

Open *Doors*

PRAYER DIARY | November/December 2022



**“Glory to God in the
highest heaven,
and on earth peace
to those on whom
his favour rests.”**

LUKE 2:14

NOVEMBER

Persecuted children

Tuesday 1 November

Hundreds of thousands of Christian children across the world face persecution because of their faith – either because they are directly targeted, or because their families are persecuted. Pray for Open Doors partners providing children with protection, a Christian education and access to God's Word so they can stand strong in their faith.

Wednesday 2 November – Colombia

Valentina (15) found refuge from persecution at the Children's Centre in Colombia, run by Open Doors, where she has received an education and emotional support (see Magazine p6). Pray that more children vulnerable to persecution would know God as their 'refuge in times of trouble' (Psalm 59:16).

Thursday 3 November – Colombia

Pray for continued strength, wisdom and joy for the teachers, tutors and psychologists who serve at the Children's Centre. It takes a lot of wisdom and knowledge to help these children overcome their traumas and see a better future. Pray that all who serve at the centre would pass on God's plans for 'hope and a future' to the children (Jeremiah 29:11).

Friday 4 November – Iraq

Mimi (12) and her family were displaced by so-called Islamic State. A microloan from Open Doors partners enabled them to return home and start a farm, but they continue to face discrimination. Pray that Mimi will grow in resilience and that her family and small Christian community will continue to stand strong.

Saturday 5 November

So many children across the world have known the destructive consequences of war and displacement. Please pray God provides children in war-torn countries like Iraq, Syria and Yemen with a bright future of safety, stability and freedom in their faith.

Sunday 6 November

Christian children in predominantly Muslim countries are often bullied for not wearing a veil or adhering strictly to Ramadan. Ask God to increase their understanding and wisdom in how to respond in these situations, and to guide them in their faith.

Monday 7 November – Myanmar

In the wake of the ongoing civil war in Myanmar, many young people have become addicted to drugs. The junta (Myanmar military) make drugs easily accessible so that addiction will suppress the population – especially youth and children. Pray for God's protection for these children, and for an end to the junta's cruelty.

Tuesday 8 November

Praise God for the many children's Bibles and Christian

books that Open Doors has distributed to Christian children facing persecution! They are a source of hope and encouragement to young people and their families. Pray that these resources will help to deepen their faith in Jesus.

| Latin America

Wednesday 9 November – Colombia

Reina* is a pastor in Urabá, one of the most violent regions of Colombia. Ask God to protect her and her family as she ministers to her community. Pray for strength that she will remain steadfast in her faith despite the persecution she faces.

Thursday 10 November – Colombia

Please pray for political freedom in Colombia. The recent presidential elections were mostly calm, but it's not unusual for people to be coerced during the voting – some people can be threatened physically, and others are told they will lose their jobs. Ask for God's justice to reign in the country.

Friday 11 November – Colombia

Miguel*, Fernando* and John* are pastors who once belonged to illegal armed groups. They now face threats from their former groups because they've chosen to follow Jesus. Pray that God will keep them and their families safe, and that they will continue to spread the gospel in their communities.

Saturday 12 November – Venezuela

Pastor Jose Vivas is an active major in Venezuela's Air Force. After being falsely accused of encouraging an uprising against the government, he's no longer allowed to leave the country. Please pray that God will strengthen him in his faith and help him to continue to be salt and light in his community.

Sunday 13 November – Mexico

Currently in Mexico there are 12 cartels at war for territory; Christians often face violence and death threats for standing up to them. Pray for an end to drug trafficking, and ask God to bring peace to the country and provide leaders who will fight effectively for justice and truth.

Monday 14 November – Mexico

Femicide is a huge problem – approximately ten women are killed every day in Mexico. Please pray for an end to this violence, and that women will be recognised as God's image-bearers. Pray for healing for those who have lost a mother, daughter or wife.

Tuesday 15 November – Mexico

Praise God for the Open Doors team in Mexico, who are working hard with a local lawyer to reconcile tensions between Christian converts and non-Christians living in rural indigenous communities. The team says: "In six cases, the authorities have ruled in favour of our fellow Christians; three cases are still in the legal process."

*Names changed for security reasons

Give thanks for **ANSWERED PRAYER**

LIVING AGAIN AFTER **ESCAPE** FROM SAUDI ARABIA

Image used for illustrative purposes

ADAM'S BEEN BEATEN, IMPRISONED AND FALSELY ACCUSED. WE ASKED FOR YOUR PRAYERS – AND THEY HAVE BEEN ANSWERED.

Adam* grew up a Muslim. He comes from a Yemeni background but has spent most of his life in Saudi Arabia. When Eve*, his sister-in-law, became a Christian four years ago, her family asked Adam to convince her to return to Islam – but instead her faith inspired Adam to give his life to Jesus.

Since then, Adam has faced multiple charges – including

inciting others away from Islam and helping Eve to flee the country because of persecution – and has spent time in prison. Last July, he sent his family abroad while he battled the accusations. A month later, Adam was convinced to join them following a brutal attack ordered by his brother-in-law that left him severely wounded and visibly discouraged.

"I'd like to thank every brother and sister who prayed for me and contributed to getting us a place to live together," Adam shares from a safe country where Open Doors local partners are helping the family settle. They have joined a church with other Yemeni believers. The two children are studying to become dentists.

"I'd like to thank every brother and sister who prayed for me."

Meanwhile, Adam is learning to shake off the false guilt that accompanied his escape. "It took a while for him to be freed from the feeling of failure," says Hakeem*, a family friend. "We showed him the example of Paul in the Bible. When people searched for Paul, Christian friends helped him to flee the city. [Acts 9:25]

"We don't encourage Christians to leave their country," Hakeem continues. "But this was an emergency. Adam had gone through too much, and it could put other Christians at risk. He was really in danger, that is why we helped him. If he had stayed, things wouldn't look good for him and for others."

"I feel that today I can live again," Adam says. "Your prayers have been answered. What we need in this world is to turn to God in prayer for the church and for the sake of others. God listens to the true

prayers. If we pray, we will feel His presence and we will have His guidance."

PLEASE PRAY

- That the family will heal from trauma
- That Adam will soon find work to support his family
- That Adam's sons will thrive in their faith and studies.

*Names changed for security reasons



TACKLE PERSECUTION

Saudi Arabia is one of seven countries on the World Watch List playing in the 2022 FIFA men's World Cup. We've put together a special prayer diary featuring stories, facts and prayer requests from these nations for you to use during the World Cup. Order your copy and find other World Cup resources for all ages at opendoorsuk.org/worldcup

| Afghanistan

Wednesday 16 November

Secret believers continue to live in deep fear that they will be discovered and face violent persecution. Pray for their protection and that God's close presence will bring peace to their hearts.

Thursday 17 November

Drug addiction has been rampant in Afghanistan for many years and has become much worse since the Taliban takeover last August. Pray for a reversal of this trend and that the Taliban will take steps that bring hope rather than despair.

Friday 18 November

The reestablishment of the 'Ministry for the Prevention of Vice and Promotion of Virtue' reflects the Taliban's desire to enforce their strict interpretation of Sharia (Islamic law). Pray that international pressure will lead to greater freedom for women and religious minorities.

Saturday 19 November

Several male Afghan refugees in countries neighbouring Afghanistan have been deported without explanation. It's led to other refugees being reluctant to go out to earn money, for fear of discovery. Pray for an end to these deportations.

| World Cup

Sunday 20 November – Qatar

The men's football World Cup begins today and seven of the competing countries

are on the World Watch List, including host nation Qatar. "God is visiting people in their dreams. God is doing healings among the Qatari people," shares a church leader. Pray for more encounters like this.

Monday 21 November – Iran

Iran is in a group with England, Wales and USA. They play England today. Pray that the World Cup will present new opportunities for Christians in Iran to share the gospel and gather with each other for fellowship.

Tuesday 22 November – Tunisia

Christians in Tunisia can face intense pressure from their families to renounce their faith. Two believers, Zara* and Mohsin*, are currently facing this from their two families. Pray they will be given wisdom, boldness and strength.

Wednesday 23 November – Morocco

Abd* is often closely watched by the authorities because of his faith. Another believer, Meriam*, is passionate to share the gospel, but she struggles to know how to do this. Pray for peace and protection for Abd, and ask God to fill Meriam with courage and confidence.

Thursday 24 November – Cameroon

The ongoing Anglophone crisis – a civil war that's been fought since 2017 – has preoccupied the government, resulting in less security in the north where Islamic militant group Boko Haram is active.

It's making Christians more vulnerable to attack. Pray that the government will be stirred and equipped to counter this extremist threat.

Friday 25 November – Iran

You might remember Homayoun Zhavah (who has Parkinson's disease) and his wife, Sara Ahmadi. They were respectively given two and eight years' imprisonment for Christian activities. When they reported to begin their sentences, they were told they could go home. However, they've now been detained. Pray for their immediate release.

Saturday 26 November – Mexico

Open Doors local partners recently ran workshops (PICTURED BELOW) for Christians living in three states where murder rates are among the highest in the country. Church leaders who speak out against criminal gangs are especially at risk. Pray that believers will be used boldly by God to reduce crime and reach gang members with the love of Jesus.



Sunday 27 November – Arabian Peninsula

Open Doors local partners help facilitate around 200 face-to-face meetings each year with people they've connected with online who've used the internet to express an interest in Christianity,

for example, they might have googled, "Who is Jesus?" Pray that this internet ministry will grow even more effective.

| Persecuted women

Monday 28 November – UK

Globally, Christian women face persecution for their faith and gender. The Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI) conference, which begins today in London, is a great opportunity for Open Doors to raise awareness of the double vulnerability of our persecuted sisters. Pray that government representatives will be impacted by what they hear and make tangible commitments towards addressing this issue.

Tuesday 29 November – UK

Pray for wisdom for the Open Doors Advocacy team as they meet with delegates. Pray that Foreign Secretary James Cleverly MP – together with other Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office ministers – will engage with Open Doors and other organisations to prevent sexual violence in conflict around the world.

Wednesday 30 November – UK

Pray that delegates at the PSVI conference will understand how religious identity can heighten the vulnerability of women and girls in many countries around the world. Ask God to give them discernment to know the next steps to take in preventing sexual violence.

*Names changed for security reasons

A black and white portrait of Brother Andrew, an elderly man with white hair, smiling and looking slightly to the right. He is wearing a dark suit, a light blue shirt, and a patterned tie.

Celebrating the life of Brother Andrew

1928-2022

When he was once asked what words he would like on his gravestone, Open Doors founder Brother Andrew had a simple answer: “A disciple of Christ” – is there any further explanation needed? Is there a greater honour than to be called a disciple of Jesus Christ?”

Throughout his 94 years, that was an honour that was central to Brother Andrew's life.

GOD'S SMUGGLER

His ministry began in the 1950s, smuggling Bibles behind the Iron Curtain. It was a story he told in *God's Smuggler* (1967) – a book

which has inspired and emboldened millions of readers ever since. Since he died, many Open Doors supporters have shared the impact this book has had in their life, which has been so encouraging to hear.

“There are no borders, no prison walls, no doors that are closed to us when we pray”

Brother Andrew's ministry continued in different countries and continents, as he felt led by God, from serving the underground church in communist China

to evangelising to leaders of Islamic extremist groups in the Middle East. Throughout it all, he knew the vital importance of prayer. “Our prayers can go where we cannot... there are no borders, no prison walls, no doors that are closed to us when we pray,” he said.

THE PRIVILEGE OF PRAYER

What started as one courageous man smuggling Bibles eventually turned into the global ministry of Open Doors. In more than 70 countries, Open Doors supports persecuted believers by supplying Bibles, providing emergency relief and helping the church stand strong for the long-term. Brother Andrew was a man of action – but he recognised that all action would only work if backed by prayer. As he said, “God wants to use us to work out His purposes. What a privilege and responsibility! So let's get on our knees and pray. And may God use our prayer to change the course of history.”

Many of you will have been deeply impacted by Brother Andrew's life and ministry. As we grieve, we have much to thank God for. We are so grateful for Brother Andrew's life of service. Thank you for continuing his legacy of praying for God to change the world.

PLEASE PRAY

- Thank God for the life of Brother Andrew, a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ, and for all the people he has inspired, encouraged and supported
- For God's comfort for Brother Andrew's friends and family, and all who loved him, as they mourn
- That Brother Andrew's legacy will continue around the world, serving and strengthening those who follow Jesus no matter the cost.

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT Brother Andrew with his VW Beetle (1955); handing the first modern Albanian translation of the Bible to the President of Albania (1993); sharing the love of Jesus with Muslim leader Abu Nassar in Gaza (2012)



Persecuted children

Thursday 1 December

Many children who experience persecution become traumatised and need a lot of care and support. Thank God for Open Doors partners working with these children; they often hear heart-breaking and difficult stories. Ask the Lord to give them wisdom, strength and renewed compassion.

Friday 2 December – Egypt

Christian children from a Muslim background often struggle in their school or community. Layla* (14) from Egypt is mocked by students and teachers because she cannot participate in Ramadan. Pray for Layla and children like her to stand firm in their God-given identity.

Saturday 3 December – Syria

Apo (10) (SEE COVER) has grown up without his dad, Rober, who was kidnapped by Islamic extremists in 2013. Praise God that he is making new friends and receiving spiritual support from his local Centre of Hope, where he loves to play football. "What I like most at school is the sports class," he says.

Sunday 4 December – Central Asia

In May, we asked you to pray for Talitha* (17), who was secretly baptised last Christmas. Sadly, the pressure of such a challenging environment has

led to Talitha deciding not to pursue her faith in Jesus at the moment. Please pray that God will guide her back to Him.

Monday 5 December – Nepal

Sonu* and her sister were abused by their stepfather when he discovered they had chosen to follow Jesus. They are now sheltering in a church and being supported by Open Doors partners. "I feel secure in Jesus," Sonu says. "I'll never turn back from my faith." Pray for God's healing, protection and strength.

Tuesday 6 December – Algeria

Pray for children of converts from Islam – many of them are facing hostility and persecution because of their parents' faith. Pray that these children will know Jesus as their foundation early on in life and be strengthened to stand strong.

Wednesday 7 December – Colombia

"For those who are being persecuted, I would tell them not to leave their faith," says Valentina (see 2 November). "If they are still here, it's because God has a purpose for them." Thank God for Valentina's courage and pray that her testimony will strengthen and encourage other children living at the Children's Centre.

Refugees

Thursday 8 December – Nicaragua

Political instability, poverty and drug trafficking-related conflict are forcing many

parents to flee and leave their children with relatives. Although Nicaragua is not in the World Watch List top 50, it has risen 11 places in the past two years. Pray for reconciliation and strength for children and parents.

Friday 9 December – Tunisia

When Femi* was persecuted for his faith and forced to leave his hometown, he didn't know where to go. Praise the Lord that Femi has settled in a new city and found a job that sustains him; pray that God will renew Femi day by day.

Saturday 10 December – Myanmar

Pray for Christians displaced by the conflict in Myanmar. Many face emotional turmoil due to displacement, and trauma because of the violence they have experienced. Ask God to provide shelter and food for them, as well as emotional and physical healing.

Sunday 11 December – Democratic Republic of Congo

Attacks by the Islamic militant group ADF have caused many people to flee their homes. Local Open Doors partners recently delivered food aid to around 1,500 people in the village of Komanda. Please pray that refugees there will find permanent homes soon, and receive the support they need.

Monday 12 December – Lebanon

Praise God for youth leaders in Lebanon working with Muslim child refugees from Syria. They run various

activities and games, provide sweets and toys and share a simple story about God. Pray that these children will experience God's love and grow in their desire to know more of Jesus.

Tuesday 13 December – Burkina Faso

In October, Burkina Faso saw its second military coup in eight months. In both instances, a lack of effort to resolve the growing Islamic militancy is believed to be the driver. The country is in upheaval and Christians are often caught in the crossfire. Many believers have lost their homes in the violence. Please pray for an end to the unrest, and for God's protection for vulnerable believers.

Wednesday 14 December – Afghanistan

Many people in Afghanistan are forcibly evicted from their homes if they are perceived to support the former government. Please pray for God's protection for the families who have to leave everything behind as they flee to safety, and that they will find shelter and practical support.

Thursday 15 December

"And He will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). Although the wars in Yemen, Syria and Myanmar have largely disappeared from the news, they continue to uproot and impoverish thousands. Pray for Jesus to strengthen His church and reign as Prince of Peace in these nations.

*Names changed for security reasons



With love from Colombia

Over the years, hundreds of you have sent letters to the Colombia Children's Centre, which provides a place of safety, education, discipleship and fun for

Christian children at risk of persecution from criminal gangs or indigenous groups. In response, some of the children have written Christmas cards to you!

We must enjoy every moment, no matter what, knowing the purpose that God has in our life, there are difficult moments but you are not alone, here we pray for you, although I do not know you, I know that God loves you, as I said before you have to enjoy every moment. Like Christmas. It is special, different from the whole year, I enjoy with my family, we make a buffet and give each other gifts, my sisters dance, others sing and make a bonfire and we all share together as a family. As well as I also want you to enjoy how beautiful Christmas is with your family. And remember Philippians 4:13 From Colombia with Pleasure.

ATT: Cesia Ortega

Dear friend may the peace of God be with you wherever you are located in the world on this very special day which is Christmas day. I want to tell you what my family does on this day, we go to church very early, we have a small party with the brothers of the community, then in the evening we give small gifts to the children of the church and some of the people, then we travel to the city to spend the whole night with the rest of the family with food, music, gifts and lots of love. With this I want to give you a word of encouragement to you that I do not know you but I know that God never leaves you alone that despite the difficulties he is there and finally I am Julian Esteban Mayorga.

Read more
letters online at
[opendoorsuk.org/
write](https://opendoorsuk.org/write)

WOULD YOU LIKE TO WRITE BACK?

There are two ways you can write to children at the centre:

- ✦ Get your church to write messages on a large foldout card available at opendoorsuk.org/christmas
- ✦ Write an individual letter using guidance at opendoorsuk.org/write

The children would love to hear from you!

| Prisoners

Friday 16 December – India

Six Christian women were arrested at a birthday party earlier this year, accused of forcibly converting others. Their lawyer believes they have been denied bail due to political pressure. Pray for these women and their families, and for justice in the courts.

Saturday 17 December – North Korea

A new report has found that Christians are particularly targeted for torture in North Korean prisons. The researchers found that Christians are 'interrogated for longer periods, usually under torture'. Pray that these imprisoned believers will know God's sustaining love.

Sunday 18 December – Malaysia

Pastor Raymond Koh was kidnapped in February 2017 by the Malaysian secret police and has not been seen since. His wife, Susanna, is suing the Malaysian government, and tirelessly seeking answers about her missing husband. Please pray that the truth will be uncovered.

Monday 19 December – Myanmar

Pray for the release of pastors who have been jailed for standing up to the military junta, or imprisoned under false charges. Ask God to sustain them and provide for their needs. Pray also for their families, that God will protect them and strengthen them in their faith.

| Believers from Muslim backgrounds

Tuesday 20 December – Indonesia

When Doni* converted to Christianity from Islam, his mother began to persecute him. Open Doors local partners have helped him with a home and starting a small business selling food. Pray that Doni will be able to forgive his mother and that God will bring about healing and reconciliation.

Wednesday 21 December – Morocco

It's illegal to 'shake the faith of a Muslim' in Morocco, and Christians face pressure to renounce their faith, particularly if they come from an Islamic background. Pray that these Christians will hold tight to God's promises and draw others to Jesus.

Thursday 22 December – Libya

In Libya, those who leave Islam to follow Jesus face immense pressure from family. Moncef* recently chose to follow Jesus, but his family is pressuring him every day to renounce his faith. Pray that he will daily encounter the sustaining power of the Holy Spirit.

◆ Christmas

◆ **Friday 23 December**

For many Christians around the world, the Christmas season brings increased likelihood of attacks. Pray for God's protection and peace for churches and Christians

meeting to worship, and that the plans of any attackers would come to nothing.

◆ **Saturday 24 December – Christmas Eve**

In Yemen around Christmas, small parties are organised with gifts for children. Please pray that they will meet with Jesus through these Christmas events, and the gospel will be explained in a way that both children and adults can understand and receive.

◆ **Sunday 25 December – Christmas Day**

"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned" (Isaiah 9:2). Pray for persecuted Christians in dark situations today – in prison, under house arrest or displaced – to experience the life-transforming love of Jesus.

◆ **Monday 26 December – Boxing Day**

Elmeera* (12) and Aisha* (8) are Christians from North Africa. "We love Christmas," they write in a letter. "Since our church is closed, we couldn't celebrate Christmas with other children. That's why we ask you to pray for us that next year we can celebrate Christmas in the church with our community."

◆ **Tuesday 27 December – Iran**

"At Christmas, we are monitored by the intelligence agents most," says Elahe*. "Many Christians are arrested for celebrating Christmas, so we must be careful." Pray for God's protection for Christians in Iran over this festive season.

◆ **Wednesday 28 December – Ethiopia**

Daniel* was rejected by his community after he became a Christian. Thanks to Open Doors local partners, he has completed his education. Pray for all isolated believers this Christmas, that they will experience the joy of the angels, shepherds and Magi in their hearts.

◆ **Thursday 29 December – Egypt**

Ashraf* (12) and his family must celebrate Christmas in secret. "We can't go to the church," he says. "We watch the Christmas night prayer on TV. But we lower the volume so we aren't heard by our neighbours." Please pray that, one day, Ashraf will be able to share his faith with his friends.

◆ **Friday 30 December**

Praise God for the faith and strength of Open Doors local partners who have continued to support persecuted Christians in more than 70 countries throughout 2022. Thank God for their courage and determination to minister to our sisters and brothers. Pray that God will renew their strength in the coming year.

◆ **Saturday 31 December – UK&I**

God has been at work through His church in amazing ways in 2022 – thank you for your prayers and support! Pray that more Christians in the UK and Ireland will connect with their persecuted church family in 2023 and be strengthened and encouraged in their faith.

*Names changed for security reasons



JOIN US FOR

IDOP ONLINE 2022

UNITING IN PRAYER TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Sunday 6 November | 7.30 - 8.30pm

Would you like the opportunity to join with others to pray for our persecuted family? This year, we're again joining with our friends at the Evangelical Alliance, Release International and CSW to mark the International Day of Prayer (IDOP) for the Persecuted Church – and we'd love for you to be there!

At the event, you will be able to hear the latest from Iraq, where Christians are looking to return to their homes and rebuild their lives following years of conflict. You'll also hear updates and stories from China and Cuba, and pray into the Freedom of Religion or

Belief (FoRB) Ministerial that took place in July.

Our persecuted family frequently tell us the difference your prayers make to their lives. This event represents another precious opportunity to remind them that they are not alone.

"We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed."
- 2 CORINTHIANS 4:8-9

To register, go to opendoorsuk.org/idop



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