



# 40 DAYS *of* PRAYER

STORIES OF GOD'S WORK AROUND THE GLOBE



PRAYER COMPANION BOOKLET



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## INTRODUCTION

The history of revivals shows the vital importance of corporate, prevailing, intercessory prayer for cities, nations, and the body of Christ. Over the next 40 days we invite you to join us in praying for situations like these:

- Pastors ministering in hard places like Łuków, Poland, where communism crushed the evangelical churches
- Churches in Iran that have spread even though conversions to Christianity are illegal
- Teachers warning against the prosperity gospel movement in Venezuela and sub-Saharan Africa
- Spiritual encouragement and gospel-centered resources for believers in China

As it was 2,000 years ago, the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore we pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers (Matt. 9:37-38). Among them are our global team of editors and writers who are leading our 15 regional and language sites, and our many partners who are laboring with us to proclaim the gospel.

Our desire is that this 40 Days of Prayer and Giving campaign will ignite a prayer movement for the global church, and that through an outpouring of generosity we can further fuel their work.

Thank you for joining us,

Julius Kim  
President, The Gospel Coalition



## DAY 1

### FROM ZERO TO SEVEN IN ŁUKÓW



In eastern Poland, 40 years of Communism was particularly harsh. It crushed the small cluster of evangelical churches there, leaving very few Bible-believing Christians.

Seven years ago, two pastors set out to plant a church in the eastern town of Łuków, population 30,000. No Protestant church had existed in the town's 750 years, and the two pastors had no contacts there. Undeterred, they began holding worship services every Sunday. They preached more than 300 sermons, handed out hundreds of tracts, and paid monthly rent on a room.

For six long years, there was not a single convert to Christ. The pastors grew tired. They discussed the high financial costs of ministering in a town with no spiritual fruit. They considered leaving Łuków. After prayer, however, they decided to stay awhile longer. In the ensuing 12 months, five people, ranging in age from a teen to a septuagenarian, entrusted their lives to Christ. Today there are seven born-again believers in Łuków, a 700 percent increase of evangelical Christians in one year.

#### Ways to pray:

1. Thanksgiving for the saving grace of God
2. Strength and endurance for the pastors ministering in hard places
3. Companionship and fellowship for Christians in Łuków and Poland

“Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.”

*Luke 15:7*



## DAY 2

### THE FASTEST-GROWING CHURCH IN THE WORLD



The Iranian Revolution of 1979 established a hard-line Islamic regime. Over the next two decades, Christians faced increasing opposition and persecution: all missionaries were kicked out, evangelism was outlawed, Bibles in Persian were banned and soon became scarce, and several pastors were killed. The church came under tremendous pressure, and many feared it would soon wither away and die. But the exact opposite has happened.

In the last 20 years, more Iranians have become Christians than in the previous 13 centuries—since Islam came to Iran. In 1979, there were an estimated 500 Christians from a Muslim background in Iran. Today, there are hundreds of thousands—some estimate more than 1 million. According to research organization Operation World, Iran has the fastest-growing evangelical movement in the world. The second-fastest-growing church is in Afghanistan—where Afghans are being reached in large part by Iranians.

#### Ways to pray:

1. Thanksgiving for the miraculous growth of Iranian Christians
2. More trained leaders to serve as evangelists, church planters, and pastors in Iran
3. Endurance and comfort for those being persecuted and suffering for their faith in Jesus

*“As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.”*

*Genesis 50:20*



## DAY 3

### THE WALKING CHRISTIANS

Long before the pandemic, the church in Venezuela was experiencing a complex and difficult situation. The worsening economic crisis has led more than 5 million people to flee the country, where food and medicine are hard to come by and inflation is skyrocketing. Electricity availability and internet access are also spotty. According to mobile broadband speed and browsing statistics, Venezuela ranks 139th, above only Afghanistan and Palestine.

In a global pandemic, with 95 percent of public transportation unavailable, and gas inaccessible for many, how can the people be fed? How can they gather for Sunday services?

Yet the church has persevered. Pastors on the ground report an unexpected growth of new believers who have arrived tired and in need of a loving Father who brings peace, comfort, and rest for their hearts in the midst of their affliction. Although there is no transportation or internet, people are walking for hours in order to gather together and hear the Word of God.

#### Ways to pray:

1. Thank God for the spiritual transformation of the church in Venezuela, for the many who have turned from the prosperity gospel to the true gospel of grace
2. For provision for the brothers and sisters who are experiencing hunger and hardship in the country, and the many who have fled to Colombia, Brazil, Chile, Dominican Republic, and other countries
3. For a miracle of renewal and peace in Venezuela, for God to soften the hearts of the authorities and bring many to the gospel

*“Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.”*

*Luke 15:7*



## DAY 4

### SMUGGLING BOOKS FOR GOD'S GLORY



Throughout church history, Christians have looked to books to receive guidance, encouragement, and the wisdom of others. But in China, purchasing Christian resources is a tremendous task, and it is nearly impossible to ship resources into the country from other places.

In 2020, a group of TGC Chinese collaborators was called to the police station for lengthy questioning about buying Bible interpretation books smuggled into China. Many were detained more than 24 hours. The Christian who sold the books was eventually

sentenced to seven years in prison.

Although we are able to share some spiritual resources through The Gospel Coalition and 9Marks, this is not enough for the needs of the churches in China. Both lay people and church leaders need better access to more spiritual resources.

#### Ways to pray:

1. Thanksgiving for the wisdom and courage of many brothers and sisters who are writing and distributing spiritual truth to those in need
2. For the importation rules to be loosened so that Chinese Christians can more easily purchase good books
3. For God to keep those who translate, publish, and sell spiritual books safe from the disturbance and persecution of the enemy

*“For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.”*

*2 Corinthians 10:4–5*





## DAY 5

### CHRISTIANITY GROWS ON ANY SOIL



Cambodia had a population of 7.5 million when Pol Pot came to power in 1975. Four years later, his Khmer Rouge had killed an estimated 2 million people, most notoriously in “killing fields”—where so many bodies were piled into mass graves that clothing and bones still emerge from the dirt after a heavy rain. Although the Vietnamese invaded Cambodia in 1979, toppling the Khmer Rouge, the aftermath has not been easy.

But as the population has grown, so has Christianity. Over the last 30 years, in a country that knows the cost of manmade utopian efforts, the number of Protestants has jumped from 2,000 to more than 300,000.

Missionary J. D. Crowley works in the northeastern part of the country. Along with other missionaries, he’s seen 3,000 people come to Christ and 70 churches planted since 1994. In the last few years, the training at the local Bible school has been given over to indigenous pastors and funded by the local churches. “When we can catch our breath,” Crowley said, “we just shake our heads and think what a privilege it has been to watch God do what he’s done up here.”

#### Ways to pray:

1. Praise for the new birth of thousands of Cambodian Christians
2. For those who have not yet heard and believed in Jesus
3. For new leaders to continue to be raised up and trained well

“*Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.*”

*Galatians 6:9*



## DAY 6

### LET NO ONE DESPISE UGANDAN YOUTH

Uganda is one of the youngest countries in the world. Three-quarters of the population is younger than 30, while only 4.6 percent of the population is older than 60. The average age in Uganda is 15.

These young people are willing to sail across the Mediterranean Sea to find jobs in Europe or travel to the Arab world as domestic workers. Some join terrorist groups like Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram. But others are planting churches, leading congregations, and reaching the unreached. The growth of the African church is happening among young people.

With its boldness and energy, Uganda's youthful population is an asset, an opportunity for the church to transform broken society for generations to come. Can you imagine how this country and continent could change if these young men and women are passionate for Christ and are trained in the truths of Scripture and the gospel of grace? Oh Lord, may it be so!

#### Ways to pray:

1. Praise to the Lord for the strength of the young Christians in Uganda and Africa
2. For deep spiritual growth in young people through discipleship
3. For the transformation of the young people in Africa to a mission force into the rest of the world

*“Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.”*

*1 Timothy 4:12*



## DAY 7

### TRUE GOSPEL IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Over the last 10 years, Christian minorities in Egypt and the Middle East have endured the social and political uncertainty that followed the so-called Arab Spring. From one perspective, there isn't a more relevant time than this for the gospel to flourish, particularly when besieged Christians and non-Christians seek God's mercy and forgiveness offered in the crucified Savior.

In reality, however, the response of many hasn't been repentance. Deceived by prosperity preachers, many have lost their confidence in God's Word and have fallen prey to other gospels.

God is always sovereign, and he is at work among the growing minority who are still faithful to his Word and who live their life in a manner worthy of the good news of Jesus Christ. As surprising as it's been to see a therapeutic and prosperity gospel in the Middle East, every week we hear testimonies of people engaging the truths of the biblical gospel and believing the Jesus of the holy Scriptures.

#### Ways to pray:

1. Thank God for faithful evangelical leaders who proclaim the true gospel and confront false teachers
2. For unity in truth and love among evangelicals from different denominations as they face different challenges, since tribalism is a problem in the church in the Middle East
3. For the planting of healthy local churches in which the gospel is made visible to the wider community

*“Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.”*

*1 Peter 2:11–12*



## DAY 8

### TWO-TENTHS OF 1 PERCENT

Bosnia-Herzegovina is a beautiful country, where the hilly landscape is dotted with picturesque mountain villages. Ten years ago, in one of those villages, three Muslim women began to meet together in secret. They would log on to the internet and read the Bible together.

Over time, they became attracted to the person of Jesus Christ. Desperate to know more about him, they mustered the courage to drive from their mountain village, where there was no church, to the town of Mostar, 45 minutes away.

They searched for a pastor there, one who was rumored to know Jesus. Finding him, they asked questions and listened as he told them about Jesus. They responded enthusiastically, "He's the one we want to meet!"

Today they belong to Christ. In a land where less than two-tenths of 1 percent know the Lord, God is at work. Right now, The Gospel Coalition is drawing together pastors throughout the country in a united effort to bring the gospel to Bosnians and others throughout the Balkans.

#### Ways to pray:

1. Praise God for the miraculous salvation of men and women all over the world, particularly in countries with little access to the gospel
2. For the growth of the church in Bosnia and the Balkans, so that many others might know and preach Christ in the region
3. For the faithful pastors in small communities, that they might know their work is not in vain

*Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word. . . . So there was much joy in that city."*

*Acts 8:4, 8*





## DAY 9

### SEEKING LIBERTY, FINDING FREEDOM

Carlos was 10 when he began walking to the United States from his home in El Salvador. Once he reached northern Mexico, he and his mother were hidden in the fake floor of a truck and trafficked over to McAllen, Texas.

The journey took a little over two weeks, but Carlos would need another two years to start assimilating into his new country. Yet he never felt secure: his thick accent stood out whenever he talked to Americans, but he also stood out among Mexicans. Always out of place, he started rebelling more and more against his mother, wondering why they made the trek at all.

In desperation, his mother sent him to his uncle in New York, who was a pastor. Here, Carlos felt something very different. He found a family that had a different structure, and he began attending church services for the first time in his life.

The Lord worked in his heart. When he was 15, Carlos gave his life to Christ and began studying Scripture. Now in his late 30s, Carlos is a missionary in Europe, serving Hispanic communities in Italy. He helps those who feel out of place understand there's room at the table for those who repent of their sins and trust their lives to Jesus Christ.

#### Ways to pray:

1. Thanksgiving for the mercy of God that continues to rescue the lives of sinners and change the course of our stories
2. For churches and ministries seeking to help with immigration resettlement
3. That the Lord will raise up more missionaries from developing nations to serve the saints and seek the lost all over the world

“*But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.*”

*1 Corinthians 15:10*



## DAY 10

### LOST AND FOUND

The Uyghurs are a Muslim minority group in China facing systemic human trafficking. Recently a missionary family of four serving among them was evacuated after police took in a colleague for interrogation. They had just seven hours to flee.

The family ended up back in the United States—lost, broken, and confused. They felt guilty for leaving their friends behind, and sad about missing out on the great things God was doing.

Then they discovered that their town in the United States was home to a number of Uyghur families. They were able to make connections, love, and support the refugees. Later, their church hosted a prayer and awareness event. Many Uyghurs attended, and God overwhelmed them with his love.

One Uyghur family started studying the Scriptures and is now sharing its hope in him with many others. Praise be to God! He sees, knows, and cares for the oppressed.

#### Ways to pray:

1. Praise the lovingkindness of the Lord, who allows us to participate in his good plans
2. For the church to see and reach diaspora Uyghurs, who are often hurting and lonely
3. For an end to the human trafficking of Uyghurs in their homeland, and for God's light to shine even in the concentration camps

*In my distress I called upon the LORD;  
to my God I cried for help.  
From his temple he heard my voice,  
and my cry to him reached his ears."*

*Psalms 18:6*



## DAY 11

### WHITE FLAGS IN PERU

In March of 2020, the government of Peru instituted mandatory COVID-19 lockdowns, closing everything but approved banks, food markets, and medical facilities. Since the majority of the population subsists on a day-to-day income, many could not fathom surviving two weeks without work.

As they ran out of food, people began hanging white flags outside their homes. The flags were a type of surrender, signaling that those inside were desperate. One church started gathering food—some purchased from marketplaces and some grown by the church community—and delivering it.

One church member is a young missionary with an open-door policy. He started noticing an increase in kids and teenagers who wandered into his house throughout the day, often around mealtimes. At first, he was a little annoyed because he didn't always have enough prepared for 12 extra mouths. But he soon realized they were from white-flag homes. Often he sacrificed eating reasonable portions so he could share his food with those in need.

The church began to pray for God's provision, and it wasn't long before generous donations began coming from unexpected people and places. In a time when the church could have been struggling and paralyzed, members stepped forward in boldness with the ability to provide for and encourage more than 400 families with over 600 bags of food.

#### Ways to pray:

1. Thanksgiving for the Lord's continued provision to those in need, and for his work in the lives of his sheep
2. For wisdom, strength, and discernment for those serving in Peru and throughout the global South, in the face of increased challenges brought about by the pandemic
3. For the millions in Latin America who have suffered the socioeconomic hardships brought by COVID-19, and who face a long wait before vaccination

*You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."*

*Matthew 5:14–16*



## DAY 12

### TRUE HAPPINESS IN CHRIST

The Nordic countries of Europe consistently rate as the happiest places on earth. But they are also perhaps the most secular, where the very notion of God stirs ambivalence among the population.

Recently a group of young pastors, keen to see a spiritual awakening in the northern reaches of Europe, began meeting and praying earnestly for a new Reformation. They have been drawn to The Gospel Coalition and its commitment to proclaim the good news of Christ as the only means by which people can be reconciled to God and transformed for his glory. Most of them thought they were alone in their region, and have found camaraderie, community, and friendship in knowing other like-minded brothers and sisters.

Councils for TGC Nordic are now forming in the five countries—Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. Interest is high. But so is the isolation felt by the small number of Reformed evangelical pastors throughout the region.

#### Ways to pray:

1. Give thanks for God's grace that is always saving and changing lives, even in places where it doesn't seem to be at work
2. For a true Christ-centered coalition to emerge in the Nordics, whose pastors burn with a zeal to bring the gospel to their nations
3. For the people to understand their true need of Christ, and the joy that comes from abiding in him

*When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,  
we were like those who dream.  
Then our mouth was filled with laughter,  
and our tongue with shouts of joy;  
then they said among the nations,  
"The LORD has done great things for them."*

*Psalm 126:1–2*





## DAY 13

### HOPE FOR A STRUGGLING PEOPLE

Christianity in South Korea grew with the economy after World War II. In 1970, 18 percent of the population was Christian; by 2000, it was 31 percent. By 2006, South Korea was sending out more missionaries than any other country except the United States.

And then things stalled. Growth slowed, and church attendance began to shrink. It's not hard to see which generation is struggling—less than 2 percent of those younger than 20 attend church.

"In Korea, money is winning," some have said. "Money is the No. 1 enemy in Korean Christianity now." But money is not a good master. Many people in Korea are struggling, sad, and anxious. Children spend up to 16 hours a day in school and tutoring programs, working to enter the best universities. Employees put in long hours under immense pressure. Suicide rates are high, and youth report high levels of unhappiness.

TGC Korea's vision is to point people to the Savior who is worth more than lucrative jobs or big bank accounts. We have a truth that, like the biblical pearl in the field, is worth selling all your possessions to own.

#### Ways to pray:

1. Praise God for the previous growth of Christianity in South Korea, and for the many faithful pastors still at work
2. For Koreans to see the emptiness of the idol of wealth
3. For TGC Korea's ministry to be used as a channel of God's love and mercy

*“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?”*

*Romans 8:31–32*



## DAY 14

### THE MOST DIVERSE CITY IN THE WORLD

News from Canada can be discouraging. In the last three years, the Canadian Supreme Court rejected the country's only Christian law school and the government required organizations looking for summer-job funding to affirm LGBTQ and abortion rights.

"But the gospel is advancing," a local pastor said. "Lives are being transformed, people are being baptized, and churches are being planted. . . . God is alive and well in Canada."

One reason for the stabilization and growth of Christianity in a secularizing country: In 2017, the BBC concluded that Toronto was the most diverse city in the world. Most immigrants come with a basis of faith, and are more likely than those born in Canada to attend church or embrace religion.

At the same time, conservative theology is attracting both the church and the unchurched. But as the liberal churches fade, it leaves an even starker line between the remaining evangelical churches and the culture. "We're in a very critical time, because many churches are on the verge of being tempted to capitulate to culture," the Canadian pastor said. "The pressure has never been greater, with the sexual revolution leading the way."

However, the sifting isn't all bad news, he said: In the end, "you should have a strengthened church."

#### Ways to pray:

1. Praise for the beauty and growth of Canadian multi-ethnic churches
2. For Canadian Christians to continue to stand firm in the face of mounting cultural pressures
3. For pastors to communicate God's Word in a way that is simple and clear for both mature and new believers

*"Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many."*

*1 Corinthians 12:12–14*



## DAY 15

### NOT A LOT OF THEOLOGY IN SÃO PAULO

Vinicius was 12 years old when his parents divorced and he started going to church by himself in São Paulo. At first, his church was a place with “not a lot of good theology but not a lot of bad theology—just love for Jesus and evangelism.” But over the 12 years he spent there, the teaching moved steadily into “more health-and-wealth theology and coaching to be the best version of yourself.”

While browsing a Christian YouTube channel, he clicked a video that was trending in the United States—evangelist Paul Washer’s “shocking message.”

“It was a shock for me,” Vinicius said. “I remember crying that whole night, and a big hunger started in my heart. I wanted to know more about the Word.” He clicked on more videos, watching dozens by John Piper that Desiring God released for free. “I wanted more of the gospel I was hearing.”

In Brazil, Vinicius’s story is typical. More than 2.5 million have watched Washer’s “shocking message” with Portuguese subtitles. Another million have seen it dubbed in Portuguese. Many are continuing to dig deeper and deeper into Reformed theology. “Ten years ago, I didn’t think I’d ever see this enthusiasm for the gospel,” a Baptist missionary said. “It’s the best moment I’ve seen in my 26 years here.”

#### Ways to pray:

1. Praise God the gospel is growing in a tremendous way in Brazil
2. For TGC Brazil as it continues to produce gospel-centered content through original resources and translations
3. For thousands of internet searchers, that they would find Christ-exalting content and that their hearts would be softened to the gospel

“*And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*”

*Romans 8:28*



## DAY 16

### CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES FROM AN ATHEIST COUNTRY

Under the 40-year reign of Stalinist dictator Enver Hoxha, Albania was one of the most repressive societies in the world. In the first country to officially declare itself atheist, Christians and Muslims alike were persecuted. Many were executed.

In the early 1990s, mission agencies could only name 16 known believers left in the country. But the Lord has turned a grim past into an exciting present. There are now thousands of first-generation Albanian Christians.

What impresses most is their desire to grow theologically and to bring the good news of Christ to their neighbors. The Lord is doing a work in the Albanian-speaking countries of southeast Europe.

To support this remarkable movement, The Gospel Coalition has recently launched its newest international website, TGC Albanian. Please pray that God would use the website to reach into the hearts of Albanians everywhere, drawing many to Christ in lands where so few have heard of the Savior.

#### Ways to pray:

1. Praise for the work of early missionaries who entered Albania when it opened in the early 1990s
2. For continued growth of churches, both in numbers and unity
3. For a softening of the older generation, which has been deeply shaped by Stalinism and is more likely to resist the gospel

“*For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.*”

*2 Corinthians 10:4–5*





## DAY 17

### MUSLIM BACKGROUND BELIEVERS

Evangelism among Muslims is expanding. We see God working powerfully in the Middle East for his glory and kingdom. However, it is difficult for these new converts to understand how they should live out their newfound Christian faith.

Even as they secularize, Western cultures are operating on historical Christian values such as human rights and religious freedom. But Muslim cultures are shaped by the Qur'an, which emphasizes correct living over love and forgiveness.

More than 95 percent of the Iranian church comprises Muslim Background Believers (MBBs). They are saying yes to our Lord, and are willing to leave behind all the old religious culture and thinking, with the hope of finding all the things they need for their soul.

But while they love their Lord, read their Bibles, and gain knowledge about the gospel, it is difficult to put into practice values that you have not seen modeled. These new Christians often don't have access to enough biblical teaching and training to guide their thinking. In addition, it is difficult for them to learn from each other, since their conversions and church services are illegal in their officially Islamic country.

#### Ways to pray:

1. Praise the Lord for the many stories of Iranians being saved miraculously
2. For physical safety from persecution and imprisonment
3. For MBBs to model their lives after Jesus

“*Knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.*”

*1 Peter 1:18–19*



## DAY 18

### PROVIDING RESOURCES, ENCOURAGING LONELY BELIEVERS

The first Spanish translation of the Bible, la Biblia del Oso, predates even the King James Version. But despite having some reformers in the early 17th century, Spain was largely closed to the Reformation.

Today, Spain is one of the European countries most in need of the gospel—with fewer believers, faithful churches, and new churches by number of citizens. But the Lord is at work! The gospel is growing, the vision for church planting is being renewed, and laborers are being sent out into the harvest. One of the key ways we're seeing this growth is through the internet, particularly through platforms like TGC Spanish.

TGC Spanish provides resources that can be used in pulpits and pews to teach the truths of the gospel. But in places like Spain, a second crucial ministry has been that of encouragement to believers who have felt alone and alienated from others because of the lack of Protestant and evangelical churches around them.

Some time ago, a reader explained how much comfort it's brought to her to read writers who are also living in Spain. "In my city, there isn't a single Protestant church," she said. "As my husband and I are getting ready to move to a different city, we've been connecting online with the services from another church and are reading and watching everything we can on Coalición's website. It's been a balm in these trying times."

Hearing such testimonies is humbling. We pray the Lord raises up more pastors and church planters so the number of healthy churches grows exponentially in Spain.

#### Ways to pray:

1. Thank the Lord for his provision of gospel resources in Spanish
2. For unity among true gospel workers in Spain, that they might be of one mind in service to the saints
3. For wisdom for the editors of the Spanish website, so they might better understand the needs of the Spanish church

*"When therefore I have completed this and have delivered to them what has been collected, I will leave for Spain by way of you. I know that when I come to you I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ."*

*Romans 15:28–29*



## DAY 19

### THE MINORITY OF A MINORITY



The overwhelming evidence of human rights abuses by the Chinese government in Xinjiang, China, has become widely known. The target is the region's more than 13 million Muslim-majority Turkic Uyghur and Kazakh ethnic minorities. News reports describe the suffering of more than a million Uyghur Muslims held in prison-like political indoctrination concentration camps. For those not detained, life is lived under ever-present, high-tech surveillance.

What is less appreciated is that those affected include our brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ. The number of Muslim-background believers among the Turkic minorities of Xinjiang may be small, but God has been building his church. This minority of a minority in the midst of such severe testing needs our prayers to be a beacon of light and hope.

#### Ways to pray:

1. Praise God for his unstoppable, saving grace that is moving in the midst of persecuted Uyghur and Kazakh minorities
2. For God's transcending, inscrutable peace to guard the minds of Christians when they are tempted to believe that the state is omnipotent and omniscient
3. For the Bible in Uyghur, either in digital or print form, to be freely accessible in Xinjiang

*“Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.”*

*1 Peter 5:6–7*



## DAY 20

### SMUGGLING BOOKS FOR GOD'S GLORY

The Soviet regime killed an estimated 20 million Christians between 1921 and 1980. The pressure stayed high until 1991, when the Soviet Union disintegrated into 15 independent countries.

As soon as they could, thousands of Christians fled from the former Soviet Union, a migration that significantly hurt evangelicalism. But not everyone left. And the door that was open to migration worked both ways, letting in thousands of missionaries.

The Christians who remained split themselves from the one official Protestant denomination into at least 35 more, then got to work. Within 10 years, Russians started ministries in hospitals, orphanages, prisons, and soup kitchens; founded Christian publishing houses; and formed professional networks for Christians in the marketplace. Seminaries sprang up and began steadily turning out pastors trained in biblically sound doctrine.

But recently, the country has begun cracking down on religious freedom again. Foreign missionaries have been watched with a high degree of suspicion; however, there are enough Russian theologians, with training, to take their place.

#### Ways to pray:

1. Praise that Russia has an unprecedented level of good resources
2. For pastors to preach expositional, gospel-focused messages
3. For protection from the Russian government, that it would not target the Reformed movement

“*For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.*”

*Romans 15:4*





## DAY 21

### NEEDED: FAITHFUL DISCIPLESHIP IN UGANDA

The damage from aggressive missionary cults and false prophets in Africa is both great and growing. Congregations and families are divided, women and children suffer from financial and sexual exploitation, and disillusioned believers abandon the faith.

Rodgers Atwebembeire and his team at the Africa Centre for Apologetics Research (ACFAR) are actively working with denominations and parachurch ministries, like TGC Africa, to equip believers to defend the faith and exercise biblical discernment.

"I have been greatly changed by your teachings on cults and can't thank you enough," a Christian leader wrote to ACFAR not long ago. "When I started following you, my eldest son had joined [a local cultic group]. I didn't know how to help him, since I didn't know about the group. I went to your website and found helpful information."

Africa's vulnerability to cults exposes a lack of education and discipleship. God's Word makes it clear that the antidote to deception is discernment grounded in a mature grasp of Scripture and essential doctrine. That wisdom, enabled by the Holy Spirit, will allow Christians to identify errors, confidently defend the gospel, and evangelize those who are spiritually trapped.

#### Ways to pray:

1. Praise for the faithful leaders who are preaching the whole counsel of God throughout Africa
2. For a vision and desire for rigorous discipleship to spread among church leaders
3. For revival among the followers of Uganda's "Faith of Unity" cult, whose god-man founder died in January—leaving hundreds of thousands simultaneously bereft and newly open to the liberating good news of Jesus

*“And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.”*

*Ephesians 4:11–14*



## DAY 22

### NEW BONDS IN AN OLD WORLD

The continent of Europe is home to at least 46 countries and 750 million people. The enormous diversity of cultures has spawned both exemplary civilizations (such as Greek, Roman and Western) and horrifying conflicts (such as World Wars I and II).

Europeans are enjoying a season of relative peace. Yet diversity continues to divide north and south, east and west, rich and poor, Christian and Muslim, Orthodox and Catholic, Brexit and the European Union, social democracy (Germany, France, UK) and thinly veiled despotism (Belarus, Russia, Turkey). Not surprisingly, Europeans still don't have a unifying identity. Hope is elusive and satisfaction fleeting.

The good news is that Europeans are primed for the solutions found only in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Many young adults are hungry to learn more about Christ. In the last two years, a council for The Gospel Coalition Europe has formed, with representatives from countries across Europe, to oversee and support the many national branches of TGC. May the Lord use its leaders to promote a singular focus on the gospel of Christ and to bring a second great Reformation to this strategic continent.

#### Ways to pray:

1. Praise God for the many ways he has used European brothers and sisters to bless his church throughout history
2. For wisdom for pastors, leaders, and Christians living in a post-Christian continent
3. For members of TGC Europe's council, that they might be wise, humble, and faithful with the task at hand

*"We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life."*



## DAY 23

### OLD NEWS IN A NEW WORLD

Insecurity, corruption, and violence often fill the front pages of Central American newspapers. In response, many people are searching for peace and justice. But instead of finding that relief in the good news of the gospel, hundreds of thousands have fallen prey to the false news of the prosperity theology that has proliferated in most of the Spanish-speaking world.

One worship leader recently recalled a meeting where the guest preacher spent more than an hour asking people to come to the front in order to be blessed. He began by calling them to the altar by denomination (in the local currency): 500, 1,000, 2,000, 10,000, whatever you wanted to offer. Then he moved on: your belt, your chain, your shoes—even the keys to your car. That was the way to be blessed by God, and to prove your faith to Christ. Hundreds came forward.

Such teaching has diverted and inoculated hundreds of thousands from the true faith. But in God's kindness, things have changed significantly over the last few years. Not a week goes by that we don't hear a testimony of a family, a pastor, or even a whole church that abandons the lies of that false gospel and embraces the truths of Scripture. In the Spanish-speaking world, God is at work, maybe now more than ever!

#### Ways to pray:

1. Give thanks for the thousands who are leaving prosperity teachings and hearing the voice of the Savior
2. For the sheep who are being deceived by wolves, that they might soon wake up and return to the way of the cross
3. For the ministry of TGC Spanish as it continues to proclaim the good news of salvation through articles, podcasts, videos, and resources

*“Then Jesus told his disciples, ‘If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.’”*

*Matthew 16:24–25*



## DAY 24

### AS PERSECUTION GROWS, MERCY RISES

The second most populous country in the world, India is home to more than 1.35 billion souls. Though English is commonly spoken, more than 19,000 other languages and dialects are also present. Hinduism and Islam are the majority religions; Christianity claims only a statistical sliver of the population.

Religious persecution has increased since 2014, when a fundamentalist Hindu political party came to power. Christian converts from Hindu backgrounds are especially targeted, since they're accused of bringing bad fortune to their communities. Lately, persecution has also included Christian communities denied help from the government and Christian individuals feeling outcast by society.

As always, God is also on the move. Christians from around the country testify to miraculous provision by the Lord through local churches. Churches—like Redeemer in Delhi—are being planted. New theological institutions—like Hindi Bible College in North India—are being started. Even in a difficult year, important events—like All India Pastors Conference—are being held. And we're currently in the process of forming a TGC India chapter to support the work of the local pastors and leaders. God is at work!

#### Ways to pray:

1. Thanksgiving for the faithfulness of Indian believers, despite persecution
2. For the hostility to end—that the government may protect Christians from persecution, and that the persecutors might repent of their sin
3. For the local ministries and churches being raised in such a difficult year, and for the future launch of TGC India—that the Lord might use it to support the local churches

*To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.  
O my God, in you I trust;  
let me not be put to shame;  
let not my enemies exult over me.  
Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame;  
they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous."*

*Psalms 25:1-3*



## DAY 25

### A GOSPEL OF GRACE IN AN EXPENSIVE PLACE

Japan is not a poor country. After the devastation of World War II, private companies, the government, and employees pulled together to create new technology and better products. By 1967, Japan's gross domestic product was second only to America's.

But material success (people didn't have many physical needs) combined with long work hours (no time for church) made mission work harder. Many missionaries quit, and mission organizations began steering away from a country that took time and resources without ever producing fruit.

In 2010, an intrepid pastor planted a gospel-centered church in Tokyo, one of the most expensive cities in the world. Ten years later, the core group of 12 people has now ballooned to a network of 10 churches with a total of 500 to 600 members. Reformed evangelical churches are springing up around the country.

"Japanese people are longing for true acceptance—not based off the superficial performance or work, but rather a Father who loves them and dared to give us his only Son to bring them into his family," one pastor said. "Japanese people soak, like sand soaks up the water, when they hear that."

#### Ways to pray:

1. Praise God that in one of the world's most expensive cities, funds have been provided to support church planting
2. For the goal of an additional 20 church plants by 2023
3. For protection and fortitude for church-planting teams

“According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

*1 Corinthians 3:10–11*



## DAY 26

### JIHAD OF THE WOMB

In the complex religious world of the Middle East, there's a lot of gospel progress happening in Egypt. More than 5 percent of the population is Christian, in a land where Christianity has been present since the first century. This has allowed for more churches, pastors, and even seminaries than most other Middle Eastern and northern African countries. But persecution has also been on the rise.

Over the past 20 years, the Christian minority in Egypt has been subjected to a "jihad of the womb." Christian women and girls are targeted by a systematic Islamization process, usually through a forced disappearance or through being tricked or coerced into a relationship with a Muslim man.

This leads to a complete separation from their Christian families and a forced conversion into Islam. Very few women succeed in escaping, with the police either unable or unwilling to find the perpetrators.

Many of these women were already married and had children with their Christian husbands. According to Islamic Sharia law, if a woman converts to Islam and has children from her Christian husband, she and her new Muslim husband have the right to take the children and convert them to Islam.

#### Ways to pray:

1. Praise for Christians in Egypt who have understood the gospel, and for those who have labored to produce resources in Arabic
2. For the ending of this horrendous practice, and for the victims, that the Lord may allow them to escape or to witness to the power of the gospel
3. For local churches, pastors, and women's ministries to be equipped in sound biblical resources, so that they might minister to the women caught in these situations

*Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep."*

*Romans 12:14–15*





## DAY 27

### NOT JUST A WESTERN RELIGION

Nima Alizadeh was born in Tehran two years after Iran's 1979 revolution, which deposed the country's monarchy in favor of an Islamic theocracy. Under Islamic law, conversions to Christianity were illegal and church services held in Farsi were banned.

Nima's family was nominally Muslim. When his uncle converted to Christianity, Nima was confused. "Isn't Christianity a Western religion?" he asked. "Why did you change?"

When his uncle explained Jesus, Nima was instantly converted. "I was so thirsty to hear the truth," he said. He connected to a house church in Tehran that had only five members. But during the next year, it grew to 45. Over the next 20 years, this church has planted about 25 other small groups in 12 cities. About 500 people have committed their lives to Jesus.

When the government learned about Nima's involvement, he was forced to flee. His conversion is apostasy, a serious offense that could carry the death penalty. He made his way to California, where he now teaches online Bible studies to Iranian Christians and seekers. Over the past few years, attendance has grown from 40 people to more than 600. He also leads TGC Farsi, with translated and original content for the Farsi-speaking world.

#### Ways to pray:

1. Praise the Lord for his care for Nima and other Iranian Christians
2. For Nima's online ministry, and others like it, to reach searching Iranians
3. For TGC Farsi to provide timely and trusted resources to Iran

*"After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!'"*

*Revelation 7:9–10*



## DAY 28

### DEEP DISCIPLESHIP IN THE DEEP SOUTH

In 2010, almost 90 percent of Chile's population identified as Christian, but that number didn't tell the whole story. A rising number of the population was religiously unaffiliated. Of those who remained Catholic (64 percent), many were nominal. Of the 17 percent of Chileans who were Protestant, most believed some form of the prosperity gospel. Nearly 60 percent of Chile's Protestants—and 48 percent of its Catholics—told researchers that God grants wealth and good health to believers who have enough faith.

A group of churches joined Mobilization Outreach Urbana, a program that focused on street evangelism in major Chilean cities. As it picked up momentum, several thousand young men and women worked to share Jesus with those around them. Yet over time, the leaders noticed a lack of depth—the conversion conversations were shallow and short, and some health-and-wealth theology was creeping in.

So they paused the work, pondered, and prayed. They studied good theology. Then they restarted with volunteers who were more committed to the centrality of the gospel and to building long-lasting relationships with those they evangelize. That means fewer sinners' prayers. But it also means more discipleship—and, perhaps, more authentic conversions when they come.

#### Ways to pray:

1. Praise that leaders throughout Chile are working, not only for evangelism, but deep and lasting Bible teaching
2. For Chilean Christians to continue to develop friendships as an evangelism tool and to serve their congregations in a committed and enthusiastic way
3. For those caught in prosperity theology to hear the gospel and be relieved of the pressure to perform

*“For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”*

*John 3:17*



## DAY 29

### GOD'S SOVEREIGN CONTROL OVER NIGERIAN CHAOS

Nigerian Christians long for Christ's return amid a chaotic world. The country's population of 200 million experiences rampant corruption, police brutality, regular kidnappings, and little trust between citizens. The land can seem God-forsaken.

The nation is divided in many ways, but the sharpest is between the north and the south. In the majority-Muslim north, Christians face heavy persecution and pressure. In the south, Christians are awash in an aberrant prosperity gospel that does not, cannot, and will not save.

Yet Nigeria is not beyond God's reach, nor is it out of God's sight. He is at work in the nation. In the last few decades especially, a small burgeoning of healthy churches is happening in places like Abuja (the capital) and Lagos (the most populous city). Churches are reporting growing numbers of believers and baptisms, as well as Christians coming out of prosperity gospel congregations to the true light of the gospel of grace.

#### Ways to pray:

1. Praise for the growth of churches, particularly in Abuja and Lagos
2. For the persecuted Christians in the north, that the Lord might strengthen the church and hinder the advances of Muslim aggressors
3. For reformation in the church, particularly in the south—that true believers might leave churches preaching false doctrines, that wolves would stop spreading lies, and that more ministries and resources might become available

*“Simon Peter replied, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ And Jesus answered him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.’”*



## DAY 30

### CHURCH UNITY AND RENEWAL IN KOREA

A few things helped Christianity take hold on the Korean peninsula in the late 1800s. One was the indigenous belief in a supreme being, which easily translated over to belief in the Christian God. Another was that missionaries often advocated for churches to become self-supporting and indigenous-led as soon as possible. Third, missionaries brought with them Western medicine and education. Their hospitals and schools and universities—and the American Christian values they represented—were especially attractive to young Koreans.

By the year 2000, there were 14.7 million Christians in South Korea, where the communal culture and limited space gave rise to megachurches. Today, the world's largest Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Assemblies of God congregations are all in Seoul. But in a world heading toward postmodernism and deconstruction, and in an isolationist era exacerbated by COVID-19, Korea churches are having trouble encouraging people's faith and worship practices.

However, some are taking the opportunity to break away from megachurches. Korean pastors today report more of a sober and God-focused approach to ministry. During this time, we hope and pray that churches and ministries can work together for a true gospel renewal.

#### Ways to pray:

1. Praise for God's sovereign care over Korean history, so that the gospel took hold of millions for salvation
2. For Christians in Korea to work together in presenting the truth, as the cultural and religious stalwarts become increasingly rare
3. For the younger generation of South Koreans seeking Christianity; pray they find the gospel as the answer above all other things

*Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart."*

*2 Corinthians 4:1*



## DAY 31

### LIGHT AFTER DARKNESS

While the Reformation was taking over Europe, Catholicism was taking over the Americas. To this day, if you were to ask someone in Latin America for their religion, they would almost certainly say Catholic (whether they practiced it or not). Even as Protestantism is on the rise, Catholics have made every effort to maintain their stronghold—if not in religion, at least in politics and culture.

Elaine grew up Catholic, just like everybody else in her family. She was baptized by the family priest, went through first communion and confirmation, and attended Mass frequently. She thought Protestants were a fraud, a cultic copy of original Christianity.

But the headmaster at her school regularly preached the gospel in morning devotions. And the testimonies of those “frauds” sounded significantly more real than her religious experience. She had a harder time squaring the priests’ teaching with the Bible she’d begun to read. Finally, she started visiting a gospel-centered church and gave her life to Christ. The whole time, she was nervous that her family would find out, making sure to hide her baptism from her grandmother.

In God’s kindness, Catholicism has lost much strength in the Dominican Republic, where Elaine lives. Evangelical churches are showing remarkable growth, with many members coming out of nominal and practicing Catholicism to the true gospel of God’s grace. Today, Elaine—and most of her family—attend the same church where she met Christ.

#### Ways to pray:

1. Praise for God’s kindness in rescuing people from dead adherence to man-made rituals for salvation
2. For the growth of gospel-preaching churches in the Caribbean and in the Dominican Republic
3. For people coming out of Catholicism into the gospel—that they might be faithful witnesses to those around them, that their families might feel loved and understand their decision, and that many might come to Christ

*“And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name’s sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life.”*

*Matthew 19:29*



## DAY 32

### A HUNGER FOR THE WORD IN MONGOLIA



Christianity moved into Mongolia the minute democracy opened the doors in 1990, with some missionaries standing at the border. Religion had been banned for 70 years of Soviet-sponsored communism, and when things loosened up, most returned to their historically Buddhist roots.

The first people interested in Christianity were really young—those who came to Christ were in middle school and high school. They began witnessing to their friends. By 1993, the number of Christians was estimated at

2,000. About 25 years later, the numbers had grown to 30,000.

Mongolia's high literacy rate (97 percent) and unusual level of theological education (the Ulaanbaatar Bible School opened in 1992) has helped to hold down the spread of prosperity theology. In the 600 or so churches in Mongolia today, more than 400 leaders have some level of formal Bible training.

#### Ways to pray:

1. Praise that Mongolian leaders to receive theological training to shepherd their congregations and combat wrong theology
2. For the gospel to flourish, as Mongolia is strategically located to send missionaries to Russia, China, and other parts of Asia
3. For the pastors and missionaries who labor patiently in Mongolia

*“Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.”*

*Colossians 3:23–24*





## DAY 33

### THE GOSPEL IN A FLASH DRIVE

It's not hyperbole to say that every pastor around the world has needed to adapt in the past year in order to better serve the church. The tool that most have reached for has been the internet, with many congregations opting to livestream their services or hold Bible studies on Zoom.

But what do you do in a country that is hostile to the gospel and where internet speeds are too slow for streaming video? Where importing Christian resources and Bibles is regulated by the government, and the people are struggling economically?

One Cuban pastor explained that all it takes for a message to reach the island is one USB flash drive. For years, Cuban Christians have been able to get solid resources from overseas in a pendrive or hard drive, then move it around to different congregations. In 2020, they started distributing weekly sermons this way as well.

The weekly flash drives, along with recent improvements that have allowed for WhatsApp and Telegram, have been great mercies from God to a country that's faced strong economic hardships. The combination of physical needs and better communication has opened the door for a revival of sacrificial mercy for churches in Cuba. They report it is already bringing salvation and blessing communities.

#### Ways to pray:

1. Thanksgiving for the shrewdness of our Cuban brothers and sisters, and their perseverance in serving one another with the truths of Scripture
2. For this extended period of hardship to bring about wisdom, patience, and endurance for the Cuban church
3. For the Lord to use his servants to feed the hungry and help the sick, as a testimony to the power of the gospel

*“For in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord.”*



## DAY 34

### FROM THE CRADLE TO THE CROSS

Though Kenya is considered a Christian nation, ethnic cultural practices are frequently mixed with biblical truths. The need for trained leaders for the more than 80,000 congregations is massive.

One Kenyan pastor recently told his congregants that they could be saved by good works. Sitting in the pews were a group of children from a local orphanage, ranging from second grade to high school. When they returned home, they were distraught. They kept telling their house parents that is not what the Bible teaches.

The children had just finished 30 weeks in a daily Bible study on the book of Romans, so they knew grace backward and forward. But the timing wasn't just an unlucky coincidence for that particular pastor—these children were in the middle of a 553-week Bible study. That's more than 10 years of memory verses and study questions. The curriculum was written by Reformed theologians and is used—partially or completely—in orphanages, church schools, widows' groups, and partner churches in Africa. Thousands of students, teachers, employees, church leaders, and church members have used it to study the Bible.

In a country that's full of churches, yet also full of false teaching, such a curriculum is a true gift. Can you imagine what the Lord can do with these children if they grow up believing these gospel truths with all their hearts? Oh Lord, may it be so!

#### Ways to pray:

1. Praise for this theologically rich, in-depth Bible study program
2. For openings to begin these Bible studies in more schools throughout Africa
3. For the thousands of confused Christians in Kenya and throughout Africa, who still try to keep the law with their own strength

*Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes."*

*Deuteronomy 6:4–8*



## DAY 35

### BUILDING ON A SOLID FOUNDATION IN LITHUANIA



The Reformed church in Lithuania was already small before World War II. Afterward, a 50-year Soviet occupation brought stiff persecution that caused more than half of the small Reformed church to head to the relative safety of the larger Catholic church. Today, only about 2,000 of the country's 2.7 million people consider themselves Reformed.

But in the last 10 years, the Reformed church has moved toward a renewed emphasis on confessions. A few years ago, one Reformed leader grew excited about The New City Catechism (NCC), which offers 52 questions and answers to help children and adults alike learn the core doctrines of the Christian faith.

The leader shared the NCC with his friends and students in the charismatic Word of Faith movement, which had been moving away from its prosperity gospel roots. Their response? To help translate the catechism into Lithuanian and, eventually, to sign identical faith statements with the Reformed church. The NCC has provided not only unity, but a way for Lithuania's Word of Faith churches to center themselves on the gospel.

#### Ways to pray:

1. Praise that these churches have anchored their theological stance in solid doctrine
2. For the continued translation of theologically sound resources into Lithuanian
3. For the NCC to continue to instill a solid foundation for new and old believers

*“But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine.”*

*Titus 2:1*



## DAY 36

### EXPOSITORY MINISTRY IN UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Tucked up under the Persian Gulf lies the United Arab Emirates (UAE). It's an Islamic country with a diverse population brought by the oil-rich economy. That means people of 60 different nationalities walk into any given Christian church every week. Pastors see a crying need in this part of the world for strong churches centered on the Bible, but there are precious few churches devoted to expository ministry, serious about Reformed theology, and preaching the gospel.

International churches have a tendency to avoid the sharp edges of theology in order to alleviate the difficulties inherent in culturally divided populations. Pastors are trying to accommodate people from all different places. But you can't preach the whole counsel of God without getting to the edges. And you can't expect the blessings that come from preaching the truth of Scriptures if you're not preaching the truth.

In God's kindness, some churches in Dubai are obeying. One in particular, United Christian Church of Dubai (UCCD), has seen tremendous fruit. As pastors began expositing through books of the Bible, some members were put off and left. But others joined, and over the past 15 years, UCCD has planted three churches, each of which has begun to multiply. There are now seven to eight like-minded churches in the area, with an average attendance of more than 500 souls.

#### Ways to pray:

1. Praise for the openness that foreign Christians have experienced in the religiously closed country
2. For churches to have prosperous growth along with robust theology, and to become self-supporting
3. For UAE Christians to reach the spiritually hungry countries just across their borders

*You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."*

*Matthew 5:14–16*



## DAY 37

### PURSUING TRUTH AMID PERSECUTION

Serving in ministry can be challenging and burdensome even under ideal circumstances. Every pastor serves the Great Shepherd in his ministry to the saints—joining in their weaknesses and pain, sharing in their burdens in prayer and lament, and seeking the Lord's face and Scripture for the diverse struggles that all congregants endure in their daily walk through this world.

Imagine how difficult it must be for pastors in non-ideal circumstances. Over the past decade, pastors in Chinese churches have faced increasing persecution, interrogations, loss of meeting places, lack of stability in fellowship, and reduced financial income. When pastors face internal and external problems, they often feel anxious, discouraged, and afraid. What's more, our Chinese brothers and sisters say these strenuous circumstances have increasingly affected many marriages among key leaders in the church.

Serving in ministry can be challenging and burdensome anywhere, and it's proving increasingly difficult for our brothers in China. Thankfully, they are not alone, and we have Someone who hears our prayers and can give comfort, strength, and joy even in our suffering.

#### Ways to pray:

1. Thanksgiving for God's faithfulness in raising up pastors in China over the decades of struggling and persecution
2. For pastors to continue to pursue growth in the truth so they will be renewed in their hearts
3. For the stability and growth of marriages of pastors, leaders, and Christians in China

*“And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to fall, and I am not indignant?”*

*2 Corinthians 11:28–29*



## DAY 38

### DEPTH AND HEALTH IN THE GLOBAL CHURCH

Our partners all over the world, from Guatemala to Germany to Ghana, speak of the tension between the depth and breadth of the church—the need for pastors and congregations to build a deep conservative theology while remaining faithful to the evangelistic mission of Christ at all times.

All around the world, churches that espouse theological education often suffer from a tendency to neglect the mission of the gospel and gradually internalize it. At the same time, churches that desperately try to reach out tend to move toward pragmatism and using extra-biblical approaches.

We need both. And we see the Lord raising more theologically trained evangelists, maybe now more than ever in the history of the church. But the need is great, the challenge is at hand, and the flesh is weak.

#### Ways to pray:

1. Thanksgiving for the incredible doctrines of the gospel and the zeal of hundreds of thousands to proclaim it
2. Repentance for our reluctance in presenting the gospel to those around us, and for God's grace to provide both opportunities and boldness
3. For the Lord to raise up more theologically sound evangelists and missionaries throughout the world

*“But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first.”*

*Revelations 2:4–5a.*





## DAY 39

### CHURCH PLANTING IN ZAMBIA

The gospel is the baton that must be passed on from place to place and generation to generation. When new churches are planted, they must be inculcated with this vision so they do not just ensure continued existence, but also guarantee the spreading of the church worldwide. Church plants must be empowered with the know-how and the material resources to propagate themselves.

One example is Kabwata Baptist Church (KBC) in Lusaka, Zambia. KBC has planted more than 30 churches across Africa. Of those, about 15 are now independent. And two new works are scheduled to start in Kigali, Rwanda, after two Reformed student groups asked KBC for its oversight in establishing them as churches.

Because the COVID-19 pandemic changed the way believers give towards the work of missions—moving much of it online—some of KBC's churches are reporting that this has resulted in higher giving than ever before. Praise the Lord that he has supplied their need!

#### Ways to pray:

1. Praise God for solid churches in Africa that take seriously the training of pastors and the work of missions
2. For God's people to learn to trust him to provide needed resources
3. For many conversions, so African churches may be filled with true Christians for the glory of God

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

*Matthew 28:19–20*



## DAY 40

### DIASPORA CHURCHES — A HOME AWAY FROM HOME

All believers are sojourners—in exile, on our way to our eternal home, living in the already but not yet. We have all had the sense of not fitting in, of being different from those around us, of trying to figure out our place in the world.

This feeling is sharpened for believers who have had to flee their country. Since Syria's civil war began in 2011, more than 11 million of its 17 million people have had to leave their homes. Thousands ended up in refugee camps in neighboring Lebanon, where churches are offering assistance, and where conversion from Islam to Christianity is allowed under the law. Others were able to resettle in countries such as Canada and the United States, where Christian organizations and churches are working to care for many of them.

In a similar vein, we see churches caring for the Chinese diaspora—helping their congregants as they struggle with their identity and opening their services to other languages in order to reach their neighborhoods. Hispanic churches become family and cultural centers for believers away from home, and we hear testimony after testimony of these churches energizing majority culture congregations around them. In a very visible way, this is the gospel at work—a glorious reminder of our spiritual citizenship and a powerful spearhead for gospel advancement.

#### Ways to pray:

1. Thanksgiving for the care and belonging that diaspora churches provide
2. For pastors to know how to serve their unique congregants, while also serving the communities where they're planted
3. For a kingdom mentality in Christians around the world, that we might wait eagerly together for our true home with Jesus

*“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”*

*Galatians 3:28–29*





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