

# Taliban laws regarding women prompt calls for prayer

August 30, 2024

NASHVILLE (BP)—A new Taliban law restricting the rights of women even further has led to calls for prayer from Arabic church leaders as well as Afghans who have fled in recent years.

“These women are victims,” said Raid Al Safadi, pastor of Arabic Baptist Church of San Antonio. “Islamic law and Sharia law deal with them as slaves, something that is owned and not as a human being.”

The “Law on the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice” was adopted recently in Afghanistan. Among other things, it mandates women wear clothing that covers their entire bodies, including their faces. It also bans their voices being heard in public and adds more restrictions to moving about without being accompanied by a male relative.

“This makes me very sad,” Al Safadi said. “They have no rights, no freedom to express themselves or have a personality. They are not allowed the choice of how to live.”

Twenty years after its removal by U.S. troops, the Taliban returned to power in August 2021 as America’s military withdrew. That soon brought a return to the previous draconian laws as part of Taliban rule with the few Christians remaining forced to operate under extreme secrecy.

“It is a mess, and a lot of Afghans came to America. One of our guys, though, told me through tears how much he praised God. His family was here, and there is a chance for his daughters to go to school in America,” Al Safadi said.

# **‘The Taliban has taken everything’**

Another Afghan refugee who asked to remain anonymous told BP the news left him feeling “completely hopeless.”

“The Taliban has taken everything,” he said. “They cannot see people happy. I am very sad and worry about my own family. I am praying to God to show me a way to protect them from Satan.

“As a Christian, prayer is everything for me to share my sadness, and happiness, with God. Prayer has its own power and mine is that God establishes his kingdom in Afghanistan for his people.”

The new law also requires men to grow beards, bans drivers from playing music and restricts media from publishing images of people.

Al Safadi, who is from Jordan, tells of his own experiences in returning to remote villages that have a Christian presence because individuals have seen healings and been visited by Jesus in their dreams.

“It opens people’s eyes to something bigger than Islam,” he said. “I received many calls from those wanting to know more about Jesus.

“We can reach Afghanistan by reaching Afghani people in America. They are a big field and ready. Share the gospel with them to help them understand Christianity. When they become Christians, it becomes a great opportunity to become a ministry in Afghanistan for the future.”

There is a reason for the Taliban to want to limit exposure to technology. Al Safadi told how sites like YouTube can be crucial not only for Afghans to learn English, but also to be exposed to and learn about Christ.

“We need to work to empower and make disciples of Afghani people in America so we can send them all over the world,” he said. “They are in

America, but their dream is to return to Afghanistan. When they become disciples, they can do something.”