

27-29 APRIL 2012

OPEN DOORS ANNUAL CONFERENCE (CO DOWN) GLENADA HOLIDAY & CONFERENCE CENTRE, NEWCASTLE



Come and join us for a weekend of rich fellowship, challenge and blessing. Hear the latest news from the persecuted church and find out how you can get involved - and make a difference!

This year, we are delighted to welcome Vijayesh Lal, head of the Religious Liberty Commission of the Evangelical Fellowship of India, as our main speaker. Vijayesh will share from his experience of the persecuted church in India and

bring stories of firsthand encounter with Christians who are suffering for their faith. The weekend programme will also include workshops, interviews and discussions. We look forward to seeing you!

**For a booking form, please call the Ireland office
+44 (0) 28 9075 1080 or email odireland@opendoorsuk.org**

Closing date for bookings is Friday 13 April.

FIT FOR A CHALLENGE?

BELFAST CITY MARATHON

Join the Open Doors Team on **7 May 2012** and run, roll, or walk for the persecuted church. For the brave and the bold, choose from the Marathon Run, Wheelchair Marathon, Team Relay or the Marathon Walk (9 or 26 miles). Or for a gentler journey, you can take part in the Fun Run - only three miles to run for *their* lives!

For more information and registration, call +44 (0) 28 9075 1080 or email odireland@opendoorsuk.org

JUNE 2012 CYCLE AROUND NORTHERN IRELAND IN THREE DAYS!

"I have been challenged by the message that I have heard and read from Open Doors. There has to be something I could do to help..."

Gordon is attempting to cycle 221 miles around Northern Ireland - in three days! And he'd love others to join him. Are you fit for the challenge? Enjoy fresh air and wonderful scenery, all for suffering brothers and sisters around the world. **To find out more, call +44 (0) 28 9075 1080**



DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

4 - 6 MAY 2012

Weekend conference - 'Walk with the Persecuted'

Newtownards Baptist Church

Eddie Lyle, CEO, Open Doors UK&I, will be the main speaker. For more details go to:

www.opendoorsuk.org/ireland



WELCOME TO KELLY!

We are delighted to welcome Kelly Yates to the Ireland team! Kelly joined us in the office on 1 March as Supporter Experience Coordinator for Ireland.



Open Doors in Ireland

Serving persecuted **Christians** worldwide

Issue 28 | April 2012



ARAB SPRING OR CHRISTIAN WINTER?

In December 2011, I stood in Tahrir Square, in the centre of Cairo, where in recent days the world has seen both the best and the worst of the new Egypt. I was there to visit my Egyptian brothers and sisters in Christ, to hear their stories, to share their pain and to pray with them.

Over the past year our TV screens have been inundated with pictures of people sacrificing their lives in their cry for freedom. But behind the TV cameras and news headlines lies another reality: our Christian brothers and sisters are fearful, harassed, disadvantaged, suffering and dying for their faith. They are denied their most vital freedom - freedom of religion: freedom to worship, freedom to share their faith.

However, amidst the chaos and oppression, the church in Egypt is standing strong. On the outskirts of Cairo, where the city's rubbish is dumped, stands the Cave Church. Literally carved out of the mountains that supplied stone for the Pyramids, it is one of the most extraordinary expressions of the church, not just in Egypt, but around the world.

On 11 November 2011 (11/11/11), tens of thousands of Christians from all denominations met there to pray (see above). For 14 hours they cried out to God for peace in their land.

During my time in Cairo I had the privilege of attending a prayer meeting where over 800 people were pleading with God for His direct intervention at this critical time. Standing hand-in-hand in prayer with Christians facing this uncertain future is something I will never forget.

"Please pray. Pray that God will preserve His church."

Church. I asked every believer I met there, "How can the church in the West help you?" The common reply was, "Please pray."

An Egyptian church leader pleaded passionately, "If you, the church, in England and Ireland, have been praying, I would encourage you from the heart of Tahrir Square and say, please continue praying... that the will of God will be done and will take place here in Cairo."

Our brothers and sisters in Egypt are seeking God's intervention on behalf of their nation. May I encourage you to

join me at the Spires Conference Centre on 23 June for an evening of prayer and intercession for the church in Egypt and throughout the nations of the Arab Spring? Let us join our voices with theirs, and cry out for God's kingdom to come, in the Arab World as it is in heaven.

Eddie Lyle

ARAB SPRING OR CHRISTIAN WINTER?

**Saturday 23 June 2012 7.45 pm
The Spires Conference Centre
Belfast**

Featuring: An expert from Open Doors' ministry in the Middle East and a key church leader from Egypt. **Worship led** by Nathan Jess and members of New Irish Arts.

**Tickets £5
Telephone +44 (0)28 9075 1080
Email odireland@opendoorsuk.org**

SECRET CHURCH

DONAGHADEE

18.00: 21 January. It was cold and dark. Fifty-five people turned up for church armed with torches and Bibles - to a main entrance blocked up and covered with tape. It was closed and no-one could enter. The youth group hid in the shadows, quietly directing the unsuspecting congregation to follow. Avoiding the 'secret police', they guided people through car parks, down dark corridors, bringing them to a 'secret location'.

18.10 Suddenly, the silence was broken by two loud voices. News readers, in silhouette, brought headlines from the persecuted church. People in real danger, fearful for their families, their livelihoods. The room was lit only by a single bulb in the prison cell and by the moon shining through the skylight. Flags from the twenty countries where persecution is most severe, hung on the walls.

19.30 People were visibly moved as stories were told from inside the prison cell by folks in silhouette, and by others simply standing in the light of their torches. The minister led a Bible study on Jonah by torchlight and three people shared their experience of being Christians in the 'free world'. Time was given throughout the evening for prayer and silent reflection.

21.00 "For three hours we entered the world of the persecuted church, trying to understand, to identify. We can never comprehend the reality of life as a persecuted Christian, but this experience challenged and inspired each of us to come alongside, to walk with them, and pray for them. It also challenged us in our own walk with God."

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WORLD OF THE
PERSECUTED
CHURCH...

TAKING THE MINISTRY OUTWARDS...

INVITE A SPEAKER

Would you like to share the message of the persecuted church with your church? See your congregation challenged and inspired by their stories? Could you organise a 'Secret Church' event?

You can invite an Open Doors speaker along to your church or organisation. Our team of staff and volunteer speakers travel throughout Ireland speaking in churches, organisations, schools and youth groups, bringing the message of the persecuted church.

For more information on planned speaking engagements, go to www.opendoorsuk.org/ireland. Or contact the Ireland team, who would be happy to arrange for a speaker to visit in your area, or advise on your 'Secret Church' event. Call +44 (0) 28 9075 1080.

JOIN A PRAYER GROUP

"To clasp the hands in prayer is the beginning of an uprising against the disorder of the world."
- Karl Barth

Prayer is the foundation of everything we do in Open Doors and we are so grateful for those who faithfully pray on behalf of the persecuted church. If you would like to meet with others to pray, please go to www.opendoorsuk.org/ireland for details of prayer groups in your area.

Or if you would like to start a prayer group in your home or church, please email odireland@opendoorsuk.org or ring +44 (0) 28 9075 1080 for more information.

'Mary & Elizabeth'

PRESIDENT'S PROJECT
2011-2013

MRS
MAUREEN
WEIR
All Ireland M.W.I.
President

Maureen Weir is President of Methodist Women in Ireland (MWI), representing, supporting and encouraging Methodist ladies across Ireland. As part of her two-year office, the President can choose a project which she encourages the MWI to support financially and in prayer.

"A few years ago," says Maureen, "I attended a seminar about the persecuted church and I was shocked to hear of so many countries in the world where Christians cannot worship freely, cannot meet for prayer or Bible study, except in secret and with the fear of being imprisoned or worse."

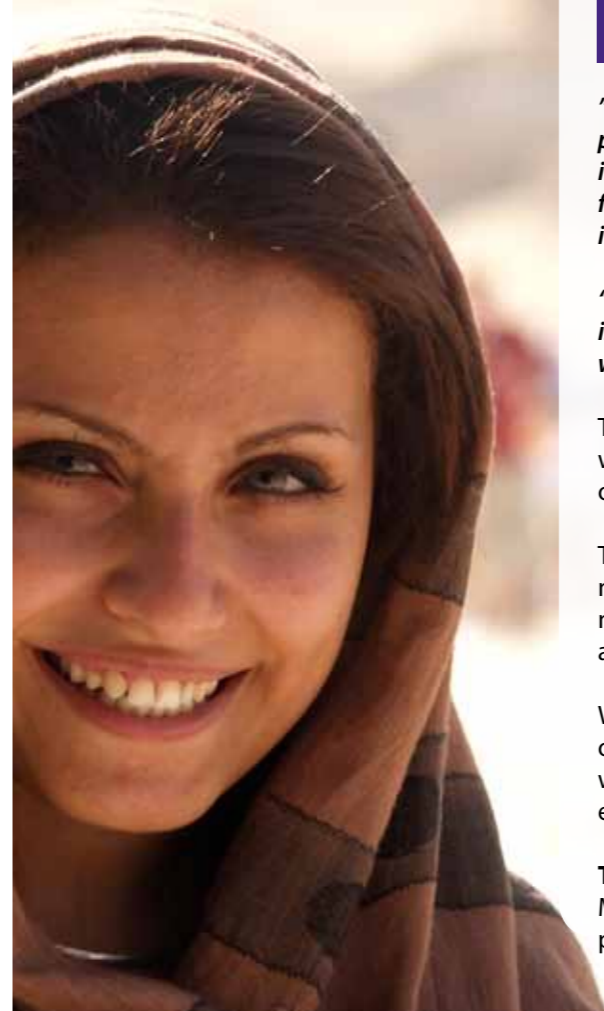
"This really challenged me, and so for my President's Project, which is entitled 'Mary and Elizabeth', I am hoping to help and support the women of the persecuted church in Egypt."

The 'Mary and Elizabeth' movement is a network of about 2,000 women from across Egypt, united in their desire to serve the women of their nation.

The President's Project 2011-2013 will help fund a nationwide conference for the Mary and Elizabeth network, and support their ministry to women in cities and villages across Egypt.

We hope that the project will raise more than £10,000 over the two-year period and provide training workshops, social service projects and women's empowerment programmes.

Thank you to Maureen and the ladies of MWI for supporting the women of the persecuted church in this way!



THE CLOTHES MY SISTER WEARS



Ladies, we would like to introduce you to the women of the persecuted church! Hear their stories, step into their shoes. Come and meet our special guest, 'Hanna', who will 'share with pain and joy, of women who suffer, many from abused backgrounds and some who have never had any educational opportunities'. An evening of fashion, fun, inspiration and hope.

For tickets and more information call +44 (0) 28 9075 1080

WEDNESDAY 9 MAY
Seven Oaks Hotel,
Carlow 7.45pm

THURSDAY 10 MAY
Jackson's Hotel, Ballybofey,
Donegal 7.45pm

SATURDAY 12 MAY
Enterprise Centre,
Castleblayney,
Monaghan 7.45pm