

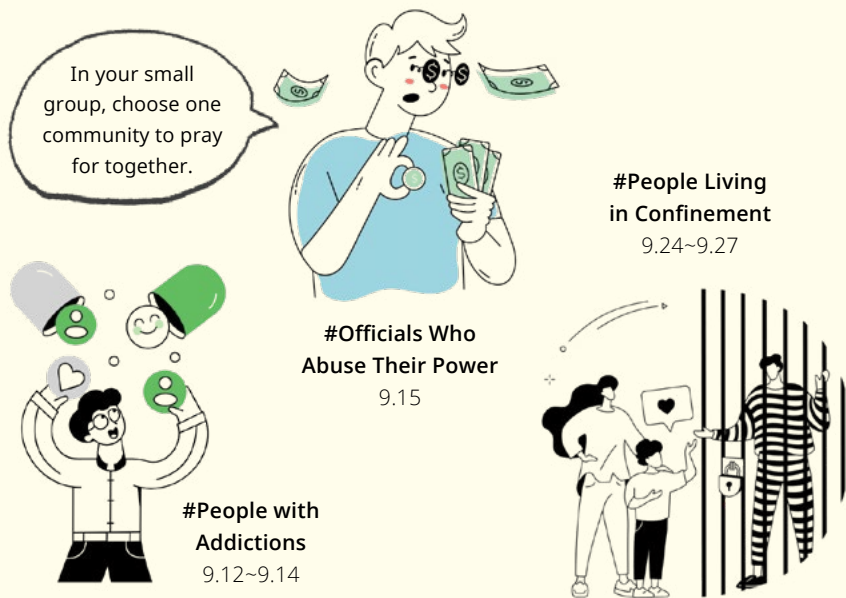
SEP2026

MISSION PATHWAY

PRAY FOR THE UNREACHED

MARGINALIZED
GROUPS





Three Powers, One Disputed Land

Kashmir Between Three Powers

When *Thunderbolts**¹ was released, I found myself drawn immediately to its premise. Films built around a special ops team have traditionally centered on winners — people whose lives gleam with achievement and capability. But the characters in this film are neither conventional superheroes nor straightforward villains. They are people who have stumbled through life, people who are routinely overlooked and misunderstood.

Watching them, I kept thinking of figures from Scripture. Zacchaeus the tax collector, notorious for his fraud. The woman whom the crowd was ready to stone. The paralyzed man by the pool of Bethesda. The blind men crying out for sight. They, too, lived on the edges, rarely taken seriously or truly heard. And yet Jesus sought them out. He met them where they were, and made new life possible for them.

This, in turn, led me to wonder: among the unreached peoples of the world today, are there communities that have long been overlooked? Some may be excluded from public life because of physical or mental disabilities. Others may be misunderstood because of their occupations or choices they have made in the past, and may rarely set foot inside a church. Where are they now? What are their lives like? And who is listening to their stories, concerns, and needs?

With these questions in mind, the theme for this month gradually took shape. We will focus on socially marginalized communities among the world's unreached peoples, seeking to understand

#Sex Workers

9.16~9.20



#Homeless People

9.21~9.23



#People with Disabilities

9.1~9.11



#Communities with Traditional Religious Roles

9.28~9.29



their needs and considering how our skills and gifts might enable us to walk alongside them. These articles also highlight innovative approaches to care from around the world. We hope they will inspire Christians, churches, and mission teams to pray for efforts that prepare the way for the gospel.

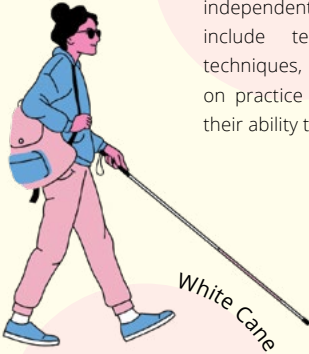
Like the characters in *Thunderbolts**, these communities are also like you and me. They bear the image of God and are equally in need of His mercy. May God give us clarity and pure hearts to see what He wants us to see and to remember these communities in prayer.

We look forward to the day when, in the new heaven and new earth, we will stand alongside them before the Lord and worship together the God who has never forgotten a single person.

1 *Thunderbolts** is a 2025 Marvel film featuring an ensemble of former villains and social outcasts.

Orientation and Mobility Specialist

A trained professional who helps people who are blind or have low vision travel safely and independently. Their work may include teaching white cane techniques, accompanying clients on practice routes, and assessing their ability to travel independently.

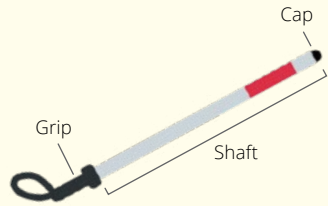


An important mobility tool that helps people who are blind or have low vision detect obstacles and changes in the path ahead. Its reflective surface also makes the user more visible to pedestrians and drivers.

Guide Dog



Some people who are blind or have low vision may choose to use a guide dog, particularly if they are comfortable with dogs and able to manage a large one.



Sighted Guide

When crossing a street or navigating an unfamiliar area, a person who is blind or has low vision may need assistance from a sighted guide. The guide leads the way while the person places a hand on the guide's shoulder or holds their arm just above the elbow.

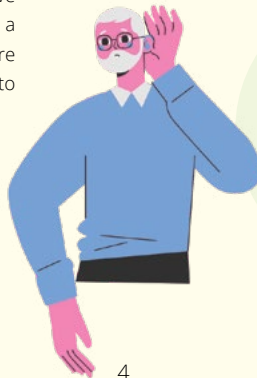
What It Takes to Step Outside

The Essentials

Most people leave home with three things: their phone, keys, and wallet. For some people with disabilities, however, getting out and about safely requires much more.

Hearing Aids

These are medical devices that can amplify selected sounds, reduce background noise, and help users focus on particular sound sources. The auditory stimulation they provide may also help slow the decline in auditory processing.



Mobility Aids



Depending on their individual needs, people may use canes, walkers, wheelchairs, or other mobility aids. Wheelchairs may be manual, powered, or custom-designed to accommodate different physical needs.

Accessible Facilities

Ramps, accessible restrooms, elevators or platform lifts, designated parking spaces, handrails, and clear signage help ensure that people with mobility impairments can move about freely and safely. These facilities also foster a more inclusive and respectful society.

A Note on Offering Help

When you meet someone with a disability, ask whether they need assistance and what kind of help would be useful. Respect their pace and choices. The best way to help is to offer the assistance they actually need.

Alerting Devices for Deaf People



Deaf people use a variety of creative tools to meet everyday needs, including flashing doorbell alerts, visual phone notifications, warning lights, and vibrating alarm clocks.



Hearing Amplifiers

Assistive listening devices are non-medical tools that amplify sounds in the surrounding environment.

Sign Language

Some Deaf people communicate primarily through sign language, together with lip-reading and facial expressions, without using other assistive devices. Around 300 sign languages are currently used worldwide.



Kashmir was once a princely state¹ in the Himalayan region. After Britain ended its colonial rule over India, Kashmir became caught in a contest for political control and is now administered in parts by India, Pakistan, and China.

01

TUESDAY

People with
Disabilities

Blind in a War Zone

Visually Impaired People in Myanmar

Brian Zaw, a blind disability rights advocate from Myanmar, spoke out for people with disabilities affected by the civil war. His advocacy brought him into conflict with the military junta, eventually forcing him and his family to flee to Australia. Even as a refugee, he has not stopped thinking about the blind community he left behind. Knowing how vital white canes are to their safety and independence, he began collecting used canes and donating them to an organization serving people with visual impairments along the Thailand-Myanmar border.

In March 2025, a powerful earthquake struck Myanmar. Political instability slowed the disaster response dramatically, and a month later more than 3.5 million people remained homeless, leaving many survivors in makeshift shelters and tents amid extreme heat and harsh living conditions.

Wars and disasters continue to affect people around the world. May we not forget the visually impaired caught in these crises, but faithfully remember them in prayer.

Even before the war, visually impaired people in Myanmar faced serious barriers to education and employment, with very few resources available to them. The conflict has left them even more vulnerable. They may struggle to receive warnings, evacuate quickly, or avoid dangers such as attacks and landmines. Reports of injuries and deaths have drawn the attention of human rights organizations.

Heavenly Father, we ask You to watch over the visually impaired in Myanmar and those around the world who are living amid war and disaster. Be their refuge in places marked by upheaval and scarcity. May they encounter disciples of Jesus in temporary shelters and receive the peace and hope that come from You. We pray for national leaders and humanitarian organizations. Grant them compassion and wisdom so that their policies and actions will safeguard the rights and well-being of people with visual impairments. May the white canes donated by people in Australia provide practical help to those living along the Thailand-Myanmar border. Stir churches to recognize the needs of vulnerable communities affected by war and disaster and to respond with material aid, medical care, and compassionate support. May visually impaired Christians help churches better understand their communities and lead them toward deeper and more practical expressions of care. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.





At a health center in India, Neha slowly and precisely moves her fingertips across a patient's breast, feeling for subtle changes in the tissue. She is a Medical Tactile Examiner trained through Discovering Hands. Founded by German physician Dr. Frank Hoffmann, the program has trained more than 80 blind and visually impaired women in countries including India, Mexico, and Nepal.

02

WEDNESDAY

People with
Disabilities

A Glimmer of Hope at Her Fingertips

Visually Impaired Women in India

Blind and visually impaired people can develop a highly refined sense of touch. With specialized medical training, women with visual impairments can detect small abnormalities that may be missed during a standard clinical breast examination.

Breast cancer is the leading cause of cancer-related death among Indian women. Moreover, approximately 60 percent of breast cancer cases in India are diagnosed only after the disease has reached an advanced stage. Rural communities often lack adequate medical equipment, and cultural discomfort surrounding breast examinations discourages many women from being screened. As a result, many miss the period when treatment is most effective.

Discovering Hands trains women with visual impairments as Medical Tactile Examiners, helping make breast examinations more accessible and addressing gaps in health care. However, training one examiner costs approximately US\$2,500, and the program depends largely on private donations. Not all physicians are receptive to the approach, and many hospitals lack sufficient space to provide examinations in private.

India is estimated to have 15 million women with visual impairments, but only 5 percent have the opportunity to support themselves financially. Neha's work demonstrates the skill and professional value of people with visual impairments. Yet society must open many more doors before others like her are given the same opportunity.

Heavenly Father, through the Discovering Hands program, may the abilities of more women with visual impairments be recognized and developed, becoming a blessing to medical professionals and patients alike. Move more people to give generously so that Discovering Hands can expand into other countries, create employment opportunities, and ease the compounded challenges these women face because of both disability and gender. Fill governments around the world with Your compassion. Lead them to provide meaningful employment opportunities, training, and support so that people with visual impairments can support themselves. We believe that when given the opportunity, they can make indispensable contributions to society. Bless Christians with visual impairments throughout the world. May they use the distinctive gifts You have given them to make a difference in their communities and reveal the goodness of Your creation. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.





In a world largely designed around the needs of the general public, more companies are beginning to embrace accessibility. Through thoughtful design and technology, they are helping blind and low-vision people interact with the world more freely. Here are three examples.

Seeing One Another

Businesses Taking Action

The iPhone has sometimes been praised as a particularly accessible phone for blind users. Apple has a dedicated Accessibility Policy and Initiatives team and has developed numerous features around the needs of people with disabilities. During the pandemic, People Detection helped blind and low-vision users maintain physical distance from others. Door Detection provides spoken information about a door's location, distance, type, and how it can be opened, giving users greater confidence as they navigate independently.

Be My Eyes: Launched in 2015 by a visually impaired founder, this app connects blind and low-vision users with volunteers around the world through live video calls. Volunteers assist with everyday tasks such as checking expiration

- Today, take some time to reflect and write down your response to this question: How can I and my church serve blind and low-vision people through practical action?
- You might also search online for examples of churches, ministry teams, missionaries, and businesses serving blind and low-vision communities.

dates and locating items. By 2025, the app supported more than 180 languages and served over 750,000 blind and low-vision users, with more than 8.5 million volunteers participating.

Mission Pathway Audio App: Launched in August 2021, the app provides Mandarin and Cantonese recordings. It enables blind and low-vision people, as well as older adults, to join in prayer for the nations by listening.

Heavenly Father, we praise and thank You for moving these companies and teams to recognize the needs of blind and low-vision people. Through practical features and services, they are making everyday life more accessible and convenient. Their work is a tangible expression of Your love. Bless and use these efforts. Guide those involved and provide the wisdom and resources they need to continue innovating and serving. May their work bless the world and inspire others to help create environments that are more welcoming and accessible to blind and low-vision people. Move churches and Christians to recognize needs that have gone unnoticed in their own communities. Teach them to listen, offer companionship, and help others know that they are valued and seen. Watch over every fellowship of blind and low-vision believers. As they read Scripture and worship together, grant them spiritual illumination and deeper insight into Your truth. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.





Bengkala, a small Balinese village of roughly 3,000 people, has an unusually high proportion of Deaf residents because of a recessive genetic mutation passed down through generations. For many years, the villagers have accepted their Deaf neighbors as full members of the community. This spirit of inclusion has gradually influenced surrounding communities, schools, government agencies, and businesses, helping Bali develop a distinctively Deaf-friendly environment.

04

FRIDAY

People with
Disabilities

A Place Where Deaf People Belong

Deaf Inclusion in Indonesia

"I feel that I am equal to hearing people." Bengkala has been described as a "Deaf utopia." Here, deafness is not treated as a deficiency, and Deaf residents contribute to the community alongside their hearing neighbors. Over generations, the village developed Kata Kolok, a local sign language distinct from other sign languages in Indonesia. A large proportion of both Deaf and hearing villagers can use it. Bengkala also has a Deaf dance tradition dating back more than 40 years. The dancers move in unison, following memorized choreography and visual cues to keep time.

The local primary school recognizes the challenges Deaf children may face in learning spoken language. Teachers use both Kata Kolok and Indonesian Sign Language, equipping Deaf students to communicate within their village and with Deaf communities elsewhere in Indonesia.

As awareness of Deaf identity has grown, the capitalized word "Deaf" is often used for people who identify with a shared sign language and Deaf culture, rather than referring only to hearing loss as a disability. This publication follows that convention.

"Hearing person" is a term used within Deaf communities for someone who is not Deaf.

Businesses have also offered support. Indonesia's state-owned energy company Pertamina helped establish a weaving center that provides Deaf women with opportunities to earn an income. One restaurateur encountered Deaf-inclusive workplaces while in the United States. After returning to Indonesia, he made Deaf employees more than half of the workforce across his four restaurants, creating workplaces where Deaf and hearing employees can thrive together.

Heavenly Father, may Bengkala's example of welcoming and including Deaf people spread throughout the world. Move churches everywhere to take practical action by creating accessible worship services and fellowships where Deaf people truly belong and where Your love is made known. At every stage of their education, provide Deaf students with suitable teachers and strong support networks. Whether they communicate through speech or sign language, help them express themselves confidently, connect with others, and develop their abilities. Lead governments to give greater attention to the rights of Deaf people through their policies and allocation of resources. Work through nongovernmental organizations, businesses, and charities to address gaps in public support. Strengthen Deaf communities that have been pushed to the margins so that their members can support themselves and use the gifts You have given them. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.



Why do Deaf people need the Bible in sign language when printed Bibles are already available? The answer lies in an often-overlooked fact: learning to read often draws heavily on prior experience with spoken language.

05

SATURDAY

People with
Disabilities

A Language in Motion

Sign Language Bibles

When hearing people read silently, they often connect written words with the sounds of spoken language. For them, writing records a language they already know through listening and speaking.

For those born Deaf or who lost their hearing early in life, sound offers little or no foothold for making sense of written words. As a result, reading may not come as intuitively or fluently. For many Deaf people, sign language, rich in facial expression, movement, and visual imagery, is the language that feels most natural and conveys meaning most fully. Written language, by contrast, can feel almost foreign.

Producing a sign language Bible normally involves filming Deaf translators as they present the translated text. In regions where Christian ministry is restricted, appearing on camera may expose translators to arrest, rejection,

Around 70 million people worldwide use more than 350 sign languages. Yet only one of these languages has a complete Bible: the American Sign Language version, completed in 2020. This means that most Deaf people still cannot encounter the truths of Scripture in the language they know best.

or other danger. It may even put the entire translation project at risk. New technology is beginning to offer greater protection. AI-assisted systems can capture a human translator's signs and reproduce them through a digital avatar, concealing the translator's identity while preserving the translation.

Heavenly Father, access to sign language Bibles is vital for Deaf people to understand the Christian faith and grow spiritually. Prepare the global Church not only to support written Bible translation, but also to pray fervently and give generously for sign language translation projects around the world. Guide the work now underway in Thailand, Romania, Liberia, and other countries. Raise up Deaf leaders within churches in every nation who understand the need for the gospel in their communities. Send missionaries fluent in sign language to serve among Deaf people and proclaim the good news. We pray for every translator. Make them channels of Your grace through whom Deaf people may truly encounter Christ. May advances in technology serve the gospel by accelerating translation and protecting everyone involved in the work. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.





How did a Black American living under the racial segregation of the early twentieth century become an influential missionary and educator known as the “Father of Deaf Education in Africa”? This is the story of Andrew Foster.

06

SUNDAY

People with
Disabilities

Opening Doors for the Gospel in Africa

A Deaf Missionary

Foster lost his hearing at age eleven after contracting spinal meningitis. As both a Black and Deaf student, he encountered repeated barriers to education. He was nearly thirty when he finally earned a bachelor's degree in education, becoming the first Black graduate of Gallaudet University. He later earned master's degrees in education and Christian missions.

God placed on Foster's heart a deep concern for the education and spiritual needs of Deaf people in Africa. In 1956, he founded the Christian Mission for Deaf Africans, now known as the Christian Mission for the Deaf, and soon began serving in Africa. He later married Berta Zuther, who was also Deaf. Together they raised five children in Nigeria and devoted themselves to serving Deaf communities across the continent.

Foster died in a plane crash in 1987. Over three decades, he founded more than thirty schools and numerous churches across thirteen African countries. His wife Berta and later their son Tim carried the ministry forward, continuing his legacy among Deaf communities across Africa.

Foster traveled widely to raise funds, train teachers, establish training centers, and develop educational materials. He introduced American Sign Language while incorporating signs used locally, helping signed communication spread through Deaf education in Africa. He arranged for promising students to study in the United States, helping equip a generation of Deaf African leaders. He also advised government officials on educational policy and advocated for better opportunities for Deaf people.

Heavenly Father, we praise You for the immeasurable breadth and depth of Your love. You equipped and sent Andrew Foster to bring the gospel and Deaf education to Africa. May his testimony inspire every member of Christ's body to use their professional gifts as salt and light, serving those whom society so often overlooks. Comfort and sustain Deaf people and their families. Where Deaf education remains limited, open doors and raise up Christians to teach, advocate for, and support Deaf students. Grant wisdom to those in authority so that they may establish sound policies for Deaf education and employment. Help churches recognize Deaf people as treasured members of the body of Christ and gladly equip Deaf Christian workers and missionaries to proclaim Your name among unreached peoples, as Foster did. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.





North Korean society places great emphasis on labor and productivity. As a result, people with disabilities are often regarded as unproductive and subjected to discrimination and social isolation. Although the government adopted a law protecting the rights of people with disabilities in 2003, reports indicate that many children with disabilities still face barriers to education and healthcare. Reliable nationwide data remains limited, particularly concerning people living outside Pyongyang.

07

MONDAY

People with Disabilities

Carried Through Life

People with Disabilities in North Korea

"Given Sun-ok's condition, why is her husband still willing to care for her?" Such whispers have followed Sun-ok throughout her marriage. Born with cerebral palsy and unable to walk, she cannot obtain a wheelchair in North Korea.¹ Her rural community also offers little support for people with disabilities. Whenever she leaves home, a family member must carry her on their back, making employment all but impossible. Without the unwavering devotion of her husband, Yong-ju, she might share the plight of many people with disabilities in North Korea: lifelong dependence on their parents, followed by profound uncertainty when those parents are no longer alive.

For many years, international humanitarian organizations have worked to advance disability rights in North Korea. Christian organizations have provided food, medicine, and clothing to people with disabilities and other vulnerable communities. Humanity & Inclusion, or HI, has focused on expanding access to education for children with disabilities, improving rehabilitation services, and helping people with disabilities participate more fully in society.

1 International sanctions and related import restrictions have made it more difficult for humanitarian organizations to bring assistive devices into North Korea. Exemption procedures can be lengthy, delaying access to essential equipment such as wheelchairs and crutches.

Heavenly Father, we lift up the humanitarian organizations serving North Korea. Grant them wisdom to find new and compassionate ways to support people with disabilities. May a society that places such high value on individual ability come to recognize the God-given worth and potential of every person with a disability. Through training and support, help them develop valuable skills and contribute according to their abilities. We ask You to work through children with disabilities in North Korea's elite families, making them a force for advancing disability rights throughout the country. We also remember people with disabilities around the world whose lives are restricted by inaccessible environments and unjust systems. Where assistance from governments and international organizations does not reach them, provide the help they need. Raise up Christians and missionaries to come alongside these families, responding with loving care, faithful companionship, and prayer. Make them vessels of Your compassion. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.





The Paralympic Games represent the highest level of competition for athletes with visual, intellectual, and physical disabilities. The name comes from the Greek word *para*, meaning “beside” or “alongside,” expressing how the Paralympics stand alongside the Olympic Games as an equally distinguished arena of competition. Since 1988, the Summer Paralympics have been held in the same host cities and venues shortly after the Olympics, inviting the world to celebrate the achievements of Para athletes.

08

TUESDAY

People with
Disabilities

Running with the Lord

Christian Athletes with Disabilities

“I was about seven years old when I got my first wheelchair, and I remember whizzing around my primary school and my teachers saying: “Slow down!” I always had this desire to be fast. So when I realised it [wheelchair racing] was a sport, I knew it was for me. Nobody’s going to tell me off for going fast on an athletics track!”

Karé Adenegan is one of Britain’s leading Paralympic athletes. At fifteen, she made her Paralympic debut at the 2016 Rio Games, winning one silver and two bronze medals. She later earned two silver medals in Tokyo and another two in Paris. Throughout her career, she has spoken openly about her faith and given the glory to God.

Karé was born into a Christian family and has cerebral palsy, which means she uses a wheelchair for mobility. For years, her disability left her with difficult questions for God. Then, at the 2012 London Paralympics, she watched wheelchair racers surge down the track, and a new possibility opened before her. A wheelchair did not prevent her from running, competing, or pursuing speed. That day, she resolved to become an athlete.

Now, whenever Karé takes her place on the track, she remembers that God has guided her every step of the way. Through her speed and determination, she bears witness to His grace.

Heavenly Father, reveal to Paralympic athletes around the world that their strength and worth come from You. May the peace You give set them free to develop their gifts and live with confidence and purpose. Let every training session and every step forward become an opportunity to experience Your presence. We also thank and praise You for Karé and for the way You have guided her life beyond all she could have asked or imagined. Through her testimony, may people with disabilities discover that You have a good purpose for each of them and that every one of them bears Your image. Bless people with disabilities around the world. In their families, schools, workplaces, and communities, may they find their own lane and rhythm within Your love. When they reach the finish line of life, may they joyfully declare, “All glory belongs to the Lord.” In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.





The World Health Organization estimates that the war between Russia and Ukraine has placed nearly one-third of Ukrainians at risk of developing mental health conditions, including 1.5 million children estimated by UNICEF. Psychologists are seeing growing numbers of children affected by anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder, with symptoms worsening as the war continues.

09

WEDNESDAY

People with
Disabilities

Childhood Under Fire

The Mental Health of Ukrainian Children

Vira was fifteen when Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine. She and her mother spent long hours sheltering beneath a table, their days filled with the sound of explosions and the fear of what might come next. Gradually, Vira withdrew into herself. Her experience reflects that of countless children traumatized by the war. Many have been forced to shelter in subway stations, basements, and bomb shelters, sometimes without water, food, or heating. For them, life underground has become a new reality.

Children have fewer resources than adults for coping with prolonged stress and need psychological care tailored to their age and circumstances. Yet Ukraine's healthcare system has been overwhelmed by the war, and specialized services remain severely limited. Save the Children provides child-friendly spaces,

A tender act of care: In her spare time, psychologist Halyna Pankova repairs dolls and builds miniature houses, as though restoring a small part of the world that war has shattered.



digital learning centers, and psychosocial support where children can learn, interact, and begin to heal. Project HOPE has also expanded access to mental health services while calling attention to the need for sustained investment in psychological care.

The trauma of war will not disappear when the fighting ends. Healing the hearts and minds of Ukraine's children will remain one of the country's most urgent challenges.

Heavenly Father, protect the children of Ukraine and all those growing up amid war and unrest. Raise up more trained counselors and provide appropriate mental health resources to bring healing to their wounded hearts. Give them strength to make their way through a childhood shattered by war. Raise up churches and Christians to offer practical assistance and faithful companionship, bringing children the peace and hope found in Christ that no one can take away. We pray for children whose speech and language development has been disrupted by war and for those who struggle to read or write. Give governments wisdom to establish policies that address the damage war has done to their education. Move people and organizations from every sector to create safe spaces, both physical and online, where children can learn, gather, rebuild trust, and rediscover the rhythms of ordinary life. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.





The World Health Organization has reported that Africa has the highest regional suicide rate in the world. The 2023 World Happiness Report also found that seventeen of the world's twenty-four lowest-ranking countries were in Africa. Yet the continent faces a severe shortage of mental health resources. In 2020, the global median was approximately 13 psychiatrists per 100,000 people, while the median across Africa was only 1.6.

Between Medicine and Traditional Belief

Mental Healthcare in Tanzania

Tanzania reflects many of the mental health challenges found across Africa. In a country of more than 70 million people, there are only about 1.3 specialized mental health workers for every 100,000 residents. Mirembe National Mental Health Hospital, the country's only specialized government psychiatric hospital, is located in the capital, Dodoma. Yet nearly two-thirds of Tanzanians live in rural areas, where limited healthcare infrastructure places professional treatment beyond the reach of many.

An even greater obstacle lies in prevailing beliefs about mental illness. In some communities, mental health conditions are attributed to spirit possession or punishment by spiritual powers, leading many people to consult traditional healers first. Compared with healing practices

Grandmothers as Counselors: In neighboring Zimbabwe, the Friendship Bench program trains grandmothers and other community health workers as volunteer lay counselors. They offer people experiencing anxiety and depression up to six free talk-therapy sessions, each lasting thirty to forty-five minutes. Founded in 2006, the program has trained more than 2,000 community health workers and served approximately 30,000 people in 2017 alone.

that have been trusted for generations, modern psychiatric care may seem unfamiliar and difficult to trust. High treatment costs and long distances to medical facilities create further barriers, often preventing people from receiving timely and appropriate care. Even those who recover after receiving hospital treatment may face rejection or abandonment by their families because of the stigma surrounding mental illness.

Heavenly Father, we look to You on behalf of Tanzania and other regions where mental health resources remain scarce. Give governments the capacity and resources to strengthen mental healthcare systems and train more specialized workers. Work through medical teams around the world to develop appropriate mental health programs for low-income and developing countries, easing the burdens carried by those who suffer. May Christians listen with compassion to people's struggles, becoming trusted companions alongside the traditional healers to whom many turn. May the Holy Spirit draw people to the Lord who gives healing and life. Raise up short-term medical mission teams to provide basic mental health education and practical assistance in underserved communities. Sustain healthcare workers carrying overwhelming responsibilities. Grant them the rest found in Christ, and help them entrust their patients to You in prayer. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.





Mental health resources on Malaysian campuses have long been inadequate, leaving many young people to face anxiety and despair alone. During his college years, Luke began noticing friends who were self-harming or struggling with depression and anxiety. Some even called him late at night to confide that they were contemplating suicide.

11

FRIDAY

People with
Disabilities

Guiding Others Through the Fog

Mental Health Ministry in Malaysia

Luke G. Tan is a young Malaysian writer and speaker. While in college, he studied mental health extensively and compiled guides and other resources for his peers. Over two years, he came alongside nearly eighty students, offering emotional support while exploring questions of faith with them.

In time, Luke began facing mental health struggles of his own. Anxiety, depression, and obsessive-compulsive disorder brought him to a profound physical and emotional low. In the midst of this darkness, his mother reminded him once again of the love of Jesus. Through this journey, Luke came to understand that because of Christ's saving work, those living with mental illness do not have to struggle alone. He also

Putting It into Practice: Did this article bring to mind someone facing a mental health condition? Take some time to learn more about what they are experiencing, and pray for them.

learned that professional treatment can be one of the ways God reveals His goodness and glory.

Today, Luke runs A Pocketful of Grace, a podcast and digital platform that brings faith and psychology into conversation. Through personal testimonies, mental health education, and conversations with Christian mental health professionals, he encourages greater understanding of mental illness. He also speaks at universities and churches, seeking to help both the church and wider society become more welcoming to those with mental health conditions and more willing to walk alongside them.

Heavenly Father, may the Holy Spirit be with those living with mental illness, assuring them of Your acceptance and love. Give their families and friends the wisdom and strength to comfort them and walk faithfully beside them. Grant them confidence in the knowledge that You remain sovereign even in the midst of illness. Use the resources prepared by Luke and by churches, and raise up well-equipped Christian mental health professionals and pastors who can integrate professional care with faith and lead people to Jesus. May the church become a safe place where people can speak openly about their weaknesses and carry one another's burdens. Through the church, help society overcome the prejudice and misunderstanding surrounding mental illness. Father, may Your love reach the deepest wounds of the human heart. Open doors for those living with mental illness to encounter the gospel, and lead them into peace, hope, and salvation. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.



12

SATURDAY

People with Addictions



Hanover Park, a community on the outskirts of Cape Town, South Africa, remains deeply scarred by the legacy of apartheid. Gang activity has taken root, drugs are widespread, and violence is a constant threat, with young people bearing the greatest burden. Many are drawn into gangs. It is estimated that nearly seventy percent of local young people struggle with some form of substance addiction, often using drugs to numb unresolved trauma and becoming trapped in a cycle of addiction.

On the Front Lines Against Drugs and Gang Violence

Ministry to Addicts in South Africa

Before becoming a Christian, Pastor Craven Engel was involved in a gang and experienced firsthand how closely drugs and violence are intertwined. Over the years, he has helped young people overcome addiction, leave gang life, find employment, and rebuild stability. By 2025, the Ceasefire¹ program had helped rehabilitate 168 people considered at high risk of gang violence.

Pastor Engel understood that as long as shootings and retaliatory attacks continued, young lives could be destroyed at any moment. He therefore established Ceasefire in Hanover Park, training reformed former gang members to serve as violence interrupters and mediators. Drawing on their experience and credibility within the community, they enter volatile situations, mediate disputes, and negotiate temporary truces.

Although the team has earned respect within parts of the community, its members still face death threats, failed negotiations, and cuts in municipal funding. Many struggle to balance their commitment to rebuilding the community with the need to support their own families. Even so, they continue toward the front lines, determined to interrupt the violence and preserve the possibility of a new life for more young people.

¹ First launched in Chicago in 2000, the Ceasefire model treats violence as a public health issue, seeking to interrupt conflicts before they escalate and to reduce violence within communities.

Heavenly Father, we lift up South Africa's Ceasefire program in prayer. Give its mediators wise words, and help them use their past experiences and influence to become peacemakers in the midst of conflict. Provide the funding and resources they need, protect every member of the team, and enable this program to continue transforming lives. We remember people around the world caught in addictions involving drugs, alcohol, sex, or violence. May governments, healthcare systems, educational institutions, and communities work together to respond practically to their needs. Move churches everywhere to accompany people struggling with addiction with Your compassion and understanding, helping them rebuild their lives. You alone can heal wounded hearts. May those struggling with addiction be drawn again and again to the cross, finding in Jesus the satisfaction and peace for which they long. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.



The Golden Triangle, where Myanmar, Laos, and Thailand meet, has long been one of the world's major drug-producing regions. Because of complex geographical, historical, and other factors, many local people have become trapped in addiction and find it extremely difficult to break free. Over the years, God has called workers from many places to enter the region and establish gospel-based recovery ministries. Rather than relying on substitute medications such as methadone¹, these ministries seek to bring lasting freedom from addiction through the life-transforming power of Christian faith.

13

SUNDAY

People with Addictions

From Recovery to Shepherding Others

Mental Christian Addiction Recovery in the Golden Triangle

Northern Thailand's New Life Recovery Village | Rebuilding the Whole Family

In 1997, Pastors Zhang Yu and Zhuo Yingxue (Zhang's wife) traveled to the mountainous Chiang Rai region of northern Thailand, where they established the New-Life Drug Rehabilitation Center. Pastor Zhang had once struggled with drug addiction himself. Reading the Christian magazine *Cosmic Light* led him to explore the Christian faith, and with the help of an Operation Dawn recovery village² in northern Thailand, he was able to leave drugs behind.

Responding to God's call, Zhang and Zhuo began serving people affected by addiction. They soon recognized that drug addiction harms not only individuals but also their families and communities. This led them to develop a family-based approach to recovery. While the husband entered rehabilitation, his wife could work and their children could study Chinese, allowing the entire family to rebuild its life together. The couple also developed a farm, livestock facilities, and a student center, where residents could acquire practical skills while the ministry served children and young people.

Kokang Life Renewal Gospel Drug Addiction Treatment Center | Welcome Without Limits

The Kokang Life Renewal Gospel Drug Addiction Treatment Center opened in 2019 under the leadership of local minister Zhong Jianwei. As a young man, Zhong received help overcoming addiction through Operation Dawn. The experience inspired him to serve his own people, and he returned home in 2007 to begin this ministry.

More than seventy percent of the center's residents relapse and return, some more than once. Even so, Minister Zhong continues to welcome them with God's grace and compassion. The center also provides training in construction and technical trades, and residents have participated in disaster relief and recovery efforts following periods of internal conflict.

Zhong hopes to establish a women's recovery center in central Myanmar, providing a way forward for women affected by addiction who are often overlooked and rejected by society.

- 1 Methadone is an opioid medication that, when taken regularly, can ease withdrawal symptoms and help people recovering from opioid addiction return to everyday life. It is used as a substitution treatment in the United States, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and elsewhere.
- 2 Operation Dawn was among the earliest Chinese Christian organizations to establish gospel-based addiction recovery ministries in the Golden Triangle. Many people who received help through its programs later became pastors and recovery workers themselves.



Heavenly Father, all praise belongs to You. Thank You for working through Your Spirit to prepare those overcoming addiction in the Golden Triangle for lives of renewal. Through the power of the gospel, You have renewed lives, and many have courageously answered Your call to serve others still struggling with addiction. Thank You for using Christian recovery teams throughout the years. Continue to provide the workers, funding, and resources they need. Raise up people who will faithfully pray for the pastors and families living and serving in recovery villages. May they support them as Aaron and Hur supported Moses. Call more pastors and workers with a burden for addiction ministry to cross cultural and national boundaries, bringing Christian recovery ministries to places around the world devastated by drugs. Lead Christians with expertise in medicine, psychology, education, and vocational training to serve alongside them, so that those in recovery may receive comprehensive care. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.



1. Withdrawal Stage



Program graduates and counselors care for newcomers from the perspective of their own experience. They help them through the distress of withdrawal, attend to their daily needs, and encourage them to form relationships within the community.

2. Adjustment Stage



Residents attend Bible classes and receive counseling as they rebuild their lives through faith. They also share responsibilities such as farming and cooking, learning to take responsibility for themselves and others.

3. Maturity Stage



Residents learn to face difficulties through faith. Their patterns of thought gradually begin to change, and renewal becomes evident in their lives.

4. Testing Stage



As residents become more stable, they begin helping newcomers. They also make plans for the future and prepare to return to society. This stage can bring some of the greatest tests of recovery.



Sin Suoi Ho is a Hmong village in Vietnam's Lai Châu Province. In the past, villagers depended on growing opium poppies for their livelihood, while many also struggled with opium addiction.

14

MONDAY

People with Addictions

Leaving the Poppies Behind

A New Economy for a Former Opium Village

In the 1980s, the government provided the village with a radio so that its headman could stay informed about official policies. Because he was Hmong and did not understand Vietnamese, he searched the dial for a broadcast he could follow. There, he unexpectedly discovered a Hmong-language gospel program from Far East Broadcasting and became a faithful listener.

Four years later, the headman and his family came to faith and began sharing the gospel with their neighbors. As the Christian faith gradually took root in the village, those struggling with addiction found the resolve to seek freedom. By 2005, the entire village had overcome its dependence on opium.

After leaving opium and poppy cultivation behind, villagers began growing high-value crops

Sin Suoi Ho has undergone a remarkable transformation. It received an ASEAN Community Tourism Award in 2023 and was named one of Vietnam's five best community tourism destinations at the 2025 Vietnam Tourism Awards. Hanoi has also pledged to work with Lai Châu Province to promote tourism and attract more visitors from Vietnam and abroad.

such as orchids, peaches, apples, roses, and hawthorn. These new crops helped them rebuild their livelihoods. Surrounded by mountains and blessed with beautiful scenery, Sin Suoi Ho also draws visitors through its distinctive Hmong architecture, clothing, and festivals. Residents now operate homestays and Hmong restaurants, work as local guides, and make and sell traditional clothing. Together, these activities have set the village on a more diverse and sustainable path of development.

Heavenly Father, thank You for bringing the gospel to Sin Suoi Ho. As its people came to treasure Jesus Christ, they found the resolve to overcome addiction and rebuild their families and their lives. Continue to strengthen those seeking freedom from addiction. Bless the village's agriculture, cultural tourism, and ecotourism, and make these industries a source of stable income and lasting renewal for the community. Remember regions throughout the world that have been severely affected by drugs. Raise up faithful and influential local believers to pray for those struggling with addiction and encourage them to take their first steps toward recovery and change. Send Christians and missionaries equipped in medicine, education, counseling, livelihood development, and vocational training to walk alongside these communities as they break free from the grip of drugs and pursue economic renewal and wider social transformation. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.



After gaining independence from Sudan, South Sudan initially experienced rapid economic growth fueled by international aid and oil revenues. Yet without effective systems of oversight, corruption quickly took hold. Political, economic, and military power have long been concentrated in the same hands, allowing corruption among the ruling elite to go largely unpunished. Between 2018 and 2023, the Anti-Corruption Commission was not directed to investigate a single case involving the misuse of public funds, nor did it initiate any such investigations itself.

15

TUESDAY

Officials Who
Abuse Their
Power

The Powerful Prosper, the People Suffer

South Sudan's Ruling Elite

In its 2024 Corruption Perceptions Index, Transparency International ranked South Sudan last among 180 countries, making it the country perceived to have the world's highest level of public-sector corruption. Its standing has shown almost no improvement over the years.

International observers report that the ruling elite maintain tight control over the country's oil revenues and use them to consolidate their power. The president's discretionary spending receives little scrutiny, while government contracts are awarded directly to companies owned by public officials, bypassing open tender procedures. Military spending is similarly opaque. Senior officers can influence where funds are directed, inflate troop numbers with "ghost soldiers," and exaggerate procurement costs to accumulate personal wealth.

Ordinary citizens bear the consequences. Infrastructure projects have stalled, food shortages have deepened poverty, and courts, hospitals, and schools have fallen into disrepair. Civil servants frequently go unpaid, leaving many public institutions unable to function effectively. The people of South Sudan live under the daily burden of corruption. They urgently need a government that can be held accountable and meaningful opportunities to participate in rebuilding their country.

Heavenly Father, may corrupt officials, however deeply distrusted by the people, encounter Jesus as Zacchaeus did. Give them the courage to confess their wrongdoing and make amends through concrete action. May the Holy Spirit touch South Sudan's ruling leaders and restore in them a desire for holiness, enabling them to withstand the temptations of wealth and power. May the government establish effective systems of oversight, restore integrity to the nation's finances, and use its resources to provide healthcare, education, and food for its people. Raise up local Christians to pray faithfully for their country, serve those who are suffering, and bear witness to Your justice and compassion. We also pray for nations and leaders throughout the world. May they walk before You with humility and reverence, becoming instruments of Your peace, justice, and holiness. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.



Bangladeshi law permits adult women to engage in sex work under certain conditions, yet the profession remains widely regarded as immoral in the country's predominantly Muslim society. In reality, many are trafficked into the sex trade as children. Trapped by extreme poverty and a lack of other skills, they may struggle to leave throughout their lives, while also facing drug dependence and serious harm to their health.

Bodies Altered for Profit

Sex Workers in Bangladesh

The British charity ActionAid estimated that the vast majority of sex workers in Bangladesh had become dependent on Oradexon, a steroid containing dexamethasone. Brothel madams would force them to take the drug to give them fuller figures and make underage sex workers appear older, helping brothels evade police scrutiny.

However, prolonged use of Oradexon can cause physical dependence. Those who stop taking it may experience headaches, stomach pain, loss of appetite, skin rashes, and other symptoms that leave them unable to work. Fearing the loss of their income, many feel unable to stop.

Despite ActionAid's efforts to raise awareness of Oradexon's dangers, the lack of decisive government action has left sex workers to face this health crisis with little support.

Oradexon is a corticosteroid used to treat serious medical conditions, but it has also been misused to fatten cattle. Long-term use can lead to grave health consequences, including heart disease, kidney damage, osteoporosis, and swelling throughout the body. In severe cases, it may even contribute to death. Despite these dangers, some brothel madams insist that the drug is harmless, while local pharmacists and doctors continue to promote it. Its low cost only makes the abuse more difficult to stop.

Heavenly Father, we look to You on behalf of sex workers around the world who are suffering exploitation. You see the poverty, illness, and trauma they endure on the margins of society. Draw near to them in Your compassion. May they come to know that Jesus Christ paid a great price to redeem them and experience the freedom of Your grace. May churches and Christians follow the example of Jesus, approaching them with love and acceptance, listening to their stories, seeking to understand their circumstances, and responding to their needs. Through medical care, counseling, education, economic assistance, and other forms of professional support, help them pursue healthier lives marked by greater dignity. Move governments throughout the world to adopt and enforce effective policies and regulations that prevent brothels from misusing harmful drugs that can cause dependence. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.



Gladys Chan founded Glance Ministry in 2020 to encourage Hong Kong churches to care for sex workers and other marginalized communities. The ministry also equips churches to develop mercy ministries. She explains, “We are not judges or saviors. We are bridges, helping the church and society recognize their needs.”

17

THURSDAY

Sex Workers

A Glimmer Beyond the Door

Ministry Among Sex Workers in Hong Kong

In 2024, Glance Ministry funded and organized an art exhibition titled Knocking the Dust Off. The title grew out of the curator’s experience visiting sex workers. Signs reading “Please Ring” and “Please Wait” hung on their doors, yet few people ever knocked out of genuine concern. Over time, dust gathered on the doors.

After accompanying Glance Ministry workers on visits to sex workers, eleven Christian artists created works that offered the public a glimpse into the lives of Hong Kong’s fung je.¹ Fine arts student Angela Siu, for example, painted the silhouette of a fung je on a medium-sized stone and invited visitors to hold it, allowing them to experience for themselves something of the weight these women carry.



Artwork from the Knocking the Dust Off exhibition

Even before founding Glance Ministry, Gladys had become a longtime friend to many fung je. She celebrated their birthdays, accompanied them to medical appointments, helped them apply for public housing, and waited for appropriate opportunities to share the gospel. More than 500 sex workers are estimated to work in Sham Shui Po, the district where she serves.

1 Fung je is a colloquial Hong Kong term for female sex workers.

Heavenly Father, thank You for raising up Gladys Chan and the volunteers of Glance Ministry to serve sex workers in Hong Kong. Provide the resources and funding they need, and call more Christians and churches to use their creativity and professional skills in serving sex workers. May they offer care that embraces the whole person, bringing Your compassion and faithfulness into society's neglected corners. We ask especially that You raise up Christian men with the maturity, wisdom, and calling to care for male sex workers, whose needs are easily overlooked. Lord, every person in the sex industry is precious to Your beloved Son, Jesus, who was willing to pay the price for their redemption. Move churches throughout the world to respond to Your call with compassionate action, becoming faithful companions, intercessors, and supporters of sex workers until they find their way home to You. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.



Between the sixth and thirteenth centuries, women skilled in dance were dedicated to temple service under royal patronage. They were known as devadasis, meaning “servants of the deity.” They cared for temples, performed sacred dances, and held an honored place in religious life. Because they were regarded as symbolically married to a deity, they did not marry mortal men and were traditionally treated with reverence. Over time, however, the institution changed, and in some regions the dedication of girls became closely associated with temple prostitution.

18

FRIDAY

Sex Workers

Young Girls Dedicated to the Gods

The Devadasi System in India I

Devadasis depended heavily on temple economies and the support of the traditional nobility. During periods of Muslim rule, some temples in northern India were damaged. Under British colonial rule, temples lost much of their financial autonomy and traditional aristocratic patronage. With their sources of income disappearing, some devadasis were forced to provide sexual services to priests or worshippers. What had once been regarded as a sacred dedication became a breeding ground for exploitation.

In its later forms, the devadasi system increasingly drew girls from Dalit and other marginalized communities. Dedicated from childhood and isolated from wider society, many feared that leaving would bring a divine curse. They endured sexual violence, sexually transmitted infections,

Several Indian states have enacted laws prohibiting devadasi dedication, including Karnataka in 1982 and Andhra Pradesh in 1988. Yet reports as recent as 2023 indicate that girls in southern India continue to be dedicated illegally, leaving them to struggle amid secrecy, exploitation, and discrimination.

and extreme poverty. Once they were no longer considered desirable, some were left to survive through begging or commercial sex on the margins of society.

In 1901, Northern Irish missionary Amy Carmichael founded the Dohnavur Fellowship to shelter devadasis who had escaped from the temples. Even when priests took legal action against her, she remained steadfast in her ministry. Through the fellowship, many devadasis gained access to education and medical care and rediscovered their dignity through faith.

Heavenly Father, You see the devadasis crushed beneath so many burdens. Gather their tears and bind up the wounds in their bodies, minds, and spirits with the love revealed at the cross. Set them free and renew their strength. May they know that they are Your beloved daughters and that You have never abandoned them. Thank You for working through Amy Carmichael more than a century ago to surround vulnerable girls with the love of Christ and bear witness with them to the hope of the gospel. Move again today. Raise up churches and gospel workers throughout India to establish ministries and fellowships for devadasis. May they care for them, walk alongside them, and serve these forgotten women and girls. Restore their God-given dignity, and make their lives vessels of praise and testimony. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.



Manjula Telagade was born in northern Karnataka, India. Her village had around sixty households, and nearly every one included a woman who had been dedicated as a devadasi, including Manjula's own mother. At about sixteen, Manjula threatened to take her own life rather than be forced down the same path. She worked part time to support herself through university and, with the help of a nonprofit organization, earned a master's degree in social work before pursuing doctoral studies. Today, she works in social services and advocates for devadasi women.

Dancing Toward a New Future

The Devadasi System in India II

Several NGOs in India are working to help devadasi women break free from exploitation. They provide education, vocational training, employment assistance, counseling, and healthcare. Through street outreach and community meetings, they also help the public understand the harm caused by the devadasi system.

The government of Karnataka has also taken action. In 2025, the state legislature passed the Karnataka Devadasi (Prevention, Prohibition, Relief and Rehabilitation) Bill, drafted by the National Law School of India University with input from 15,000 devadasi families. The bill imposes stronger penalties on those who perpetuate the system while also providing affected families with basic protections, including housing and pensions. It would allow children of devadasi women to establish legal paternity and claim inheritance and financial support from their fathers. It also requires public institutions to adopt measures against discrimination and ensures that devadasi communities are represented in local governing bodies, giving them a voice in decision-making and oversight.

May they finally be free to dance into a future of their own choosing.

Heavenly Father, thank You for raising up government agencies and nonprofit organizations in India to protect the rights of devadasi women. May the relevant laws and policies be fully implemented, making employment, education, healthcare, housing, financial assistance, and counseling genuinely accessible to them. Transform the attitudes of society, removing prejudice and discrimination and cultivating greater acceptance and empathy. May Christians in India serve devadasi women with love and professional skill, becoming salt and light in their communities and reflecting Your justice and compassion. The devadasi system has profoundly affected the lives of women and children, leaving many in circumstances that are painfully complex. In places beyond the reach of human care, watch over them and provide for them according to Your abundant promises. Strengthen their hearts and grant them rest. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.





In 2005, Don and Bridget Brewster watched a documentary about child trafficking in Cambodia, filmed near a place they had previously visited. Deeply moved by what they saw, they began researching human trafficking in Southeast Asia, gathered a team, and returned to Cambodia. There they founded Agape International Missions (AIM), seeking to stop the cycle of exploitation at its source.

20

SUNDAY

Sex Workers

Restoring Lives, Breaking the Cycle

Rescuing Trafficked Children in Cambodia

To help rescued girls begin new lives, AIM established transitional and restoration homes that provide safe shelter and psychological support, helping survivors rebuild their sense of worth. It also opened an employment center where they receive training in garment production. The finished products are sold through retail outlets, providing them with a stable income and a path toward independence.

To prevent trafficking and bring perpetrators to justice, AIM formed an investigative team that gathers intelligence and works with Cambodian police. In Svay Pak, a major trafficking hub, AIM also established a community center offering education, practical assistance, and alternative employment opportunities. These efforts strengthen the community's ability to protect those at risk. AIM also planted a church, seeking to transform the values of the community through Christian faith.

Between July and September 2025, AIM worked with Cambodian authorities to rescue eight girls from sexual exploitation in rural areas. The operation also dismantled a trafficking network operating behind the cover of a legitimate business and brought thirty-seven women to safety.

Heavenly Father, the cries of Cambodia's sexually exploited children have reached Your ears. In places where their suffering goes unseen, You know the trauma and pain they endure. Guide AIM's rescue ministry with justice, compassion, and wisdom. Bring hope to those who are oppressed, free them from the cycle of exploitation, and help them rebuild their lives and rediscover their worth in Your love. By Your Spirit, bring renewal to Cambodia and to every region where human trafficking is rampant. Transform hearts through Your truth, turning people away from exploitation and leading them to follow You with clean hands and pure hearts. Raise up Christians and churches around the world to answer Your call as Don and Bridget Brewster did. Help them see that those living on the margins of society are deeply loved by You, and inspire them to serve with Your love through their varied skills and gifts. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.



In Japanese society, where people are strongly expected not to burden others, those without homes are often judged as irresponsible and may face exclusion or even violence. To avoid discrimination, many take care to remain presentable and are reluctant to seek public assistance. They support themselves through temporary work, yet still struggle to save enough to secure housing. Although the government provides public assistance and shelters, complicated application procedures and strict requirements prevent many from receiving help.

21

MONDAY

Homeless
People

Staying Presentable on the Streets

Homelessness in Japan

Behind Japan's orderly streets, homelessness is more hidden and more complex than it may appear.

Away from the bustle of Japan's city centers, makeshift shelters built from cardboard or blue tarpaulins can sometimes be seen in public parks. In 2025, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare counted only 2,591 people experiencing homelessness nationwide. This seemingly low figure reflects the government's narrow definition, which includes only those living long-term in outdoor public spaces such as parks, railway stations, riverbanks, and roads. If those staying in internet cafés, inexpensive hotels, or friends' homes were also included, the true number would likely be considerably higher.

The causes of homelessness are complex, and most of those counted are men. After Japan's economic bubble collapsed in the 1990s, the system of lifetime employment began to erode. Many middle-aged men who lost their jobs struggled to reenter the workforce. As they grew older without savings or family support, some eventually found themselves living on the streets. Women may lose their homes after a husband becomes unemployed, after being widowed, or after fleeing domestic violence. Without sufficient financial independence, they can easily fall into poverty and housing insecurity.

Heavenly Father, You are the God of the sojourner and the poor, and You never forsake those who sleep on the streets. Call churches to pray for people experiencing homelessness in Japan and around the world. Open their eyes to the spiritual needs of those without homes, and move them to help improve their living conditions. May the church become a spiritual home where they experience the support, healing, and belonging found in Christ. Grant governments around the world wisdom and justice to enact appropriate laws and treat with compassion those who have lost their homes because of economic hardship, family circumstances, or other causes. Give particular attention to the safety and circumstances of women experiencing homelessness. Transform hearts by Your Spirit, filling the nations with compassion so that they respond to the plight of those without homes with the love and acceptance of Christ. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.



People experiencing homelessness struggle to survive on the margins of East Asia's highly urbanized societies. Across the region, local organizations are responding with creative initiatives that restore dignity and help people regain stability. Their work also makes cities more inclusive by encouraging society to recognize the humanity and value of those without homes.

22

SUNDAY

Homeless
People

Opening Doors with Compassion

Organizations Serving Homeless Communities in East Asia

TW

**Homeless
Taiwan
Association**



Many people experiencing homelessness want to shower every day, but public facilities often close early, while hotels are too expensive to use simply for bathing. Women have an especially urgent need for washing facilities that are safe and private. In 2022, Homeless Taiwan opened the Pon Pon Showerhouse in Taipei's Wanhua District, keeping it open until 7 p.m. With donations from businesses and members of the public, the facility provides free showers, device charging, drinking water, essential supplies, and menstrual products. It also offers consultation and referrals for employment, housing, and healthcare. Around eighty to ninety people use the facility each day.



Kana Kawaguchi began serving people experiencing homelessness when she was fourteen. At nineteen, she founded the nonprofit organization Homedoor. Through her street outreach, she discovered that around seventy percent of the people she met were skilled at repairing bicycles. At the time, Osaka was also struggling with large numbers of illegally parked bicycles. In response, Homedoor launched the HUBchari bicycle-sharing service in 2011, creating jobs for people experiencing homelessness and reinvesting its revenue in services that support them. In a culture where many people find it difficult to ask for help, Kawaguchi has created dignified employment that enables people to support themselves.

JP

Homedoor





HK ImpactHK

ImpactHK gives particular attention to the physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing of women experiencing homelessness. In 2023, the organization partnered with a university on a two-and-a-half-year Special Care and Co-Living Pilot Programme for Homeless Women. The program provided safe accommodation, professional care, and medical assessments. Among its forty-seven participants, mental health and self-worth improved significantly. Stress and trauma scores fell by more than fifty percent, while depression scores fell by more than forty percent. The team has also urged the government to recognize the particular needs of women experiencing homelessness and to include mental health support in its policies.



Heavenly Father, we thank You for the goodness and compassion reflected in the work of these three East Asian organizations. They treat people experiencing homelessness with respect, provide long-term support as they rebuild their lives, and encourage wider participation from society. May the lessons they have learned benefit communities around the world and help others consider how they can walk alongside those without homes. Remember and use ministries serving people experiencing homelessness everywhere. Continue to renew Your churches, deepening our understanding of their circumstances and their need for belonging, and welcoming them into the family of God. May they experience Your love through us as we enter their lives without an agenda, listen to their stories, and recognize the precious image of God each one bears. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.





In 2011, Oula was displaced by the Syrian civil war and sought temporary refuge in a city to the north. Then, in 2023, a devastating earthquake took both her husband and her home. At twenty-six, she was left to raise her infant daughter alone and pitched a tent beside the ruins. For the next year, they endured the scorching heat of summer and the bitter cold of winter, yet government assistance never arrived.

23

WEDNESDAY

Homeless
People

A Shattered Home

Syrians Without Homes

Years of civil war have displaced nearly seven million people within Syria. The 2023 Türkiye-Syria earthquakes claimed more than four thousand lives in Syria and left millions in need of shelter. International sanctions have further complicated the entry and delivery of humanitarian assistance. With official aid slow or insufficient, many survivors were forced to rely on local and international relief organizations. Many also struggled to find work and secure housing, while displaced women and children faced heightened risks of harassment and violence.

Some civil society organizations have helped repair damaged homes, but they have been unable to assist everyone whose home was completely destroyed. Oula and her daughter, for example, continued living in a tent. “We have nothing left but God’s mercy,” she said. Her tragedy is shared by countless Syrians.

In this time of darkness, Syrian churches have continued to open their churches and homes despite their limited resources. They have distributed food and financial assistance, offered companionship, and supported disaster survivors with the love of God. The world’s attention may have gradually turned away from Syria, but the needs of those without homes remain urgent and real.

Heavenly Father, we place in Your hands the people of Syria and all those around the world who have been displaced by war and natural disaster. Comfort and heal them in body, mind, and spirit. In the midst of upheaval, may they find in You an unshakable refuge, and may You provide them with a safe place to live. Work through international charities and medical organizations so that relief supplies can overcome the barriers created by sanctions and instability and reach displaced people in time. May every donation and resource be used wisely to help people rebuild their homes, livelihoods, and daily lives, with particular care for vulnerable women and children. Call and strengthen churches around the world to serve in disaster-stricken areas, raise funds, give generously, and remain faithful in prayer. May the hope of the gospel of Christ fill the hearts of people everywhere. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.





Following the Cambodian government's anti-drug campaign, some minors have been arrested simply for being near a suspect or having some connection to them. These children are placed in a prison system that, as of 2023, had the second-highest occupancy rate in the world, holding more than four times the number of people it was designed to accommodate. Many are detained before they have been convicted.

24

THURSDAY

People
Living in
Confinement

Life Behind Prison Walls

People in Cambodia's Prisons

Data from 2024 show that as many as seventy-five percent of people held in Cambodian prisons were still awaiting trial or a final judgment, including more than two thousand minors. These young people were often held alongside adults in harsh conditions, placing them at high risk of bullying. One child who had been bullied described prison simply: "There is only suffering in prison."

The Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights, known as LICADHO, has long called on the government to end the excessive detention of minors, use alternatives to imprisonment for lesser offenses, and ensure that every child has access to legal assistance. Without such support, young people may remain in detention for extended periods simply because they lack the resources to defend themselves.

The nonprofit organization This Life runs the This Life Beyond Bars program, which provides young people with career planning, vocational training, counseling, and legal assistance. It also helps them reconnect with their families and reintegrate into society after release. The reoffending rate among participants fell from sixty percent to two percent, showing how support beyond the prison system can give young people a different future.

Heavenly Father, "while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." As those who have committed offenses bear responsibility for their actions, help them encounter this love and hope so that they do not sink into despair. May the care and concern shown by organizations and communities lead people in prison toward repentance and new life. Bless Cambodia with a just judicial and prison system so that innocent people and those awaiting judgment receive fair and timely hearings. Protect young people in prison from the violence and harmful influence of adults held alongside them. Expand the reach of prison ministries, reduce reoffending, and give more people the opportunity for a new future when they return to society. Grant those serving on the front lines the love, courage, and wisdom they need each day to meet the challenges of their work. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.





Guishan Prison and Longtan Women's Prison in Taoyuan, Taiwan, hold around 370 foreign prisoners, most of whom are Vietnamese. Behind these high walls are two people who speak the prisoners' native language and serve dishes from home: Pastor Mặc Sơn Hải and his wife, Nguyễn Ngọc Điệp. Through their warmth and love, they open hearts that have remained closed behind bars.

25

FRIDAY

People
Living in
Confinement

Warmth Beyond the Bars

Ministry to Foreign Nationals in Taiwan's Prisons

Pastor Mặc first began caring for foreign nationals in prison alongside the late Pastor Immanuel Scharrer, later taking responsibility for the ministry. Nguyễn Ngọc Điệp had previously served with Pastor Nguyễn Trường Thu and his wife, caring for Vietnamese prisoners, migrant workers, and foreign spouses. After marrying, Mặc and Nguyễn devoted themselves to prison ministry. They provide gospel literature, visit prisoners, help them contact family members overseas, cover medical expenses, and prepare Vietnamese food to ease their homesickness. Many have come to faith through their ministry, and five are now studying theology in prison.

Pastor Mặc, his wife, and their team also formed a Guishan support group to help former prisoners rebuild their lives. Some have returned to their home countries and found employment, giving

Take It Further: Scan the QR code to learn more about the ministry of Chinese Worldwide Gospel Mission. If you feel led to care for people imprisoned far from home, you may contact the ministry team by going to their website. Any further arrangements will be made by the organization.

hope to those still in prison. The couple also travel to Vietnam to obtain Vietnamese-language Bibles and build relationships with local churches so that those returning home can continue receiving pastoral care.

A small group currently meets in the prison every Wednesday afternoon. More than twenty missionaries from different countries serve prisoners of various nationalities, but more workers are still needed. The ministry also needs financial support to print publications and replace aging vehicles.

Heavenly Father, thank You for calling missionaries from other countries to enter Taiwan's prisons and walk alongside foreign prisoners. Give them Your wisdom and compassion so that they can understand and respond to each person's needs. Provide Your servants with sufficient workers, funding, and resources. Establish the work of Pastor Mặc, his wife, and their team so that more prisoners may experience Your love. May the lives of those who come to faith in prison be firmly rooted in Your word, and may they follow You throughout their lives. We pray for people serving sentences far from home around the world. Send more workers to serve as Your vessels in prisons across the nations, restoring those who have fallen and equipping them to become a blessing to many. May those released from prison find faithful pastors and supportive fellowship in the church, so that their lives may be strengthened and built up. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.





The term hikikomori refers to people who have remained largely confined to their homes for at least six months, withdrawing from school or work and having little interaction with anyone outside their immediate family. A Japanese government survey released in 2023 estimated that 1.46 million people between the ages of fifteen and sixty-four were living in this state of social withdrawal, equivalent to roughly one in fifty people.

26

SATURDAY

People
Living in
Confinement

Behind the Closed Door

Hikikomori

Research suggests that hikikomori does not arise from any single cause. It is often the result of multiple pressures building over time. Tension between parents and children, bullying, competition in education and employment, economic stagnation, the effects of the pandemic, and social expectations can become overwhelming. Withdrawing from society may then become a way of temporarily protecting one's physical and emotional wellbeing.

Yet although retreating into the home may offer relative safety, it does not take away the pain within. Some feel powerless and distressed because they struggle to find their place in society. Others are burdened by shame and regret because they cannot live what is considered a "normal" life or believe they have disappointed their parents.

People living as hikikomori seldom seek outside help themselves. Family members in the same household may also remain silent because they feel ashamed or do not know where to turn. Some parents even blame themselves for failing to raise their children well and begin withdrawing from society themselves.

Hikikomori is not unique to Japan. Similar cases have been identified in South Korea, Italy, Spain, France, and the United States, suggesting that hidden social isolation is a challenge faced around the world.

Heavenly Father, may people living as hikikomori know how deeply You love them. You are a gentle healer who understands their frustration and brokenness and can lead them out of isolation. Rekindle in them the courage to say, "I can try again." Provide people who will walk alongside them as they begin with one small, everyday task and gradually regain confidence, hope, and a sense of safety. Help churches understand the circumstances of those who experience severe social withdrawal and accompany them patiently in love. Sustain the family members who live with them. When they are weary, burdened by self-blame, or overwhelmed by helplessness, draw them to You for rest and strength. Raise up support networks to help these families carry their burdens. Renew this generation so that society may learn empathy and respect and work together to create safer, more inclusive communities. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.





As caregivers grow older, the question of who will care for people experiencing prolonged social withdrawal has become increasingly urgent. Countries are actively exploring possible answers. Some reach out through art, others address the financial hardship associated with social withdrawal, and there are others that shut themselves inside a room to better understand the pain of their withdrawn children.

27

SUNDAY

People
Living in
Confinement

Opening the Door to Isolated Hearts

Supporting People Experiencing Social Withdrawal

In Japan, a government agency works with Operation Mobilization (OM) to offer communication workshops led by an arts team. Through art, drama, and games, participants are gently encouraged to understand themselves more deeply, practice connecting with others, and explore their abilities in a safe environment. Growing demand has led the program to increase its workshops from once to twice a month, with each group limited to five participants. Some move on after finding employment, while newcomers take their place. The KHJ National Federation of Families with Hikikomori also partners with the government to train support workers who care for people experiencing prolonged social withdrawal.

In South Korea, the government has sought to address the financial hardship that can contribute to social withdrawal. Eligible young people may receive up to approximately US\$465 per month for daily necessities and cultural activities, helping to ease the pressure of engaging with society. Civil society organizations have also introduced a thirteen-week family education program that includes a three-day “confinement experience.” Parents stay in rooms without phones or internet access and spend their time reading accounts written by socially withdrawn young people. The experience is designed to foster empathy and encourage parents to reflect more deeply on their relationships with their children.

Heavenly Father, we thank You for the teams around the world that care for people experiencing prolonged social withdrawal. Guide governments and civil organizations with wisdom so that their work through policy, education, and the arts may respond thoughtfully to the needs and difficulties of those living in isolation, bringing hope for healing and new life. May the grace of reconciliation reach every family affected by prolonged social withdrawal. Through support groups and training, help families better understand what their loved ones are experiencing and rebuild their relationships with patience, honest conversation, and acceptance. Inspire Christians to enter this often-overlooked community and develop ministries that serve people living in isolation. Through visits, attentive listening, and faithful companionship, may they be like the four friends who carried the paralyzed man to Jesus, willing to go the extra mile for these individuals and their families. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.





Across South Asia, Hijra are a distinct social and cultural community made up primarily of people who were assigned male at birth but live in feminine or third-gender identities. In parts of the region, they are believed to possess the power to confer blessings and are often invited to celebrations, ceremonies for newborns, and weddings. During the Mughal period, people described as eunuchs, some associated with Hijra traditions, also held positions in royal courts. Under British colonial rule, however, Hijra were subjected to criminalization and surveillance, deepening their social exclusion.

28

MONDAY

Communities
with
Traditional
Religious
Roles

No Place to Belong

Hijra Communities in South Asia

"When we beg on trains, the police harass us and insult us. I keep asking them, 'Why do you respect men and women, but not us?'" These words reflect the treatment Hijra commonly face in public spaces.

As demand for their traditional ceremonial blessings has declined, many Hijra have come to rely on singing and dancing, begging, or sex work to survive. Because of their gender identity, they frequently face rejection from their families, schools, and wider society. Their access to education and employment is severely limited, and some are left to sleep on the streets or live in impoverished neighborhoods. Many also endure persistent sexual harassment and verbal abuse, leaving them without a sense of safety or basic dignity.

Hijra depend on one another and have formed close-knit communities of their own. Younger members often become disciples of older Hijra, who teach them how to earn a living while providing mutual care and support. Governed by their own rules and traditions, these communities offer both practical and emotional support. At the same time, their guarded nature can make it difficult for outsiders to approach them and earn their trust.

Heavenly Father, we pray for Hijra who feel lonely, lost, and desperate to be accepted. As they struggle to survive on the margins of society, may they come to know Your love. Raise up the workers and forms of ministry best suited to serve Hijra communities, following the example of Jesus Christ, who drew near to those overlooked in society. Grant wisdom to governments, civil organizations, and churches so that Hijra may have access to education and vocational training, develop new skills, and find more opportunities to participate in wider society rather than remaining confined within their own communities. In Your love, may they come to understand Your purpose in creating them and find an eternal place of belonging and a new home in You. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.





The Indonesian province of South Sulawesi is home to the Bugis people, whose traditional understanding of gender is both diverse and nuanced. Bugis culture recognizes five gender categories: men, women, calalai, who are assigned female at birth but assume masculine social roles, calabai, who are assigned male at birth but assume feminine social roles, and Bissu. Traditionally regarded as genderless ritual leaders, Bissu serve as intermediaries between humanity and the divine.

29

TUESDAY

Communities
with
Traditional
Religious
Roles

Between Heaven and Earth

The Bissu of Indonesia

In traditional Bugis culture, the Bissu were regarded as the spiritual heart of the community. Before Bugis royal institutions were dissolved in 1957, they fulfilled many important roles. They preserved cultural traditions, officiated at royal coronations, weddings, funerals, and other ceremonies, and conducted rituals connected with agriculture. Believed to communicate with the natural and spiritual worlds, they offered guidance in both sacred and everyday matters.

The Bugis creation epic La Galigo, one of the longest literary works in the world, contains numerous accounts of Bissu and the rituals they performed, reflecting the sacred place they traditionally occupied in Bugis society.

As Islam became firmly established in Indonesia, traditional Bugis understandings of gender came under increasing pressure, and the standing of the Bissu gradually declined. They are now a small and vulnerable community. Although many continue to maintain their distinctive identity, they face pressure from religious regulations and wider social expectations. When undertaking the Hajj (the Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca), Bissu who are officially classified as male are generally required to follow the rules for male pilgrims. They must therefore navigate a difficult path between their religious faith, their identity, and society's expectations.

Heavenly Father, You are the God who created every people and nation, and every life is unique and precious in Your sight. When the Bissu experience rejection and uncertainty amid the demands of Islamic faith and society, reveal Yourself to them and bring them comfort. In Your love and wisdom, guide them as they seek to understand their identity. May they know that their very breath comes from You. Through Jesus Christ, the mediator between God and humanity, may they become part of Your chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and a people belonging to You. May churches and Christians in Indonesia become good neighbors to the Bissu, approaching them with gentleness, wisdom, and humility. Give them the heart of Christ as they walk alongside the Bissu, bless them, and welcome them into Your family. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.





Which of the communities introduced this month has left the deepest impression on you? Today, as the Holy Spirit leads, write a prayer for them.

30

WEDNESDAY

Marginalized
Groups



A series of horizontal blue lines for writing, filling the main body of the yellow notebook.



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