



Giulio Paletta/CSW

**CSW** everyone  
free to believe

Spring/Summer 2021

# connect & encourage

Write to someone facing injustice for their beliefs.

“[My wife] told me she received many cards from England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. She said these people were all praying for me. It made me feel like I was part of a big family.”

Nguyen Van Dai, Vietnamese human rights lawyer living in exile in Germany

**Keep in touch. Today.**

**Share** how you've used it, and we'll let others know so they can try using it in the same way!  
Email us at [admin@csw.org.uk](mailto:admin@csw.org.uk)

**Please don't send any letters to the office as we're not able to forward these on at the moment. We'll let you know as soon as this changes.**

Human rights defenders in South Asia



Giulio Paletta/CSW

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# Get writing

## Is it ok to include Christian greetings and scripture verses?

Most of the people in Connect & Encourage are Christians, and we encourage you to write appropriate scripture verses and Christian greetings. Writing relevant Bible references is useful for non-English speakers so they can look up the same scripture verses in their own language.

However, some are not Christians – we have indicated this next to their names. Please be sensitive to this when writing to them.

If the person you are writing to is a Christian, it's okay to send them cards that are obviously Christian. However, if you want to be safe, or the person you are writing to is from a different faith, cards with colourful pictures or landscapes on the front are always appreciated.

## What if I can't write in the person's language?

Even if the person receiving your card can't read English, receiving a card can still bring them hope and encouragement by reminding them that they are not forgotten. However, if you can write in the language of the person – even if it is just a phrase or two – please do! They will appreciate your effort.

## Will my letters actually reach the intended person?

Although some letters may be intercepted, most will reach their destination. Even if the letter doesn't reach them, it can still have a powerful effect by reminding governments that their case is not going unnoticed by the rest of the world.

## Is it safe to include my name and address on my cards?

As long as you are happy to receive a reply, including your contact details isn't a problem. In fact, a pen pal relationship with someone who is facing injustice for their faith can be extremely inspiring! However, you may receive letters requesting financial help. Always contact CSW regarding these requests before you respond to them.

## Can I send letters to every country where CSW works?

We have only included people in Connect & Encourage if we can verify they will receive your cards safely. In some of the countries where we work, sending letters and cards could further endanger the recipients. Instead, please remember these people in your prayers, asking God to grant them strength, protection and comfort.

**You can find more tips for writing your cards at [csw.org.uk/connectencourage](http://csw.org.uk/connectencourage)**

# Writing a letter

We've included some sample letters here to give you an idea of what to write. A personal letter with details about your everyday life can be a wonderful encouragement, but it's also the case that sometimes a template letter may be a safer option for some of our cases, or a good start for you to write your own message.

If you want to write your own message, here are some general guidelines:

- Just write a little bit about yourself – where you live, what the area is like, your family, your hobbies, and so on. Most of the people in Connect & Encourage are Christians, so you could write an encouraging Bible verse in the card, and some Christian greetings such as 'God bless you' and 'May the Lord be with you'.
- Even if the person who gets your card can't read English, receiving it will still encourage them by reminding them that they're not forgotten.
- Writing relevant Bible references is useful for non-English speakers so they can look up the verses in their own language.
- If you're happy to receive a reply, it's safe to include your name and address on the cards. Many people have developed rewarding relationships in this way, by writing to and hearing from people who suffer because of their faith.

## Letter 1

Dear [name]

I was deeply moved when I heard about your situation. I wanted to write to you and let you know that your story is being told all over the world and that people are joining together to pray for you.

[name]

## Letter 2

Dear [name]

I pray that God grants you strength and courage to persevere in this terrible situation. Please know that you have not been forgotten by the world.

[name]



**Send hope. Today.**

**Writing tip** Many people appreciate a postcard with a bright picture on it: try to find something colourful and uplifting.

# Africa and the Middle East

**Dear CSW,**

Thank you for sending the current edition of Connect & Encourage. It is a tremendous resource.

As for a method: I pick a recipient and prayerfully ask for a relevant Scripture, which then comes to mind. And then I write a short message e.g may God bless your work, in the case of an organisation.

Thanks again and God bless,

**John**  
New Malden

## Egypt

In the past we've asked you to send cards, but at this time it's difficult to ensure they will arrive in a timely manner. Please keep praying for Egypt; while the situation has improved for the Christian community, religious minorities are still targeted, and there are a growing number of human rights defenders among the nation's prisoners of conscience.

## Eritrea

Many Eritrean Christians have been forced to flee their country due to the severe oppression they face on account of their faith. As they waited for acceptance in third countries, they have established their own worshipping communities. These are essentially refugee churches. Many of these Christians still live cautiously because the Eritrean authorities have been known to track down and harass people even outside of Eritrea. The cards you've sent have been an amazing encouragement to many. Please keep writing!

**Ebenezer Foundational  
Healing Church  
GPO 16147-00100  
Nairobi  
Kenya**

## Iran

Unfortunately it isn't safe to write to many of the prisoners in Iran. Over the last few years we've seen a pattern of religious minorities being arrested on national security charges, and in a number of current cases it could put them at risk if they were to receive cards from other countries.

## Nigeria

**The Most Rev Dr Benjamin  
Argak Kwashi and  
Mrs Gloria Kwashi**



Archbishop Benjamin Argak Kwashi is the General Secretary of the Global Anglican Future Conference (Gafcon) and a prominent and eloquent advocate for Christians in northern and central Nigeria. His family experienced two brutal attacks in the recent past but made a full recovery. In addition to writing to the family, please pray for their safety and strength in the midst of ongoing tensions in central Nigeria.

**The Most Rev Dr Benjamin Argak  
Kwashi and Mrs Gloria Kwashi  
Anglican Diocese of Jos  
PO Box 6283  
Jos  
Plateau State  
930001  
Nigeria**

## Rebecca Sharibu



Rebecca (above, right) is the mother of Leah, a Nigerian schoolgirl who was one of 110 girls abducted from their school in Dapchi, Nigeria by Boko Haram in February 2018.

The next month, following negotiations by the government, the remaining girls were put into trucks to go home. But Leah wasn't among them. She wasn't released because she refused to convert in exchange for her freedom.

Rebecca has been waiting for Leah to come home for over three years – CSW has been advocating and campaigning to secure Leah's release ever since she went missing.

Unfortunately we cannot give you Rebecca's direct address due to security concerns, and we do not currently have the capacity to pass on your messages. Please continue to pray for her.

## Nigeria contd.

### CSW Nigeria

Our office in Nigeria works to promote religious freedom in an exceptionally difficult context and with very few resources. However, despite the many difficulties they face, their work is growing! The head of CSW-Nigeria, Rev Yunusa Nmadu, is currently General Secretary of the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) denomination, one of the largest denominations in northern Nigeria with a membership of over five million worldwide. At a time when abductions for ransom are rife, please pray for protection as staff travel the country to assist communities and individuals experiencing violations.

**CSW Nigeria c/o ECWA Gospel Church**  
**Lemu Road**  
**Tudun Nupawa**  
**PO Box 619**  
**Kaduna**  
**Nigeria**



Rev Yunusa Nmadu, CSW Nigeria

## Sudan

There have been significant changes in Sudan since former President Omar al Bashir was deposed and a Transitional Government took over in September 2019. The new political leaders have provided assurances to churches and Christians in Sudan that they would work to address the violations of the past. While the government grapples with these changes, churches continue to prepare legal cases to claim back from the government land and assets confiscated during the last 30 years.

The Khartoum Bahri Evangelical Church is one of several churches that has had its buildings and land confiscated and its leaders arrested.

Unfortunately we cannot give you the church's direct address due to security concerns, and we do not currently have the capacity to pass on your messages. Please continue to pray for them.



A protest at Khartoum Bahri Evangelical Church

### Sudan Church of Christ (SCOC)

Leaders of the SCOC are still facing criminal charges over an attempt to take over the administration of the church. A new trial started in October 2019, which is taking up the time and resources of the leadership to defend. Unfortunately we cannot give you the church's direct address due to security concerns, and we do not currently have the capacity to pass on your messages. Please continue to pray for them.

### The Episcopal Church of Sudan

The Episcopal Church is one of the largest Christian denominations in Sudan, and has several schools and medical centres attending to the needs of the entire community. In the past, the church has faced government harassment over the ownership of their properties and land disputes. Please pray for the leadership of the church as they navigate the new political realities in Sudan.

Unfortunately we cannot give you the church's direct address due to security concerns, and we do not currently have the capacity to pass on your messages. Please continue to pray for them.



Catholic Cathedral Bangui

Hervé Sereffo

## Central African Republic

During 2017 and the start of 2018 thousands of people in the Central African Republic (CAR) were displaced, and hundreds were killed during clashes between armed groups. In February 2019 a new peace treaty was signed by the 14 main armed groups and the government. There continue to be episodes of violence in CAR despite the agreement, that leave the most vulnerable civilians displaced and at risk. Churches of all denominations are responding to support their communities. Unfortunately we cannot give you the churches' direct address due to security concerns, and we do not currently have the capacity to pass on your messages. Please continue to pray for them.

## Hey CSW,

We used Connect and Encourage as one of our units of study on global justice issues. We spent some time looking at the persecuted church and Connect and Encourage was a practical way for us to respond to what we learnt. The students enjoyed the process – it was a small and powerful way to connect with the stories of those who suffer for their faith and on quite a personal level, to get in touch with them and initiate some kind of relationship. It was also a good way to engage in informed prayer too.

Take care,

Suhail – Canada  
[vineyardschoolofjustice.org](http://vineyardschoolofjustice.org)

# South Asia

## India

### Nehemiah Christie

Nehemiah is a human rights defender based in Tamil Nadu. He is the Director of Legislation and Regulation at the Synod of Indian Pentecostal churches, which has oversight of 30,000 churches in India. He is a member of the United Christian Forum for Human Rights, an inter-denominational Christian network that campaigns for freedom of religion or belief. Nehemiah was a participant at CSW's South Asia 'Defend the Defender' project where he was trained on international advocacy. He is also the founder of the Calvary Christian Centre in Erode.

**Nehemiah Christie**  
**18/8 Iraniyan Street-1**  
**Lakshmi Garden**  
**Rangampalayam, Erode**  
**638008, Tamil Nadu**  
**India**



Nehemiah Christie

### John Dayal

John Dayal is one of India's most prominent voices on human rights, and the situation of religious minorities in particular. He is a member of several governmental bodies, including the national Integration Council. The former president of the All India Catholic Union, he is also co-founder and secretary general of the All India Christian Council.

**505, Link Apartments**  
**18, I.P Extension**  
**Delhi 11092**  
**India**

## Pakistan

### Christian Study Centre (CSC)

CSC works to help churches in Pakistan gain a better understanding of the relationship between Islam and Christianity, and the particular nature of their calling as churches in a Muslim state. The centre undertakes academic research into Islam and Christianity in Pakistan and their relationship. They also promote dialogue between Christians and Muslims to foster mutual understanding, peaceful co-existence and promote cooperation in nation-building.

The CSC would like to thank everyone who sent cards to them with such beautiful thoughts. They mean a lot to them!

**Christian Study Centre**  
**126 Murree Road**  
**Rawalpindi Cantt, Pakistan**

### National Commission for Justice and Peace (Pakistan) (NCJP)

NCJP is one of CSW's key partner organisations in Pakistan. They are a well-organised institution with offices in all provinces and major cities of Pakistan. Please pray for the safety and security of the staff, especially those who travel to rural areas to conduct workshops and training. Pray for the leadership that they may guide the organisation and work in the right direction. Please do write to encourage the NCJP staff at the head office in Lahore. NCJP offices Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, Faisalabad, Multan, Hyderabad and Quetta will receive mail through the Lahore office.

**E 64/A, Street No. 8**  
**Officers Colony Walton Rd.**  
**Lahore**  
**Pakistan**  
**ncjihra@gmail.com**  
**www.ncjp-pk.org**



### Peace and Development Foundation (PDF Pakistan)

Romana Bashir and Arif Gill are experienced workers in interfaith harmony. Their workshops on the subject, aimed at challenging the prevailing extremist mindsets, have been very successful. Pray for the safety and security of Romana, Arif and their staff. Do write to encourage the staff as their work actually changes mindsets and effects real change on the ground.

**House No. 1959/1**  
**Indus Rd. No.3,**  
**Tariqabad, Rawalpindi Cantt. 46000**  
**Pakistan**  
**pdf.info.pk@gmail.com**

## Pakistan contd.

**CSW currently understands that raising the international profile of individual prisoners in Pakistan may worsen their conditions so, on the advice of local partners, we've removed them from this edition. At any time there are hundreds of people in detention, without a fair trial. We urge you to pray for them and their families whenever you can.**

### Farrukh Saif Foundation (FSF)

Salvance Jacob is a highly qualified and able Christian lawyer who is national head of the FSF network of Christian lawyers in representing minorities – particularly Christians – who could otherwise find no legal assistance. Religious minorities are severely discriminated against in the Punjab courts. Salvance Jacob and others have been frequently threatened with violence in and out of the courtroom; still they press on and help those most in need. Please pray for protection, safety and wisdom in their work. Please do write to encourage them as they advocate for those suffering from false accusations and the endemic prejudices in a broken justice system.

**salvancejacob3@yahoo.com**

### Cecil and Iris Chaudhry Foundation (CICF)

Michelle Chaudhry, the daughter of the late Cecil Chaudhry (Senior), is a key partner of CSW in Pakistan.

In response to the growing and neglected needs of minorities, Michelle set up a foundation in memory of her parents, who spent their lives working to improve conditions for minorities in Pakistan. Pray for Michelle to have the necessary resources to run her programmes and projects, and for protection for the CICF staff. Please write to Michelle encouraging her.

Michelle told us, 'I want to say thank you to everyone who has sent me cards. We've received over 200 cards from CSW supporters. I'm so touched and it was overwhelming for me.'

Michelle and her team would be delighted to write back to you in thanks for your encouragement! If you'd like to receive a reply from them, please include your address in the card.

**16C/1-A, Gulberg II,  
Lahore 54600  
Pakistan  
info@ci-cf.org  
www.ci-cf.org**

### Greetings from The Cecil & Iris Chaudhry Foundation!

I'm writing to express our gratitude to all CSW supporters who take out the time to send us messages of love and support. We are so touched and emotionally overwhelmed!

We in Pakistan live under very trying circumstances, religious persecution and intolerance at every level; there is so much pain and sadness in our world that frustrations and despair easily find their way into our lives, and it is at that time that we feel so encouraged and strengthened to know that we have wonderful people out there who care and are praying for us.

I thank each and every one of you for your concern, your sentiments, your prayers and your continuous support. It is people like you who give us the strength to carry on; it is people like you who give us hope that all is not lost in this bigoted and intolerant world.

You strengthen our resolve to stand firm in the face of evil as we fearlessly continue our fight for a just and tolerant Pakistan.

**May God bless you all abundantly!  
Michelle Chaudhry  
President  
The Cecil & Iris Chaudhry Foundation  
(CICF)**



Michelle Chaudhry

**“I want to say thank you to everyone who has sent me cards. We've received over 200 cards from CSW supporters. I'm so touched and it was overwhelming for me.”**

Michelle Chaudhry, Pakistan

# East Asia

Hello,

Over the last 18 months I have written to all the Cuban church leaders who are listed in the current edition of Connect & Encourage. When I write, I commit myself to praying for each person I write to every day for the next month.

David  
Ripon

Be an encourager. Today.

## Writing tip

**Please don't mention CSW or China Aid in your cards to Chinese or Vietnamese people, and do not make any comment about the government or the political system. This could endanger the person you are writing to.**

## China

Information courtesy of China Aid Association and other sources.

### Gao Zhisheng

Gao Zhisheng, a Christian human rights lawyer, was given a three-year prison sentence for 'violating the terms of his probation'. The sentence related to his 2006 probationary sentence (three years' imprisonment and five years' probation) for 'subversion of state power'. He was released in August 2014, but was put under round-the-clock surveillance. As a result of his time in prison, Gao has suffered from physical and psychological health problems.

Gao disappeared again in August 2017. Although there are conflicting accounts of his whereabouts, it is likely he is being held in some form of detention. He has not been seen since his disappearance.

It is not possible to write to him at this time, but thank you for praying faithfully for Gao. Sadly there is no update, but please pray especially for his family over the anniversary of his disappearance.

You can read more about Gao at [csw.org.uk/gao](http://csw.org.uk/gao)



Gao's daughter  
Grace Geng



Pastor Yang Hua

### Living Stone Church

Living Stone Church is an unregistered Protestant church in China. Several church members have been targeted and the government has tried to force Living Stone church members to stop meeting; they would welcome your messages of solidarity and support. Pastor Yang Hua led Living Stone Church until he was detained in 2015 for 'obstructing justice' and 'gathering a crowd to disturb social order' and later 'illegally holding state secrets'. He was formally arrested in early 2016, and his lawyers told us that he had severe health conditions as a result of his ill treatment in detention.

Almost two weeks after his trial on 26 December 2016, Pastor Yang Hua was sentenced to two and a half years in prison. In March 2017 he was reported to be 'on the verge of paralysis' as a result of severe inflammation in his legs.

Pastor Yang Hua was released from prison on 19 June 2018 after completing a two and a half year sentence. According to friends and supporters, he is suffering from several health problems.

Another leader at the church, Pastor Su Tianfu, was sentenced to one year in prison suspended for two years, with a further six months' residential surveillance, following his trial on 26 April 2018. Both pastors were also fined over US\$1 million for collecting 'illegal' donations from members of the congregation. Pastor Su Tianfu and Pastor Yang Hua have filed several appeals on the basis that the money was voluntarily donated by church members and was only used to fund church activities. All appeals were rejected.

Pastor Yang and Pastor Su would love to receive cards and messages of support from you.

Both of them would greatly appreciate your prayers and letters!

**#5-5-8 Dongshan Yi Jing Yuan  
Da Xing Garden  
Yun Yang District  
Guiyang, Guizhou, 550000  
People's Republic of China**

**“At the time, I was completely isolated because I had this stigma of having been a prisoner, but these letters really kept me going because they showed me that even though people around me didn't understand what I was doing, other people from across the world were encouraging me and writing to me.”**

Vietnamese pastor  
under house arrest

## Alimujiang Yimiti

A Uyghur Christian from Xinjiang province, Alim is being detained 'solely because of his faith' according to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention.

Alimujiang was working as a project manager for a British company, when it was targeted in a series of closures of foreign businesses belonging to Christians in Xinjiang in September 2007. Alim was detained in February 2008 and sentenced to 15 years in prison in April 2009, in a court case that did not follow due process under Chinese or international law.

Following a failed appeal, Alim was moved to a prison in Xinjiang's provincial capital, Urumqi. In February 2011 it was announced that an appeal at the Higher People's Court of Xinjiang had failed and his sentence was upheld.

In January 2013 Alim's wife was informed that her monthly visits to her husband would be cut to one every three months.

**Alimujiang Yimiti**  
**Prison No. 3 of Xinjiang**  
**No. 1339**  
**Dongzhan Road**  
**Urumqi city**  
**Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region**  
**830013**  
**People's Republic of China**



Alimujiang Yimiti

**Be an encourager. Today.**

**Writing tip** Please don't mention CSW or China Aid in your cards to Chinese or Vietnamese people, and do not make any comment about the government or the political system. This could endanger the person you are writing to.

## Pastor Zhang Shaojie

In November 2013 over 20 members of Nanle County Christian Church, Henan, which belongs to the state-sanctioned Three Self Patriotic Movement, were detained after members attempted to petition a higher authority about a land dispute involving the church. Lawyers representing the detainees were repeatedly prevented from meeting their clients and foreign journalists covering the case were also intimidated and harassed. At the time of writing, most of the detainees have been released, but Pastor Zhang Shaojie is in prison serving a 12-year sentence for fraud and 'gathering a crowd to disturb public order'. Pastor Zhang Shaojie's daughter has said that he is suffering both mentally and physically as a result of meagre food rations and sleep deprivation in prison: please pray urgently for his physical and mental health.

**Zhang Shaojie**  
**Mailbox #841 sub-box for education,**  
**Xinmi City**  
**#2 East Main St., Xinmi City**  
**Henan Province**  
**452370**  
**People's Republic of China**

## Vietnam

### Nguyen Trung Ton

Nguyen Trung Ton is an outspoken human rights defender and Protestant pastor. In February 2017 Pastor Ton was kidnapped by state agents and was stripped naked, tied, beaten and abandoned in a remote mountainous location in the middle of the night. Both his knees were seriously injured and his lungs were damaged. He was arrested on 30 July 2017 on a charge of attempting to overthrow the state. In April 2018 Nguyen Trung Ton was sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment and two years' house arrest.

Following an appeal hearing in June 2018, Truyen's sentence was upheld.

Pastor Ton has been transferred to a prison very far away from his home, in a province in a different part of the country. This makes it very difficult and expensive for his wife to visit him. His wife has been able to send him some books including the Bible. There has been some improvement in his health, but he still has pain in his leg and trouble with his kidneys. His wife is very grateful for messages she has received from people overseas.

Unfortunately we cannot give you her direct address due to security concerns, and we do not currently have the capacity to pass on your messages. Please continue to pray for her.

**“[My wife] told me she received many cards from England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. She said these people were all praying for me. It made me feel like I was part of a big family.”**

Nguyen Van Dai, Vietnam

### Nguyen Bac Truyen

Nguyễn Bắc Truyển is a legal expert and human rights activist who was abducted by the Vietnamese police in July 2017. He was held in incommunicado detention until his trial in April 2018. During this time he didn't see his wife for six months and was unable to meet with his lawyers until two weeks before his trial.

In April 2018 Truyển was convicted of 'carrying out activities aimed at overthrowing the government' and sentenced to 11 years in prison followed by three years' house arrest. In reality, his only crime is defending the oppressed.

A Hoa Hao Buddhist, Truyển speaks up for those of all faiths. In 2019 he went on hunger strike (along with other prisoners of conscience) to protest the treatment of fellow prisoner Nguyen Van Hoa, a young Catholic activist.

Unfortunately we cannot give you his direct address due to security concerns, and we do not currently have the capacity to pass on your messages. Please continue to pray for him.

**Be an encourager. Today.**

Find more writing guidance at [www.chinaaid.org/p/write-letters.html](http://www.chinaaid.org/p/write-letters.html)

# Latin America

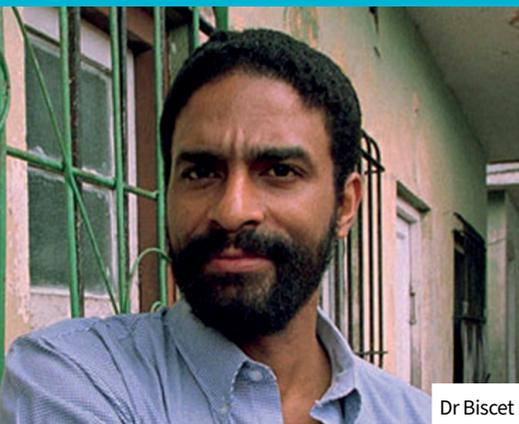
## Dear CSW,

Hope you will be pleased to know that having prayed through Connect & Encourage for many years, I have used lockdown to write to one person in each of the countries mentioned.

**Carolyn**  
Blandford Forum

## Send hope. Today.

**Tip** Please don't mention CSW or make any political comment in your cards to Cuban people – this could endanger them.



Dr Biscet

## Colombia

Despite the signing of the peace agreement, many church leaders in Colombia are regular targets of threats, forced displacement and assassination. The illegal armed groups that are present in large parts of the country continue to severely restrict religious activities, and churches are frequently extorted by them. Indigenous communities also suffer conflict-related violations, and have seen their freedom of religion severely curbed by courts ruling in favour of traditional authorities seeking to impose religious uniformity in their communities.

### Members of indigenous communities

Members of indigenous communities who have converted to other faiths or no faith, and away from the religious beliefs and practices promoted by their leaders, face suffering and severe discrimination within their communities. This includes threats of forced displacement or being excluded from receiving certain benefits by indigenous authorities, generally known as 'cabildos'. Despite strong protections for freedom of religion or belief in the constitution and in international treaties that Colombia has signed up to, Colombian courts have ruled that these rights do not extend to those living on indigenous lands where collective cultural rights take precedence.

In some indigenous reserves religious minority children suffer daily discrimination because the school curriculum is designed to comply with traditional beliefs.

Please write to them care of the following address. Since there are so many, and new cases occur on a regular basis, it's best to address your cards generally and let our contacts distribute them.

**RELIEC**  
**Calle 24A # 75-83 piso 2**  
**Barrio Modelia**  
**Bogotá D.C**  
**Colombia**

## Cuba

### Bernardo and Damaris de Quesada

On 8 January 2016, government officials initiated the destruction of Reverend Bernardo de Quesada Salomon's church without warning. Numerous other Apostolic Movement church leaders in Camagüey and Las Tunas, as well as other parts of the country, were arbitrarily detained or confined to their homes by state security agents at that time – presumably to stop them from going to support the churches which were being demolished.

Nonetheless, the de Quesada family and their church continue to congregate and worship, and have since rebuilt their church.

**Revs Bernardo and Damaris de Quesada**  
**Calle 4ta No 27**  
**Versalles, Camagüey**  
**CP 70600**  
**Cuba**

### The Rigal family

Ruth and Joel are the children of Reverend Ramón Rigal and Pastor Adya Expósito Leyva. They attended school online as their parents didn't want to send their children to a state-run school where they would be bullied because of their beliefs.

However, parents are legally required to send their children to state-run schools and protecting Ruth and Joel in this manner is illegal in Cuba. As a result, in April 2019, both Ramón and Adya were imprisoned for their decision to home-school their children.

Adya was released from detention in March 2020 after serving over 11 months of an 18-month sentence for the alleged crime of

'other acts against the normal development of a minor'. For many months during their parents' imprisonment, Ruth and Joel weren't able to live in the same house.

Ramón was released in June 2020 after serving 14 months of a two-year sentence. For much of his imprisonment, Ramón was in a maximum security unit where he was denied conditional freedom, and was allowed to receive only one visit per month.

**La Familia Rigal**  
**1075 Luz Caballero entre Donato Mármol y Varona**  
**Ciudad de Guantánamo**  
**Guantánamo**  
**Cuba**

### Dr Oscar Elías Biscet

Dr Biscet was released in early 2011 after serving eight years of a 25-year sentence, following a deal brokered by the Catholic Church. He was imprisoned because of his human rights work. He is now at home with his wife, Elsa, but they feel very unsafe so rarely go out except to attend church on Sundays, and Dr Biscet remains under constant state surveillance. He is a devout Christian and pacifist, and was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize in 2011. CSW has been supporting Dr Biscet for over ten years.

**Dr Oscar Elías Biscet and Elsa Morejón Hernández Acosta**  
**464 e/ 8va y 9va**  
**Lawton**  
**Ciudad de la Habana**  
**Cuba**

### Reverend Juan Carlos Núñez

Rev Juan Carlos Núñez's church belongs to the Apostolic Movement, an unregistered network of Protestant churches. In October 2017, he was found guilty of violating the environmental protection law following noise complaints from neighbours

about his church's sound system. Following the complaints, Juan Carlos was given a one-year sentence of house arrest. This is not unusual in Cuba, where government agents sometimes try to instigate community hostility towards a local church by encouraging complaints.

**Rev Juan Carlos Núñez**  
**Maceo 19**  
**Las Tunas, Las Tunas**  
**Cuba**

### Father José Conrado

Father Conrado is a Roman Catholic priest who has suffered harassment and threats for speaking out against human rights violations and allowing the families of political prisoners to attend Mass at his church.

**Padre José Conrado**  
**Iglesia y Convento de San Francisco**  
**de Paula**  
**Calle Fernando Hernández esq. a Piro**  
**Guinart**  
**Trinidad, Sancti Spíritus**  
**Cuba**

### Pastor Reutilio Columbié

In February 2012 Pastor Reutilio Columbié was beaten so violently that he suffered brain damage. It's believed that this attack was a direct result of his challenge to the authorities over their arbitrary confiscation of his church's truck. He was found unconscious in the street after the severe beating, and now struggles with his speech and with memory loss.

**Reutilio Columbié Leiva**  
**Iglesia Evangélica Centro**  
**Cristiano Shalom**  
**Calle Cabaña, Reparto Monterrey**  
**Moa, Holguín**  
**Cuba**

### Maranatha First Baptist Church of Holguín

The Maranatha First Baptist Church continues to report difficulties with the government. It took them years to obtain permission to go ahead with their new building, and religious freedom violations against other members of their denomination continue to occur.

**Primera Iglesia Bautista Maranatha**  
**Fomento 298 e/ Martí y Luz**  
**Caballero**  
**Ciudad de Holguín, Holguín 80100**  
**Cuba**

### Dagoberto Valdez

Dagoberto Valdez is a Catholic lay leader who has been the target of threats and harassment because of his activities in independent civil society, including working on independent Christian publications.

**Dagoberto Valdez**  
**Polvorín #8 e/ San Juan y Raverio**  
**Pinar del Rio CP 20100**  
**Cuba**

### Pastor Onel Pardillo Garcia

Pastor Onel Pardillo Garcia and his church have been under pressure, including government surveillance. Please pray that they would find the economic resources they need as they seek to undertake new constructions to their church buildings; and for protection from surveillance for Onel and his family.

**Calle 97a No. 3802A e/38 y 38a,**  
**Lotería, Cotorro**  
**CP14000, Ciudad de la Habana**  
**Cuba**

### Rev Roberto Rodríguez

In an answer to prayer Reverend Rodríguez was cleared of the charges against him. He and his family continue to live in difficult circumstances and have been unable to return to their home.

**Rvdo Roberto Rodríguez y Familia**  
**Princesa No. 52 e/ Laborde y Gene**  
**Cardenas, 42110**  
**Matanzas**  
**Cuba**

### Yaguajay Baptist Church

As part of a dispute over the ownership of this church's property, the local authorities claimed that the church's land had been nationalised in October 1980. Subsequently, the church property was confiscated and handed over to government businesses. The historic church building belonged to the Western Baptist Convention prior to the Revolution.

**Pastor Yuri Castellanos Pérez**  
**Yaguajay Baptist Church**  
**Calle Quintín Banderas #15**  
**Yaguajay**  
**Sancti Spíritus CP 65100**  
**Cuba**

### Pastors Rolando and Elizabet Ortiz Bode

Over the last decade, Rolando and Elizabet have been involved in leading a steadily-growing house church affiliated with the Eastern Baptist Convention. Since July 2014 they have been under pressure from the government.

**Pastors Rolando and**  
**Elizabet Ortiz Bode**  
**Céspedes 53 e/ Villuendas y Juan**  
**M. Feijó**  
**Jatibonico**  
**Sancti Spíritus**  
**Cuba**



Omar Gude Pérez

Omar Gude Pérez was a prominent church leader who served three years in prison in Cuba enduring the most brutal physical and mental torture. He was tempted to abandon his faith and adopt the vicious lifestyle of the prisoners around him, but at his very lowest point his wife, Kenia, brought him a card from a little girl. It read, 'God still has faith in you, and I trust you.' This simple message renewed Omar's faith and helped him to continue to endure his captivity. Shortly afterwards, Omar was released.

Omar Gude Pérez, Cuba

## Alain Toledano Valiente

Reverend Alain Toledano Valiente and his family have been experiencing severe harassment from the government and Communist party officials for many years. In 2007 and 2016, Rev Toledano Valiente's Emanuel Church was demolished by the authorities. Harassment of Alain has since intensified, with increased police summons and interrogations.

**Alain Toledano Valiente**  
**Edificio: 36, Escalera B,**  
**Apartamento: 2, Micro: 3,**  
**El Salao**  
**Santiago de Cuba**  
**Cuba**

## Pastor Tomasa Victoria Ayala Zeller

Pastor Tomasa Victoria Ayala Zeller and her family were evicted from their home on 22 May 2009. They were originally told that the house, which also served as the church, would be confiscated in July 2008, despite the fact that Tomaza and her husband Jorge had lived there for almost 30 years and were the legal owners. When they were finally evicted, the authorities gave them documents prohibiting Tomaza from holding any religious services and the police chief threatened to imprison her for 'dangerousness'.

**Tomasa Victoria Ayala Zeller**  
**Ministerio Apostólico Internacional**  
**Fuego y Dinámica, Elia Calle 23,**  
**número 33, entre calle 8 y calle**  
**10, reparto Santa Lucía, Municipio**  
**Colombia, Elia, Las Tunas**  
**Cuba**

## Reverend Arcadis Solano

Reverend Arcadis has been experiencing severe harassment from government and Communist party officials for many years. During the pandemic the government harassment has continued, with phone calls, official summons and interrogations from the government.

**Arcadis Rafael Solano**  
**Carretera Country Club,**  
**Nro 106 Km 1**  
**El Caney**  
**Santiago de Cuba**  
**Cuba**

## Apóstol Marcos Antonio Perdomo Silva

Apóstol Marcos is a pastor from the Apostolic Movement whose church was destroyed in July 2014. Since then he has had his house taken from him, turning him into a tenant, he has been imprisoned, his family have been abused, and his children have been persecuted in school for being pastor's children.

**Apóstol Marcos Antonio Perdomo**  
**Silva, Ministerio Apostólico y Profético**  
**'Estableciendo el Reino de Dios', Calle**  
**C número 147**  
**reparto Acerradero**  
**Guamá**  
**Santiago de Cuba**  
**Cuba**

## Daniel Josué Pérez Naranjo

Baptist pastor Reverend Daniel Josué Pérez Naranjo has been waiting for over two decades, since 1997, for his denomination to be re-registered and legalised. Without registration, Reverend Naranjo cannot carry out vital repairs on his church (which is also his home) or start new churches in his local area.

**Daniel Josué Pérez Naranjo, Iglesia**  
**Bautista Misión Bereana (Berean**  
**Baptist Mission Church)**  
**Arroyon Chaparra**  
**Las Tunas**  
**77300**  
**Cuba**

## Reverend Yordanys Díaz

Reverend Yordanys Díaz is a pastor and leader of his denomination. He and his family have been targeted by the government. The government attempted to get his denomination to expel him, but instead they elected him president of the denomination.

Pastor Yordanys and his church continue to face harassment from the government, especially since his denomination withdrew from the government-controlled Cuban Council of Churches in late 2020.

**Reverend Yordanys Diaz**  
**Calzada 10 de Octubre #1816**  
**E/Santa Amalia y Arnao**  
**Reparto Santa Amalia**  
**Municipio Arroyo Naranjo**  
**La Habana**  
**Cuba**

## Reverend Hernández Armas

Reverend Hernández Armas, a pastor and leader in the Western Baptist Convention, has been labelled a 'counter-revolutionary' and prohibited from travelling outside of Cuba.

**Reverend Carlos Sebastián**  
**Hernández Armas**  
**Calle 69 #1605 e/16 y 18**  
**Cotorro, Ciudad de la Habana**  
**14000**  
**Cuba**

## Mexico

Please send cards of encouragement to religious minority families in Mexico, including those who have been forcibly displaced, care of the following two addresses. Since there are so many, and new cases occur on a regular basis it's best to address them generally and let our contacts distribute them.

**Attn Luis Herrera**  
**Calle Gonzalez Bocanegra No. 16-C**  
**Barrio de San Antonio, CP 29250**  
**San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas**  
**Mexico**

**Dr Jorge Lee Galindo**  
**Ave Mirador de Queretaro #21**  
**Interior 51, Fraccionamiento**  
**El Mirador, El Marques, Queretaro**  
**CP 76246, Mexico**

## Juana

Juana and her family converted to Protestant Christianity in 2009. Because of their faith, they decided that they would no longer take part in local festivals or join in the activities of the majority religion. Just four months later, Juana, her family, and several other groups of Protestant Christians were driven out of their home village.

Juana now lives in a home she had to build herself with financial help from her family. As her husband died a few years ago, Juana is the sole breadwinner. Her children have to take care of themselves while she goes to work. Her oldest daughter, Adriana, has had to leave school so she can cook and care for her siblings. Unfortunately we cannot give you her direct address due to security concerns, and we do not currently have the capacity to pass on your messages. Please continue to pray for her.

Our manifesto #5

We believe **everyone** deserves  
to have their story heard.

**CSW** everyone  
free to believe

CSW is a human rights organisation advocating for freedom of religion or belief, and as Christians we stand with everyone facing injustice because of their religion or belief.

T +44 (0)20 8329 0010

🐦 @CSW\_UK

f /CSWUK

csw.org.uk

PO Box 99

New Malden

Surrey, KT3 3YF

United Kingdom

Registered Charity No. 281836



Freeport RTHJ-UYUU-YJTX  
CSM  
P0 Box 99  
NEW MALDEN  
KT3 3YF



CSW everyone  
free to believe

**Our manifesto #9**

We believe **your voice holds  
unimaginable power  
and can save lives.**

# We believe **your voice holds unimaginable power and can save lives.**

We would like to keep in touch with news about our work and how you can support it. Please let us know how you prefer to hear from us by completing your details below.

Name:	Address:
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Phone number:	Email:
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## Keeping in touch

- Post  Email  Please do not contact me by post  
 Please do not send ANY further communications.

If you would like to change how you hear from us in the future or opt out of further communications, get in touch on **020 8329 0010** or email **admin@csw.org.uk**.

For further details, please see our privacy policy at **csw.org.uk/privacy**

**CSW** everyone  
**free to believe**

Please fold, tape up and return your complete form to:

**CSW, FREEPOST, PO Box 99, New Malden, Surrey, KT3 3YF**

Reg Charity No. 281836