

## KIM KUK-GI (NORTH KOREA)



South Korean Presbyterian missionary **Kim Kuk-gi** (69) is serving a life sentence in labour camp in North Korea. He was arrested in December 2014 with businessman Choe Chun-gil (63) on charges of spying for South Korea, which said the charge was “*absolutely groundless*”. North Korea’s state news agency KCNA described the two Christians as “*heinous terrorists*” who operated from the Chinese city of Dandong, near the North Korean border. Pastor Kim was also accused of spreading

religious propaganda from a church he ran in Dandong, where he had moved in 2003 to take care of displaced North Koreans. He had bought noodle- and tofu-making machines and sewing machines to send to North Korea.

In May 2015 the North Korean authorities presented Pastor Kim and Choe Chun-gil at a press conference in Pyongyang where they “*confessed*” that they had been paid to steal state secrets for South Korea. The following month, KCNA announced that the two men had been tried in the Supreme Court and sentenced to life in prison.

### Family

Kim Kuk-gi is married to Kim Hee Soon and they do not have children.

### Latest News

On 2 November 2023 South Korea’s Unification Ministry stated that families of six citizens detained in North Korea, including Kim Kuk-gi, would receive compensation payments in recognition of their status as victims of abduction.

## PRAYER POINTS

- Sunday:** Pray for protection and good health for Pastor Kim.
- Monday:** Ask God to encourage Pastor Kim and give him hope.
- Tuesday:** Pray for Pastor Kim to be released.
- Wednesday:** Pray for the pastor’s witness to guards and prisoners.
- Thursday:** Ask God to comfort and sustain his wife, Kim Hee Soon.
- Friday:** Pray for blessing and release for Choe Chun-gil.
- Saturday:** Pray for the thousands of North Korean Christian prisoners.

# FUTSUM GEBRENEGUS (ERITREA)



**Rev Dr Futsum Gebrenegus** is an Eritrean Orthodox priest and psychiatrist who was arrested in November 2004 because he led Bible studies that attracted thousands of young people. Dr Futsum was Eritrea's only psychiatrist and led an Eritrean Orthodox renewal movement along with Rev Dr Tekleab Menghisteab and Rev Gebremedhin Gebregioris.

In November 2004 security forces arrested Dr Futsum and Dr Tekleab at

a Ministry of Health conference and arrested Rev Gebremedhin the same day. The government then closed down their church. Dr Futsum is imprisoned incommunicado in the maximum-security Wengel Mermera interrogation centre in Asmara along with his two fellow priests and several senior pastors.

Dr Berhane Asmelash, Director of Release Eritrea, was in a Bible study group and a Medical Doctors Christian Alliance with Dr Futsum and reports that his friend worked hard to improve mental health in Eritrea and that *"everyone loved him"*.

## Family

Dr Futsum is a widower with three sons, one of whom lives in Eritrea. His wife and father died during his imprisonment and he was not permitted to attend their funerals. His elderly mother was recently seen receiving medical treatment in South Africa.

## Latest News

In late 2023 it became known that Dr Futsum was in good health. He is in a room with several other senior pastors.

## PRAYER POINTS

- Sunday:** Pray for good mental and physical health for Dr Futsum.
- Monday:** Ask God to refresh Dr Futsum and encourage him.
- Tuesday:** Pray for his release and that his mother would see him again.
- Wednesday:** Pray for good fellowship with other Christians in the prison.
- Thursday:** Ask God to bless Dr Futsum's sons and give them hope.
- Friday:** Pray for Dr Futsum's witness to other prisoners and guards.
- Saturday:** Pray for freedom for all Christians to meet in Eritrea.

## ZHANG CHUNLEI (CHINA)



**Zhang Chunlei** leads the unregistered Ren'ai (Love) Reformed Church in Guiyang. He has been detained since March 2021 and stood trial in November 2022, but the verdict was never announced and his sentence is unknown.

Elder Zhang worked as a government official before starting his own business in 1993. He became a Christian in 2008 and in 2018 was one of the first of over 450 Christian leaders to sign the "Declaration

*for the Sake of the Christian Faith*" written by Pastor Wang Yi following the introduction of China's revised Regulations on Religious Affairs. Over half the pastors who signed the Declaration were questioned and many house churches were shut down.

Ren'ai Church was banned in September 2018, but members continued to hold services in restaurants and hotels, which were repeatedly raided. Following a raid in March 2021 Elder Zhang was detained and charged with "fraud" for collecting offerings from church members. In January 2022 he was further charged with "inciting subversion of state power" and he stood trial on the combined charge in November 2022.

### Family

Elder Zhang and his wife Yang Aiqing have two adult children and a grandchild.

### Latest News

Elder Zhang was treated in Sanjiang hospital in August 2023 after suffering gall bladder inflammation.

## PRAYER POINTS

- Sunday:** Ask God to protect and encourage Elder Zhang in prison.
- Monday:** Pray for complete healing from gall bladder inflammation.
- Tuesday:** Pray that Elder Zhang would be released soon.
- Wednesday:** Pray for Elder Zhang's witness to other prisoners and guards.
- Thursday:** Pray for protection, provision and hope for Yang Aiqing.
- Friday:** Ask God to bless and encourage Ren'ai Church.
- Saturday:** Pray for an end to the severe restrictions on Chinese churches.



**Ashfaq Masih** (37) is a Pentecostal bike mechanic from Lahore who has been in prison since June 2017, when he was accused of blasphemy. His court hearings were cancelled repeatedly until he was eventually sentenced to death by hanging in July 2022.

On 15 June 2017 a local Muslim got his motorbike repaired at Ashfaq's shop but when Ashfaq asked for payment he refused to pay the full amount, saying he

was a poor sadhu (religious devotee). Ashfaq replied that he believed in Jesus Christ and refused to reduce the price, saying he was poor himself. A crowd gathered and Ashfaq was accused of blasphemy for "*disrespecting*" the Prophet Muhammad by saying Christians believe Jesus was the final prophet.

Ashfaq was arrested and brought to the police station, where a blasphemy case was registered. He is in Sahiwal Jail, 180 km from Lahore, and his appeal is pending in the Lahore High Court.

### Family

Ashfaq and his wife Nabeela have a daughter aged nine. They fled when he was accused of blasphemy but have returned home. Ashfaq's mother Zeenat died in November 2019, leaving his father Yaqoob and his older brother Mehmood.

### Latest News

Nabeela visited Ashfaq in October 2023 and said he was very disturbed by the ongoing delays in his case.

## PRAYER POINTS

- Sunday:** Ask God to comfort and encourage Ashfaq.
- Monday:** Pray that Ashfaq would soon be acquitted and released.
- Tuesday:** Ask God to keep Ashfaq safe and well in prison.
- Wednesday:** Pray for hope and strength for Ashfaq's family.
- Thursday:** Pray for protection and provision for Nabeela.
- Friday:** Ask God for courage and protection for lawyers and judges.
- Saturday:** Pray for reform of Pakistan's blasphemy laws.