



Persecution & Prayer Alert

The Voice of the Martyrs Canada
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*"When a man has no strength, if he
leans on God, he becomes powerful."
~ D.L. Moody*

KAZAKHSTAN: Church Buildings Confiscated

Source: Forum 18

City officials in Kazakhstan's capital of Nur-Sultan have ordered the confiscation of the Grace Presbyterian Church building, as well as the place of worship being constructed on the same site for the Agape Pentecostal Church. The authorities claim that the land is needed for a new public kindergarten.

In 2001, Grace Church purchased a former college building and has spent considerable money renovating the property. The compensation now being offered to the church by the city is considered well below market value.

Members of the Agape Church dreamed of having their own building for years, and all official approvals for the building had been received from the city. They had only recently begun construction on their facility when the order was received.

As for Grace Church, this is not the first time it has faced troubles. In 2014, the same order was given, also ostensibly to build a kindergarten. At the time, an agreement was reached. Additionally, back in 2014, the former pastor was convicted of allegedly harming the mental health of a church member. Even though that same member denied all allegations, the pastor received a four-year suspended sentence (see www.vomcanada.com/kz-2014-02-27.htm). For more information on the persecution of Christians in Kazakhstan, or to review previously posted reports, go to www.vomcanada.com/kazakhstan.htm.

Please prayerfully uphold the congregation members and leaders of these two churches as they deal with the legal challenges set before them. Pray that this issue will be resolved without unnecessary duress and that the church members will be able to retain rightful ownership of

their property. May Christians in Kazakhstan be given open doors of opportunity to spread the Good News of the Gospel throughout their communities by testifying of God's life-changing power -- even among the governing officials opposing them -- so many more will be enlightened to His sovereignty, truth and righteousness.

ERITREA: Thirty Christians Arrested at Wedding

Sources: Release Eritrea, Barnabas Fund

Eritrean authorities continued their ongoing crackdown on unregistered religious groups when 30 guests were arrested at a wedding ceremony in late June. These Christians were arrested in the capital city of Asmara, joining 15 others who had been previously arrested in April and sent to a prison camp.

The government of Eritrea is known as one of the most oppressive in the world, notorious for its arbitrary arrests and detention of people -- without any trial. Last year alone, between May and August, more than 330 Christians were arrested.

Since religious restrictions were instituted in 2002, only four religious groups are legally allowed by the government: Eritrean Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Lutheran and Sunni Islam. Membership in any other group is strictly prohibited, and even members of these legally recognized groups are not necessarily immune from harassment.

For an informative video report, including interviews with persecuted Eritrean believers, go to www.vomcanada.com/video/eritrea. Additional reports on incidents of persecution in this country are available at www.vomcanada.com/eritrea.

Remember the hundreds of believers presently being imprisoned in Eritrea, some of them already having endured many years of inhumane treatment under terrible conditions. Pray that these prisoners and their families be endowed with inner strength through the divine intervention of the Holy Spirit. May those responsible for the country's oppressive laws realize the error of their ways and come to respect the rights of all citizens by treating others as they themselves would like to be treated.

CHINA: Churches Converted to Cultural Centres

Sources: International Christian Concern, Evangelical Focus

As China continues its crackdown on churches, some state-approved Three-Self Churches have been "voluntarily" converted into cultural centres. In Jiangsu province, the Flowing Stream Church was disbanded in 2019, accused of "occupying the village's cultural base." It has now been turned into the "Yangzai Township Flowing Stream Village Cultural Service Centre" where the socialist principles of President Xi are promoted, in the governing officials' attempt to spread "positive energy" to the community.

A similar fate happened to the Beizhouzhuang Church. Shut down in October over registration problems, the members were to have "voluntarily" donated the facility to the community, turning it into the Beizhouzhuang Cultural Compound. The church has been unable to meet since being closed. There have been reports that dozens of other government-approved churches were forced to close as well.

If you have not yet had the opportunity to view Greg Musselman's interview with Bob Fu from ChinaAid, we encourage you to go to www.vomcanada.com/video/bobfu to learn more about the challenges facing China's Christians.

Pray that the Lord will make it possible for Christians throughout China to receive greatly needed fellowship, teaching and encouragement, despite the oppression they are experiencing. May they also be inspired with new and innovative ways to spread the Gospel message. Intercede for the members of any churches still in operation who are likewise facing the uncertainty of potential shutdown, asking God to minister spiritual strength, peace and hope to His persecuted people by impressing upon their hearts the promises contained in His infallible Word.

If you would like to post a prayer of praise or petition on behalf of our persecuted family around the globe, visit VOMC's prayer wall at www.vomcanada.com/prayerwall.htm.

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If you would like to encourage someone to read or receive this weekly prayer alert, please use our online form at www.vomcanada.com/pnpforward.htm and help spread the message of the persecuted church around the world.

For information on additional ways to support members of the persecuted church overseas, review the list of options at www.vomcanada.com/take-action.htm.