

Open *Doors*

MAGAZINE

|

May 2019

Bringing hidden persecution into the light

See. Change. for
women believers
from a Muslim
background



30 DAYS OF PRAYER FOR THE MUSLIM WORLD 6 May – 4 June 2019

Join with thousands of Christians around the world to pray for the Muslim world during Ramadan. Includes:

- Inspiring stories of how God is at work in the lives of Muslims today
- Useful facts and information about Muslim practices and beliefs
- Daily focus on different countries and people groups across the Muslim world

To order your **FREE** copy today use the response form, visit www.opendoorsuk.org or call Inspire on **01993 460015**.



What's your legacy?

Give a lifetime of hope to your persecuted family by prayerfully including a gift to Open Doors in your Will.

Find out more and order a pack at www.opendoorsuk.org/legacy or phone 01993 460015.

"Whatever you did for one of my brothers or sisters... you did for me." Matthew 25:40



hidden word

In places where the Bible is banned, followers of Jesus memorise it. Hidden word is a new resource to inspire you to learn Scripture.

The pack comes in a buriable bag, and includes six weeks of devotions and challenges, a leader's guide, a 'Hidden Word' New Testament and Psalms, memorisation aids and a wealth of ideas, activities, stories and prayers.

New resource perfect for youth groups or as a stand-alone devotional



opendoorsyouth.org/hiddenword

£14 including postage/ Discounts for five or more copies. The pack cost includes a donation to send a Bible to a persecuted Christian

Letter from Henrietta

Change

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Galatians 3:28

In Egypt last year, I was told how Christians who had long prayed for change in their nation were delighted by the Arab Spring. Their delight turned to horror, however, when the Muslim Brotherhood came to power. Through that, and the rise of the so-called Islamic State, thousands saw the reality of Islamic extremism and turned away from Islam. Many courageously chose to become Christians – one church I visited had baptised 6,000 believers from a Muslim background! It proved to me that whatever changes we witness, personally or politically, God can use as an opportunity for growth – and the courage of our persecuted family can inspire us to take greater steps of faith.

So, how are new believers coming to faith from a Muslim background? The story of Aizah (pp6-11) gives a glimpse. Unbelievably, despite the cost being so high, Muslim women are turning to Jesus – and women are reaching out to other women, and discipling them in their new faith. They need to. New global research conducted by Open Doors has revealed the shocking truth that millions of women are doubly vulnerable because of their faith and gender – which is why we've launched the **See. Change.** campaign (p11). Open Doors' vision is that our persecuted sisters are seen, heard and enabled to reach their God-given potential – and we can all bring about that change by praying, giving and speaking out on their behalf.

Open Doors believes that women are critical to the growth and health of the local church – so I am delighted that we are standing alongside women like Aizah, equipping them as leaders to strengthen others who are suffering for their faith. With the Spirit's anointing, and support from their global church family, they can become 'oaks of righteousness', bringing good news of freedom to 'the places long devastated' (Isaiah 61:3-4).

I believe the world will see change for the better as people come to know Jesus – and good leadership in the church helps. That's why training, Bible literacy and discipleship are such a key part of our mission to 'strengthen what remains' (Revelation 3:2). This year's annual review shows how your support is not only keeping our persecuted family alive, but also strengthening them to be salt and light in their broken communities. These are the good works that God has prepared in advance for us to do. Thank you for the part you are playing in this.



Henrietta

Henrietta Blyth
CEO, Open Doors UK&I

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 image: Illustrative image of a secret believer

World Watch News

NIGERIA

Standing with the Chibok parents five years on



Hannatu Dauda cradles a picture of her missing daughter Saratu (above).

"Anytime I hold this picture I feel as if she is here with me," she says. "I have so much hope that if she is alive, God willing, one day my tears will be wiped away."

Saratu was among the 230 girls abducted by Boko Haram extremists from Chibok Secondary Girls School on 14 April 2014. Some escaped. Others have been released. But 112 Christian girls are still captive and no one knows how many are still alive.

Ever since that night, Open Doors has been supporting the Chibok parents with emergency relief and spiritual care. Your support has enabled us to provide them with food and medicine, trauma care, prayer and encouragement – and has kept their hope alive.

"If they have killed her and show me her body, then I will stop hoping for her return," says Yana Gana, whose daughter Rifkatu is still missing. "Until then, we will wait for her to come back. I believe that God will perform a miracle and the girls will be

released. He alone can make a way where there is no way for her to return."

"I am grateful for your prayer and support," says Hannatu Dauda. "I have hope that this year God will bring them out. Just as we rejoiced with those who were freed, we will also rejoice when our daughters come back."

Please continue to pray with these parents. You can send a message of encouragement to them at www.opendoorsuk.org/nigeria, where you can also see a video featuring Hannatu Dauda and Yana Gana.

"If people are willing to risk their lives to follow Jesus, he must be worth following."

Every week speakers from Open Doors visit churches up and down the land to talk about the persecuted church. Recently, we've been blessed to see people not only respond to the needs of our persecuted family, but also make commitments to Christ.

"A lady came up to me to say that she has been praying for her husband for many years as he was not a Christian,"

said Andy, Head of Church Relations. "He surprised her by saying that he wanted to go to church with her. After hearing about the persecuted church he decided he wanted to follow Jesus. She was overjoyed."

At one service eight people made a commitment. At another service two young people told Andy that 'if people were really willing to risk their lives to follow Jesus then He

must be worth following and they decided to give their lives to him'.

The witness of the persecuted church can affect our lives here in the UK and Ireland. If you would like to invite a speaker from Open Doors to your church, call **01993 460015** or email inspire@opendoorsuk.org

NORTH KOREA

The Bible that escaped

This is more than a Bible: it's a survivor. It comes out of North Korea and is almost 100 years old.

It has survived the Japanese rule of Korea in the early 20th century, when Christians were forced to bow before the altars of the emperor. It has survived three generations of dictators – Kim il-Sung, Kim Jong-il and Kim Jong-un, who have tried to ban the Bible and crush its power.

So how did this Bible 'escape' the country? It was given to one of our underground workers in exchange for a smuggled, modern Korean Bible.

Thanks to your support and prayers, secret believers in North Korea are receiving new Bibles. And the believers who previously guarded this precious object gave it to the



Bible smugglers as a way of saying 'Gamsahamnida!' ('Thank you!')

It reminds us that the church is still alive and active in North Korea. In fact, until recently this Bible was still being used by secret believers in North Korea, despite being written in very out-of-date Korean.

Find out more about this Bible and other Christian books which escaped from North Korea at www.opendoorsuk.org/northkorea

SYRIA

Staying behind to dispel the darkness

His life has been threatened. Three members of his congregation have been kidnapped because of their faith. His church has been surrounded by fighting.

Yet Pastor Abdalla has decided to stay in Syria to be a beacon of light in the darkness. And thanks to your incredible response to Open Doors' Christmas appeal for Syria, Christians are being helped with food, medicines and school fees. There is specialised care for trauma victims and a new medical clinic. And the church also supports Kurdish converts from a Muslim background in one of Aleppo's refugee camps.

"Time and time again, my church talks about how thankful they are for all the help," he says. "Other NGOs are stopping aid throughout Syria and many are suffering, but our church feels like they're constantly thought about, that they aren't forgotten."

One mother of three said: "Don't think that the little help you're giving us does nothing. Please thank those who are helping out. It makes a difference."

ALGERIA

Christians on their knees for their country

Thousands of Christians in Algeria have been fasting and praying 'for the blessing of our country and for its socio-political stability' as unrest continues across the country.

Massive protests have forced the long-standing president, Abdelaziz Bouteflika (83), to stand down. The president had already announced that he would not run for a fifth term, and planned presidential elections had been postponed.

In a press release, the Protestant Church of Algeria declared solidarity with the 'aspirations and legitimate claims of the Algerian people in their peaceful struggle for the coming of a modern democratic republic, where the fundamental rights of the citizens will be protected and respected, regardless of their political and religious beliefs'.

In recent years the Algerian Church has faced church building closures, while pastors and others involved with the church have been interrogated.

"Christians have gone through a lot of persecution," said Abdul*, an Algerian believer. "For sure, there are Christians who are afraid. But there are also many others who still have the courage to stand up and declare their faith in Christ Jesus."

"We as Christians strongly hope that our Lord Jesus Christ will intervene in the country."

For the latest news and stories of courageous faith visit www.opendoorsuk.org



Bringing hidden persecution into the light

Aizah* faced extreme violence and rejection from her family when she gave her life to Jesus. As a woman, she was doubly vulnerable to persecution. Yet today Aizah has overcome all this to become an inspiring leader in her own right, providing protection, support and encouragement to women like her.

The persecution of women is hidden. We cannot show you their faces for their own protection. This photo is illustrative.

*name changed for security reasons



Aizah, a believer from a Muslim background, fell in love with the Bible.

Aizah is from North Africa. When she became a Christian, her life changed for ever. Perhaps this sounds familiar. Perhaps the same thing happened to you.

"It shaped me," says Aizah. "My family could see the difference. I stopped saying bad words, I stopped seeking revenge. Nothing of what people did stayed in my heart; I felt the power of forgiveness."

Aizah's faith has led her to risk everything to support other women who face persecution. But her decision to turn to Christ was dangerous. Her father instructed her brother to beat her every day. Scared that her father might kill her for her conversion, she ran away from home.

"At the moment of your conversion you bring shame on your family," says Aizah. "If you are a woman born into a Muslim family and you become a follower of Jesus, then you bring shame on your father, your brother, and the whole family. You hurt your family and

dishonour them. That is how they feel about your conversion, and they will tell you that you're an infidel, you bring us shame."

Across the Middle East and North Africa, the rise of radicalism has driven many Muslims to question their faith. Many Muslims like Aizah have come to Christ, especially during Ramadan, when Muslims fast to seek God. A great countermovement is filling churches with new believers and the church is growing rapidly.

"You're an infidel, you bring shame on the family."

But Christians from a Muslim background can face severe persecution. The dangers are particularly acute if you're a woman.

Annual research from the Open Doors World Watch List has highlighted the shocking truth that millions of Christian women are doubly vulnerable to persecution, targeted both

because of their gender and their faith. But what is even more shocking is that their suffering is invisible, that they are largely unseen and ignored by the world around them.

This has to change. That's why we've launched the new **See. Change.** campaign to change the future for inspiring women like Aizah who face persecution for their faith and their gender. Together we can restore dignity, hope and identity for women who would otherwise be suffering persecution alone and in hiding.

SURPRISE CONVERSATION

Aizah wasn't always a pioneering Christian leader, sharing the gospel and serving her community as she is today. Her journey to Christ began 17 years ago and sprang from an unlikely conversation. Aizah met a North African woman and was impressed by her strength in the face of suffering.

Aizah says, "I saw that she was good, so I didn't understand why she wasn't a

Muslim. I tried to evangelise her, to turn her into a Muslim. I wanted her to say the Muslim creed so that she wouldn't go to hell."

The two women spoke more about their faiths. Aizah asked the woman for a Bible so that she could compare it to the Quran and prove the Christian wrong.

Aizah explains, "When you convert to Islam, you will go to heaven," I said to her. 'You have the good deeds.' But she answered: 'I am good because of the teaching of Jesus.'"

This made no sense to Aizah. Brought up as a Muslim, she was convinced that the Quran was the last revelation of God. She thought the Bible had been corrupted by Christians.

She says, "I thought it would be the same text but with small differences. But the two books proved to be quite different."

After some time of reading, Aizah put the Quran aside. "I fell in love with the Bible," she says. "From that time on, I thought I had turned into a Christian. I didn't know yet about Jesus and the importance of Him, about His suffering and death for me."

It was some years before Aizah felt compelled to tell her family about her conversion. She decided to tell her father first. Her father works with the police and he had spoken at home about people becoming Christians.

"I rehearsed my speech the day before," she says. "I tried to imagine all possible responses he could have. I was warned by others not to say that I had become a Christian, but to say that I had become a follower of Jesus. Muslims see Jesus as a prophet, so being a follower of Jesus would sound more positive than that I had become a Christian. So the next day I approached my dad, he was watching TV. 'Dad, you always say that I've changed. Do you want to know why?' When he affirmed, I simply said: I became a Christian."

'YOU WILL LOSE EVERYTHING'

Her father's response was calm but harsh. Aizah says, "He said, 'You are going to lose everything. You will lose your mother, your brother and sister, and nobody will talk to you.' He is a man who shouts readily; he can be very hard on people, but he said everything calmly, he didn't do anything rash."

The next day Aizah had to work. She had finished university and was on an internship. She says, "My father came to work and confiscated my car. The same week my brother beat me up. I decided to stay with friends. On Saturday my father asked me to come home to talk with him."

That time the tone of the conversation was different. "My

father was really angry, he felt betrayed and hurt by me," she says.

Her father told her younger brother to beat his sister up twice a day until she came to her senses. Soon after her father threw her out of the house.

After three weeks away from home, Aizah persuaded her father to talk to her. He ordered her to return home for ten days and have no further contact with Christians.

"I'm not your Dad anymore"

"He expected that I would return to Islam," she says. "I saw this as a chance to show my parents that I love them."

In those ten days at home Aizah was not allowed to sit at the table with her family. Nobody talked to her. After ten days, she told her father she had not changed.

"So you will lose everything," he said. "I am not your dad anymore, I am going to disown you."

Aizah replied, "You're my dad."

But her mother warned her that her father's anger was only growing. "My mother said that my father might kill me because I was too rebellious," she says.

The next day Aizah left her

PRAY FOR MUSLIMS DURING RAMADAN:

6 MAY-4 JUNE 2019

Ramadan is a key spiritual time for Muslims as they seek God in fasting and prayer. Many Muslims see visions of Jesus during Ramadan. *30 Days of Prayer for the Muslim World* is an excellent resource that will help you to pray for more Muslims to discover the love of Jesus this Ramadan. Order your free copy by completing the response form, calling our Inspire team on 01993 460015 or visiting www.opendoorsuk.org.





Aizah wants to set up a safe house for women who are thrown out of home after becoming Christians. *Image used for illustrative purposes.*

family's house.

"I walked away with only the things that I could fit into my backpack. I stayed for a few weeks with another believer, and then I lived for two years with the family who led me to Jesus. It was ten years before I spoke to my father again," she says. "The good thing is that God walked all this time with me. I didn't get a hardened heart. God helped me to not miss my father too much. God provided these moments that I saw my father walking in the streets when I was missing him more. God also made it possible to continue to talk with my mother, although my father had forbidden her to contact me."

'WOMEN ARE SEEN AS A THREAT'

God's faithfulness to Aizah during her family's persecution is incredible. Yet Aizah's experiences are replicated across North Africa and the Middle East. She knows many more women who have suffered similar pressure and persecution after they have become Christians, and she understands the issues that

women who leave Islam to follow Christ are forced to face.

Aizah is moved by her own faith and experience of God's love for her to reach out to other women from a Muslim background who have found Christ. In the past months, she has met with around 60 women who are being supported by Open Doors in different ways.

"God walked all this time with me."

She recognises that these women believers have specific needs and she is well-placed to support them.

Aizah explains, "A big problem women face when they come to the church is that fellow believers who were raised in the Islamic culture see women in the same way as Muslim men do. Islam says women have less or incomplete faith and wisdom, therefore you're always looked down upon. Women are seen as having nothing to offer. Only when you're married are you worth something. Your worth comes from your family, your husband or maybe your job.

"It is hard," she says. "As soon as you say 'I am a Christian', you turn into a rebel in the eyes of your Muslim family and, paradoxically, in the eyes of the Christians too. Women are seen as a threat who need to be contained."

To solve the problem of their infidel Christian daughter, some parents arrange a marriage with a Muslim man.

"Then they get rid of the problem and, more importantly, get rid of the shame. Other parents keep their daughters imprisoned in their house. That is very hard for a convert. How can she grow in her faith?"

What Aizah also sees happening is that the family decides to stop funding the studies of their daughters. "I know many girls who had to stop studying because of that," she says.

SAFE HOUSE

Aizah's faith and experiences have given her insight and vision into the best way to help other women in her position.

She says, "We want to have a safe house for women who are expelled from home

after their conversion. Women expelled from home lose their honour. They have no protecting shield for them, no father or brother to defend them. In our culture a woman like that deserves to be attacked. It is a big thing. It makes a lot of difference when people know that someone is protecting you as a woman."

Courageous Christian women like Aizah are critical to the growth and health of the local church in North Africa and the Middle East. Your support for Open Doors provides leadership development for men and women – but women are doubly vulnerable and their particular struggles are often overlooked. Aizah says, "I had never heard of any other organisation that has said that they're going to work for women. Open Doors says they want to stand with us. This is very bold; it is pioneering a new thing, starting to say we're going to be intentional and strategic about it. We're living in a male culture. But they are saying we will come

also alongside the women. I see a lot of flexibility to come with something tailored for our context."

"Open Doors is pioneering a new thing"

Aizah has seen the many ways that your support for Open Doors is having an impact on the women she meets. She says, "Many of them were participating in training. Others were encouraged in one-on-one meetings. Open Doors supported women who were under house arrest, women who were thrown on the street by their family. Women who were suffering hunger were provided with food. A family arranged a marriage of a converted woman with a Muslim man. Open Doors provided a lawyer to help her. We could also support a woman who was held in a mental clinic. She was put there by her parents when she declared that Jesus was living in her heart."

God sees women like

Aizah; no-one's suffering is hidden from God. Across the Middle East and North Africa, your support for Open Doors ensures women are treated with care and dignity. Women are seen when isolated, empowered to read, enabled to earn to provide, confident that God sees them. Thanks to your commitment and prayers, Open Doors also helps the church respond positively to women rather than reinforcing the stigma associated with abuse and sexual violence.

Aizah says, "Open Doors prepares the next generation of women to counsel, to lead and to pastor in their country. But we're not imposing an agenda on them, we follow the need of each country. The strength of the workers of Open Doors is the willingness to go on a journey. We want to hear you, brainstorm with you, and go through the process to see how we can help, how can we have synergy. Let's go on a journey. It's not an organisation that just comes with a bag of money."

BE PART OF THE SEE. CHANGE. CAMPAIGN

I HEAR YOU

Every £31 could help another Christian woman from a Muslim background, like Aizah, fulfil her God-given potential. Your gift could train her to share the gospel and serve her community.

Pray for Aizah and other Open Doors partners reaching out to isolated women to encourage them in their faith. Pray for the establishment of safe houses where women can find shelter, care and spiritual support.

I'M WITH YOU

I will stand with you and speak out.

When you speak out, our leaders listen. Show Aizah and other persecuted women that you see them and stand with them – visit www.opendoorsuk.org/seechange to be part of a huge, hand-made petition that will be presented to the UK government in November.



I SEE YOU

Open Doors' vision is that every woman who is persecuted for her faith and gender is seen, valued and empowered to reach her God-given potential. You can help us to make that vision a reality with your long-term support, prayers and actions.

Meet your extraordinary family from North Korea, Nigeria and Syria



Image used for illustrative purposes

STANDING STRONG Open Doors Celebration 2019

What does courageous faith look like? How is God working through His church around the world? How is the gospel changing lives in some of the darkest places in the world? Come and find out this November at Open Doors' celebration event Standing Strong!

Just wait until you meet Tirham*. She's bold, she's brave, and she's working to bind up the broken hearts of women and girls in Nigeria who have suffered violent persecution – much of it at the hands of Islamic extremist groups like Boko Haram. Tirham's vital ministry is made possible through your support, which is enabling Open Doors local partners like her to provide trauma care workshops for persecuted women.

Tirham says, "Women have always been the recipient of hate, wars, persecution and

aggressive behaviours all over the world. They are voiceless because somehow culture and traditions have relegated them to an object without rights and feelings... Violent conflict and killings in the north-east, southern Kaduna and north-central Nigeria have left mostly women and children homeless and emotionally wounded. Sometimes they are subjected to untold hardship both physically and emotionally – some of these women and young girls are kidnapped, raped and perhaps killed."

Nigeria has risen two places this year to number 12 on the Open Doors World Watch List, which ranks the top 50 countries where Christians face the most extreme persecution.

Recent Open Doors research has revealed that Christian women are doubly vulnerable to persecution – they are targeted both for their

faith and their gender. And that's why we've launched a new campaign, *See. Change.* Your prayers and support mean that Open Doors is able to work with local partners to provide trauma counselling for women and girls who have been through these ordeals. During the workshops, these women are looked after both physically and spiritually – they are given a chance to speak about their experiences and receive healing. Tirham is one of the volunteers, and she testifies to the power of these workshops.

"During the workshop, the first few days, [the women] couldn't talk. But before the end of their stay with us, they were happy and testified of having their burden lifted up... The act of listening to them and allowing them to share their frustration, humiliation and fear for the future proved to be very helpful."

BOOK TODAY FOR STANDING STRONG!

Want to grow your faith and know more about how God is at work through His church in Nigeria and around the world? Join us for a day of worship, prayer, inspiration and challenge from the persecuted church. Our guest speakers from North Korea, Nigeria and Syria will leave you with a fresh understanding of how God is at work in their lives, through your support.

"It's just been so moving, so touching, so inspiring to hear the testimony of our brothers and sisters, what they're going through."

Standing Strong delegate

GLASGOW

9 November – 10am-4pm
Findlay Memorial Church
Early bird adult ticket - £10 (after 31 July this will be £15)

IRELAND

12, 13 and 14 November – 7.30pm-9.30pm (locations to be confirmed)
Tickets will be £5 (*no early bird pricing)

BIRMINGHAM

16 November 2019 – 10am-4pm
Bethel Convention Centre, West Bromwich
Early bird adult ticket - £10 (after 31 July this will be £15)
£5 per child at Birmingham

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMME

Back by popular demand, there will be a children's programme for ages 5-11 years at Birmingham. One delegate from Standing Strong 2018 said, "On behalf of my grandchildren, thank you very much for the



programme... I'm sure that it will have sown seeds that will come to fruition in due course."

Spread the word: Standing Strong is about coming together with your global church family, so why not bring a group? Birmingham sold out last year, and spaces will

be limited again, so book fast!
Group bookings get 30% off.

HOW TO BOOK

For more details and to make your booking, go to www.opendoorsuk.org. Early bird price available until 31 July.

*name changed for security reasons

POST IT!



Do you want to inspire children with stories of adventure, courage and secret faith – and get them involved in supporting their persecuted family?



Our new children's resource POST IT! offers a whole range of ways to send messages of encouragement to children who are persecuted for their faith.

No parent would keep their child in a place of threat or deprivation if they didn't have to – and yet, around the world, millions of Christian parents are forced to choose between raising their children as Christians or keeping them physically safe. These children grow up knowing that their parents might be arrested or imprisoned at any time for their faith – and they are in grave danger. They need encouragement.

Added to that, most Central Asian countries prohibit the teaching of religion to children so one of the big challenges is how to reach out to them. But through summer camps, it can happen in a fun way without attracting too much attention. In partnership with local Christians, Open Doors organises secret children's camps in Central Asia, and there God does many unexpected things.

Most of the children at these camps come from

Christian families – and, for the majority, it is a new experience. But children from Muslim families can be found there, too. At one camp, there were a number of Muslim children who seemed intent on challenging everything, claiming themselves as followers of 'the true religion Islam'. But, to the surprise of everyone, at the end of the week, they all made a commitment to follow Christ – something that would have been very difficult to do in normal circumstances. Can you imagine what might have greeted them on their return?

Young people like these run the risk of rejection from their families – and even abuse. As part of the first indigenous Christian young generation to grow up in Central Asia, they are under daily pressure. They need encouragement, too.

CHILDREN CAN SEND DRAWINGS

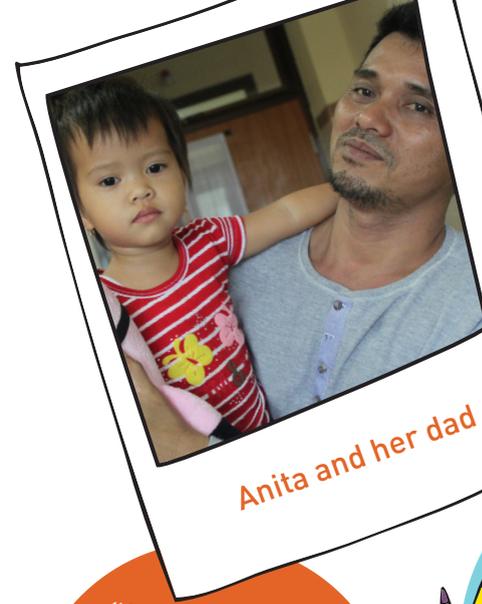
It's not just adults who can recognise and respond to injustice. Children know only too well about issues of unfairness and bullying. And they want to do something about it. That's why we've

produced POST IT! – a new resource to help children send messages of encouragement to children whose Christian identity can bring risk and danger.

One of the simplest ways to do this is by sending hand-drawn pictures – messages without words (except for signing with your first name). These pictures can then be safely shared with children and youth in Central Asia – at their summer camps, Sunday services, or with families at training events – in a way that won't draw unwanted attention.

SEND A MESSAGE OF LOVE AND JOY – THROUGH DRAWINGS

Sending a drawing to Christian children in Central Asia will not only give them the encouragement to keep following Jesus, it will also tell them they are remembered by a worldwide family of faith, hope and love.



When a co-ordinated suicide bomb attack rocked the world of Christians attending their churches in Surabaya, Indonesia, thousands of you wrote to three young children who were injured in the attack: Alvaro, Anita and Trinity. They and their families hugely appreciated the outpouring of love and encouragement.

Thank you! Responses like these are the best reason to get drawing now!



"[These letters are] so beautiful. We are very grateful, even though we can't mention all your names individually."
– Anita's dad

"Thank you, my friends, for sending me the letters. I am very happy! Please continue to pray for me so that I can recover quickly and be handsome again!"
– Alvaro

FOUR MORE REASONS TO SEND A MESSAGE OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Sending messages not only benefits the children who receive them, but those who send them, too:

- It's a great thing to do together as a family
- It helps children understand more about their world
- It makes faith relevant – and gives a reason for prayer
- It's a really meaningful activity for Sunday school and children's groups.

POST A MESSAGE TO CHILDREN OF THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

With POST IT! you can find out how to send a drawing to children in Central Asia – and more!

POST IT! HAS:

- Information on encouragement campaigns for Central Asia, India and Colombia
- Lots of different ways to send messages: drawings, cards, photos, audio, video
- Something for all ages – but especially for children aged 5-11.

With so many different options, you can use it at home or at church – again and again! All campaigns in POST IT! run until 31 December 2019. Order this unique new resource now by going online or phoning Inspire on **01993 460015** – and get posting!

You can also find information about the Central Asia Children's Drawing Campaign – and other children's letter-writing campaigns – at: www.opendoorsuk.org/write



P.S. Check out our printable design templates which can be downloaded straight away!

No retreat, no surrender: Living courageously for Jesus in Algeria

Fight or flight?
What's your natural response when you face opposition?
If your faith came under fire, would you stand your ground?

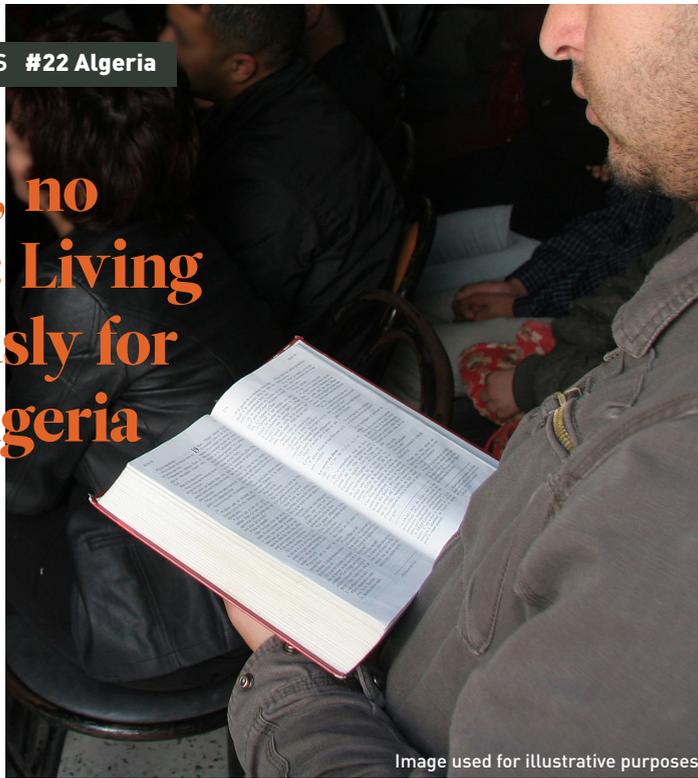


Image used for illustrative purposes

For Muslih*, a secret believer in Algeria, following Jesus is a daily battle, but retreating is not an option. "When you are in a war, when you run, you turn your back on the enemy and they shoot you," he says. "We're in a battle and it's better to keep the weapons and go to the front, maybe we can reach our goal. For sure we will have less chances when we retreat."

Muslih, who used to belong to a political movement that campaigned for greater cultural and political freedom for Berbers, came to faith after God answered the prayers of some Christians who prayed for his broken car to start. "Something happened in my heart," he says. "Thoughts like, 'the prayers of Christians are heard' and 'their God answers prayers' came to mind. Six months later I became a believer."

But Muslih's choice to follow Jesus was not without consequences. "My brother was very opposed to my conversion, also my cousins. I was the first Christian in my village. It was something new for everyone, and there were a lot of Muslim extremists in that place."

Muslih's village used threats of expulsion from the community and isolation to intimidate him – threats that did not stop him from sharing the gospel and planting a house church.

"I brought some gospels to my village and we started with a group of five or six converts in small, secret gatherings in our village. We used all kinds of locations – sometimes in a house, under olive trees; even once in a grave yard. As soon as we were discovered, we moved to another location. Again and again we were chased out of

our meeting place. Normally we could use a place for one or two months before we had to move on."

Algeria is the highest rising country on this year's World Watch List – Open Doors' ranking of the top 50 countries where Christians face the most extreme persecution. Believers there are unable to share their faith openly due to strict blasphemy laws, and the state restricts freedom of religion through laws which regulate non-Muslim worship and ban conversion from Islam. Although Algeria did not embrace the 2011 uprisings of the Arab Spring, the political climate is becoming increasingly unstable with massive protests against the country's long-standing president leading to his resignation in April (see p5).

It would be safer and easier for Christians there to remain in hiding, away from those who seek to harm them. But God-given courage and strength mean that believers are doing the exact opposite – and they are seeing amazing growth!

"The church is growing," says Muslih. "There are some 30-35,000 protestant Christians in Algeria who meet in one of the churches... The secret church is way bigger. There are many believers who don't go to a church, but instead watch Christian TV. Sometimes we meet them in a coffee shop. The church in Algeria wouldn't have space to receive all those people."

One of the reasons for this huge growth is prayer, Muslih says. "We are well organised in prayer, we pray from 6pm till midnight. We see signs of a new revival. Muslims are coming to us; they are tired, and some clearly and openly say, 'We

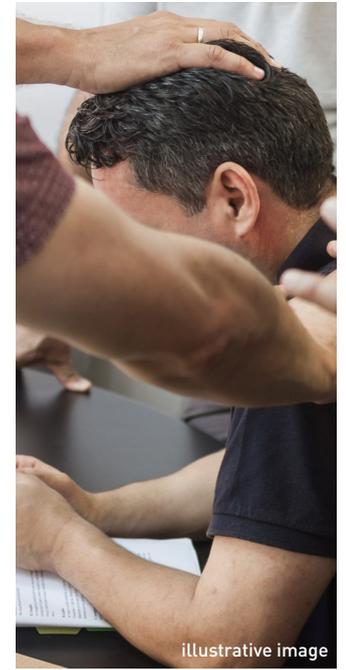
want to know Christ."

Thanks to your support, Open Doors local partners have been able to strengthen Muslih in his ministry. He says, "You have a great quality that I never saw with others: that is your devotion to us. You fulfil all your promises. For me, you feel like a family, I feel good about you."

"We see signs of a new revival"

You're supporting us as a family and the church in general. This helped us a lot, it helped us to answer the needs of our church. Your spiritual support is formidable, especially all those people who are praying for us. It makes me proud to know that when I am in the battlefield, there are people behind us. Knowing that makes us strong."

*name changed for security reasons



illustrative image

"The prayers of Christians are heard." Seeing this attracted Muslih to become a Christian.

INSPIRE YOUR CHURCH WITH STORIES OF COURAGEOUS FAITH LIKE MUSLIH'S

Muslih's amazing story is one of millions. Persecuted believers all around the world are living courageously and taking risks to share Jesus with others – and you can inspire your church with their stories using the new 2019 World Watch List Church Pack! It's full of imaginative resources to help everyone in your church, young and old, to stand with their persecuted family in prayer and action. The pack includes:

- World Watch List 2019 Top 50 Guide
- Family-friendly map with activities for children
- 50 simple country flag stickers to encourage all ages to pray
- Drawing campaign for children in Central Asia



- Youth leader's session outline
- Simple ten-minute presentation outline to include in your church service.

Order your church pack today! You can also find downloadable films, PowerPoints and other World Watch List resources at: www.opendoorsuk.org/resources



COULD YOU DO SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY?

Death threats, miraculous escapes, survival against the odds. So many stories from the persecuted church are extraordinary. What if you could do something extraordinary in response?

Here's your chance to do something amazing. The Muskathlon challenge in South Korea, in October 2019, has sold out so quickly that we're running another event in 2020. What is it? It's an extreme challenge to raise money and pray for Christians facing extreme persecution. You'll travel with a team of fellow Muskathletes to South Korea to complete a sponsored challenge of your choice. You could run 13, 26 or 39 miles, cycle 75 miles or trek 39 miles.

Along the way you'll hear first-hand about the cost and courage of following Christ in North Korea and you'll have a unique opportunity for fellowship with your persecuted family.

You'll meet Christian defectors from North Korea now living in South Korea and hear their stories. You'll have the chance to visit the demilitarised zone and even pray through the border fence. You'll be pushing the limits of your faith and endurance to achieve great things for your persecuted family. It's also an incredible opportunity to deepen your own trust in God.



The fundraising challenge you'll face is to raise £10,000. Sound impossible? That's what makes it so exciting. It may seem like an unachievable goal – but it really can be done.

Just ask Dawn Gillett, who ran a Muskathlon marathon in Jordan last year. She says, "I would say go for it – start immediately – you will be amazed at the support you get. Talk to everyone about what you are doing and why. You will find that there are people who wouldn't take on the physical challenge but who would love to help with fundraising and prayer. Make sure they know they are as much a part of the challenge as you are!"

You'll get full support from Open Doors with advice on everything from fitness training to fundraising, from what to pack to how to pray.

Imagine the feeling of achievement when you cross the finish line! And imagine the encouragement your life-changing support will bring to Christians in desperate need inside North Korea.

North Korea remains number 1 on the Open Doors World Watch List: the most dangerous place in the world to

be a Christian. The personality cult surrounding third-generation dictator Kim Jong-Un leaves no room for religious expression and Christianity is strictly forbidden.

Christians keep their faith secret from their children because weekly state indoctrination classes encourage even pre-school children to betray their parents. If a Christian is discovered, they are sent to a labour camp or killed on the spot. Often their families share their fate because North Korea practises collective punishment.

Yet miraculously, hope is alive in North Korea. Open Doors secret workers are smuggling in enough food to keep 60,000 believers alive in North Korea, as well smuggling in illegal Bibles, broadcasting Christian radio programmes into North Korea, and running safe houses at the Chinese border for those who are able to escape.

A secret Open Doors source recently met a North Korean refugee family in China. They say, "Their children were the ages of my children at the time – nine and six – or so it seemed. I couldn't have been more wrong. They were 14 and nine. But their growth was stunted because they had been malnourished their entire lives."

Right now, more families than ever are facing malnutrition in North Korea. Drought and floods have worsened the impact of the UN sanctions, meaning that 10.3

million people – almost half the population – are in need of food aid. Your extraordinary fundraising could play a significant role in bringing relief and even saving lives.

For example, just £30 could provide a monthly relief pack to keep two North Korean believers alive. This could include food, medicines, clothes, boots and blankets. Every £88 you raise could provide a North Korean believer with a place in a safe house where they can receive training and fellowship, alongside practical relief such as food.

Your fundraising will make a real and tangible difference to people's lives. But just by being there, your presence will bring joy to the North Korean Christians you meet. You may hear their dark stories of imprisonment, but you'll also see the light of Christ shining brighter. You'll also have the chance to pray like never before – and your prayers could even help to bring about change.

Think you're up for the challenge? Visit www.opendoorsuk.org/muskathlon to secure your space or contact Fiona on 01993 460015 or challenge@opendoorsuk.org.





Look closely

Who do you see?

Do you see a woman in danger?

Do you see hidden persecution?

Do you see a daughter of God?

Do you see a leader for the next generation?

Do you see hope for the Middle East and North Africa?

See. Change.

Will you see a woman in danger and help change her future today?

Aizah*, in North Africa, wants to create a safe house for other women who are expelled from home when they convert to Christianity – just as Aizah was. She says: “Women expelled from home lose their honour... In our culture a woman like that deserves to be attacked. It makes a lot of difference when people know that someone is protecting you as a woman.”

Your gift and support will restore hope to courageous believers from a Muslim background who are persecuted for their faith.

Every £31 could help another Christian woman from a Muslim background, like Aizah, fulfil her God-given potential. Your gift could train her to share the gospel and serve her community.

Every £51 could ease the pressure on family life for believers facing hidden persecution. Your gift could train a believer to provide for their family financially.

Be part of the Open Doors *See. Change.* campaign. Your long-term support and prayers will help to bring hidden persecution into the light. Please pray and give a gift today. Use the response form, phone **01993 460015** or visit **www.opendoorsuk.org**. Thank you.

*Name changed for security reasons | Image used for illustrative purposes