

Open *Doors*

MAGAZINE | Jan/Feb 2021

Would you
survive in
North Korea?



NEW!

OPEN DOORS 2021 WORLD WATCH LIST TOP 50

Available end of January

Your comprehensive guide to the places where following Jesus costs the most, this booklet is packed with information and inspiration to help you pray, support and speak up for your persecuted family. Includes:

- Information and prayer points for the top 50 countries on the list
- Inspirational testimonies from persecuted Christians
- Six 'What if?' features that bring the world of the persecuted church alive
- Removable World Watch List map
- Information on global persecution trends

Pre-order your FREE copy by contacting our Inspire team on 01993 460015 or email inspire@opendoorsuk.org.



WATCH THE 2021 WORLD WATCH LIST LAUNCH LIVE!

Wednesday 13 January 4-5pm

You are invited to watch the online parliamentary launch of the 2021 World Watch List on 13 January.

This year's event will be held digitally – which means you can watch it live!

Hosted by Rt Hon. Theresa Villiers MP, the parliamentary launch is an amazing opportunity to ensure that our MPs hear first-hand testimony from persecuted Christians about the human rights abuses they face, and understand what they can do to bring about real change.

Find out how you can watch the broadcast - and invite your MP to the event if you haven't already done so - at opendoorsuk.org/wwl

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 opendoorsuk.org/legacy or phone 01993 460015.

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

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.

Contact us:

England and Wales
PO Box 6, Witney
Oxon OX29 6WG
T 01993 460015

Ireland
PO Box 873
Belfast BT15 1WZ
T 02890 751080

E inspire@opendoorsuk.org

Scotland
T 01292 800006
E scotlandteam@opendoorsuk.org

Find us on:

opendoorsuk.org



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Cover image:
Commuting in Pyongyang, North Korea.
REUTERS/Damir Sagolj

Letter from Henrietta

A chance for change

"Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." PSALM 46:10

Usually, in my January letter, I'd be wishing you a Happy New Year – and I certainly hope you and your loved ones have a blessed and joyful start to 2021. But I'm also aware that it's still an uncertain time for all of us. We don't know what the trajectory of the pandemic will look like in the coming year, or when life will 'get back to normal'.

For persecuted Christians around the world, Covid-19 isn't only a deadly pandemic and the reason many have lost their source of income. It's also another weapon of persecution: many Christians are being denied vital food, aid and PPE. That's what Open Doors will be highlighting at the parliamentary launch of the World Watch List on 13 January – you can read more on p6. It's not too late to invite your MP to attend: we need to ensure that our MPs know what is going on, and what we want them to do about it!

Since 2002, North Korea has been at the top of the World Watch List – it's the hardest place in which to follow Jesus. On p10, you'll read the amazing stories of Open Doors field workers who support North Korean Christians. Persecution is getting more extreme around the world, but our brothers and sisters are undaunted in their vision to worship God and build up His church. It's our privilege to do everything we can to strengthen, support and equip them.

When I look at North Korea, it reminds me of the book of Daniel. Like Nebuchadnezzar, the Kim dynasty build huge statues of themselves and demand every citizen bow down to them. Daniel faced enormous persecution, even a fiery furnace and a den of lions. But the Lord fought for him and he survived to proclaim God's name to the nation! Even better, Nebuchadnezzar was brought to repentance and praised God.

Let's keep praying that God breaks into the hearts of those who persecute Christians, and that every believer who is persecuted for their faith will, one day, be free to praise Jesus openly. And let's use our freedom in the UK to urge our MPs to use their influence to support our persecuted family.



Henrietta Blyth
CEO, Open Doors UK&I

PAKISTAN

Abduction of Pakistani Christian teen investigated

Please pray for a 13-year-old Pakistani Christian girl, Arzoo, who was abducted in October by a Muslim man in his 40s. Investigations are ongoing.

A few days after taking Arzoo, the man produced a 'marriage certificate' stating she was 18 and had converted to Islam. Consequently, the Sindh High Court permitted the arrangement, allowing the man to take Arzoo home. But following protests, judges ordered police to free the girl, who is in protective custody whilst the courts investigate the case.

An anonymous source said, "It is their [Pakistani Christians] sincere prayer that they will see justice in the days ahead. That they will hear the courts set a clear precedent ensuring future clarity that, regardless of religious affiliation, children are safeguarded from abuse that is legitimised by child marriage, in keeping with the country's child marriage restraint laws. Arzoo is the face of many others."

Please pray for Arzoo and her family, and that the courts will quickly grant her release, with no ramifications.

PHILIPPINES

Persecuted women in the Philippines make 1,000 facemasks

Isn't it great when you learn a skill that ends up being vital in a way you'd never anticipated? This is certainly true for a group of Christian women from a Muslim background in the Philippines who've used some new-found skills to make around 1,000 vital facemasks for their community.

The women attended the Kaholatan weaving project, funded by your support, aimed at helping persecuted Christians to learn weaving skills and sell their products – like mats, slippers and wallets – to support themselves and their families.

But then the pandemic hit and many believers didn't have the means to buy facemasks for their families. Thankfully, the women were able to use their expertise to serve their brothers and sisters in need – making and distributing masks.

"At the beginning of the training I made many mistakes," remembers Lita. "But after many tries, I was able to create masks that were good. Even with my age, I still push myself to do these things because I know what I do here is for the Lord."

Lita's friend Merita agrees: "When I think of the people who are going to need the masks, I am able to push myself to make more and do my best, even when it's hard



to do." For the women, this was not just another project; this was a way they could be empowered to use their skills to serve their own neighbours.

Please continue to pray for our brothers and sisters in the Southern Philippines as they face the ongoing challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as persecution from some in their community. While parts of the Philippines are mostly Christian, areas of the south are Muslim majority, and leaving Islam for Christianity can mean believers are ostracised by their community.

UK & IRELAND

Sam celebrates 21st birthday with persecuted church

The excitement of any birthday is the presents – especially a 21st! It's here that one young Open Doors supporter, Sam Couper, had an idea.

"The Bible tells us that if one part suffers, we all suffer. If I get the chance to celebrate, so should they!"

Instead of getting presents for his big birthday last year, Sam asked family and friends to donate to the persecuted church.

Sam explains, "The Bible tells us that if one part suffers, we all suffer. If I get the chance to celebrate, so should they!"



ABOVE Sam didn't receive presents for his 21st birthday - but the persecuted church did

Would you consider taking on a fundraising challenge of your own? Maybe running or baking, or an unusual challenge like

shaving off your beard? Head to opendoorsuk.org/fundraise for ideas and inspiration.

SUDAN

Praise God for more good news from Sudan



ABOVE Your prayers for Sudan are being answered

Sudanese Christian and Muslim leaders have signed a declaration to work together on promoting religious freedom in a country that has been ruled by oppressive Islamic law for three decades.

The landmark move follows shortly after the removal of Islam as the country's state

religion and the repeal of the death penalty for leaving Islam.

"In principle, Open Doors sees this as a very positive development," says Jo Newhouse, an Open Doors spokesperson

for sub-Saharan Africa. "It is a crucial step forward for the church which, for years, has been denied space in society to live out Christianity in freedom."

In more good news, according to CSW, eight church leaders have been acquitted after being charged with illegally occupying their church buildings.

Restrictions and discrimination against Christians appear to be lifting under Sudan's interim government.

Praise God that things seem to be changing in Sudan for our persecuted church family! Please pray that momentum will continue and the declaration will be heeded at all levels of society. And please remember in prayer converts from Islam; they face intense opposition from their families and this is unlikely to change soon.

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

RAISE THE ALARM



INVITE YOUR MP TO THE WORLD WATCH LIST PARLIAMENTARY LAUNCH

13 JANUARY 2021

You're in the middle of a global pandemic. You're worried about your loved ones. You might have lost your job, or even had someone close to you die. On top of all that, Covid-19 is being used as a weapon of persecution against you, because you are a Christian.

Most of this will be familiar to you, or people you know in the UK and Ireland. 2020 was an extraordinary year. But it's very unlikely that you've experienced persecution because of your faith in the midst of the pandemic. That's the truth for many believers around the world – denied vital food and

aid by local authorities, sent to work where the virus is at its height, denied crucial PPE.

The World Watch List parliamentary launch is a unique opportunity to ensure those in power hear about the human rights abuses facing your persecuted family. At the launch

on 13 January 2021 (4-5pm), MPs will be able to learn about how Covid-19 has exacerbated existing persecution. They'll also hear an overview of the 50 countries where Christians face the most extreme persecution, and hear first-hand from believers who have suffered because of their faith.



AMINA, NIGERIA

Amina from Nigeria will share about how Covid-19 makes existing religious persecution even worse. Her husband was killed by Boko Haram and, five years later, she was kidnapped and held hostage for eight months. Now, local authorities often prevent her and other Nigerian believers from getting essential food and aid. And despite lockdown restrictions, attacks have also continued on households staying at home to avoid spreading the virus.



FATHER DANIEL, IRAQ

We are asking the UK Government to recognise that local faith leaders can play a vital and unique role in tackling religious persecution. Open Doors partner Father Daniel, from Erbil, Iraq, will be at the launch to share his story with MPs, including his support for many internally displaced Christians who fled the Nineveh Plains when so-called Islamic

State invaded. "Because of the persecution, many Christians left Iraq," he says. "The church is at risk of disappearing."

But Father Daniel has witnessed extraordinary faith in those who remain: "I observe a deepening of faith in the Christians here. It's mesmerising to hear the stories of my parishioners' lives with God." And he is so grateful for your support: "You help us to go through the dark times. You are like a light, an encouragement to us, to not give up in this journey. It's impossible to mention all the things that we've done with the help of our supporters; it is too much."

Thank you! And you can keep helping Father Daniel's congregation – and many like it – by raising awareness of the importance of involving local faith leaders in the fight against persecution. In the face of challenges created by Covid-19, it's more important than ever.

A CRUCIAL OPPORTUNITY

You will be encouraged to know that religious persecution remains a pressing and important issue for MPs. In a recent Prime Minister's Questions, Fiona Bruce (MP for Congleton) spoke about 'the persecution suffered by countless people of faith across the world' and asked for Prime Minister Boris Johnson to support 'our church leaders' call for prayer and in championing the universal human right of religion or belief wherever one lives'.

Johnson replied: "We all know that wherever freedom of belief is under attack, other human rights are under attack as well. We will continue to work closely with like-minded partners to stand up for members of such marginalised communities."

The World Watch List launch is a crucial opportunity for MPs to stand up for these persecuted believers – and for you to raise awareness with those in power. It is vital that we call on the UK government to work with local faith leaders and implement mechanisms that protect persecuted Christians on the frontline.

If you haven't done so yet, please do **invite your MP to attend** – and perhaps ask them afterwards what they learned at the event, and how they plan to support those who follow Jesus no matter the cost.

WATCH THE LAUNCH LIVE!

This year, the event will be held digitally on 13 January (4-5pm) – which makes it even more convenient for MPs to attend. It also means **you can watch live!** Spread the word – and why not let your MP know you'll be watching?



Find details of how to watch the broadcast, and

how to invite your MP, at opendoorsuk.org/wwl or by scanning the QR code.

Sovereign Lord, please give wisdom and insight to our MPs and other decision makers. Show them how they can serve Your people around the world, standing against religious persecution and ensuring mechanisms are in place to combat it. We ask Your blessing on the World Watch List launch – that many will attend, many will hear and many will act. Amen.



WOULD YOU SURVIVE IN **NORTH KOREA?**

Think of your church.

Now, first, imagine that you can't meet in person.

That won't take a big stretch of the imagination, given the past twelve months. But now imagine you don't even know who the other members of your church are. And that it would be dangerous if you found out. And even more dangerous if anybody found out you were a Christian.

How would anybody find out? People in your neighbourhood would be trained to spot you. They wouldn't just be looking for signs that you met with other believers

IMAGE Temperatures can be as low as -30°C at the North Korea/China border

– they'd be trained to spot if you closed your eyes briefly before eating food, or inadvertently hummed a Christian song. Even your children might give the game away. They would be told to inform their teachers if they see you reading from a black book.

NORTH KOREA: THE MOST DANGEROUS PLACE TO FOLLOW JESUS SINCE 2002

This is the risk faced by Christians every day in North Korea. Since 2002, it's been the most dangerous place in the world to follow Jesus, according to extensive World Watch List research. But it's certainly not the only country where Christians face extreme persecution. In many countries – including Eritrea, Iran, Afghanistan and Somalia – secret believers know that they could be imprisoned, tortured or even killed if their faith is discovered.

"If you're arrested as a believer – in most cases, your life is over," says Brother Simon, who has supported North Korean Christians through networks in China for many years. Like everyone involved in this work, it wouldn't be safe to use his real name. "You will be sent to a detention centre and

"If you're arrested as a believer – in most cases, your life is over"

BROTHER SIMON

interrogated and tortured for a few months. If you survive that prison and aren't executed, they will usually take you to a labour camp for political prisoners. Nobody is ever released from these camps."

And it's not just you. Every



TOP Aerial photo of a North Korean labour camp. Nobody is ever released from these camps, BOTTOM Your support enables this Bible study for North Korean refugee women in China

member of your family would be found guilty 'by association', and face the same punishment.

YOUR HELP SUPPORTED 90,000 NORTH KOREAN CHRISTIANS LAST YEAR

When you think about being a Christian in countries like North Korea, Eritrea or Iran, it seems almost impossible. And persecution is increasing. But, miraculously, so is the church. And you can be part of what God is doing to bring hope and life to believers who are following Jesus no matter the cost.

Across the river from North Korea, in China, Open Doors field workers run secret safe houses for North Korean Christians who have managed to escape. Through secret networks in China, they're also able to provide vital food and spiritual support to more than 90,000 North Korean believers. That's thanks to you, and the ongoing gifts and prayers of Open Doors supporters like you. Without your help, many more believers would die.

Peter and Matthew – again, not their real names – are among

Q&A WITH SECRET FIELDWORKER BROTHER SIMON

Brother Simon has supported North Korean believers through networks in China for many years. Here, you can read what life is like for Christians in the most dangerous country in the world.

Q: How are North Korean Christians surviving during Covid?

Most North Korean Christians are already poor. There are often food shortages and, during the pandemic, food prices have quadrupled. A kilo of rice costs multiple months' salary. North Koreans call Covid-19 the 'ghost disease'. They are usually malnourished already, and many die quickly. Some just fall dead on the ground.

On top of this, Christians need to hide their faith. We even know stories of couples who were both secret Christians, but only found out years into their marriage.

Q: Is it easy to escape to China?

It's much more dangerous nowadays than in the 1990s. People used to swim across the river separating North Korea from China, or even walk across in winter. Now the border is much more heavily guarded on both sides. You need to spend thousands of dollars on bribes, and even then you don't have a guarantee. Often, the

soldiers have a quota: they need to arrest a certain number of border-crossers.

Once you're in China, you're illegal and can be arrested. Many women are trafficked into marriages with Chinese men. That's an awful fate, but still better than staying in North Korea, many say. Christians come to China so they can receive biblical teaching and fellowship, as well as food. Amazingly, many believers choose to return home to North Korea.

Q: What is your vision for the North Korean church?

Four words: survive, strengthen, equip, go.

If you're desperately hungry, you can't do ministry. The first concern of the persecuted church is survival. It doesn't stop there, however. Even though their circumstances are difficult, they want to be God's witnesses and reach their own people with the gospel.

God has miraculously opened the door for Christians to reach us in China. Your support means they receive food, medicines and other essentials. We strengthen and equip them with training in our safe houses, and broadcast radio programmes. We hope to double our reach in the coming years.

To Open Doors supporters, I say – thank you so much for your dedication. I have seen the church change because of your support. One North Korean believer said to me, about foreign brothers and sisters: "You have never seen our faces and you don't know our names, but you love us."





FROM TOP Peter and Matthew courageously risk everything to help North Korean believers (identities concealed for their safety)

the extremely courageous Open Doors workers who work with North Korean believers. Their roles are very dangerous, but knowing they are supported by you gives them encouragement and strength.

“WITHOUT YOUR PRAYERS, I CANNOT CARRY OUT THIS MISSION”

“My work is to meet North Koreans who’ve already heard of Jesus,” says Peter. “To help them survive the North Korean system if they go back, I provide them with spiritual and physical help. This helps the underground church to

You can watch interviews with secret fieldworkers Matthew and Peter at opendoorsuk.org/northkorea

preserve her faith from within North Korea.”

Matthew is very aware that he and Peter are putting their lives on the line. He hears many stories about Christian workers who are killed – even outside North Korea. In China, North Korean secret agents often track down and murder Christian missionaries. Can you imagine that feeling – of never being quite safe?

“Only some of these incidents are reported on the news,” Matthew says. “When I hear these things, I’m terrified. I’m sure the missionaries who were killed thought, ‘I’ll be fine.’ But they were killed. And it can happen to me. Those fears surround me from time to time.

“Without your prayers, I cannot carry out this mission. Through your prayers, God pours out His grace.”

THE COURAGE OF OPEN DOORS WORKERS

As Matthew says, your prayers make an enormous difference. Truly, Matthew and Peter are living out John 15:13: “Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” And it’s not just the fear of being caught. The conditions that Open Doors workers operate in can be extraordinarily harsh.

“It’s sometimes below -30°C in winter,” says Peter. “And

winter lasts for six months. I remember one night, it was one o’clock in the morning and the temperature was below -28°C. I was supposed to meet a local contact. But he didn’t answer my calls and he wasn’t where we’d arranged to meet. I tried to contact him for three hours. At about four o’clock, my phone rang. It was his number. When I answered, I heard a strange man asking, ‘Who are you?’”

“We must continue this work until North Korea is restored and overflows with holy worship and praise!”

PETER

This is exactly the sort of call that field workers like Peter dread. “I was so shocked that it felt like I was struck on the head. Immediately, I threw my phone on the ground and smashed it with a stone. Then I threw it in a drain hole. But I had nowhere to go in this strange city. I stood in the freezing cold until the next morning. As soon as I could, I got on a bus and left the city.”

Later, Peter heard that his contact was being investigated by agents from North Korea.

GOD’S PLAN FOR NORTH KOREA

“Even as they go through tribulations and pain, North Korean Christians still look to God and pray to God,” says Peter. “We need to remember our brothers and sisters there. We must continue this work until North Korea is restored and overflows with holy worship and praise!”

Matthew agrees: “My true hope is – if God allows – that we, as a global church, are able to connect with North Korean

believers. I believe we can help them. They can also share their testimonies with us. That’s what being ‘one body of Christ’ is all about.”

These courageous men see a future when the North Korean church can be a beacon for Christ’s love in the world. “I

PLEASE INVITE

It’s not too late to invite your MP to the World Watch List Parliamentary launch on 13 January, where they can hear first-hand about extreme religious persecution. And you can attend virtually too! See p6 for more information.

PLEASE GIVE

You can give vital support to North Korean believers and Christians in other countries where following Jesus puts you in danger of imprisonment, exile or even death.

Every £21 could give a Bible to three believers in a country where Christians face extreme persecution

Every £35 could give biblical training to a believer from a country where Christians face extreme persecution

Every £74 could provide food, medicine and shelter for a North Korean believer fleeing extreme persecution

PLEASE PRAY

Please join with this prayer, written by a secret believer. Amazingly, she managed to smuggle it out of North Korea:

believe, in God’s time, He will use North Korean believers as powerful missionaries for other persecuted areas,” says Matthew.

You can be part of God’s plans for North Korea too, and for other countries where Christians can’t yet shout from the rooftops

about the love of God. You can use your freedom to speak out, pray and give to your church family facing extreme persecution. Please show them that they are not alone and not forgotten – not ever.

LORD!

We give thanks to you that we have become the seed of the gospel. Thanks to You, we are the hope in the dry land that is North Korea. We thank You that we can sow seeds with tears in our eyes, while at the same time, we dream about the green pastures that Christ will lead us to.

Whether we live or die, we do it with our faithful fellow workers who walk faithfully on the same road as us. Thank you for these fellow workers, who have such a strong faith, a faith that is continuously refined by fire.

Please use us. We are Christ’s Army and want to bring the gospel to the end of the world. We want to be Your witnesses and spread Your blessings. Let me be Your worker for the Glory! Hold my hands until I meet You! Let me be obedient wherever You lead me! Let me be Your joy, and a good Christian.

Lord! Don’t you know everything about us? Don’t you see everything that’s in us? Lord! We love you! Lord! Thank you! I will follow you until I die!

AMEN.





SEE. CHANGE. CAMPAIGN UPDATE

You are seeing change as UK Government launches call to stand up against sexual violence in conflict

In 2019, Open Doors launched the See. Change. campaign, to raise awareness of the double vulnerability of persecuted Christian women. Over 16,000 of you signed the Handmade Petition to declare that these women are seen and loved! And exactly one year after the petition was presented in Westminster Abbey, the UK government's Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI) team has launched a 'Declaration of Humanity'. This is good news, and Open Doors UK & Ireland has already signed up!

Jacqueline Isaac (Vice President of NGO Roads of Success and an international lawyer) was one of the architects of the new Declaration. In this interview with Open Doors, she explains what the Declaration is and how it will impact the lives of women and girls who have experienced, or are vulnerable to, faith-based sexual violence in conflict.

1 What is the Declaration of Humanity?

The Declaration of Humanity by Leaders of Faith and Leaders of Belief is the first-of-its-kind declaration to prevent sexual violence in conflict and end the stigma that faces survivors and children. The Declaration unites leaders of multiple faiths, challenging damaging societal norms, emphasising the double vulnerability that religious

minorities face, calling for their protection and encouraging support for survivors of sexual violence internationally.

The Declaration condemns conflict-related sexual violence, redefines the understanding of rape and sexual violence, and affirms the innocence of survivors and the need to fully honour and accept them. It also puts action to words and commits signatories to doing everything in our power to prevent this violence and support survivors. I'm pleased to say this declaration has already been signed by many faith leaders, worldwide.

2 Why is the Declaration needed?

Undoubtedly, a key destabilising weapon in so-called Islamic

State's (IS) genocide against Christian, Yazidi and other religious minority populations across Syria and Iraq was the targeting of women and girls, solely for their religion. That's why a declaration that acknowledges the intersection of religion and sexual violence, and the power of religion to support these women and their families, is the greatest tool to show perpetrators like IS: you didn't succeed in your mission to destroy this religious group.

Coming from a religious minority background in the Middle East myself, I understand how important it is for the world to support victims and survivors of our minority communities. Acknowledging the innocence of survivors and victims and emphasising the need to reintegrate them into their community - including their religious community - is the strongest weapon against the

campaign of mass wartime rape and captivity. And that process of support and acceptance of these survivors must begin with religious leaders.

3 How do you think the Declaration will impact the lives of real women?

Ekhlis is a young Yazidi woman from northern Iraq who suffered terribly while in IS captivity, and told me she tried to take her own life three times. However, her faith was a light in the darkness. Yazidi spiritual leader Baba Sheikh issued an edict telling families and communities to accept and reintegrate rape survivors, especially those who'd been forced to convert to Islam - a previously unpardonable sin in the Yazidi religion. The first group of women who escaped captivity, in August 2014, were personally welcomed back into the faith by Baba Sheikh, assuring their families that they were still Yazidi. That means that women like Ekhlis can return to a community that supports her, listens to her, and fights for her.

The Declaration implores religious leaders within survivors' communities to

stand with them, like Baba Sheikh did. While local leaders are the mouthpiece of the Declaration on the ground, national and international actors are responsible for supporting these leaders in fostering the norms and values embodied in the Declaration. Each has a crucial and mutually reinforcing role.

4 What is your sense about the UK Government's commitment on this issue?

Since I began advocating on behalf of Yazidi and Christian survivors of sexual violence, I've worked with the UK Government every step of the way and seen their commitment to a dialogue between ending sexual and gender-based violence in conflict and freedom of religion or belief.

I look forward to continuing this journey. The next steps for the UK are to ensure that implementation happens at all stages, calling on more leaders to sign, holding interreligious dialogue with survivors and ensuring that practical steps are taking place on local levels.

5 How can Open Doors supporters support the Declaration?

Firstly, thank you. Brave, beautiful, resilient women have spoken out, sharing their story and asking: "Where are you, world?" Together, we have begun to answer. Thank you for being guardians and protectors of these women and their stories and the communities they are fighting to preserve.

The best first step for those seeking to support survivors of sexual violence in conflict is to sign the Declaration. By doing so, we are part of a movement that is redefining how this violence is viewed and how survivors are treated. We are signalling to survivors, to their communities, to perpetrators and to the world that we will no longer tolerate silencing and rejecting rape survivors. You can email psvi@fcdo.gov.uk to sign. Please do! And then, of course, we must put the words of the Declaration into action.

Thank you so much for advocating for your sisters in Christ. You are amplifying their voices, and making a real difference. Please keep praying for persecuted Christian women and for those working on the Declaration of Humanity. Pray that God will use the Declaration powerfully to support His daughters.

LEFT PAGE Jacqueline Isaac and Lord Ahmad (Prime Minister's Special Representative on PSVI) were among those who created the Declaration of Humanity

RIGHT PAGE The Declaration will help women like these Iraqi Christians who had to flee IS



THE FAITH BEHIND THE FIGURES

What if your church had to meet in secret?

What if you were put in prison for your faith?

What if following Jesus meant facing violence or even death?

These are just some of the challenges our persecuted brothers and sisters face every day. And they are the questions we will be exploring in this year's World Watch List resources for individuals and churches.

The Open Doors World Watch List has established itself as the most authoritative guide to worldwide Christian persecution. Based on in-depth research and in-country expert knowledge, it is a unique picture of the state of global persecution.

But the list is more than a set of statistics. Behind the figures there is faith – a real, living, powerful faith which serves to inspire us all. Behind the figures are millions of individual Christians who bravely follow

Jesus every day. The World Watch List is an invitation for us to connect to their lives - and in doing so, to reflect on our own life and faith as well.

“We make sure every church member has a WWL country to pray for. Every country is covered in prayer. It's significantly increased the level of prayer in the church. Thank you for the resources, they are fantastic!”

**BARBARA STONEHAM,
HOOK EVANGELICAL CHURCH**

Whether you have been faithfully praying your way through the list for many years, or this is the first time you encounter the true scale of persecution, we have a resource to help you engage with the World Watch List and the persecuted yet courageous Christians it represents.



The rise of violence in sub-Saharan Africa is just one of the disturbing trends revealed by the latest World Watch List research. Even during the coronavirus pandemic, deadly attacks increased in the region. The cover of this year's Top 50 features Pastor Jeremiah* from Nigeria. In April 2020, his village was attacked by Fulani herdsmen. "When we go to sleep at night, we are never sure whether we will make it alive to the next day," he says.

With your help, Open Doors was able to support Pastor Jeremiah (pictured, with his wife) and his church with critical food, medicine and materials to rebuild their homes - along with spiritual support and trauma care - to encourage them in their faith and strengthen the church.

"If you had not come, we would have suffered even more," Pastor Jeremiah says. "Open Doors, on behalf of my people, we are saying, thank you."

*name changed for security reasons

NEW RESOURCES FOR 2021 AVAILABLE END OF JANUARY



WORLD WATCH LIST TOP 50

The comprehensive handbook to the Top 50 countries where faith costs the most. Packed with information and inspiration to help you pray, support and speak up for the persecuted church. Includes:

- detailed information and specific prayer points for each of the 50 countries
- inspirational stories and testimony from persecuted Christians
- six 'What if?' features which bring the world of the persecuted church alive
- a removable World Watch List map
- information on global persecution trends
- inspiration for using the Top 50 in your prayers



THE WORLD WATCH LIST CHILDREN'S MAP AND PRAYER PASSPORT

Praying for the persecuted church is not just for adults. How about grabbing your Prayer Passport and setting off on a journey of prayer through the year? Each week, colour in the flag of the country you are praying for and put a sticker on that country on the map. How many can you visit in the year? Includes:

- Full colour map of the Top 50 countries
- 24 page Prayer Passport with activities, prayer points, Bible verses and flags to colour in
- Stickers to add to the map.

WORLD WATCH LIST: YOUTH LEADER GUIDE AND YOUTH MAP

Two new resources for youth leaders and young people exploring what persecution is, why and where it is happening and how our prayers can cross borders to bring light and hope in the darkness. Includes:

- Youth leader session outline, with games, videos, stories, discussion points, prayer ideas and Bible material
- Fold-out Youth World Watch Map with stickers to help you pray for specific countries



OPEN DOORS SPEAKERS, VIDEOS AND MUCH, MUCH MORE

Along with these core resources, there are many other ways in which you and your church can engage with the World Watch List

- Book an Open Doors speaker for your church – whether in person or online

- Watch inspirational and informative videos – and download them for your service
- Download Power Points slides to help your church or home group pray for the top 50 countries on the World Watch List.

To pre-order any of these resources, call our Inspire team on **01993 460015** or email inspire@opendoorsuk.org.



Faithful with a few things

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE OFFER OUR GIFTS TO GOD FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH



Marmalade, a sleepover and eBay. What do these three things have in common? God is using each of these to bless and provide for persecuted Christians around the world! And all because three Open Doors supporters took something small, offered it to God in faith, and watched what He did with it...



A MARMALADE MIRACLE

One evening, Julia from Oxford was studying Jesus' parable of the talents (Matthew 25) in her home group. To put it into practice, they were each given £5 and encouraged to multiply it for God.

After seeing some Seville oranges for sale, Julia decided that marmalade would be

a great way to multiply her money. She had read about North Korean Christians in the Open Doors magazine, and how a regular gift could help provide relief aid to keep a North Korean family alive. By selling the marmalade, she made over £300!

Julia was so encouraged to know that her offering had helped to keep several North Korean families alive that she decided to make more marmalade. She took some

jars to sell to friends, unaware of the chain reaction it would trigger. As she was leaving, her friends asked her about giving to persecuted Christians. She says, "They had chosen Open Doors to give it to because this marmalade had brought suffering Christians to their attention. God had heard the cry of my heart."

Julia is planning to make more marmalade this January. She says, "It's hard work stirring that pan – but it's such a blessing. God can take your smallest efforts and bless and multiply them for His glory. He can inspire you with the strangest ideas and they work out!"



A SLEEPOVER FOR SYRIAN REFUGEES

Five-year-old Molly (PICTURED ABOVE) is from County Armagh, Northern Ireland, and she is proof that age is no barrier to

what God can do! After being inspired by an Open Doors speaker, Molly decided to host a sleepover in her church* to raise money for Syrian refugee children. The rector was so taken by her idea that he said yes immediately!

Molly then took 24 home-made collection tins to nearby shops, and her school held a non-uniform day. She saved up all her pocket money and Christmas money too.

On the big night, 11 people slept in tents in the church. Thanks to everyone's generosity, Molly raised £5,884 for the persecuted church! To any children who might be thinking of what they can do to help, she says, "You can do it!"



AUCTIONING OLD TOYS ONLINE

Have you used lockdown time to clear out the clutter? Richard from Oxfordshire did just that – and came across lots of old toys he no longer wanted. So, he set up an account on eBay to sell them. Over the course of just a few months, over £1,000 came in! "It's a simple thing," he says, "but think of the difference it might make to the persecuted church!" At the time of writing, Richard has raised £1,150 for persecuted Christians.

WHAT ARE YOUR TALENTS?

It's a new year with new opportunities to invest in God's kingdom. This year, could you consider investing in His kingdom by supporting your persecuted church family? What are the gifts, hobbies or opportunities that God has given you that you could offer back to Him on their behalf?

*This took place before Covid-19

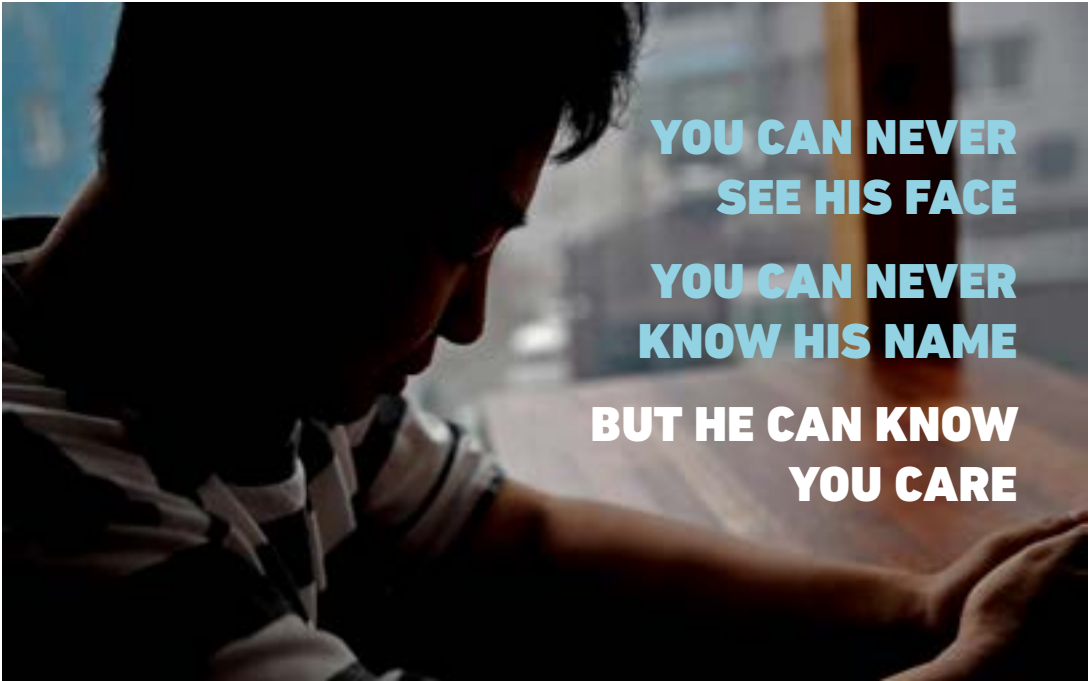
BELOW, RIGHT: Molly and Richard were faithful with a few things. What could you offer to God for the persecuted church?



Take the next step

Despite lockdown, there are still lots of ways to raise money for our persecuted church family. Have you been inspired by Julia, Molly and Richard? Head to opendoorsuk.org/fundraise and tell us what you're planning. You'll also find lots of great resources to help you plan and implement your idea. We'd love to cheer you on however God's calling you to serve!





**YOU CAN NEVER
SEE HIS FACE
YOU CAN NEVER
KNOW HIS NAME
BUT HE CAN KNOW
YOU CARE**

His face is hidden, but it's no secret he needs your support and prayers.

Since 2002, North Korea has been top of the Open Doors World Watch List: the hardest place to follow Jesus. If anybody finds out you're a Christian, you will be killed or taken to a horrendous labour camp.

Persecuted Christians from countries like India and Eritrea also face attacks, opposition or exile. They rely on your ongoing gifts and prayers for hope and help.

"We need to remember our brothers and sisters," says Peter (not his real name), an Open Doors fieldworker who supports North Korean believers in China. "I believe we can help them. That's what being the body of Christ is all about."

Will you show your love with a gift to a secret believer today?

EVERY £35 could give biblical training to a believer from a country where Christians face extreme persecution.

EVERY £74 could provide food, medicine and shelter for a North Korean believer fleeing extreme persecution.



The 2021 World Watch List is launching on 13 January 2021 – to pre-order your Top 50 booklet email inspire@opendoorsuk.org. Visit opendoorsuk.org/wwl on 13 January to discover the 50 countries where it's most dangerous to be a Christian.

To make your gift, return the enclosed envelope, phone **01993 460015** or visit opendoorsuk.org. Thank you.