

Sunday 23 March – EASTER SUNDAY

MIDDLE EAST

Pray for people in the Middle East to search for the true meaning of Easter and that God will lead them to good internet sites containing the truth of the Gospel. Pray also for the impact of satellite TV stations showing Easter programmes. Pray that many non-Christians will understand the personal impact of Christ's death and discover His resurrection life.

Monday 24 March – ISRAEL AND PALESTINIAN AREAS

Pray for the staff and students of the Israel College of the Bible. ICB trains Israelis for life and ministry as leaders in the Church.

Pray also for a small group of students in Gaza, taking courses, sometimes via video link, with the Bethlehem Bible College. They eagerly want to study the Bible but have limited finances. Teachers from Bethlehem cannot travel to teach them, so they have to do a lot remotely. Pray that the essential video connection will remain operational.

Tuesday 25 March – ISRAEL AND PALESTINIAN AREAS

Christians in Gaza are living under severe pressure and growing persecution. Pray for safety and survival in their daily struggles to survive physically, economically and spiritually (see **Frontline**, page 9).

Wednesday 26 March – SYRIA

Praise God for many and varied opportunities for His Word to be proclaimed. God continues to use the *Jesus* film in a great way. Please pray for strength for the people involved with God's work – fatigue and sickness are common. Pray also for safety on dangerous roads.

Central Asia

Thursday 27 March – TAJIKISTAN

Please pray for Igor who lives in a small town in the mountains. While in prison he became a Christian but he also contracted tuberculosis. He was sent home to die but God intervened and healed him. He and his family are now sharing God's love with adults and children in their town and surrounding villages. Please pray for them as they face strong opposition from some neighbours and the authorities.

Friday 28 March – CHECHNYA

Please pray for strength and encouragement for Christians here, isolated from one another and fearful of the consequences for talking of their faith in Christ.

Saturday 29 March – UZBEKISTAN

Many Uzbek and Karakalpak Christians would love to have Christian literature in their own languages but translation takes a long time. Finding skilled translators is increasingly

difficult because of the risk of being involved with this work and also because the standard of education has dropped over the last few years. Please ask God to provide these workers.

Sunday 30 March – TURKMENISTAN

In January's **Prayer Diary** we gave thanks for the release of Vyacheslav Kalataevsky from prison in early November 2007. He served eight months out of a three year sentence for 'illegally crossing the border'. Vyacheslav was deported from Turkmenistan in December but his wife and children stayed behind. He longs to return to his family and they are trying to find a way to be reunited. Ask God to strengthen and provide for this family.

Monday 31 March – HOMEFRONT

Praise God for the positive response to the **Hope Academy** events, and pray that as the finals take place over the Pentecost weekend God's name will be honoured and many young people will become aware of the Persecuted Church and how they can play their part as members of God's family.

Give thanks for answered prayer

Over the last seven years Open Doors has produced the quarterly **China Prayer Campaign** in the run-up to the Beijing Olympics in which we frequently asked for prayer for those imprisoned for their faith in China.

We'd like to give thanks to God for an unprecedented legal victory: on 8 January, the Hubei Provincial Re-education through Labour Administration Committee repealed the ruling of a previous court. As a result, four church leaders were released from labour camps in Hubei province.

On 6 August 2007, nine church leaders - four men and five women - were sentenced to 18 months (men) and 12 months (women) re-education through labour after they were found together at a Sunday worship service in the home of Ms. Qin Daomin. They were accused of the 'crime of engaging in organising and making use of an evil cult organisation to undermine the enforcement of State laws'.

Since then, two of the women have been serving their sentences at their homes because of illness and pregnancy. On 9 October a Beijing attorney filed a request that the decision be overturned and after three months of deliberation the court ruled that the decision was "not based on clear facts and is not supported by sufficient evidence."

Although the four men have been released, at the time of writing the other three women had yet to be released from their labour camp, despite the court's ruling. Please pray that they too will soon be released. Please continue to pray for the many other Christians who remain imprisoned for their faith in China.

Source: China Aid Association



Non-stop Prayer Egypt

In January's **Frontline** we reported on Muhammad Hegazy's dramatic and dangerous attempt to claim the legal right to change the religion named on his personal identification papers from 'Islam' to 'Christianity'.

On 29 January, the Egyptian court ruled against him. Judge Husseini said that it was against Islamic law for a Muslim to leave Islam, but that Hegazy "can believe whatever he wants in his heart, but on paper he can't convert."

Gamal Eid (pictured below), head of the Arab Network for Human Rights Information (ANHRI) whose lawyers have been representing Hegazy, was disappointed with the verdict. He said, "The judge didn't listen to our defence, and we didn't even have a chance to talk before the court."

Hegazy plans to appeal against the decision or open a new case if possible. His wife, Zeinab, also a convert from Islam, plans to go to court for her right to register as a Christian.

The religious designation 'Muslim' on converts' ID makes life very difficult for them – they must marry under Shariah law and their children receive Islamic teaching at school.

Hegazy's open declaration of conversion last August caused public outcry, and death threats have forced him and his wife into hiding. Zeinab gave birth to a daughter in January and the family desperately need your prayers for God's protection and provision. Hegazy's father told an Egyptian paper that if his son did not return to Islam, he would kill him. See **Frontline** page 9 for further information.



Source: Compass News

For prayer news call our prayer hotline 0800 258 5101. For email prayer alerts and more, visit www.opendoorsuk.org/pray



Open Doors
Serving persecuted Christians worldwide

Open Doors **UK** T 01993 885400
PO Box 6 F 01993 885401
Witney E info@opendoorsuk.org
Oxon OX29 6WG I www.opendoorsuk.org

Open Doors Registered Charity in England and Wales No 260600

Open Doors

Prayer Diary

Serving persecuted Christians worldwide

March 2008

"Members
of a great
family"



Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering. Hebrews 13:3

Africa

Saturday 1 March – ETHIOPIA

Last year Yilma (not his real name), a Muslim-background believer (MBB), was taken to a mosque where Muslims demanded he denounce his faith. When he refused, they spat on him and bit him. In October his house was set on fire. It has since been repaired thanks to support from his church, but he and his family fear another attack. Pray for Yilma and his family's safety in this hostile area. Many MBBs face similar situations but local authorities appear unwilling to take action against fellow Muslims. Pray that believers will trust in God and show His love to their persecutors.

Sunday 2 March – SOUTHERN SUDAN

Praise God for a successful graduation at Emmanuel Christian Training Centre (ECTC) last November. Many students are determined to share the Gospel in unreached areas across southern Sudan. Pray for spiritual growth and good Bible teaching in the churches.



Another group of students have finished their studies at ECTC in southern Sudan since these students graduated in 2006

Monday 3 March – SOUTHERN SUDAN

Sudan still needs to fully implement the comprehensive peace agreement. Pray that God will intervene and establish peace in war-torn southern Sudan. Pray too for understanding between the two parties involved in the peace talks that will protect religious freedom across the whole country.

Tuesday 4 March – ZANZIBAR

Christians form about one per cent of Zanzibar's population; they struggle to obtain permission to build, with the result that Muslim-background believers are in dire need of facilities like nursery schools and places of worship. Pray that God will intervene so that the authorities give permission.

Please also pray that God will provide the Church with much-needed training materials to strengthen and equip them to reach Muslims with the Gospel.

Latin America

Wednesday 5 March – COLOMBIA

Please pray for protection of Liz, a member of Open Doors' team in Colombia, as she travels to some danger zones to research how Christians are facing up to the reality of persecution.

Thursday 6 March – MEXICO

Continue praying for five families in Saltillo, Chiapas, who have been threatened with expulsion from their community for believing in Christ. Brother Felipe, one of Open Doors' contacts in Mexico, visited and encouraged them.

Friday 7 March – MEXICO

Continue praying for our Christian brothers who are unjustly imprisoned in the Acteal case (where Mexican Christians were jailed for supposedly murdering 45 Tzotzil Indians in 1997). This month it will be ten years since their arrest and trial, and the media may be negative in their reports of the prisoners. Pray for wisdom among their lawyers and hope for these Christians and their families.

East Asia

Saturday 8 March – INDIA

Please pray for evangelist Birendra Sharma (23), from a Hindu background, working in the Bareilly district of Uttar Pradesh. Many in the area oppose the spread of the Gospel, so pray for God's hand of protection over him as he regularly holds prayer meetings. Praise God that many people are coming to know Him through these meetings.

Sunday 9 March – INDIA

Please pray for John Knox (24), a preacher working in the Jehanabad district of Bihar, and for Pastor Subhash Khokhria (30), working in Udaipur, Rajasthan. Please pray that many would come to a saving knowledge of Christ through their ministries.

Monday 10 March – CHINA

Continue to pray for Brother Zhang Rongliang, leader of the China for Christ house church network, who has been in prison for over three years and is only halfway through his sentence. Pray for his health; he has diabetes and is still recovering from a stroke he had in 2007. Pray too for the limited ministry he is allowed to have in prison. Finally please pray for the senior county official who is believed to be the only one against Zhang's early release.

Tuesday 11 March – NORTH KOREA

As we approach Easter, please pray for Christians in North Korea, the most difficult country in which to follow Christ. Praise the Lord that because of Jesus' resurrection there is hope for North Korea and that countless believers there are prepared to give their lives for their Lord.

See **Frontline**, pages 6, 7 and page 8 for information on how you can take action on behalf of North Korean believers.

Wednesday 12 March – SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES



The Hasim family before the tragedy: Evelyn sits with Mocsim, Jun-jun is on the far right

Evelyn Hasim lost her husband, Pastor Mocsim, and daughter when they were murdered on 3 June 2006. Praise God for providing a house for Evelyn and her family, donated by a pastor, but please pray that God will continue to minister to Evelyn's family through a local church.

Also pray for Evelyn's son Jun-jun as the family seek the funds needed for his schooling.

Thursday 13 March – BANGLADESH

Pray that the interim government will withdraw the state of emergency and that through the forthcoming elections, God will raise up righteous leaders. Also pray for Open Doors as we assist persecuted believers in practical ways and provide long-term help for victims of Cyclone Sidr in southern Bangladesh.

Friday 14 March – VIETNAM

Continue to pray for our Galilee Bible School teachers who travel constantly to different provinces and villages to train workers. Over the years this mobile Bible school is meeting the demand for pastors and lay leaders to cope with increasing numbers of Christians. Please pray that God will protect the teachers and their families from harm.

Saturday 15 March – BHUTAN

A Bhutanese brother studying theology in the Philippines hopes to finish his course this April. Pray for him, as he will then return to Bhutan to start a discipleship and youth ministry among the Drukpa people.

Also uphold isolated pastors who minister in far-flung areas, particularly in the eastern fringes of Bhutan. They need training and encouragement but struggle to attend teaching seminars or gatherings designed to equip them.

The Gulf

Sunday 16 March – IRAQ

Pray for the work of translating the Old Testament into Kurdish Surani and the translation being done into the second Kurdish language, Bahdinani, used by Iraqi Kurds. So far, only John's Gospel has been translated. The Church eagerly awaits the day when Kurds can read the whole Bible in their own language.

Pray for this year's International Book Fair in Erbil, that the Word of God will be widely distributed as a result.

Monday 17 March – IRAQ

Pray for Iraqi Christians in the danger areas of Baghdad and Mosul. In some parts security is slowly improving. Pray for continued improvement and more stability in the region, so Christians and other Iraqis can return and continue their lives.

Tuesday 18 March – IRAN

Pray for the leaders of house churches and cell groups. Many have the heavy responsibility of having to teach, guide and advise a group, without having much training and education themselves. Pray for wisdom in their teachings and strength to face difficult situations.

Wednesday 19 March – AFGHANISTAN

Tomorrow is the celebration of the Persian New Year ('Nowruz') which marks the coming of Spring. Across the Muslim world it is also observed as 'Mawlid an nabi', the birthday of Muhammad. This year is remarkable because it comes so close to Good Friday. Spring is also the time that fighting erupts again between warring factions so please pray that peace will prevail.

Middle East

Thursday 20 March – ALGERIA

Church leaders need wisdom and discernment as they seek to provide Christ-centred, biblical teaching. Pray for God's blessing on their efforts to provide comprehensive theological training and education to the Church.

Friday 21 March – GOOD FRIDAY

Jesus' persecution led to His death, which brings eternal life to all who believe. Pray that today persecuted Christians will have a renewed sense of God's presence in their pain, and the conviction of His ultimate victory over sin and death.

Saturday 22 March – MOROCCO

Thank God for the positive impact of Open Doors' socio-economic development projects. Pray for His continued guidance and protection in these efforts to fight poverty. Pray too for more openness to the Gospel in Morocco.