

VOM-USA Prayer Update for March 23, 2012

Pakistan--Pastor Discusses Christianity with Pakistani Teacher

VOM Contacts

Mark 5:36

An Arabic-language teacher at a government school in Pakistan has been meeting with a VOM-supported pastor to learn more about Christianity. The encounters began after the teacher learned that one of his students was a Christian. "I've never met a Christian in my life," he told the young man. "How do you Christians pray?" The student invited him to speak with his pastor. At first the discussions were difficult because the teacher didn't feel he could speak openly. But last month, the pastor visited the teacher's school and brought pencils and notebooks for the students. That day, the pastor and the teacher spoke for two hours, and the teacher requested a Bible so he could look up some of the verses the pastor cited. The Pakistani teacher suggested they discuss the topic of whether Jesus is the Son of God the next time they meet. The pastor asks for our prayers. "Please pray for me, when I have this meeting, that God will protect me and the Holy Spirit will guide me and save the soul of [this teacher], so he can accept Jesus Christ as his personal savior."

Azerbaijan--Church Sued Under Religion Law

Forum 18 News

Matthew 22:20-22

Azerbaijani authorities are suing the Greater Grace Church in Baku, in what is thought to be the first attempt to close a religious community under the nation's religion law. The 2009 law requires that all religious groups re-register with the government. If the state committee suing Greater Grace Church succeeds, the church will lose its right to exist. Greater Grace, which first registered with the government in 1993, says it was unaware that it needed to re-register and that authorities gave no warning before filing the liquidation suit against them. In the past, authorities have acted secretly to shut down churches, but it now appears they will operate openly, with the backing of the law. Several hundred churches waiting for official registration fear that if Greater Grace is closed, many others will be closed as well. The first hearing was held on Thursday, March 15, and court proceedings are expected to resume on March 29.

Nigeria--Church Bombings Continue

Compass Direct News, VOM Contacts

Ephesians 6:13

At least nine Christians were killed in Jos, Nigeria, on March 11 in the second church bombing within two weeks. In this most recent attack, Boko Haram terrorists targeted the 3,000-member St. Finbar's Catholic Church, in an affluent Jos neighborhood. Security personnel forced the attackers to detonate their bomb before their car reached the sanctuary. Among the victims were two women in their 50s and two boys, aged 8 and 16. Reprisal attacks by Christians reportedly

occurred after the bombing, and witnesses reported additional deaths of Christians at the hands of military personnel. The husband of one victim told Compass Direct, "What is happening in Nigeria today is a war against the Church. We need to fight back spiritually, as this is the only way we as Christians can survive it."