

The Courage and the Cost

North Korea

North Korea is the most difficult and dangerous place in the world to be a Christian.

If your faith is discovered, then you – and your family – will be sent to a labour camp, or even killed on the spot. So bury your faith deep. If you have a Bible, hide it. Don't tell your children about your faith, in case they tell their teachers.

The North Korean regime demands absolute loyalty and obedience, and the Kim family are worshipped like gods.

1. Watch the video 'NORTH KOREA: PRISON NATION'

You'll find the video on the North Korea page of our website: www.opendoorsuk.org/northkorea

This video includes the story of Hae Woo, who spent three years in a North Korean labour camp because of her faith in Jesus.

"God helped me to survive. God used me to lead five people to faith. We met together out of the view of the guards. Often that was in the toilet. There we held a short service. I taught them Bible verses and some songs, which we sang almost inaudibly."

2. Discuss: What do you know about North Korea?

What do you and your group know about North Korea? Why are Christians imprisoned there?

Share the facts below and any other stories or facts you know. Or go to www.opendoorsuk.org/northkorea to find out more.

The Cost

- North Korea has been number one on the Open Doors World Watch List for the past 18 years.
- An estimated 50,000 - 70,000 Christians are imprisoned in labour camps; most will die there.
- Christians are viewed as spies and traitors. They face arrest, torture, imprisonment, and perhaps even public execution.
- North Korea's leaders demand absolute allegiance. People are indoctrinated from cradle to grave. Your neighbour, your family – even your children – will be encouraged to report any suspicious or disloyal behaviour. Portraits of the Kim family must be hung in all homes and schools. The first words parents must teach their children are 'Thank you, Father Kim Il-sung'.

The Courage

- Amazingly, the church in North Korea is not only surviving, but growing.
- North Korean Christians believe that one day the borders will open and they will 'bring the gospel to some of the darkest places on this earth'.
- Despite widespread famine, many North Korean Christians follow the concept of 'holy rice', setting aside some of their rice to give to people who are even worse off than them. Their Christlike behaviour leads others to faith, even in the horrific labour camps. "I stood out among the other prisoners, because I helped them," Hea Woo says in the video. "Sometimes I shared some rice with the sick. Occasionally, I washed their clothes, too."

3. Read Acts 12:1–19

4. Discuss

- What are the similarities between the church in Jerusalem in the story from Acts 12 and churches in North Korea?
- What do you think that the church in Jerusalem was praying during the night?
- If you could speak to a North Korean Christian in a labour camp, or in a secret church, what would you say to them?

5. Pray

Life for a North Korean citizen has been described as being like a candle: all it takes to be blown out is one wrong word. And this is especially true for believers. So perhaps you could light a candle in the group.

- Pray together that God will nourish and protect the faith of these fragile believers – especially those in labour camps.
- Pray for protection for those who follow Jesus in North Korea, and for Open Doors secret workers as they smuggle in vital support.
- Pray that real change and freedom will come to North Korea.

6. Respond

The Open Doors Secret Church Devotional is a great way to spend time with your persecuted family each day and support persecuted believers in North Korea. Designed to replicate the small, anonymous, easily concealed Korean Bibles which Open Doors distributed to North Korean Christians for many years, the Secret Church Devotional contains 365 daily devotional readings to help you engage in daily prayer and action for the persecuted church.

And best of all, for every £10 given you will receive a Secret Devotional and a persecuted believer in North Korea will receive the gift of a Bible.

To find out more, go to www.opendoorsuk.org/smugglehope

You can find more information, prayer points and news about North Korea on the Open Doors website:

www.opendoorsuk.org

The Courage and the Cost

Sudan

In Sudan, freedom of expression is highly curtailed and the government has made it clear that Sudan is a Muslim country and should adopt a Sharia constitution.

Believers have been imprisoned on false charges of blasphemy, espionage, or 'undermining the authority of the state'. Church buildings, which have been used for worship for years, have suddenly been confiscated or demolished.

In the Nuba mountains, government forces have bombed and attacked communities, hoping to drive the people out. A fragile ceasefire is in place in the region, but the Sudanese government is still blocking aid to Christian communities in the area.

1. Watch the video 'BIKES AND BIBLES: SUPPORTING SUDANESE PASTORS'

You'll find the video on the Sudan page of our website: www.opendoorsuk.org/sudan

Recently 18 students graduated from an Open Doors supported Bible school. Watch this video to see how the simple gift of a bicycle changes the lives of courageous pastors in Sudan.

2. Discuss: What do you know about Sudan?

What do you and your group know about Sudan? Why are Christians imprisoned there?

Share the facts below and any other stories or facts you know. Or go to www.opendoorsuk.org/sudan to find out more.

The Cost

- Christian believers from a Muslim background are particularly at risk since the law officially punishes conversion from Islam to another religion by death.
- Church property can be confiscated at short moment or bulldozed on spurious legal grounds. Or the authorities try to hand property over to government-controlled groups.
- Believers are afraid to share their faith with their children or Muslim neighbours. Some even continue to disguise their identity after death, being buried in Muslim cemeteries.

The Courage

- Despite the danger, brave Christians are eager to share the gospel. "They can burn our church buildings, but they cannot burn the church from our hearts!" one pastor declared.
- Pastors stay strong, even in prison. "I was put in the same cell with condemned persons and had opportunity to preach to all," said one falsely imprisoned pastor. "In everything, God has a reason. Through our experiences, condemned people heard the gospel."
- Through partnerships with the Sudanese church, Open Doors provides training, community development, practical assistance and trauma care to persecuted Christians.

3. Read 2 Timothy 2:1-13

4. Discuss

- 'God's word is not chained,' says Paul (2 Timothy 2:9). In what ways do the Sudanese government try to 'chain; God's word?
- What would you say to a pastor in Sudan in prison for their faith?
- Paul says, 'the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others'. In partnership with the Sudanese church, Open Doors is training pastors and evangelists. Why is this kind of training important?
- How do these words encourage you to be strong in your life, and what you are doing for the Lord?

5. Pray

- Give thanks for the courageous faith of Sudanese believers and their eagerness to pass on the good news to others.
- Pray for protection for vulnerable Christians – especially widows and orphans.
- Pray for the leaders of Sudan, and that all the people of Sudan will one day know freedom, justice and peace.

6. Respond

You could pray for a new World Watch List country every week. Sign up to the weekly Open Doors email to receive stories of those who are defying dictators, breaking rules, and risking their lives to follow Jesus, sent direct to your inbox. Find out more at the Open Doors website: www.opendoorsuk.org

You can find information, prayer points and news about Sudan on the Open Doors website:
www.opendoorsuk.org/sudan

The Courage and the Cost

India

India has entered the top ten of the World Watch List for the first time.

The Hindu nationalists who govern India believe that being a Hindu is part of Indian identity. Since Narendra Modi came to power in May 2014, persecution of Christians has risen dramatically.

Several states in India have brought in anti-conversion laws, and the BJP have made it clear that they would like to make these laws nation-wide.

1. Watch the video 'INDIA: THEIR CHURCH WAS DESTROYED, BUT THEIR FAITH STILL STANDS'

You'll find the video on the India page of our website: www.opendoorsuk.org/india

This video tells the story of Sujit, a courageous church leader from India who led 60 people to Christ. He has tried and tried to build a church for them, but opponents keep burning it down. Sujit and his family had to leave their village, but he still meets with church members in secret and he hasn't given up hope.

"I hope to return to the village and to settle there. I still hope that we will get the permission to build the church."

2. Discuss: What do you know about India?

What do you and your group know about India? Why are Christians imprisoned there?

Share the facts below and any other stories or facts you know. Or go to www.opendoorsuk.org/india to find out more.

The Cost

- Hindu extremists have publicly stated that they intend to wipe out the church in India by 2021.
- Converts from a Hindu background bear the brunt of the persecution and face constant pressure to return to Hinduism.
- From documented sources alone, we know that at least 12,500 Christians and about 100 churches were attacked last year. Some 200 people were arrested solely for their faith, and ten have been killed. The actual figures could be much higher.

The Courage

- Countless stories tell of believers coming to faith in Christ through miraculous healings, and courageous leaders like Sujit are taking the gospel to remote communities. But their work is becoming more dangerous.
- As persecution in India becomes more extreme, Open Doors partners plan to double their impact. Your prayers, monthly gifts and long-term support can help them reach Christians in every corner of India with practical, legal and spiritual support.
- Open Doors works through local church partners to support Christians in India by providing Bibles, training, community development projects and urgent relief aid.

3. Read Hebrews 12:1–3

4. Discuss

- Have there been times in your life when you have needed to persevere? What helped you?
- The writer of Hebrews talks about the 'cloud of witnesses' – examples or pioneers of faith – who inspire us. Which Christians have inspired you?
- In the video, Sujit says, 'I used to feel lonely. I didn't realise that people of God are praying for me.' What difference do you think it makes to know that people are praying for you?
- How does 'fixing our eyes on Jesus' (Hebrews 12:2) help us to persevere?

5. Pray

- Pray for God's protection over Indian believers, especially church leaders like Sujit.
- Pray for wisdom for Open Doors partners who are strengthening Christians to withstand persecution through training, relief aid and advocacy support.
- Pray for the government, and for international recognition of the problem.

6. Respond

Could you pray regularly for the persecuted church? Open Doors bi-monthly Prayer News DVD brings you a mix of short videos and audio tracks that will take you across borders and right into their world. Be inspired to pray as you hear the voices and see the faces of your persecuted brothers and sisters in Christ. Find out more on the website, or order it by phoning our Inspire team on 01993 460015 or by emailing inspire@opendoorsuk.org.

You can find information, prayer points and news about India on the Open Doors website:

www.opendoorsuk.org/india