

VIETNAM

"PRAY THAT I WILL NEVER GIVE UP BELIEVING IN JESUS"

Believers from Vietnam's ethnic minority groups face great persecution. Seen as traitors of their culture and identity, they face harassment, violent attacks and social exclusion.

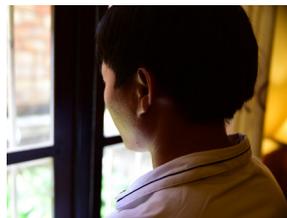
Vang Atu (28) comes from the Hmong tribe and was the first Christian convert in his village. He began to evangelise others in his village and brought four families to faith – but then the persecution began.

Four people, led by Vang's brother, came to his house, beat Vang with a club and demolished his house. Vang and his family were evicted and eventually fled the community, along with another Christian family. They headed for Central Vietnam, where they'd heard fellow believers might be able to help them. That's when they met Pastor Trang*. Pastor Trang presented Vang's story at a Standing Strong Through the Storm training event and, as a result, Vang and his family were provided with a house to live in.

Vang now lives in safety. But, amazingly, he still wishes to return to his village and share the gospel with those who hurt him and drove him away.

"I thank God for bringing me here," says Vang. "But pray with me that one day I'll be able to go back to my hometown and testify about God to everyone there. Pray that I will never give up believing in Jesus until I meet Him in heaven."

*Name changed for security reasons



PRAY

- Give thanks for Vang's courage! Pray that he will be strengthened to continue in his faith
- That Vang will be able to return home and share the gospel with his brother and his village
- For strength and protection for Christians in Vietnam who are oppressed by their families and villages.

You can watch a filmed interview with Vang on Prayer News DVD (edition 266), our bi-monthly audio resource designed to help you and your church pray for persecuted Christians. To sign up to receive a copy, phone 01993 460015, or to watch online visit www.opendoorsuk.org/prayernews

Give thanks for Answered prayer

Thank you to everyone who has been praying with North Korean believers during Lent using our *Live Like a North Korean* resource or who gave in response to our North Korea appeal. Your prayers and gifts have an immeasurable impact on the lives of our North Korean brothers and sisters.

We recently received a very encouraging message from a group of underground believers in North Korea who had received Christian materials and urgent aid, thanks to your support. They said:

"We give thanks to our Heavenly God, who protects the North Korean underground church believers walking on the Pilgrim's road. We pray that God may lead us to a port of hope in this strong storm. Our Heavenly God is our shelter and refuge. We look forward to Him with the praise and the glory.

"We also thank you who support our underground believers with love and concern. I will say this again: we thank you who support our underground church. We pray that God may pour abundant blessings upon you for the new 2018 year.

"Your encouragement and support is our foundation and power"

"Your encouragement and support is our foundation and power. We, the North Korean believers, always follow the words of our Lord like a ship follows the beacon of a lighthouse. Even though sometimes the roads in our lives are foggy, we follow the light and the faith as the faithful soldiers of Jesus Christ. We will overcome all barriers and struggles with the powerful faith in Him."

PRAY

- Praise God for the incredible faith He has given to His people in North Korea!
- Ask Him to continue to protect and strengthen His people to be 'more than conquerors through Him who loved them' (Rom 8:37)
- Pray for protection for Open Doors' secret networks reaching underground believers with food, medicine, clothes and God's Word.



WORLD WATCH LIST

14 NIGERIA



Militants, presumed to be Boko Haram, stormed a boarding school in the town of Dapchi, north-east Nigeria, in February, kidnapping 110 students.

It was originally reported that the students had run into the bush to hide and were safe. But over a week later the government confirmed that 110 girls had been abducted from the Government Girls Science and Technical College.

At the time of writing, none of the girls have been recovered. There have been rumours that half of them have been taken across the border to Niger. Extra troops have been deployed to search for the missing school girls, but many parents are not optimistic, fearing another Chibok.

The attack comes almost four years after Boko Haram kidnapped 276 girls from a boarding school in Chibok, Borno State. Many of those girls have since escaped or were rescued by the military. But over 100 girls are still missing.

An estimated 2,000 other women, girls and young men remain in Boko Haram captivity. Boko Haram continues attacks and mass abductions from villages and roadsides. Captives are forced to convert, married off to militants and those who refuse suffer extreme violence.

PRAY

Father God, please strengthen and protect all those being held captive by Boko Haram. We pray for their swift and safe release. Comfort their families and renew their hope. And please reveal yourself to members of Boko Haram and turn their hearts to you. We ask it for Your glory.

PRAY THROUGH THE WORLD WATCH LIST

Pray through the 2018 World Watch List by signing up for our weekly emails. Each week we will provide a written prayer for a country on the List as well as the latest news and stories from the persecuted church. Go to www.opendoorsuk.org



Open Doors

Open Doors, PO Box 6,
Witney, OX29 6WG

T 01993 460015

E inspire@opendoorsuk.org

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prayer diary
Open Doors
60 years of serving persecuted Christians

April 2018



"WE ARE MORE THAN CONQUERORS THROUGH HIM WHO LOVED US."

Romans 8:37

PRAY

Sunday 1 April – Easter Sunday

Christ is risen! As we celebrate the certain hope we have in Jesus, pray for God's presence and protection for Christians meeting to worship in places like Egypt, Pakistan and Indonesia, where church attacks are on the increase.

Egypt



Monday 2 April

Easter this year will bring very sad memories of 2017's Palm Sunday suicide bomb attacks on two churches which killed at least 49 people and injured many more. Pray that the resurrected Lord will bring hope and healing to all those injured or bereaved in the attacks.

Tuesday 3 April

While violence against Christians in Egypt makes the headlines, the kidnapping of Christian girls for forced marriage and conversion to Islam remains a largely hidden story. Ask God to protect girls who have been kidnapped and restore them to their families, and pray that the Egyptian government will do more to prevent further abductions.

Wednesday 4 April

Pray for Melissa*, an Open Doors partner who works with vulnerable girls in Egypt. "We talk about kidnappings openly," she says. "I teach the girls about boundaries in relationships. And I teach them about their value in Christ and help them to be in relationship with Him." Ask God to bless her work.

Thursday 5 April

Ask God to change the minds of those behind the kidnapping of these girls. A church leader who estimates that 15 girls a year are kidnapped from his community says: "I pray not only for the kidnapped girls, but also for their kidnappers. I pray that God touches their hearts." Join your prayers with his.

Friday 6 April

Christian children often face discrimination at school. Pray for Take My Hand, an education project run by Open Doors partners that teaches children to read and write and helps them discover Jesus. "They taught me everything: reading, writing," shares one boy. "They gave me a foundation for my life."



Saturday 7 April

Christians in Egypt are facing growing discrimination in education, healthcare, employment and legislation which hinders essential aspects of church life. Pray for Open Doors partners strengthening the church through literacy training and education projects, medical care, advocacy support, and ministry to children, families and widows.

Africa



Sunday 8 April

Ask God to bless the ministry of Musa Dauda*, an Open Doors partner who comes alongside isolated believers from Muslim backgrounds to provide them with clothing, food, shelter and discipleship training. "We face many threats. But it has also been a very beautiful journey so far," says Musa.

Monday 9 April – Guinea

When Bakary (60) decided to follow Jesus, his wife and children left him. He has also been facing discrimination at work. Pray that he will find a new family in his local church and ask the Lord to strengthen him not to give up on his faith.

Tuesday 10 April – Ivory Coast

Pray for an isolated group of new believers in a remote area of Ivory Coast. Through the witness of female villager, Koné*, who shared the gospel despite persecution, many came to faith, including the village chief. Praise God that, thanks to our supporters, Open Doors has been able to build a church, start literacy and livelihood training and help this isolated community to stand firm in the faith.

Wednesday 11 April – Central African Republic

Open Doors trains Sunday School teachers to strengthen the youth of the church in the Central African Republic. Many are from nominal Christian homes. Pray for wisdom for the teachers as they invest time in the lives of these young people and pray that their work will bear much fruit.

Thursday 12 April – Democratic Republic of Congo

Pray for Manda (29) whose husband, angry at her conversion to Christ, set her on fire. Open Doors, through her local church, has been helping her with medical care. Ask God to continue to comfort and heal her physically and spiritually and pray for wisdom for those helping her to overcome her ordeal.

Friday 13 April – Cameroon

Give thanks that Open Doors has been able to deliver relief aid to 300 displaced Christian families in northern Cameroon, where Boko Haram has uprooted at least 155,000 people. Pastor Mattieu, a beneficiary, says: "For those who have given their money and are supporting us in prayer, may God bless them. It encourages us in this work of the Lord because you share in our suffering."



Saturday 14 April – Nigeria

Four years after Boko Haram abducted 276 girls from a school in Chibok, over 100 girls are still missing. Ask the Lord to continue to sustain and comfort the parents of these girls and keep praying for their release.

PRAY FOR THE MIDDLE EAST

Sunday 15 April – Syria

Fighting has intensified in parts of Syria such as Afrin and Eastern Ghouta. Ask the Prince of Peace to move the hearts of all involved in the conflict to work together for peace.

Monday 16 April – Syria

Give thanks for those Christians who have decided to remain in Syria to serve their communities with Christ's love, whatever the cost. Pray that they would be strengthened by Jesus' promise that 'whoever loses his life for my sake and for the gospel will save it' (Mark 8:35).

Tuesday 17 April – Syria

Several churches in Syria are planning to open 'Centres of Hope', with support from Open Doors, to bring hope to the Syrian people through the activities offered there. We aim to open 20 of those centres across Syria in 2018. Ask the Lord to bring these plans to fruition.

Wednesday 18 April – Syria

Elderly people in Syria are a very vulnerable group. In addition to poor health, many have seen their children leaving the country, leaving them behind with almost no support. Thank God for the churches and local organisations who are helping these people.

Thursday 19 April – Iraq

Pray for the Christian families who have returned to villages in the Nineveh plain. Many still do not feel secure and some are experiencing nightmares or other symptoms of trauma. Ask God to guard their hearts with His peace and give them hope for a better future.

Friday 20 April – Iraq

Give thanks for a trauma course run by Open Doors partners in January for women and families. Ask the Lord to continue to heal those who attended from the trauma of being displaced, and thank God that there is increased openness to this important subject in the churches.

Saturday 21 April – Iraq

At least 64 Christians who remained in Mosul during its occupation are missing. Pray for a Christian who is trying hard to find his elderly parents. After Mosul was liberated, he went a number of times to try to find them, but the building where they lived had been destroyed. Pray that this couple will be found alive and pray for God's peace for their family.

Sunday 22 April – Iraq

Pray for the safety of the few Christian families who have returned to Mosul. There is no open church yet and many Christians feel it is still unsafe. Pray that they will receive wisdom to know how to be a light to the Muslim community.

Central Asia



Monday 23 April

Latifa* came to faith after a missionary outreach event at the school where she taught. When she began helping with further outreach activities for children in the school, she was fired because 'she refused her native faith and had Christian friends'. Pray for her peace and safety, and for a new job.

Tuesday 24 April – Tajikistan

Gulnora, the wife of imprisoned Pastor Bahrom Kholmatov, is struggling with ill health and depression. Pray for her healing and for strength to care for her children, and pray for peace of mind for Bahrom as he is separated from them.

Wednesday 25 April – Kyrgyzstan

Pray for believers in the Issyk-kul region whose church building and prayer house were burned down. They are now searching for another place to meet. "We don't believe the police will find and punish those who burned our church," says one member, "but despite this we bless those people and pray for them. God knows who did it."

Thursday 26 April – Kyrgyzstan

Pray for Hamida*, a believer from a Muslim background whose husband has beaten her, threatened her with divorce and locked her in the house because she refuses to deny her faith. Pray for her safety and for the opportunity to connect with other believers; ask God to change her husband's heart.

Friday 27 April – Kazakhstan

Pray for protection for a church that was raided by the State Religious Committee and fined for having unaccompanied teenagers in the congregation: the State code says that under-18s can't attend church without a parent present. Pray for a change in the law to allow more freedom.

Saturday 28 April – Azerbaijan

When Shamil*, a former mullah, came to faith through a missionary outreach to his village, he was ostracised by his community. He and his family have been threatened and beaten. Pray for safety for Shamil and his family, and ask God to strengthen their faith so they can stand firm in Jesus.

Sunday 29 April – Turkmenistan

Non-registered churches in Turkmenistan suffer repeatedly from police raids, threats, arrests and fines. Pray for increased freedom in the country, and for perseverance and wisdom for churches that are trying to register.

Monday 30 April – UK & Ireland

Give thanks for increasing opportunities for the staff team to share the message of the persecuted church with the church in the UK and Ireland. Pray for discernment to know how to have the greatest impact for our persecuted family.