

Open *Doors*

MAGAZINE | July/August 2025

Undercover faith
How Yasin shares the
gospel in Iraq





ARISE AFRICA PRAYER WALK

Saturday 13 September, 12-5pm

Join a special *Arise Africa* prayer walk around London. Along the route, we'll be stopping outside the embassies of some sub-Saharan African countries on the World Watch List – lifting those nations and our persecuted family up in prayer.

Find out more at opendoorsuk.org/prayerwalk



CHILDREN'S RESOURCES

With the summer holidays on the horizon, you'll find a range of free resources specially for children on our website. Gently introduce children in your family or church to the persecuted church in an entertaining, informative and prayerful way.

The Smuggler's Suitcase:

holiday club activity for 7–11-year-olds

Prayer Passport and Activity Map:

interactive ways to explore the World Watch List top 50

God's Big Family:

six-part teaching resource for Sunday school or children's church

...and more! Get your resources at opendoorsuk.org/children



LEAVE A LEGACY OF HOPE

You can give your persecuted family hope of a brighter future by including a gift to Open Doors in your Will. Your gift will mean a lifetime of support for those who suffer for following Jesus.

If you have not yet made a Will, you can make a Will for FREE using our partner *Farewill*.

To find out more, go to opendoorsuk.org/legacy or phone 01993 460015.



Open Doors is an international ministry serving persecuted Christians and churches worldwide.

Open Doors supplies Bibles, leadership training, literacy programmes, livelihood support and advocacy services. We also mobilise the church in the UK and Ireland to serve Christians living under religious persecution.

If you have any questions about the work of Open Doors, or would like to reprint any of the articles in this magazine, please do get in touch.

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COVER: Yasin in Iraq faces death threats and rejection for his faith

*Names changed for security reasons

LETTER FROM HENRIETTA

God is not deaf

"I pray to you, O Lord, my rock. Do not turn a deaf ear to me." PSALM 28:1 (NLT)

Something that amazes me about Jesus is that He never gets tired of revealing Himself to those who seek Him. And He keeps listening. God responds to the cries of our hearts, just as He responded to Yasin* from Iraq (p8).

Yasin's determination to find the true God reminds me of Psalm 28:1: "I pray to you, O Lord, my rock. Do not turn a deaf ear to me. For if you are silent, I might as well give up and die" (NLT). But the revelation of Jesus came with a cost. Like so many believers from Muslim backgrounds, he was rejected by his family and community. His own brother even threatened to kill him. Praise God that Yasin has decided to stay to continue sharing the gospel – despite the enormous risks he faces.

As a result of the ongoing pressure and danger, many Christians are leaving the Middle East. But God is stirring up new believers, like Yasin, to remain and be salt and light in the darkness. Thanks to your prayers and support, more people are encountering Jesus, and through local Open Doors partners they are receiving encouragement and discipleship training to stand strong and be faithful witnesses.

As we commemorate 70 years since the foundation of Open Doors, when Brother Andrew began serving the persecuted church, his ministry of Bible distribution continues. These precious Bibles aren't only building up undercover believers around the world, but are helping more people like Yasin to come to know Christ for the first time – indeed, it was through reading Jesus's words in the Bible that Yasin was transformed.

Yasin's story reminds us that God is not deaf to our prayers – and I hope you will find further evidence of this, and encouragement to persevere in prayer, in our Annual Review (p16) as we look back on all that the Lord has done in 2024. I'm grateful to God and to you for your faithful prayers and support that make the work of Open Doors possible.

Thank you, and every blessing,



Henrietta Blyth
CEO, Open Doors UK&I

WORLD WATCH LIST BULLETIN



A group from St Stephen's and St Wulstan's Church ran various distances for our persecuted family

UK

Church runs 450km and raises £2,000

A collective fundraising activity by a group from St Stephen's and St Wulstan's Church in Birmingham has raised more than £2,000 for our persecuted family.

The group comprised 23 people aged between 15 and 88 running different distances – some ran around their neighbourhood, others did a local Parkrun (5km), and some did 10km or a half marathon. Together, they covered an incredible distance of 450km, far exceeding their initial target of 250km, chosen because it is the length of the demilitarised zone between North and South Korea.

"Individually, and as a church, we support Open Doors and find the stories

of people standing firm in their suffering an inspiration to our faith and a challenge for our prayers," said Chris, who ran the half marathon. "The weekend reminded people of the freedoms we have to meet and build relationships, and raise money and awareness about Open Doors."

"We find the stories of people standing firm in their suffering an inspiration to our faith."

Could your church tackle a similar challenge? *Church on the Run* is an *Arise Africa* fundraising resource that invites your church to get on the move for Christians affected by violence and conflict in sub-Saharan Africa. Find out more at opendoorsuk.org/churchontherun

VIETNAM

Pastor arrested for social media post

A pastor in Vietnam has been arrested for speaking out about religious freedom and human rights on social media.

Pastor Quan* was at home when the electricity was suddenly cut. Shortly after, a man called pretending to check a fire alarm. When Pastor Quan opened the door, police stormed in and handcuffed him.

"The police called me and read the arrest warrant accusing my father of spreading anti-state propaganda under Article 117 of the Penal Code," says Binh*, Pastor Quan's son. "They said he would be detained for four months."

"Under current Vietnamese law, Pastor Quan could face a prison sentence of seven to 12 years, or even longer. The country is 44th on the World Watch List.

PRAY For Pastor Quan's protection and release.



Pastor Quan's courage has been costly

CHINA

New restrictions on foreign Christians

Foreign Christians will no longer be able to preach or evangelise in China, following newly enacted restrictions in the name of 'national security'.

While Christian foreigners are not officially banned, any events involving foreign nationals – from preaching to religious ceremonies, down to visits from missionaries – must be approved by the relevant authorities to be considered legal. In practice, permissions are very unlikely to be given.

The restrictions extend to foreigners being forbidden from having any religious books or audio-visual materials that 'exceed personal use quantities' without approval. This effectively prohibits the public importation of religious books, including Bibles.

PRAY For the safety, wisdom and discernment of foreign Christians in China.

PHILIPPINES

Isolated but not alone

A young believer in Southern Philippines has been forbidden from attending a discipleship programme run by local partners, but the lessons she learnt from it – and your prayers – are helping her persevere in her faith.

"Knowing that people are praying for me gives me strength."

When Leila* (18) left Islam to become a Christian, she had to keep it secret – that was until her father discovered it earlier this year. He was furious, stopping her from attending church and a discipleship programme by local partners where she felt safe. "I could be myself and learn about Jesus without fear," she says. Her father also enrolled her in a madrasah (Islamic school). "Sometimes, my father threatens to disown me if I don't follow our traditions," says Leila, now the only Christian in her family



Leila receiving prayer

after the deaths of her grandmother and cousin, who both shared her faith. "It hurts because I love him, but I love Jesus, too."

Leila continues to read her Bible and pray secretly, and she recalls the discipleship lessons she learnt that taught her to trust God even in dark times. "I know following Jesus is not easy, but I did not expect it to be this hard. Every day, I pray that my father will understand – that one day, I won't have to hide my faith anymore."

Although Leila is unable to attend the discipleship classes anymore, local partners are finding ways to reach out to her discreetly.

"I may feel alone but knowing that people are praying for me gives me strength," says Leila. "It reminds me that I am part of a bigger family in Christ."

PRAY For Leila's continued resilience and that her father will encounter Jesus.

MORE STORIES

- Leah Sharibu spends birthday in captivity
- Mixed news for imprisoned Christians in Iran
- Inspired by a dream in Brunei

Head to opendoorsuk.org/news or follow us @opendoorsuk for more news and updates





“God has not abandoned us”

Your gifts and prayers are bringing help and hope to believers in Myanmar affected by the catastrophic earthquake. Thank you!

“We see the hands of God in the midst of natural disaster through Open Doors partners,” says Daw Sun*, one of the many believers in Myanmar who’ve been impacted by your gifts and prayers following the earthquake that hit in March.

“We thank God for your help in our time of need.”

Daw Sun is a widow and mother to two children. Their home was so badly damaged that they were forced to live outside. With your support, local partners helped repair the wall around the property. Whilst the family continue to sleep outside for the

time being, because of the ongoing tremors, the work secures their home from theft.

IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

According to the UN, over 3,800 people were killed and more than 5,000 injured by the earthquake, dealing Myanmar another severe blow following years of civil war. The country is 13th on the World Watch List, with the conflict exacerbating the persecution of Christians.

The long-term presence of local partners in Myanmar meant that help for believers affected by the disaster was quickly at hand. At the time of going to print, partners had already reached over 800 families with aid including rice, oil, soap, medicine and housing repairs.

“Hallelujah, praise the Lord!” says Hla Shwe*, a widow, after receiving groceries and a solar lamp to provide power for her home. “We thank God for your help in our time of need.”

VAST AND VARIED HELP

Whatever the urgent need, your support is coming to the rescue of many Christians,



including temporary toilets made of bamboo and wood. “We’re thankful that God provided for our needs,” says a believer. “God has not abandoned us in our difficult times.”

“Because of your donations, help and prayers, we are also able to reach out to an orphanage, where children affected by the civil war are taking shelter,” shares Pastor Chan*, a church leader. “There are many kids who do not have parents. But we are trying to support them with some rice bags, snacks and toys.”

The support has even given believers the opportunity to reach out to others. “Whatever aid we are receiving from local churches, we’re sharing with people from other faiths, too,” adds Pastor Chan.

Alongside the provision of emergency aid and other support, including rental assistance and trauma care, partners are spending time with believers to listen, pray and bring encouragement. “We have received much courage through your visits,” says another believer.

AFTERSHOCKS AND OBSTACLES

The challenges remain huge. Homes are vulnerable to collapse, particularly from aftershocks, and many believers are fearful

and traumatised. Meanwhile, partners face obstacles of their own in reaching people.

“We experienced many aftershocks,” shares Daisy Htun*, a local partner. “We had no other option but to stay at a hotel that was slightly damaged. We were scared to sleep inside our hotel rooms, looking at the cracked walls of the hotel. We wondered how much more difficult it must have been for the people when the 7.7 magnitude earthquake hit their homes. All the people that we met appeared so traumatised by what had happened.”

“We have received much courage through your visits.”

BLESSED BELIEVERS

Despite this, help is getting to people and hope is emerging from the wreckage. “It’s extremely difficult, but we’ll continue to journey with the believers,” says Daisy Htun. “Our family in Myanmar were happy and feel blessed by the provisions they received.

“The lives of many believers were affected by the earthquake. When many of their homes were damaged, they struggled to resume their daily normal lives and livelihoods. The food provided was timely. It was



OPPOSITE Believers affected by the earthquake receive groceries you’ve helped provide BELOW The arrival of new toilets ABOVE A church destroyed by the earthquake

helpful as the believers were adjusting and learning to get back on their feet again.”

Thank you for responding to this crisis with your gifts and prayers. “May God bless the givers and the distributors more and more abundantly,” says Daw Sun, reflecting the gratitude felt by so many believers in Myanmar.

PLEASE PRAY

- Give thanks for the impactful distribution of aid
- That help and hope will continue to reach those in need
- For peace and stability in Myanmar.

STAY UPDATED

Keep an eye on opendoorsuk.org for further updates and stories from Myanmar to guide you in your continued prayers for the nation and its believers. Thank you!

HOW YASIN RISKS HIS LIFE TO SHARE THE GOSPEL



PICTURED Yasin disguised his Bible, for fear of discovery

When Yasin* first took a Bible home, he covered the title in tape. He had to go undercover. He knew how dangerous it was for an Iraqi Muslim to own a Bible. How dangerous it would be if his secret were revealed.

But he was soon to take an even riskier step: deciding to become a Christian and share the gospel.

PEACE FROM JESUS

The first time Yasin read the Bible, he wept. “The first thing I read in this Bible in my own language was Matthew 5, the Sermon on the Mount,” he remembers. “I cried because of the beautiful words in it. The words of Jesus gave me peace in my heart.”

**“THE WORDS
OF JESUS GAVE
ME PEACE IN MY
HEART.”**

It was a peace he’d been lacking for a long time. Though Yasin was brought up in a Muslim home, he wasn’t content in his faith. “Until I became an adult, I followed Islamic law and went to the mosque, but I was not comfortable with it,” he says. “I went to the mosque and did all my religious duties, but I was doing it for my friends’ sake. It wasn’t because I believed in it. I did not have much faith in Islam. It was a habit – but not true worship.”

He had lots of things he wanted to ask. “I argued with God a lot,” Yasin remembers. “I said, ‘God, if you exist, I don’t want to sin; I want to live with you. I am asking you to show yourself to me.’” But

no response came to Yasin's desperate questions.

He stopped going to the mosque as regularly, fending off enquiries from friends with the excuse that work was too busy. He kept praying for answers. And eventually an answer came from an unexpected source: a dream.

A MIRACULOUS DREAM

"I was sleeping, and I saw someone coming towards me," says Yasin. "I cannot describe how beautiful He was. His hair was long, he wore a scarf on his head. He was so beautiful, I could not stop looking at Him. He put his hand on my head and said, 'You are my beloved child; this is the way, follow me.'"

A Muslim friend told him the dream was from the devil, and not to think

about it any more – but Yasin couldn't believe the devil was responsible. He decided to ask a Christian friend in the village. The friend told him: "This is God showing Himself to you."

Yasin was taken to a local pastor, who was a convert from Islam. That was when Yasin read the Bible for the first time – and had a transformative encounter with the words of Jesus. After asking more questions and going to a conference organised by Open Doors local partners, Yasin made the life-changing decision to follow Christ.

"HOW COULD YOU BRING SUCH A BOOK INTO OUR HOUSE?"

BELOW Yasin works as a shepherd as nobody will give him a steady job, because of his faith



ABOVE Yasin received violence and death threats from his brother

YASIN'S TRANSFORMATION

Yasin read the Bible in secret as it was safer to keep his new faith undercover. At first, Yasin didn't even reveal the truth to his wife, Nara*, about his conversion to Christianity. After five months, he shared his secret – and Nara was horrified. "How could you bring such a book into our house?" she asked, when she saw his Bible.

She urged him to return to Islam, but he had a question for her: "What do you prefer – the violent man I was before, or the servant I've become because of my new faith?" In the months since Yasin found Jesus, he had transformed. "Before, I was really violent towards my family," he says. "But Jesus says we should be servants. I started serving my family."

Nara and their children had seen this enormous change in Yasin, and they decided not to interfere when he read the Bible. That wasn't true with everyone, though. Increasingly, Yasin couldn't

keep his extraordinary discovery to himself. He had to reveal the good news to people he thought would be receptive. It proved to be a risky decision.

VIOLENCE AND DEATH THREATS

"Most people from my village still did not know about me being a Christian. But the people I evangelised, they knew," Yasin says. "One day, my brother came to visit me. The mullah [Islamic leader] told him I was distributing Bibles and that he should try to stop me."

"HE TRIED TO KILL ME SEVERAL TIMES."

Yasin's brother violently attacked him – more than once. "He tried to kill me several times," says Yasin. "One time, he broke my nose."

Other people in the community started persecuting him too. "I received a threatening letter," he says. "In short, it said, 'If you don't leave Christianity, we will kill you.'" This threat almost came true when somebody threw a firebomb at his house – thankfully, the house didn't burn down. Through all this persecution, Yasin's faith remained strong. He was paying a huge

PERSECUTION AND REVIVAL IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Across the Middle East and North Africa, conversion from Islam to Christianity comes with significant risk if a believer's new faith is revealed. Pastor Imad* works closely with believers from a Muslim background, and shares what he has seen:

"Converts face persecution in many forms, especially from their family. They are hated, spat on, beaten, insulted and imprisoned. In November, a husband and wife I knew, who had converted the year before, were killed in their house.

"Persecution differs in different countries in the region. For instance, in Iran, the pressure doesn't come solely from the family and community but also from the government. If caught, an Iranian convert faces harsh interrogation, false accusations and unfair imprisonment. In North African countries, every citizen is considered a Muslim – so, officially,

no nationals can be Christians. When a child is born into a family of converts, the child is still considered Muslim.

"One story stands out to me – showing both the risks and God's faithfulness. At a church in my hometown, a man started to cry in the middle of the service, and it kept happening every week. I decided to talk to him.

"He said: 'I work for Al Qaeda, and I came here to kill everyone, but the first time I came here, something changed. I don't know how. But I don't know how to repent for my sins.'

"Believers often keep their faith hidden, because of these dangers. But I see from my church that this group of converts from a Muslim background is growing. Every month, we add between 10 and 20 people. Despite severe persecution, the movement is growing in Iraq, in Iran and the rest of the region."



LEFT Believers from a Muslim background gather for a secret house church meeting in North Africa

price for his faith, and his determination to share it with others, but he was sure the price was worth it.

FAMILY FINDS FAITH

Over time, and much prayer, Yasin's wife and children also chose to follow Jesus. "My daughter is a master's student and now evangelises to people and is also preaching the gospel, like me and my son," Yasin says proudly. "God has blessed our family."

"I KNOW THAT GOD HAS A MISSION FOR ME, TO BRING THE GOOD NEWS TO MY VILLAGE."

Yasin is delighted that his family share his faith – but their decision, like his, has come with a cost. His son and daughter are both unmarried, as the family are considered 'infidels' when people learn of their new faith. "Many times I have cried for my

children; the persecution really affects them," he says. "But thank God my children are both content. I believe that whoever endures trials faithfully will have a great place in God's Kingdom."

Conversion has also affected the family financially. Yasin had to close his shop, as people refused to buy from an 'infidel'. Nobody will employ him in a steady job, because of his faith; Yasin now does occasional work as a shepherd, taking care of other people's sheep for a daily wage.

Converts like Yasin are always balancing the dangers that come when their faith is known with the desire to share the gospel. "The persecution is continuous," he says, "but there is no other way; I want to give everything to God. Jesus offered Himself for me. He was insulted, He died on the cross. He did this all to redeem me. I will not deny or leave Him." He pauses

for a moment and adds: "Of course, it was and is very difficult. I feel like a sheep among wolves, because people don't treat us well."

GOD'S MISSION

The help of other Christians has been crucial in Yasin's journey. "They are very supporting, loving and respectful," he says. Yasin is able to participate in seminars and conferences run by Open Doors partners through his local church, which have helped develop his faith and equip his evangelism. Despite the risks from his brother and from others in the village, Yasin knows God has called him to stay in the community and tell people the secret of new life.

"I tried many times to leave the village, but God put it in my heart to remain here," he says. "I know God wants to use me here. I know that God has a mission for me, to bring the good news to my village."

Yasin has seen fruit from his



ABOVE Yasin is keen to share the Bible with many others in Iraq

evangelism – even from those who have persecuted him. "Two people from my village recently became believers and now go with me to church," he says. "These two insulted me before."

STAND WITH YASIN

Yasin stands in a long line of believers who take extraordinary risks because they know the worth of the gospel. This courageous faith is a hallmark of Open Doors' history, ever since Brother Andrew started smuggling Bibles into Communist Eastern Europe in 1955.

Seventy years later, Bibles are still transforming the lives of people like Yasin, and those he ministers to, in places where God's Word is dangerous to pass on.

Today, you can stand with undercover believers like Yasin. You can help precious Bibles get to those who most urgently need them, and help deliver the kind of training that equips Christians like Yasin to keep spreading the Word in risky regions.

And you can stand with him in prayer. Yasin knows what a difference it makes: "I ask you to pray for me, because I believe in the power of prayer," he says. "I ask you to pray that God gives me strength to evangelise to as many people as possible."

Today, will you help Christians like Yasin to reveal the gospel?

PLEASE PRAY

- "I ask you to pray that God protects my children," says Yasin
- For Yasin and other undercover believers to

be strengthened and bold as they take risks to share the gospel

- For Open Doors partners in Iraq to know God's guidance as they serve the persecuted church.

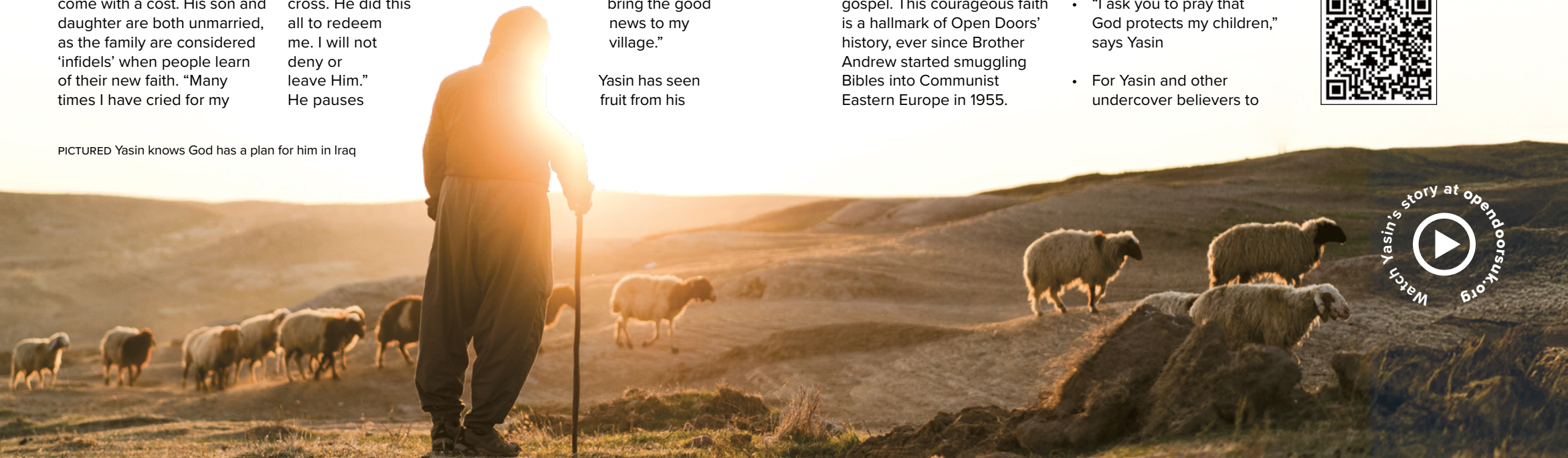
PLEASE GIVE

You can give to undercover believers at opendoorsuk.org

- **Every £24** could help disciple and encourage an undercover believer by enabling them to meet, pray and study the Bible with other Christians.
- **Every £30** could provide two undercover believers with a Bible in a country where God's Word is not easy to access.
- **Every £51** could help a vulnerable Christian establish their livelihood, giving them long-term financial security.



PICTURED Yasin knows God has a plan for him in Iraq



"THIS IS TO MY FATHER'S GLORY, THAT YOU BEAR MUCH FRUIT, SHOWING YOURSELVES TO BE MY DISCIPLES."

JOHN 15:8



ABOVE Extremist groups in Mali have driven huge numbers of Christians from their homes. The local church in Bankass received large numbers of displaced Christian families – now, thanks to your support, Open Doors partners have been able to provide 320 families with vital relief aid.

As I've been reflecting on Open Doors' impact in 2024, I've realised that what we see God doing for, in and through the persecuted church is the fruit of your prayers and generous giving. And I remain incredibly grateful for your continued support for our persecuted church family.

This year marks 70 years since Brother Andrew made his first Bible-smuggling trip, and he was clear from the very beginning about the mission of Open Doors: making sure persecuted Christians know that they're not alone. What I hope you see over the next few pages is how you are continuing his legacy and making this mission an ongoing reality. Every prayer, gift and action

helps the persecuted church to persevere in their faith and live out the call God has placed on their lives.

This year, I have been particularly struck by the call to persevere in Hebrews 12:1-2 (The Message): "Do you see what this means – all these pioneers who blazed the way, all these veterans cheering us on? It means we'd better get on with it. Strip down, start running – and never quit!"

Over the next few pages, you'll find updates from believers who've been supported through different, often long-term campaigns stretching over many years. I'm enormously encouraged by your unwavering support for our sisters and brothers through *See.Change.* and *Arise Africa*, to name just

two. Open Doors is in this for the long-term, and I'm thankful that you are too.

Jesus says that we are identified as His disciples through our love for one another, and this Annual Review puts your love for the persecuted church on display. We are all called to persevere. But what I hope the following pages show you is that your perseverance pays off – and you can see the fruit.

Thank you so much and God bless you,



Henrietta Blyth,
CEO, Open
Doors UK&I

2024 HIGHLIGHTS



OVER £17 MILLION

donated in support of persecuted Christians



101 MPS

attended the World Watch List launch



9.5 MILLION

persecuted believers received practical and spiritual support



2.5 MILLION

Bibles and Christian books were distributed

YOUR DONATIONS TO SUPPORT PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS

£810K

Arise Africa projects

£343K

Secret believers projects

£819K

Persecuted children and youth projects

£404K

Middle East projects

£5.3M
Raising prayer, advocacy and awareness

£7.4M
Where most needed

£444K
India projects

£364K
Other projects

£400K
Persecuted women's projects

£754K
World Watch List top 10 country projects

Visit opendoorsuk.org/annualreview or scan the QR code for more detail, stories and films

If you would like to receive a copy of the audited financial statements, they are available on request from: Open Doors, PO Box 6, Witney OX29 6WG.





ARISE **AFRICA**

JOYFUL THANKS FROM BURKINA FASO

More than 16.2 million Christians in sub-Saharan Africa are displaced by violence and conflict. Among that vast number are Pastor Soré, his family and the people they care for (ABOVE). Forced to flee their homes in Burkina Faso by Islamist violence, they are still living in displacement. But your support during the *Arise Africa* campaign is bringing them hope and encouragement.

"I was overjoyed when [Open Doors partners]

545,000 persecuted Christians in sub-Saharan Africa received direct support from Open Doors partners

recently visited me to see how we are doing," he says. "We are grateful to the Lord for the piece of land we bought with your support. To feed this large family, I would like to have a big field for agriculture and breeding or run a small business of selling building materials. All these things I put to the Lord

SPOTLIGHT ON... TRUSTS

£629,713 donated by trusts

the greatest impact by trusts – ever

who has always provided for us. Thank you for always asking after us and continue to pray for me and my family in Burkina Faso."

The *Arise Africa* petition was launched in 2024, and calls for protection, justice and restoration for Christians in sub-Saharan Africa. It has already been signed by 45,000 people in the UK and Ireland. Thank you for all you're doing to stop the violence and start the healing in sub-Saharan Africa.

SPOTLIGHT ON... CHURCHES



1,200+ church speaking engagements

in which volunteer speakers raised awareness, prayer and support for persecuted Christians in many churches across the UK and Ireland

SPOTLIGHT ON... PRAYER

90,600 people prayed for the persecuted church

using Open Doors' prayer resources, emails and events



WORLD WATCH LIST TOP 10

WORDS OF GOD ON NORTH KOREAN RADIO



Re-enactment image

It's difficult to imagine what life is like as a North Korean Christian. In January 2024, the publication of the World Watch List showed that North Korea was, once again, the country where Christians face the most extreme persecution. If believers' secret faith is discovered, they face death or lifelong imprisonment.

And yet God is on the move! His church is growing, and there is clearly hunger for God's Word. One way your prayers and gifts are helping that Word spread is via underground radio broadcasts.

"I listen to the radio when I can," says Ji Ho*, a secret believer in North Korea, whose story we shared in January 2024. "The air delivers the Words of my Father. I need them to live my life. They tell me what the Lord has done for us and who I am in Christ. They give me strength,

hope and courage to serve God, even if I am also at risk of being arrested."

Thanks to your support, Open Doors fieldworkers in a country neighbouring North Korea can continue these vital broadcasts. Since it's often impossible for North Korean Christians to gather together, your support is providing a lifeline of Christian community for these courageous believers.

*Ji Ho's story is based on several true accounts of life in North Korea, to protect any specific person from being identified.

SPOTLIGHT ON... YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

28,000+ youth and young adults engaged



8,765 youth resources ordered

PERSECUTED CHILDREN

"WE LEARNT THAT JESUS LOVES CHILDREN"

Like many young Christians around the world, Moryom in Bangladesh can feel very isolated in her faith (RIGHT). She's ten years old now, and still faces persecution and discrimination at school. "Most of the people in my school don't treat me well," she says. "Sometimes they beat me with sticks. My classmates don't allow me to pray with them." Recently, teachers tried to force her to pray Namaz (Muslim prayer).

Persecution intensified last December, when Muslim leaders came to Moryom's house and forbade them from celebrating Christmas. Moryom's father was told he would be killed if he

didn't comply with the religious leaders' demands.

329,600 persecuted children received practical and spiritual care to encourage their faith

A Christmas party may not seem like a life-changing event – but this context shows how important it is to Moryom. She couldn't celebrate at home but, thanks to your gifts and prayers, she went to a party organised by Open Doors partners in another city – gathering children from Bangladeshi families of converts from Islam.



"The best thing about the party was singing Christmas carols with many friends, learning new songs, cutting Christmas cake and playing with friends," says Moryom. "We also learnt that Jesus loves children, and they need to share that love with others."

The celebrations last a few days – but the knowledge that she is not alone, and has uncles and aunts around the world supporting and praying for her, will stay with Moryom for years.

SPOTLIGHT ON...

STANDING STRONG



1000 + supporters

gathered at nine regional events to pray, worship and meet persecuted believers from Nigeria, Yemen, Vietnam and West Africa

SECRET BELIEVERS

RESILIENT FAITH UNDER THE TALIBAN

A lot has changed in Khada's* life since we shared her story last year. She still lives in Afghanistan, where Christians must hide their faith from the increasingly oppressive Taliban – but she took a very courageous step.

"I shared the gospel with my family, and my family chose to follow Jesus!" Khada shares. "Since they have come to know Jesus Christ and embraced the Christian faith, they are experiencing true happiness. They

feel a sense of freedom and love from God that they never felt before."

Thanks to your support, Open Doors local partners are strengthening secret believers with Bibles, discipleship programmes and livelihood projects – with more than a third of a million pounds raised in 2025 for people like Khada.

"I would like to express my gratitude to all the believers who support us

during these challenging times under the Taliban," she says. "We are so grateful for your encouragement and support in helping us in so many different ways. May the grace and blessing of Jesus Christ be upon them."



Re-enactment image

SEE. CHANGE.

SUPPORTING COURAGEOUS WOMEN



"We became believers after the Lord healed my husband," says Juana Lopez (ABOVE), a Christian from an indigenous community in Chiapas, Mexico. The man who introduced her to the Lord warned her, "You will be the first in your community to believe in the living God, so they won't look kindly on you." But Juana and her husband had encountered Jesus and wouldn't look back.

The warning came true. Evangelical Christians face oppressive persecution in this area of Mexico – the couple received hefty fines

and were forbidden to access water or firewood. Juana's husband went to the United States to find work, because they have significant financial debts to the community. Juana is alone with her children in this hostile environment. As a woman, it is even harder to get work.

With your gifts and prayers, Open Doors partners have supported Juana with a

chicken farming project and helped pay off the fine. "I thank God and Open Doors because they listen to my situation and my needs," says Juana. "The brothers at Open Doors have already supported me with biblical teachings and money; I've paid off some of my debt and I still have a little left over for my children's expenses."

3.3 million persecuted women were encouraged with training, ministry and spiritual care



Somayeh

FROM IRAN

EYEWITNESS

God brought comfort: “In the midst of those tears, I heard a voice say, ‘Your name is written in the Book of Life,’ and those words gave me strength to carry on,” she says. She could only risk going to church once a month, and relied upon recorded sermons. Somayeh was questioned by the secret police, but they didn’t find anything. And in the background, there was always her husband. “My husband had threatened to kill me if I preached the gospel,” she says. “But I couldn’t stay silent.”

Finally, he took drastic action. He moved the family to another city, cutting her ties with her Christian community.

THE IMPOSSIBLE CHURCH

Isolated and displaced, Somayeh cried out to God: “Why has this happened?” Suddenly, to her surprise, she felt God say, “I want to build a church here in this town.”

It was an impossible idea. But she set out. And, starting with a handful of Christians meeting in secret, it soon grew to an underground house church with more than 30 members.

“When we gathered, we never mentioned our meeting places over the phone – we used code words and were extremely careful,” Somayeh says. “All phones had to be turned off, and we even removed the batteries to avoid tracking.

Through prayer, discipleship and the Holy Spirit, my new life truly began.”

THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

Somayeh’s new life came at a cost. When her husband discovered her faith, he was furious. A violent, abusive man, he beat her and treated her cruelly.

“I know God is working. His love sustains us, and His guidance strengthens me.”

“He found my Bible and tore it up in front of me,” she recalls. “Another time, he ripped up my birth certificate. It was as if my identity was torn apart. I cried so much that day.”

It started with one aim: to prove that Christianity wasn’t true and Islam was. So when a Christian friend in Iran invited Somayeh* (PICTURED) to church, she decided to go.

“My only goal was to challenge and disprove everything I’d heard,” she says. God, though, had other ideas. And when she entered the church, everything changed. “The presence of God was overwhelming,” she says. “It was everything I had longed to feel in my prayers but never did.”

Somayeh opened her heart to Jesus. “When I walked out of the church, I felt like a bird released from a cage,” she says. “As I prayed and learned, I grew in my faith and got to know Him.

“We saw miracles happening with us, and with people around us! Seeing the church grow was one of the greatest joys of my life.”

Then, one day, the intelligence services called with a chilling message: “We will see you soon.”

Time to go.

SUSTAINED BY GOD

Today, Somayeh and her daughter live in another country. She had to flee, leaving everything behind, even her son due to his military service. “It’s difficult knowing he’s still there,” she shares, “but even when hope feels delayed, I know God is working. His love sustains us, and His guidance strengthens me every day.”

She has found a Persian-speaking church where she can worship freely and, helped and trained by Open Doors partners, she serves secret Christians in Iran through an online ministry.

“I am truly grateful to those who support these seminars and make them possible,” she says. “Thank you.”

Somayeh being comforted



Iran Did you know? Christians who convert from Islam are viewed as a threat. While historic minorities like Armenian and Assyrian Christians have some protection, they are not allowed to worship in Persian or interact with converts from Islam.

09

Word

“You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (John 8:32)

Wait

Somayeh says she felt like a bird released from a cage. Spend some time thinking about what freedom in Christ means for believers in countries like Iran.

Witness

“I couldn’t stay silent,” Somayeh says. Are there areas of your life where you know you must witness to Jesus? Ask for guidance as to how best to do this in a Christlike way.

Pray

Pray for Somayeh’s online ministry with Christian women in Iran. Ask God to give her strength and wisdom. And pray for secret believers in Iran and elsewhere, for perseverance and faith.

Get informed and inspired

Open Doors’ World Watch List resources will help you go deeper with your persecuted family.

- Top 50 booklet
- Children’s Prayer Passport
- Quiz night fundraising pack



Head to opendoorsuk.org/wwl to discover more!

HELP YASIN DEFY DEATH THREATS AND KEEP SHARING THE GOSPEL



When Yasin* brought a Bible home, he had to cover the title. As a convert from Islam in Iraq, owning a Bible is extremely risky. But the dangers won't stop him sharing the gospel.

"The persecution is continuous, but there is no other way," he says. "I ask you to pray that God gives me strength to evangelise to as many people as possible."

Today, will you give to help Christians like Yasin reveal the gospel to others?

Every £30 could provide two undercover believers with a Bible in a country where God's Word is not easy to access.

Visit opendoorsuk.org,
phone **01993 460015**
or scan the QR code to
make your gift today.
Thank you.



*Name changed for security reasons

UNDERCOVER BELIEVERS

 **OpenDoors**