

# Give thanks for Answered prayer

It's been a busy couple of months for 12-year-old Noeh from the village of Karamles in Iraq. As well as presenting the *Hope for the Middle East* petition at the UN in New York in December (you can read more in the special insert enclosed with your magazine or on our website), he has also been able to start school again, thanks to the prayers and generosity of Open Doors supporters.

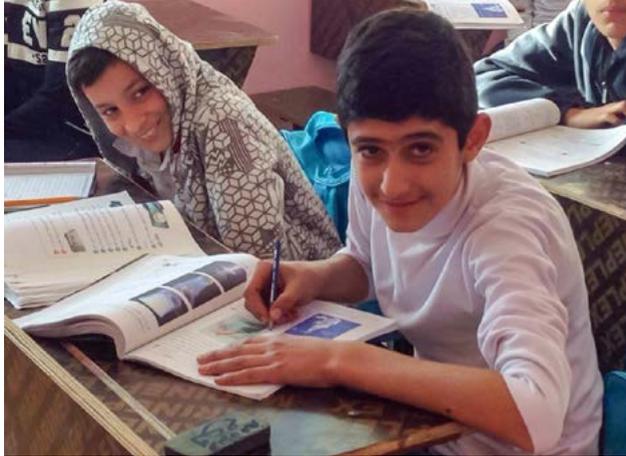
Noeh's secondary school re-opened in October. "Noeh is a smart student and he's doing well in his exams at school," says his mother. "Last time he got 13 out of 15 on one of these tests. I am very happy for that and I thank God."

Noeh is one of many children from Karamles who had to flee their homes when Islamic State (IS) invaded the Nineveh Plain in August 2014. His family returned to Karamles in August 2017, but their house had been completely burnt down by IS fighters, so they are now living in their aunt's house.

The school building looks much better now – it has been repainted and the broken windows replaced. But there are not enough teachers. For three subjects Noeh and his classmates have no teacher, so teachers of other subjects try to cover these classes.

"Because of the lack of teachers, the daily hours at school are not fixed," his mother says. "Sometimes Noeh returns home at 11:00 am, sometimes at 12:30 pm."

The shortage of teachers is a big problem for many schools in the Nineveh Plain. "Many of the staff either fled the



country, are still displaced in Kurdistan or have retired early," says one displaced teacher, "so there is a big need for teachers and administrative staff." She knows of one school for Christians where there is not a single available teacher.

In other villages, such as Bartella, there is still much work to do before the schools can reopen. Several schools have been beautifully painted from the outside by the UN, but no work has been done on the inside to prepare them for the school year. Pray that funding will be found to make these schools ready for students to start back in the new year.

## PRAY

- Praise God that Noeh is back at school! Pray that he and other children in the Nineveh Plain can resume their education in a peaceful and stable environment
- For more teachers and more funding so that more schools can be rebuilt and reopened
- Give thanks that so many people worldwide have prayed, spoken out for and supported Christians in Iraq and Syria through the *Hope for the Middle East* campaign. Pray that world leaders will do all they can to ensure that Christians and other minorities are given dignity, equality and a prominent role in rebuilding their societies.



## JORDAN

DIGNITY AND PURPOSE FOR IRAQI REFUGEES

Open Doors partner Maran made a big impact at this year's *Standing Strong* event with her inspirational talk about the work of Al Hadaf ('The Purpose') which brings hope to the lives of Iraqi refugees.

Maran says, "My dream was to create a centre that was full of colours, music, very organised, lots of flowers." Her team provides a programme for women, and trauma workshops for both women and children. "We give them a hint of hope and tell them: this will end." Everything is aimed at helping families cope with the stress of living in exile.



The centre also provides courses in English, and a boutique where the women can get good quality second-hand clothes. The programme finishes with a communal meal and gifts of food to take home.

Maran's aim is to do everything beautifully, with the aim of blessing the women and their families. "They come and they feel safe and dignified."

### Want more help praying for your persecuted family?

Your prayers and gifts make the work of Open Doors partners possible – thank you! If you want to pray further for Maran and the work of Al Hadaf, you can hear an excerpt from her talk, with photos of the work that Open Doors supports, on the latest *Prayer News* DVD (edition 264).

*Prayer News* DVD is produced every two months and includes a selection of short films and audio tracks to help you and your church pray for persecuted Christians around the world. The current edition includes films featuring children of the persecuted church, and an audio track of a talk by Pastor Jamal from Lebanon, given at *Standing Strong*.

To sign up to receive the *Prayer News* DVD phone 01993 460015, or to watch online visit [www.opendoorsuk.org/prayernews](http://www.opendoorsuk.org/prayernews)

For the latest news and to sign up for our weekly email prayer alerts, go to [www.opendoorsuk.org](http://www.opendoorsuk.org)



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# Open Doors

prayer diary

60 years of serving persecuted Christians

January 2018



"WAKE UP! STRENGTHEN WHAT REMAINS AND IS ABOUT TO DIE"

Revelation 3:2

PRAY

## North Korea



### Monday 1 January

North Korea has been number 1 on the World Watch List since 2002, making it the most dangerous place in the world to be a Christian. Pray for courage and protection for the tens of thousands of North Koreans who follow Jesus, despite the risks.

### Tuesday 2 January

An estimated 50,000 to 70,000 Christians are incarcerated in labour camps. Ask God to strengthen them inwardly with His Spirit so that they may have great endurance and patience.

### Wednesday 3 January

Open Doors supports North Korean refugees in China with shelter, aid, pastoral care and Bible study. Ask God to protect those who choose to return to North Korea to share the gospel.

### Thursday 4 January

Pray for a North Korean refugee mother who safely reached China. "My son and daughter are still in North Korea, she says. "Hopefully, they will be released soon and are able to escape from the country. I long for us to be reunited. Above all, I wish to tell them about Jesus." Ask God to answer her prayers.

### Friday 5 January

Every refugee who is sent back to North Korea will be tortured. Pray for refugees who are arrested in China and repatriated, that they are able to withstand the torture so that they can keep their faith a secret if they have become a Christian.

### Saturday 6 January

Pray for Open Doors' ministry among North Korean believers. Many North Korean spies are actively looking for our workers and for believers inside the country. Pray for God's protection.

### Sunday 7 January

Tension between China and North Korea is growing. Secret believers report it's much harder to buy food and other daily necessities on the black markets. Prices have skyrocketed. Ask God to bless Open Doors' ministry and pray that North Korea's regime will be more open to other countries so that prices drop.

### Monday 8 January

Praise God that, thanks to your support, Open Doors is able to reach over 60,000 Christians with food, medicine and clothes. As a result they are able to survive and stay to be a light in their country. "Without your prayers and financial support we cannot continue with this ministry," says our field worker.

### Tuesday 9 January

Give thanks that, despite the risks, the North Korean church is growing! An Open Doors contact told us, "Never before have I seen so many North Koreans come to faith as nowadays. The spiritual battle always intensifies when God is doing something amazing."

### Wednesday 10 January – World Watch List launch

Today sees the global launch of the 2018 Open Doors World Watch List. Please pray that God will use all the press and promotional activities taking place across the globe to wake up the world to the extreme persecution that is a reality for Christians in so many countries.

## Afghanistan



### Thursday 11 January

The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan does not allow conversion from Islam. It is seen as apostasy and brings shame on the family and community. Pray for change to take place within the country, and for openness to religions outside of Islam.

### Friday 12 January

Christian converts from Islam face intense pressure from family, friends and neighbours to recant their new faith. Depending on the family, they may even fear for their lives. Pray for courage and protection for Afghan believers.

### Saturday 13 January

Living openly as a Christian is not possible, so the small number of Christian converts in the country must remain in hiding. Ask God to provide ways for believers to meet together in safety.

## Somalia



### Sunday 14 January

Over 380 people were killed in bomb attacks in Mogadishu in October. Open Doors has been informed that several Christians died in the attack, and eight are missing. Pray for all affected by the attacks, and especially for Christians – they are a very small minority and these deaths have affected them deeply.

### Monday 15 January

Somali Christians cannot meet openly or be caught reading the Bible. Even reading about Jesus on the internet is risky. Pray that Somali believers will find ways to be discipled in secret.

### Tuesday 16 January

Many Somalis are seeking God. Thank God for His promise to build His church; pray that He will draw many Somalis to Himself.

### Wednesday 17 January – UK and Ireland

As the UK advocacy team launches the Open Doors World Watch List in Parliament today, give thanks for the growing number of MPs engaging with the issue of religious freedom. Pray that more MPs will be moved to use the power entrusted to them to bring change for those who are persecuted for their faith.

## LETTER WRITING



### Thursday 18 January – Kenya

Give thanks that, five years after the murder of her first husband, Damaris Kioko has remarried! Thank God for His healing power in her life, and for using Christians from around the world to support her through their prayers and letters. "Through those letters I have been very much encouraged," she says. "They have motivated me to continue in the faith and to serve God even more than I did before."

### Friday 19 January – Kenya

Caroline Riziki witnessed the brutal murder of her husband, brother-in-law and neighbour's 17-year-old son in her home by al-Shabaab militants. She is severely traumatised. Ask the Holy Spirit to comfort her and heal the painful memories she is experiencing.



### Saturday 20 January – Tajikistan

Pastor Bahrom Holmatov was arrested in April and imprisoned for three years on charges of 'singing extremist songs in church and so inciting religious hatred'. Ask God to sustain him, his wife Gulnora, their sons Firdavs (21) and Firus (19), and daughter Gulnoza (14), and pray for Bahrom's release.

### Sunday 21 January – Middle East

When Abdu (15) decided to follow Christ last year, his father tried to force him to return to Islam. So Abdu fled. He is now being looked after by local Christians, but still faces pressure from his family, and is worried about his future. Ask God to protect Abdu and strengthen him in his new faith.



### Monday 22 January – Indonesia

Keep praying for healing for Alvaro (4), Trinity (4) and Anita (2) as they recover from burn injuries suffered when a militant threw a petrol bomb at them outside their church. Pray for wisdom and patience for their parents as they support the children through the painful healing process.

### Tuesday 23 January – Indonesia

Remember Ahok, former governor of Jakarta, imprisoned for blasphemy in May 2017. Pray that he will be encouraged by the prayers and the letters he receives from Christians around the world.

**You can write to these and other believers using our new Letter-writing Guide: go to [www.opendoorsuk.org/write](http://www.opendoorsuk.org/write) or phone 01993 460015 to order a copy.**

## PRAY FOR THE MIDDLE EAST

### Wednesday 24 January – Iraq

Praise God that thousands of Christian families have been able to return to their homes in the Nineveh Plain, thanks to your support. There is still much to do, with many places lacking water, electricity and health care. Pray for Open Doors partners helping people to rebuild their homes and businesses.

### Thursday 25 January – Iraq

Thank God for all the Christian teachers who returned to their schools. Pray also that God will provide new teachers - many have left the country or requested an early retirement. Pray that the children will get the education they need.

### Friday 26 January – Iraq

Pray for the dozens of Christian students who have returned to the University of Mosul. Pray for their protection as they travel to and from Mosul, and ask God to raise up from among them a generation of talented young Christians who are inspired and equipped to rebuild their country.

### Saturday 27 January – Iraq

The situation in the Kurdish regions of Iraq remains tense following September's independence referendum and the subsequent resignation of the Kurdish president. Pray for a smooth transition of power and that violence will not escalate.

### Sunday 28 January – Lebanon

Pray for stability to return to Lebanon following the political crisis sparked by the temporary resignation of Prime Minister Hariri. Ask God to restore peace to this country, which hosts over 1 million Syrian refugees.

### Monday 29 January – Syria

Due to displacement and the collapse of the economic system, many Christians need help just to survive. Thank God for the churches and local organisations partnering with Open Doors to serve the displaced and pray for protection for volunteers distributing food, hygiene packs, medicine and rent subsidies.

### Tuesday 30 January – Syria

Open Doors invests in the Syrian church by providing discipleship and leadership training for church leaders and youth leaders. Ask God to use these programmes to equip His people to stand firm and bring the hope of Christ to their communities.

### Wednesday 31 January – Syria

Praise God that Muslims are finding Jesus in the midst of the crisis. Pray for wisdom and protection for churches that have started discipleship groups to teach new believers how to live as followers of Jesus.