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Release Women Email - June 2021

Dear Friend in Christ,

‘My wife was a hero Christian’

Do you have a ‘hero of the faith’? Maybe someone who has been influential in your Christian life. Maybe a biblical character who has inspired you. The ‘wife of noble character’ described in Proverbs 31:10-31 may be one such ‘hero’. She’s described as being worth far more than rubies (v10), hard working (v13), providing for her family and household (v15). She’s a wife, a mother and a successful businesswoman (v18). Her family lack nothing but she’s generous in her help to others too (v20-21) and her husband is well-respected in his local community (v23). But the final description of her, in verses 30-31, is perhaps the most telling: ‘Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; **but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.** Honour her for all that her hands have done, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.’

It would be easy to feel overwhelmed by the ‘heroic’ standard set by the wife of noble character, but Afewerki, an Eritrean father of four, describes his wife Fekadu as a ‘hero Christian’. You may wonder what she had done to deserve such an accolade.

Eritrea is a small country on the Horn of Africa, sometimes known as the North Korea of

Africa because of the repressive regime and the persecution experienced there by Christians. In May 2002, President Isaias Afewerki (no relation to the Afewerki above) closed many churches in Eritrea and severely restricted religious freedom, especially for evangelical Christians. As a result of the restrictions, Fekadu and her oldest son were arrested for attending a prayer meeting. Her husband was also later arrested. They were imprisoned locally and then transferred to Mektel-Abet, where temperatures regularly rise in excess of 40 degrees.

Prison conditions were poor and the prisoners were often beaten. All the women were ill, including Fekadu and she didn't eat or drink for a week. After Afewerki was released, he heard that his wife had died after being denied treatment for an unspecified illness. 'I cried and cried,' says Afewerki, 'but I know that my wife was a hero Christian.'

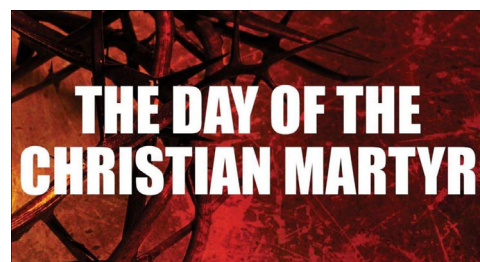


Afewerki shows a picture of his wife Fekadu with their daughter. Inset: Afewerki and his family.

We may think that heroes have to do something dramatic or dangerous, or to be exceptional in every way – like the wife of noble character. That isn't the case though for Fekadu. Afewerki describes her as a Christian hero, because she died for her faith in Jesus. She is one of many Christians each year who are killed, or die, because of their Christian faith; they are modern-day martyrs.

Each year at Release International we set aside a day, especially to remember Christian martyrs and their families, in an act of commemoration. This year, our **Day of the Christian Martyr** is on Tuesday, June 29, and we will be holding a special online service. The event will start at

7.30pm and is expected to run for approximately one hour. Please do join us for what promises to be a moving and inspirational evening as we remember those of our Christian



family who have paid the ultimate price for following Christ. There will be a special contribution from our partner **Revd Waseem** (pictured) in Pakistan who recently interviewed relatives of the victims of the 2016 Lahore park bomb blast. The event is free but registration is required and donations are very welcome. You will be able to book your place via [Eventbrite](#).

As you remember modern-day Christian martyrs, please do pray for Fekadu's husband Afewerki and their four children, as they build a new life without their own hero of the faith.



Blessings,

Release Women Team

Please CLICK on the red button if you prayed.

I prayed!

Through our international network of missions, Release International serves persecuted Christians in 25 countries around the world by supporting pastors and Christian prisoners, and their families; supplying Christian literature and Bibles; and working for justice.

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