“Lord, you are the God who saves me; day and night I cry out to you.”
PSALM 88:1
North Korea is the most dangerous country in which to be a Christian. Yet Open Doors estimates there are approximately 300,000 Christians here, courageously following Jesus in secret. Praise God that the North Korean church is not only surviving under the most extreme persecution, but growing!

North Koreans are expected to show unwavering loyalty to their leader, Kim Jong-Un. Christians are seen as enemies of the state for believing Jesus is a higher authority than the Kims. Peter*, an Open Doors worker, says, “I dream that the personality cult will fall. Please pray that the idolatry of North Korea that crushes human rights and persecutes Jesus’ followers will be demolished and that those in pain will soon be restored with the gospel of Jesus.”

Christians must hide their Bibles, pray in silence and meet in secret. Pray for North Korea’s secret believers, that God will continue to strengthen them, provide for their needs and keep them safe.

If a Christian is discovered, they will be arrested, tortured and sent to a labour camp, where they will almost certainly die. Pray for comfort and strength for imprisoned believers, and pray that even in prison, they would know God’s presence and love.

Despite the risks, we hear stories of believers sharing the gospel with others, even in North Korean prison camps. Pray that North Korean believers will shine Christ’s light in the darkest places.

Experts say there have been countless deaths from Covid-19 inside North Korea, in spite of official reports that there are no cases. Ask God to protect North Korean believers from the virus and enable them to safely receive medicine from outside the country.

Praise God that Open Doors is able to supply North Korean believers with emergency aid, such as food, medicine and clothes, through our networks in China. Pray for spiritual and physical protection for secret workers like Peter* and Matthew* (see Magazine p9), who are involved in this very dangerous work.

Give thanks that North Korea’s borders are slowly beginning to open again, allowing Open Doors contacts in China to make many deliveries to secret believers. Pray that the deliveries will pass safely through the checkpoints and reach those in greatest need.

The online sale of Bibles was banned in 2018. Pray that Chinese Christians would continue to have access to the Bible.
Give thanks for ANSWERED PRAYER

“Thank you for helping me set up a new life”

YOUR PRAYERS HELP RESTORE Y BI’S HOME AND MAKE IT BETTER THAN BEFORE

In 2018, Y Bi* from Vietnam (pictured above and right) was thrown out of her home by her husband after she became a Christian. You may remember her story from the September/October 2020 Prayer Diary. Thanks to your prayers and support, she has settled into a new home and a new Christian community.

She says, “It’s amazing to be living with other Christians. It’s a wonderful thing. Even when I am doing my house chores, I can study the Word of God.

“When I moved to this place, life was hard, but in a way better than my old village. It’s especially much better now because my daughter and mother live with me. And I am surrounded by other Christians. I am so grateful because in this new place, the people around me, my neighbours, my brothers and sisters in Christ pray, encourage and help me follow Jesus.”

“Deep in my heart I want to say thank you very much for your prayers”

Despite being so ill-treated by her husband and her previous community, Y Bi does not resent them; on the contrary, she prays for them. “There is no bitterness in my heart towards those people,” she says. “I continue to pray for them so that they will also have the chance in the near future to know Jesus, just like me.”

She is also thankful to you for making it possible to be where she is today. “I don’t know what to say, but deep in my heart I want to say thank you very much for your prayers and thank you for your love and support in helping me set up a new life in the new village. And I pray that you will be blessed and be more fruitful in your ministry or whatever you are doing for the kingdom of God.”

Y Bi offers encouragement to anyone who is struggling: “Keep trusting the Lord and He will rescue you. Even though it will not be easy, God is faithful, and He will do amazing things in your life. And I pray that you will stay strong in your faith. Choose God first and He will do the rest for you.”

PRAY

- Give thanks for God’s provision and blessing in Y Bi’s life
- That God will continue to grow the faith of her mother and her daughter
- That Y Bi will one day be able to share the gospel with her husband.

*Name changed for security reasons

Thanks to you, Y Bi belongs to a worshipping community where she can express her love for Jesus freely
**World Watch List**

**Saturday 16 January – Somalia**

Christians from Muslim backgrounds are regarded as high-value targets by Islamic extremists such as al-Shabaab. Pray for God’s healing and comfort for the families of martyrs, and pray that a strong church will emerge out of the seed of the martyrs.

**Sunday 17 January – Somalia**

War, flooding and food shortages have caused tens of thousands of Somalis to flee to Kenya. Pray that Kenyan Christians will be ready to reach out to the Somalis, and that many will hear the gospel and respond to it.

**Monday 18 January – Libya**

Libyan Christians from Muslim backgrounds face intense pressure from family and community to deny their faith. There is no recognition of the church and no church buildings, which makes it extremely difficult for new believers to connect with other Christians. Pray that they will find safe ways to meet with other believers.

**Tuesday 19 January – Libya**

The absence of a single central government to uphold law and order partly explains the extreme levels of pressure on churches and Christians. Pray for an end to Libya’s bloody civil war and that the international community will work towards lasting peace in the country.

**Wednesday 20 January – Pakistan**

Pakistan’s blasphemy laws are frequently abused to falsely accuse religious minorities, and can lead to the death penalty for those accused of insulting Islam. Pray for courage and wisdom for Christians to speak about their faith, despite fears that their words may be used against them.

**Thursday 21 January – Pakistan**

Because Christians are seen as ‘unclean’ by the Muslim majority, dirty and dangerous jobs like working on the sewage system are often reserved for Christians. Thousands of Christians are also enslaved in bonded labour. Ask God to protect those working dangerous and unsanitary jobs, and pray that believers trapped in bonded labour will soon be free.

**Friday 22 January – Eritrea**

Eritrea’s government banned all Christian churches outside the Orthodox, Catholic and Lutheran communities in 2002. Government security forces have conducted countless house-to-house raids and arrested thousands of Christians. Pray that Eritrea’s leaders will be convicted that they are accountable to God to lead their people fairly and pray for a move towards greater religious freedom.

**Saturday 23 January – Eritrea**

An unknown number of people remain imprisoned for their faith. Ask the Lord to comfort and provide for the many Christian women whose husbands are in jail, and their children growing up without fathers.

**Sunday 24 January – Yemen**

Yemen is a strongly Islamic nation and there is no room for open church activities or private worship. Pray for safety for those taking great risks to provide seekers and new believers with discipleship support. Ask God to work through them to raise up new and gifted leaders in every part of the country.

**Monday 25 January – Yemen**

Yemen’s six-year civil war has led to huge economic and humanitarian challenges. Thank God for house churches that provide life-saving assistance to Yemen’s most vulnerable, despite the risks. Pray for wisdom to know whom to help and how.

**Tuesday 26 January – Nigeria**

Nigeria’s 12 northern states began introducing Sharia (Islamic law) from 1999 and Christians there face blatant discrimination. Pray that President Buhari and his government will uphold religious freedom and take decisive action to protect all Nigeria’s citizens.

**Wednesday 27 January – Nigeria**

Extremist groups Boko Haram and Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP) continue to terrorise, kill and kidnap Nigerians, and in particular Christians. Pray for Open Doors partners providing trauma care and emergency aid to believers who have lost homes and loved ones, or experienced the trauma of abduction.

**Thursday 28 January – Iran**

Iran’s government sees Christianity as a threat and frequently raids house churches and arrests Christians. Pray for believers imprisoned for their faith. Conditions in Iran’s prisons are dire and Covid-19 has only made the situation worse.

**Friday 29 January – Iran**

Give thanks that Iranians are very receptive to the gospel and hundreds of thousands of believers from Muslim backgrounds now follow Christ. Those from strict Islamic families often face severe persecution at home. Pray that isolated believers will find ways to connect with other believers or with online resources to help them learn more about God.

**Saturday 30 January – India**

In states that have anti-conversion laws, Indians who leave the traditional faith of their community to follow Jesus are often rejected by their families and communities. Pray for protection, especially for those who live in rural areas and are particularly isolated. Ask God to help their families and communities to accept their new faith.

**Sunday 31 January – India**

Praise God that many are coming to faith in India through miraculous healings and the courageous witness of India’s Christians. Pray that this will continue, and many more will come to know Jesus.
Many of the women who flee from North Korea into China are looking for freedom. Sadly, many end up in another form of captivity: trafficked into brothels and marriages to Chinese men. Often these women are abused, with no way out. If you could reach out to them with hope and speak life into their situation, what would you say? Thanks to your prayers and support, fieldworkers like Rebecca* are able to do just that – and often at great personal risk.

“Meeting those people itself is quite dangerous for me,” Rebecca explains. “My mission was to take care of the North Korean sisters. Their lives are truly difficult and harsh... Without legal identification, they cannot travel freely within China. They cannot do what they want. They are confined in the situation. As God allowed me to find the sisters in such situations, I would go and meet them; we worshipped God together, and I would teach them about the Word.”

As a Christian, Rebecca tried to share the good news of Jesus with the women – but it was hard work. “It was very difficult to teach them the message of the Word because, in their minds, there are a mixture of ideas that they learned from North Korea which are against the teachings of Jesus. That was why the sisters themselves said that the Word doesn’t come right into their hearts. They really want to believe it, but the messages from the Bible were so different from what they had learned so far.”

But, in persevering, Rebecca saw God transform the lives of these women. “At first, the sisters only talked to me about their own problems. They didn’t listen to others. They had a lot of conflicts and fights among them. But as time went by, the sisters changed, and they now know how to listen to others, how to comfort others and how to encourage others. This is the moment that I realised that Jesus really touched their hearts and taught them how to love.”

Thanks to your continued prayers and support, Open Doors fieldworkers like Rebecca support and train 150-250 trafficked North Korean women each year. The hope is that these women will be ready to take the gospel back into North Korea when the country opens up and share Jesus with their nation.

> GO BEHIND THE SCENES
If Rebecca’s story has inspired you to find out more about what it’s like to work with underground North Korean believers, then head to opendoorsuk.org/prayer to watch an interview with field workers Peter* and Matthew* who support North Korean Christians in China.

PRAY

- Thank God for Rebecca and other fieldworkers who do such dangerous work under harsh circumstances
- For the North Korean women refugees, that God will protect them, heal them and raise them up to be courageous leaders
- For an end to the trafficking of North Korean women into China.

*Names changed for security reasons
| North Korea |

**Monday 1 February**  
North Korea has been number 1 on the World Watch List since 2002. Pray for spiritual breakthrough in this nation. Pray that Christ will be revealed in the hearts of many North Koreans and will destroy the works of the evil one (1 John 3:8).

**Tuesday 2 February**  
Pray for Open Doors field workers supporting North Korean refugee Christians in China. It’s dangerous work, as North Korean secret agents operate in China, trying to track down and kill missionaries. “I’m terrified,” admits fieldworker Matthew*. “Without your prayers, I cannot carry out this mission.” He adds, “Through your prayers, God pours out His grace.”

**Wednesday 3 February**  
Pray for North Koreans who accept the gospel in neighbouring countries and then return to North Korea. Ask the Lord to connect them safely with the underground church and give them courage to bring His kingdom to their nation.

**Thursday 4 February**  
Pray for secret Christians inside North Korea, that God will strengthen their faith and help them win the spiritual battles they face. Ask the Lord to encourage them in different ways – through other secret believers they can trust, or by receiving Christian materials through secret channels.

**Friday 5 February**  
Ask God to prepare the right time and place for secret Christians to safely share the gospel. Pray that when they try to share their faith with their children, family or friends, they will be led by the Holy Spirit.

**Saturday 6 February**  
Pray for safety for those attending Bible studies for women who have been trafficked into China. Pray that their meetings will be full of the Holy Spirit and that God will give them wisdom and strength to live for Him.

**Sunday 7 February**  
Ask God to bless and protect the work of Open Doors’ networks in China - broadcasting Christian radio programmes into North Korea, caring for North Korean refugees in safehouses, and providing North Korean believers with emergency relief aid.

**Asia**

**Monday 8 February**  
Please continue to pray for Open Doors partners supporting believers impacted by the Covid-19 crisis with relief aid and livelihood training to help believers who have lost their jobs. “The ramifications of Covid-19 will be felt long after the crisis is over,” says Open Doors’ Director for Asia. “We hope that Christians around the world continue to stand with us and help the persecuted church survive.”

**Tuesday 9 February – Myanmar**  
Rohingya Christians are under threat from all sides – persecuted as a minority group within Myanmar, and persecuted by other Rohingyas for leaving Islam. Ask God to strengthen their faith and bring them encouragement and hope.

**Wednesday 10 February – Laos**  
Pray for a Christian family whose house was destroyed by their local community because of their faith in Christ. They are temporarily taking shelter in the forest. Pray for Open Doors partners supporting the family with rice, clothes, blankets and other necessities.

**Thursday 11 February – Vietnam**  
A Dhon* and Y Mae* have faced severe persecution from their neighbours and local authorities since coming to Christ. Their crops have been destroyed, Y Mae has been fired from her job, and their two sons expelled from school, because they refuse to stop following Jesus. Ask the Lord to protect them and to quiet their fears, especially the children. Pray for Open Doors partners as they plan how best to help them.

**Friday 12 February – China**  
2021 marks the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party. Increasing social control is expected nationwide, which will likely mean more suppression of Chinese churches. Pray that Chinese believers will have strength to witness boldly to Christ despite increased pressure.

**Saturday 13 February – Malaysia**  
Continue to pray for answers on the cases of abducted pastors Raymond Koh, Joshua Hilmi and Ruth Sitepu and Amri Che Mat, who disappeared in mysterious circumstances four years ago. Pray for those who are working hard to help find these answers and ask that God’s will be done in this situation.

**Sunday 14 February – Nepal**  
Hindu extremist parties are targeting and monitoring Christians in some parts of Nepal. Ask God to strengthen His people and cover them with His protection.

*Name changed for security reasons
The cost of following Jesus is different for every Christian. For Rupa* in India, it meant going against her father’s wishes and becoming estranged in her own home. But your prayers and support have enabled her to stay strong in her faith and follow God’s call on her life.

Rupa’s father, himself a Christian, wanted her to become a chartered accountant – a highly regarded career option in India. But Rupa felt God calling her to serve Him in her local church. “If God has called me at this young age, then let Him use me at this young age,” she prayed.

Sadly, Rupa’s father seemed to walk further and further away from his own faith and became more and more angry with her decision. He began imposing restrictions on how she practised her faith. “I had to go to the washroom to pray and read the Bible,” she says. “I was so sad that my father had completely backslid in his faith and had started persecuting me in such a manner. He stopped supporting me for my college education and stopped speaking to me.”

“I will continue to serve God. I believe there will come a day when my father will rejoice over my decision as my heavenly father rejoices.”

He further warned her: “If you continue following Jesus and continue serving Him with the church, we will cut all ties with you.” With a heavy heart, Rupa accepted this rejection and courageously decided to continue to work with her church.

But thanks to your prayers and support, Rupa has been able to continue her education. “I fall short of words to thank your organisation that has come forward to help me,” she says. “I am very much grateful for the sponsored support towards my studies and pray every day that God’s blessings be upon His people.

“I desire to be involved in children and youth ministry after I complete my studies… No matter how my father reacts, I will continue to serve God. I believe there will come a day when my father will rejoice over my decision as my heavenly father rejoices.”

Rupa is inspired by the life of Paul, and by his words in Acts 20. “I have to run the race that is set for me, even if there are obstacles,” she says.

**PRAY**

- That God will continue to provide for Rupa, and that she will go on to serve Him in youth ministry
- That the Lord will heal Rupa’s relationship with her family, especially her father
- For Open Doors partners in India, that they will be able to reach more isolated believers like Rupa and encourage them in their faith.

*Name changed for security reasons.*
Muslim-majority area of Ethiopia. Christians have been deliberately left out of government aid during the pandemic, and some have faced increased persecution. Pray for God’s strength and encouragement for Adane, and for provision and protection for his family and church members.

**Monday 15 February – Sudan**
Sudan took significant steps towards religious freedom last year, with the government scrapping the death penalty for leaving Islam and committing to bring 30 years of Islamic law to an end. Give thanks for this amazing answer to prayer! Pray that those in power will continue to make strides in this direction, and that these reforms will come to fruition in everyday lives.

**Tuesday 16 February – Tanzania**
Pray for Aisha* (18), who secretly converted from Islam to Christianity. When her family learnt of her conversion, they rejected her and stopped paying her college fees. Ask the Lord to comfort her in the face of her parents’ rejection, and provide a way for her to continue with her studies.

**Wednesday 17 February – Somalia**
Faith* (18) has chosen to follow Jesus despite the high risks of being a Christian in Somalia. Her close family is trying to keep her conversion from other relatives because they fear being shamed and ridiculed. Her father is pressuring her to recant her faith. Give thanks for Faith’s bold faith and pray for her safety and encouragement.

**Thursday 18 February – Ethiopia**
Pastor Adane* serves a church of believers from Muslim backgrounds in a Muslim-majority area of Ethiopia. Christians have been deliberately left out of government aid during the pandemic, and some have faced increased persecution. Pray for God’s strength and encouragement for Adane, and for provision and protection for his family and church members.

**Friday 19 February – Uganda**
When Joseph’s employer learned about his conversion to Christianity, he fired him, citing his ‘stupid’ decision to become a Christian. Pray for his local church, which is actively discipling him, and ask God to find him a new job so he can provide for his family.

**Saturday 20 February – Mozambique**
Islamist groups stepped up attacks against Christians in northern Mozambique in 2020, causing hundreds of thousands to flee their homes and take refuge with family and friends. One Christian minister told Open Doors, “After visiting more than 20 families, I felt too overwhelmed to continue meeting other families in these dire situations.” Pray that Open Doors partners will find innovative ways to deliver emergency aid to traumatised Christians amid Covid-19 restrictions.

**Sunday 21 February – DRC**
Violence by rebels against the mostly Christian population has continued despite Covid-19 lockdowns. Pray for protection for church leaders who have remained in insecure areas to serve their communities. Pray for creative solutions that will bring Christians relief and encouragement.

**Hope for the Middle East**

**Monday 22 February – Syria**
Pray for an end to Syria’s economic crisis. Most people are living in poverty and the price of basic necessities continues to rise. Pray that the government will take serious measures to improve the economic situation and prevent people dying of hunger.

**Tuesday 23 February – Syria**
Praise God for all the help that local churches and Open Doors partners are giving to the community during this ongoing crisis. Pray for God’s provision and protection as they distribute aid to the poor and the needy.

**Wednesday 24 February – Iraq**
Covid-19 has spread rapidly in Iraq, infecting hundreds of thousands of people. Pray for medical staff, struggling with a lack of medical equipment. Ask the Lord to protect them and strengthen them to continue to serve.

**Thursday 25 February – Iraq**
The Turkish army has been opening fire on the villages, causing panic and fear among civilians. Pray for peace and protection for families living in the villages near the border.

**Friday 26 February – Turkey**
Pray for believers from Muslim backgrounds who are refugees in Turkey. They are often called in by police for questioning about why they are there – and to say ‘I have become a Christian’ is not an acceptable reason for the local (Muslim) police. The risk of being deported to their home country is very real. Pray for the international community to acknowledge this problem and not turn a blind eye.

**Saturday 27 February – Egypt**
Although Egypt’s government speaks positively about Egypt’s Christian community, the lack of serious law enforcement and the unwillingness of local authorities to protect Christians leave them vulnerable to all kinds of attacks, especially in Upper Egypt where Salafist movements exert strong influence. Pray for protection for Christians and that the influence of extremist groups will wane.

**Sunday 28 February – Egypt**
Christians from a Muslim background often have great difficulty in living out their faith since they face enormous pressure from their families to return to Islam. Pray for God’s peace for those who are fearful and for courage to keep following Jesus.

*Names changed for security reasons
The coronavirus pandemic has had a devastating impact on all our lives. People have lost loved ones, jobs, health, personal freedoms. But for many persecuted Christians, Covid-19 has also been used to exacerbate the discrimination they already face. In some countries, Christians have been denied food, aid and PPE simply because they are Christians. So, what can we do?

The parliamentary launch of the World Watch List on 13 January 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.

This year, the event will be held digitally – which makes it even more convenient for MPs to attend. It also means you can watch live! You can find details of how to watch the broadcast at opendoorsuk.org/wwl

Last year, 123 MPs and parliamentarians attended this event. Please join us in praying that this year even more MPs will attend, and ask God to move in the human corridors of power on behalf of our persecuted family.

Please pray

- For wisdom for the Open Doors team preparing for the event – that all the logistics will go smoothly
- That MPs from across the parties will attend and be moved to use the influence God has given them to bring change for persecuted Christians
- For an end to the discrimination being experienced by our persecuted family.

Please invite your MP

It's not too late to invite your MP to the event, if you have not already done so. Go to opendoorsuk.org/wwl