

We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed." Cor:48-9

Sudan Source: *Compass Direct*

Christians facing increasing hostility Sudan's Ministry of Guidance and Religious Endowments has threatened to arrest church leaders if they carry out evangelistic activities and do not comply with an order to provide their names and contact information, Christian sources have said.

The warning, in a letter to church leaders of the Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church (SPEC), arrived a few days after President Omar al-Bashir told cheering crowds that, following the secession of largely non-Islamic South Sudan, the country's constitution will be more deeply entrenched in Sharia (Islamic law).

"We will take legal procedures against pastors who are involved in preaching or evangelistic activities," wrote Hamid Yousif Adam, under secretary of the Ministry of Guidance and Religious Endowments, to church leaders. "This is a critical situation faced by our church in Sudan," said the Rev. Yousif Matar, secretary general of the SPEC.

Sudanese Christians are living beneath a blanket of fear since South Sudan seceded on 9 July 2011. Sudan has moved up in Open Doors' World Watch ranking to 16, from 35, with the situation between north and south becoming increasingly volatile.

Christians in (north) Sudan celebrated Christmas amid threats from officials in Khartoum. Three members of the Sudanese Church of Christ were detained by national security agents in Khartoum on 23 December, because they were Christians and therefore suspected supporters of southern military forces.

More recently, two Christian leaders were kidnapped by South Sudanese militia loyal to Sudan's Islamic government in Rabak, central Sudan. Although they were later released, the incident added to fears that Christians will increasingly become targets for Islamic hostility. Open Doors supports the church in Sudan by providing Bibles and Christian literature, leadership training and livelihood projects. **Please pray:**

* That church leaders would have wisdom and grace to respond to increasing opposition

* That tensions between the north and south would be resolved, rather than deteriorate to war

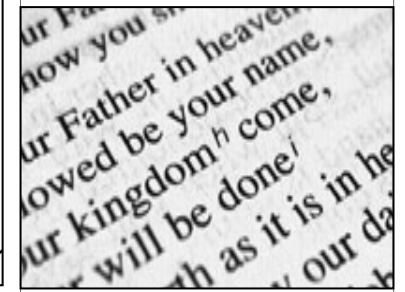
* That God would strengthen Open Doors teams serving the church and helping Christians to stand strong in the midst of daily pressures.

With many thanks for your prayers. Jane Prayer Communications

Jesus working through us, the Church, is the world's only hope. God has given us the power and dominion to bring change; let's take our swords in hand and wield them with skill and authority in the mighty name of Jesus!



12h February 2012



The Prayer Team would like to encourage members of the congregation to come along to Prayer Time on Sunday morning (10:30am) or evening (6:00pm). We meet in the Prayer Room and would love to have you join with us. Or why not come along and join us for a **Prayer Breakfast** on the 1st Saturday of each month @ **9.00am** in

Montgomery's! -

Saturday 3rd March

¹³Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. ¹⁴Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁶Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. James 5

Pray for people struggling to cope in difficult life situations and experiencing varying degrees of stress and depression, families who have been bereaved, (Boyd) & members waiting on appointments with consultants.

Information concerning people's illnesses is given with permission, but is personal, and should be treated with sensitivity and respect, and used for prayer only.

Encourage your friends to pray! Our weekly Prayer Bulletin is available every week @ www.westchurchballymena.org or send your prayer requests to West Church Prayer Team "westprayer@hotmail.co.uk"

"Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer. From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the foe." (Psalm 61:1-3)



Dear Father in Heaven, I sing praise to you this morning. You have carried me through many difficulties over the years. You have blessed me and taken care of me. You have comforted me and guided me. You are my ever-present help. I praise you, God, from whom all blessings flow. I praise you above all heavenly hosts. I praise you Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. You are the greatest. You are magnificent. You are worthy. I love you. In the name of Jesus I offer this praise, amen

Please could you pray for the management team and volunteers at the Ballymena Friendship club as we prepare for the Valentine's fun evening on Wed 15th. Your prayerful support will be much appreciated. Please pray that:

- ◆ ***volunteers to do the hand massage will come forward / be found***
- ◆ ***friendships will develop***
- ◆ ***everyone will have fun***
- ◆ ***God's love will be present***
- ◆ ***people will be made to feel welcome***

Please pray for our Discipleship Explored course. ;

Give thanks for the attendees who came along.

Pray those whose walk with Christ would benefit from the course will be moved to come along. Pray as it continues this Monday evening

Pray that we will fervently seek God's help and direction in overcoming spiritual challenges and accomplishing Kingdom purposes.

God our Father, in your wisdom and love you made all things. Bless those fathers and mothers, who have taken upon themselves the responsibility of parenting. Bless the 21st parenting workshops and for everyone involved.

Heavenly Father, May we be readily prepared to bestow hope, comfort and love to our loved ones during the end stages of life here on earth. May we not shrink, hide, nor fear death for we know that our real home is in heaven and we will live with you in eternity. In Jesus name, Amen

Latest Edition - David & Besiana's Newsletter on Welcome Desk

Brenda was a young woman that wanted to learn to rock climb. Although she was terribly afraid, she went with a group and they faced this tremendous cliff of rock that was practically perpendicular. In spite of her fear, she put on the gear and took hold of the rope and started up the face of that rock.

Well, she got to a ledge where she could take a breather. As she was hanging on there, whoever was holding the rope up at the top of the cliff made a mistake and snapped the rope against Brenda's eye and knocked out her contact lens. You know how tiny contact lenses are and how almost impossible to find. Well, here she is on a rock ledge, with who knows how many hundreds of feet behind and hundreds of feet above her. Of course, she looked and looked and looked, hoping that she would be able to find that contact lens. Here she was, very far from home. Her sight was now blurry. She was very upset by the fact that she wouldn't be anywhere near a place where she could get a new contact lens. And she prayed that the Lord would help her to find it. Well, her last hope was that perhaps when she got to the top of the cliff, one of the girls that was up there on the top might be able to find her contact lens in the corner of her eye. When she got to the top, a friend examined her eye. There was no contact lens to be found.

She sat down with the rest of the party, waiting for the rest of them to come up the face of the cliff. She looked out across range after range of mountains, thinking of that Bible verse that says, "The eyes of the Lord run to and from throughout the whole earth." She thought, "Lord, You can see all these mountains. You know every single stone and leaf that's on those mountains and You know exactly where my contact lens is."

Finally, the time came when it was time to go down. They walked down the trail to the bottom. Just as they got there, there was a new party of rock climbers coming along. As one of them started up the face of the cliff, she shouted out, "Hey, you guys! anybody lose a contact lens?" Well, that would be startling enough, wouldn't it? She had found the contact lens! But you know why she saw it? An ant was carrying that contact lens so that it was moving slowly across the face of the rock.

What does that tell you about the God of the universe? Is He in charge of the tiniest things? Do ants matter to Him? Of course they do. He made them. He designed them.

Brenda told me that her father is a cartoonist. When she told him this incredible story, he drew a picture of that ant lugging that contact lens with the words, "Lord, I don't know why You want me to carry this thing. I can't eat it and it's awfully heavy. But if this is what You want me to do, I'll carry it for You."

If God is in charge of the ants, don't you think He cares about you and me? I guess Solomon was right. One could learn a valuable lesson from that ant.

TRUST IN GOD!

We could probably all say a little more often, "God, I don't know why you want me to carry this load. I see no good in it and it's awfully heavy. Still, if you want me to, I'll carry it for You."