

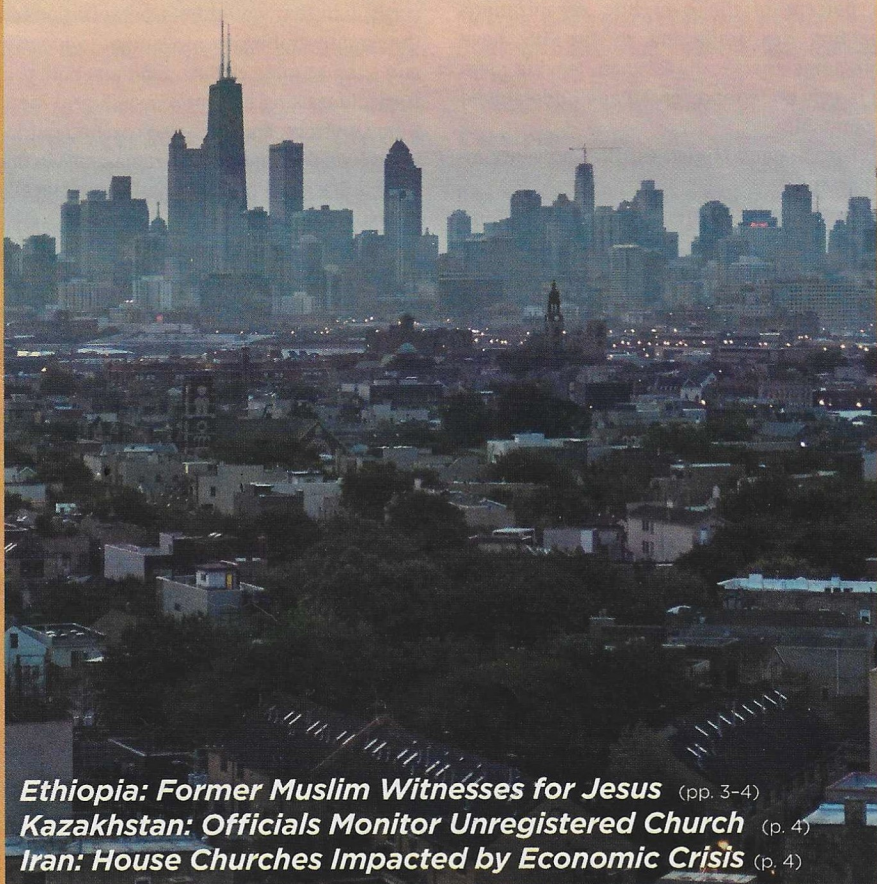
## significant news for christians

Some news that's encouraging—some disturbing. Read with discernment. Watch and pray.

# THE Church Around the WORLD

July  
2022

## Emmaus Ministries Supports Male Sex Trafficking Survivors



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## Emmaus Ministries Supports Male Sex Trafficking Survivors (1)

“Men can’t be victims of sex trafficking.” That’s the painfully wrong assumption Chicago-based Emmaus Ministries has been fighting against for more than 30 years. Emmaus seeks to amplify the voices of male sex-trafficking survivors and equip others to identify and support victims of trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation.

Sex trafficking is often assumed to be an exclusively female problem. Yet one nationwide study found that 36 percent of youth involved in the sex trade are male. Other studies suggest that boys may account for as many as half of the sex trafficking victims in US metro areas. But less than 2 percent of the over 800 organizations fighting sex trafficking in the US have programs specifically for men, leaving them a largely underrepresented and underserved community.

For Emmaus Ministries, that presents an opportunity.

Emmaus discovered that more than 90 percent of male youth ensnared in the sex trade reported having been involved in a youth homelessness program, the child welfare system, or the juvenile justice system. But these institutions were often ill-

equipped to identify sexual exploitation of males, meaning they were unable to help the young men to leave the sex trade.

An Emmaus representative said, “To prevent trafficking and increase early intervention for male victims, our path was clear: build relationships with these institutions and provide them with resources to identify and support . . . victims.”

Emmaus hired a former deputy director for the Department of Family and Support Services for Chicago, who previously oversaw all youth homeless shelters and community centers, places male victims of exploitation would frequent. This new hire has helped Emmaus navigate Chicago’s social services, making connections and building relationships with key agencies.

The next move was to develop a curriculum that would train organizations in the counter-trafficking movement to identify and support male victims. Emmaus built this curriculum using current research and input from survivors. Emmaus also reached out for input from the handful of organizations in the United States with programming specifically for male victims.

The resulting curriculum has been vetted and championed by the Cook County Human Trafficking Task Force, and the Emmaus team has started to schedule training meetings with churches and other organizations that

## PRAYER FOR THE PERSECUTED

### Recommended Scripture:

**Genesis 11:1–13:4 | Matthew 5:1–26 | Psalm 5:1–12 | Proverbs 1:24–28**

Jesus doesn’t hide the truth: follow him and you’ll encounter conflict. It’s a natural consequence when followers of Christ live out biblical values that run counter to their culture. But what’s not natural—what takes God’s supernatural help—is to be joyful about experiencing persecution. To endure it with grace. To see suffering as a way to glorify God.

*Lord, your children suffer in large and small ways for their faith. Comfort them. Fill them with joy as they walk in the truth, knowing that you are with them, right beside them. Amen.*

More prayer prompts are available in *The One Year Pray for the Persecuted Bible*.



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work with at-risk youth.

The Emmaus representative said, “Equipping people with the ability to see signs of trafficking and exploitation and the tools to intercede expands Emmaus’ ability to support male victims and survivors exponentially. After Emmaus conducted our training with an organization that works with at-risk youth, the staff who attended all reported that they found the training valuable and could immediately recognize victimization in males that they did not see before.”

Hearing from someone who experienced the horrors of the sex trade provides a small sense of the profound impact this kind of training can have. “David” (a pseudonym to protect his privacy) was instrumental in providing input throughout the creation of the Emmaus curriculum. David’s foster brother was abusive and started trafficking him when he was 12 years old.

“I don’t know how my (foster care) caseworker missed all the signs. I told her I was being trafficked and about all the things that were being done to me. I could tell she didn’t believe me—nobody ever did,” David said. “Things like that don’t happen to boys.”

David ran away to Chicago when he was 15. Without a place to stay and no way to support himself, David started prostituting to survive. He spent nearly a decade on the streets in a cycle of shame, addiction, exploitation, and incarceration.

“I’d seen people from Emmaus on the streets for years. They were always pretty nice to me, but I wasn’t buying what they were selling. One day, after a very hard night, I just needed a place to shower and wash my clothes,” David said. “[Emmaus] welcomed me home like the prodigal son.”

David stopped hustling within days after that experience and has since been actively involved with Emmaus. He’s been able to find full-time work, has a roof over his head, and has remained plugged in to a local church community. “I still don’t completely know why God took me through those hard times in life, but I know that I can help other people who are still there.”

Please pray for Emmaus Ministries and its partners as they build outreach programs to serve boys and young men victimized by the sex trade—boys just like David.

*Financial support for this project was provided to Emmaus Ministries as a Tyndale House Foundation grantee. Tyndale House Foundation is a grantmaking organization that partners with Christian ministries around the world. To learn more, visit [tyndale.foundation](http://tyndale.foundation).*

### **Ethiopia: Former Muslim Witnesses for Jesus (2)**

Sheikh Ashim Hussein, 41 and father to nine children, grew up as a devout Muslim in Ethiopia. Zealous for Islamic teachings, he sought to destroy Christianity and once



mobilized his students to set fire to a church. But when the church members gathered at the site of their burned church and prayed aloud for the forgiveness of those responsible, their witness bewildered Sheikh Ashim and shook his spiritual foundations. "These people are not healthy people," he thought. "How can they pray that God forgives someone who burned their church? In my religion, we curse people who do evil things."

Eventually, Sheikh Ashim trusted Christ for salvation and left Islam. But when Sheikh Ashim's Muslim community learned of his newfound faith, they rejected him, driving him from his home and threatening to kill him. Over the past decade, he has had to relocate multiple times due to ongoing harassment and threats. In spite of this, he boldly witnesses for Christ and has led 29 other sheikhs to salvation in him. "I don't get peace if I do not witness for Jesus," he said.

*Pray for Sheikh Ashim as he continues to share the gospel with Muslims.*

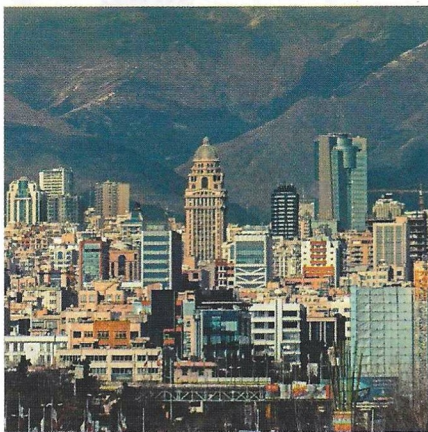
### **Kazakhstan: Officials Monitor Unregistered Church** <sup>(3)</sup>

An unregistered church in Oral, Kazakhstan, was fined in January, after police and officials from the Religious Affairs Department raided the church's Christmas service, taking several members of the congregation to the police station. They fined two members the equivalent of one month's salary. Since then, an official has been present to monitor church meetings. For the last six months, the same woman has sat in the back and recorded the meetings. She also counts how many people are there and tracks attendees.

"Let her come and hear the Word of God,"

one church member said. "We don't allow her to record, but she still does it." Another pastor from elsewhere in Kazakhstan said it used to be common for officials to monitor church services but is now rarer.

*Pray that the official sitting in these church services in Oral will be touched by the gospel.*



### **Iran: House Churches Impacted by Economic Crisis** <sup>(4)</sup>

Iran's house church network faces challenges as a result of the country's struggling economy. With a job shortage and limited access to food and fuel, believers face increasing difficulty in opening their homes to share the gospel with friends and family or disciple new believers. As the economic outlook in Iran remains bleak, pray that our Iranian brothers and sisters in Christ will be a source of hope and light.

*Pray that Iranian Christians will have access to the resources needed to advance the gospel amid the economic challenges.*