERT

Persecution & Prayer Alert

Voice of the Martyrs Canada
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*"Our Lord, for our sake, came to
the world He created and was
deprived of everything. The path He
walked, shall we not walk it? The cup
He drank, shall we refuse it?"*
~ Preacher Zhang Jiale

TÜRKIYE: Authorities Prevent Church from Purchasing Land

Sources: ADF International, International Christian Concern, Church in Chains

The Diyarbakir Protestant Church Foundation began with members gathering in a home more than 20 years ago. In 2019, the congregants moved into a dedicated church building and became a legally recognized organization. Over the years, the ministry has grown to encompass more than 100 people – a number far too large for the limited space of the premises where they are currently meeting. As a result, these believers have been seeking suitable land so they can build a larger facility that will better accommodate their growing needs. Unfortunately, their efforts to obtain a potential property have been continually ignored or turned down by governing officials.

In Türkiye, religious buildings must be built on land specifically designated for religious purposes. Although such land is available in Diyarbakir, the church members have been repeatedly prevented from getting the space needed. As a result, the church leaders initiated a court challenge, but the lawsuit was recently struck down. They are now appealing this decision.

During the ruling, court officials told the believers that they could simply purchase undesignated land and then apply afterwards for a "religious use" designation. However, this type of request has never been granted in Türkiye. Religious rights activists argue that the recent court ruling is "a troubling display of blatant faith-based discrimination against Christians." To view a recently published video in which the church's pastor, Ahmet Güvener, addresses this situation, go to https://youtu.be/XKEW_H1VJKE.

While Türkiye is officially a secular nation, the government has increasingly been adopting policies that are specifically favourable to the country's predominant religion of Islam. Additionally, several Protestant seminaries in the country were mandated to shut down, forcing churches to rely on

foreign-trained ministers. However, officials have deported approximately 185 foreign church leaders from the country since 2018, and those seeking entry are being denied under the auspices of "national security." More information on the persecution of Christians in Türkiye is available at www.vomcanada.com/turkiye.htm.

Praise God for the church growth this congregation in Diyarbakir has experienced. Please prayerfully uphold Pastor Ahmet Güvener and the rest of the church members as they now seek a resolution to the repeated challenges they have encountered while trying to obtain suitable land. May their appeal be successful so they can proceed with their plans of expansion. Pray that the Lord will not only bless this congregation, but also all the other ministries that are faithfully endeavouring to proclaim the Gospel in this Middle Eastern nation, so that many more Turkish people will come to faith in Jesus Christ.

CHINA: Bible Study Meeting Raided in Inner Mongolia

Source: ChinaAid

On the morning of July 17th, several Christians from the Xuan'en Church in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia, were gathered for a Bible study when the meeting was suddenly interrupted by a raid. The intruding officials, who were sent by multiple agencies, recorded the names and phone numbers of the attending Christians and ordered them to end the meeting – based on the grounds that they are not part of the government-sanctioned Three-Self church. Since this was considered a first offence, the believers were issued a warning.

Two days later, Preacher Zhang Jiale and his wife, Ran Yilian, were taken to the local police station where they were held for 12 hours before being released. Preacher Zhang has frequently encountered opposition from police over the past two years due to his consistent support for other persecuted churches, including members of the Early Rain Covenant Church in Chengdu. (For reports addressing other cases of persecution in China, and/or to view recorded podcasts, go to www.vomcanada.com/china.htm.)

Following the raid on July 17th, Preacher Zhang sent out a pastoral letter to his congregation, which included the following statement:

"Dear brothers and sisters of Xuan'en Church, this world wants us to submit to it, to bow down to it, and even the little worship space we have left is to be taken away. This makes us deeply understand Christ's words: *'Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay His head.'* Our Lord, for our sake, came to the world He created and was deprived of everything. The path He walked, shall we not walk it? The cup He drank, shall we refuse it?"

Pray that the members of this church in Hohhot will stand firm on the foundation of Christ and the salvation He lovingly offers all peoples through His sacrificial death on the cross. May these believers be greatly encouraged, comforted and strengthened by the assurance that the Lord not only understands their sufferings – weeping alongside them – but that He also promises to provide for their every need.... May this include being inspired with creative ways to continue meeting together for worship, Bible study and prayer – without any further interference from the authorities.

REPORT UPDATE

PAKISTAN: Hope and Faith Demonstrated on Death Row

Sources: Christian Daily International, Morning Star News, Church in Chains

A Christian who was sentenced to death for blasphemy in May 2023 has demonstrated that, even while in prison, he has been able to maintain hope for the future. Noman Masih was convicted on trumped-up charges of blasphemy for allegedly distributing sketches of Muhammad in 2019 (see www.vomcanada.com/pk-2023-06-08.htm). In a display of endurance and strength, despite this terrible situation, the young Christian man was recently able to pass his high school board examinations with a very high score.

Speaking of this achievement, the imprisoned believer's lawyer, Lazar Allah Rakha, stated, "I'm very happy that instead of descending into depression after being put on death row, Masih put his faith in the Lord and has kept his hope for freedom alive despite the dismal circumstances." Noman plans to continue his education in the future and has registered to write his intermediate examination within the next two years.

Noman's father, Asghar, has likewise expressed pride in his son, thanking God for this recent accomplishment: "[Noman] has remained steadfast in his faith; he has been reading the Bible and praying regularly since the day he was sent to prison. Other than that, he has focussed only on his studies." Asghar also gives credit to Noman's lawyer, Lazar, who has motivated the young man to pursue his education while in custody.

The president of the Church of Pakistan, Bishop Azad Marshall, has also offered his support and encouragement. Speaking of Noman, he affirmed: "In a nation grappling with complex issues of faith, freedom and justice, this young man's story stands as a testament to the indomitable human spirit. Against all odds, he has become a beacon of hope, challenging the very system that seeks to silence him."

Praise God for the ever-present empowerment, strength and joy He provides to His children, as demonstrated through the resilient faith of this young Christian man. May Noman serve as a powerful testimony of the hope that is available to all who place their faith in Jesus, so that those with him in prison will likewise surrender their lives to the Lord. Pray that Noman's verdict will soon be overturned, allowing this young man to be cleared of all charges and safely released from custody.

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