



OpenDoors

DELIVER US FROM EVIL

11 prayers for the persecuted church





OVER 200 MILLION CHRISTIANS AROUND THE WORLD ARE PERSECUTED BECAUSE OF THEIR FAITH.

They are beaten, killed, forcibly detained, their churches and homes bombed and burned, their children abducted.

They are oppressed, marginalised, denied education or job opportunities, labouring under the burden of relentless surveillance, unjust laws and endless discrimination.

But the great news is that the persecuted church is not merely surviving, it is active and alive. Despite the dangers and the difficulties, in the face of violence, hatred and injustice, Christians all around the world are daring to demonstrate the life-changing reality of the kingdom of God.

This resource will help you pray for them. The prayers focus on some of the different ways in which Christians are persecuted.

And it also focuses on 11 countries where Christians are being persecuted. For each country we show where it is on the Open Doors World Watch List – an annual ranking of the 50 countries where Christians face the most extreme persecution.

Thank you for praying. Thank you for standing with our persecuted brothers and sisters.

We pray with them, Lord, “Deliver us from evil.”

But more, we pray that – through their witness, Lord – Your kingdom may come.

COVER Mary Yakubu, one of the parents supported by Open Doors when their girls were kidnapped from Chibok, Nigeria by Boko Haram. ABOVE Joy at an adult literacy class for persecuted Christian women in Bangladesh.

ABOUT OPEN DOORS

In 1955 a man called Andrew went into Communist Europe and discovered a small and struggling church. He became known as Brother Andrew, and dedicated his life to supporting these Christians in need, smuggling Bibles, raising awareness and simply letting them know that they were not forgotten.

Today the organisation he founded is a global network that strengthens millions of persecuted Christians in more than 50 countries, including some of the most dangerous places in the world. Our underground networks smuggle Bibles and literature, offer legal advice, train church leaders and other Christians, and provide vital practical support such as trauma care and emergency aid. Most of all, our dedicated, courageous co-workers risk their very lives to visit persecuted Christians – to provide practical, legal and spiritual support, to reassure them that they are not forgotten, and to strengthen them to serve.

On our website – www.opendoorsuk.org – you’ll be able to find inspiring news and stories of faith, plus a range of resources and tools to help you wake up others to the reality of persecution.

“I am grateful to Open Doors who for over half a century have been doing this kind of work and have had a great influence in my own life since the early eighties. I know this organisation has the utmost integrity and they do their research very carefully and well.”

- JUSTIN WELBY, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY



LEFT
Brother Andrew, founder of Open Doors, in a destroyed church in Lebanon.

10 MAY



LEFT
Jitendra (21),
from India,
was brutally
attacked
for being a
Christian. He
says "I want to
thank all the
people who
pray for our
family."

A PRAYER FOR THE PERSECUTED

Lord Jesus,
Thank You that You lived on earth as one of us.
You know what it is to live in a country under occupation,
to be singled out, slandered, treated with scorn.
You know what it is to be surrounded by mobs:
ridiculed, mocked, arrested, beaten,
condemned without cause, and executed for no crime.
We pray for all of our brothers and sisters who share those experiences,
the spat upon and abused, the falsely accused,
those who are mistreated because they follow You,
those who endure the pain and suffer in silence.
May they have Your peace in their hearts,
may they act with Your courage,
speak with Your wisdom,
respond with Your forgiveness,
and love with Your love.
And may all those who have obeyed Your command to carry their cross
know that You are with them, wherever they go.
Lord Jesus, may Your kingdom come,
Amen.

WHAT IS CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION?



Open Doors understands persecution as 'any hostility experienced as a result of one's identification with Christ'.

Hostility, of course, takes many forms, from insults and abuse, to discrimination in education and the workplace, to outright violence. Open Doors researchers characterise the different types as 'smash' and 'squeeze'. When it comes to killing off people's faith, we might say it's the difference between being beaten to death and being suffocated.

Christians are 'smashed' through violence or aggression – rapes, kidnappings, forcible evictions, killings and church burnings. This kind of persecution is most visible to the outside world. But the majority of persecuted Christians are being 'squeezed' to death. They live in societies where everything is against them – the law, the government, the media, even their own families.



Read the stories of the persecuted church and find out more about world wide persecution by visiting the [World Watch List pages on our website](#).

[You can also watch a video about the Top 5 countries on the World Watch List.](#)

PRAY for the persecuted church throughout the year

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.

A PRAYER FOR THOSE IN PRISON

Lord God,

*We pray for those who are imprisoned because of
their faith:*

*the unjustly accused and illegally detained,
the set up, lied about, framed;
those sent to labour camps or political prisons;
those enduring dirt and filth, burning heat,
numbing cold.*

*Give them courage to face the beatings,
patience to bear the lies,
and hope to see beyond the bars and the barbed
wire.*

*May we do all we can to let them know that they are
not forgotten,
and so lighten their burden of loneliness.*

*Transform their cages into churches,
their cells into places of worship and witness,
so that like Your Son, who was accused, arrested,
subjected to a show trial,
beaten and executed,
they may emerge victorious,
and rise to new life.*

*Lord God, may Your kingdom come,
Amen.*



10 IRAN



The government is committed to expanding the influence of Shia Islam. Hardliners within the leadership are very anti-Christian, creating severe problems for all groups of believers. House churches for believers from Muslim backgrounds have been raided and leaders given long prison sentences. Consequently, many converts have fled abroad or practise their faith in isolation. Christians from the government-approved historical Armenian and Assyrian churches who reach out to Muslims have reported discrimination, harassment, physical abuse and imprisonment. At least 52 Christians were arrested last year.

Open Doors supports the church in the Middle East through Bible distribution, training and Christian multimedia initiatives for the region.

[Find out more about the courage and strength of Christians in Iran.](#)

[Listen to a song written and performed by a 17 year-old Iranian Christian.](#) It was recorded during a secret meeting.

A PRAYER FOR THOSE IN PAIN

*Lord Jesus,
We pray for those who are in pain because of their faith:
those beaten by guards or soldiers or the secret police;
those hurt by family members
or set upon by mobs,
just because they have decided to follow You.
May Your strength flow through them,
May they know the comfort of Your presence
and the reality of Your grace.
May they hold on to Your hope,
and experience Your healing.
Be with them, Holy Spirit, so that their present pain
becomes a witness to the eternal peace and
protection that comes from You.
And may their steadfast courage
confront and shake their persecutors,
so that the darkness in their lives is revealed,
and they, too, come into the light of Christ.
Lord Jesus, may Your kingdom come,
Amen.*



11 INDIA



In India, most persecution comes from a variety of radical Hindu groups wanting to cleanse their country.

Converts from a Hindu background bear the brunt of the persecution in India and are constantly under pressure to return to Hinduism. Radical Hindu groups are increasingly enjoying impunity when they harass Muslims or Christians. At least eight Christians were killed last year and nearly 24,000 physically assaulted. As a result, the level of fear and uncertainty among the majority of Christians is increasing.

Open Doors works through church partners to support Christians in India through Bible distribution, training, community development projects, urgent relief aid and advocacy support.

[Find out how Christians in India are responding to the increasing persecution in their country.](#)

[Pray through the World Watch List: sign up for email updates.](#)

13 MAY

A PRAYER FOR THOSE WHO GRIEVE

*Loving Father,
We pray for those who are crying out in grief,
those whose loved ones have been killed because
of their faith.
We pray for those who have lost husbands and
fathers,
wives and mothers,
whose children have been taken.
We pray for the victims of terrorist attack,
mob violence and unjust execution.
Comfort, comfort Your people.
Comfort those who remain,
for they, also, carry their cross.
May they be blessed in their brokenness.
May they discover beauty in the ashes.
May their loss and confusion lead them
ever deeper into Your love,
so that, even in the pain and heart-ache,
they may know Your peace.
Lord God, may Your kingdom come,
Amen.*



14 NIGERIA



Hostility towards Christians, especially in the northern Sharia states, is spread by radical Islamic teaching and practice.

Believers experience discrimination and exclusion, and violence from militant Islamic groups, resulting in loss of property, land, livelihood, physical injury or death; this is spreading southwards. Corruption has enfeebled the state and made it ill-equipped to protect Christians. Rivalry between ethnic groups and raids by Fulani herdsmen compound the persecution. Converts face rejection from their Muslim families and pressure to recant.

Open Doors partners with the local church to strengthen persecuted believers in Nigeria with training, community development, emergency relief, trauma care and legal assistance.

On 14 April 2014, Boko Haram extremists stormed a school in Chibok, northern Nigeria, and abducted over 200 girls. Today, half of those girls remain in captivity. [In this powerful video](#) parents thanked Open Doors partners for all their support and urged Christians to keep praying for them.

14 MAY

A PRAYER FOR THOSE UNDER PRESSURE

*Lord God,
Be with all those who are treated unfairly because
they follow You.
We pray for the second-class citizens,
those who are seated at the back of the class
and pushed to the back of the queue;
all who are denied education, justice or rights.
Hear the cry of those whose complaints go unheard,
whose applications go unread,
who are deliberately marginalised and
misunderstood because they are Christians.
Be with those who bear the crushing weight
of laws, rules and regulations designed to make
their lives hard
and the expression of their faith impossible.
Transform their anger and frustration
into the energy they need to serve Your purposes.
Help them to forgive those who mistreat them,
to love those who are 'just doing their jobs'
and to witness to those who pretend not to hear.
Help us to walk alongside them,
to speak up for them, support them,
and to do all we can to help them flourish.
Lord God, may Your kingdom come,
Amen.*



5 PAKISTAN



Conversion from Islam brings great shame to family and community, and danger for the new believer.

Radical Muslims monitor gatherings of converts. Churches have been subject to bomb attacks. All Christians suffer from institutionalised discrimination, with occupations that are seen as low, dirty and derogatory being officially reserved for Christians, most of whom are from the poorer classes. Radical Islamic groups run thousands of schools capable of stirring up enmity towards religious minorities. Blasphemy laws target Christians in particular.

In cooperation with local churches and partners, Open Doors supports the church in Pakistan through training, literacy and vocational projects, emergency aid and trauma therapy.

[Read about the courageous faith of the church in Pakistan.](#)

[Pray through the World Watch List: sign up for email updates.](#)

15 MAY

A PRAYER FOR THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN BETRAYED

*Lord Jesus,
We pray for those who have been betrayed;
for those whose trust has been abused.
We pray for those whose friends or family have lied
to them,
whose churches have been infiltrated,
whose words have been recorded and used
against them.
Lord Jesus, You know what it is to be handed over,
to be let down by those You loved.
Be with those who have been wounded by betrayal,
help them to forgive,
and may their trust in You restore their souls.
We pray also for the betrayers,
those tempted by love of money,
or in fear for their own lives.
We pray especially for those whose job it is
to feign friendship and faith
in order to capture Christians.
May the witness of their victims reveal
Your everlasting faithfulness.
May they seek forgiveness and restoration, Lord.
May these people who deal in lies learn that
the only real truth is in You.
Lord Jesus, may Your kingdom come,
Amen.*



17 EGYPT



A rise in violent attacks caused the deaths of 128 Christians last year and left many injured.

So-called Islamic State targets Christians and the Egyptian state's low regard for fundamental rights means there is little protection. Believers from a Muslim background face enormous pressure to recant; official recognition of conversion is almost impossible. Building places of worship is difficult because of administrative restrictions, communal hostility and violence. Believers, especially women, face discrimination and abuse at work; fanatical teaching from imams incites hatred and traumatises children.

Through local churches and partners, Open Doors supports the church in Egypt with literacy training, education, advocacy support, medical care and youth, family and women's ministry.

[Egypt: The spiders web](#) – This animated video illustrates how vulnerable Christian girls are at risk of kidnapping and forced marriage in parts of Egypt.

[Pray through the World Watch List: sign up for email updates.](#)

A PRAYER FOR THOSE IN EXILE

*Lord God,
Who brought Your people out of Egypt,
and led Your exiled people home,
be with all those who have had to flee their homes,
because of their faith in Your Son.
We pray for Your protection for those on the run,
those in fear for their own lives
or cast out by family or community,
or fleeing rumour and false accusations.
For the refugee and the displaced,
those living rough
or hiding in safe houses –
may they know that You have gone before them,
and are preparing a place for them.
Comfort them with Your presence.
May those who have left their homeland
know their citizenship is in heaven;
and may those exiled from their family
find brothers and sisters in us.
Lift up their hearts, strengthen their steps,
bring them to a place of safety,
and may they always find their true home in You.
Lord God, may Your kingdom come,
Amen.*



8 IRAQ



Persecution comes primarily from the self-proclaimed Islamic State (IS) – whose ideology is not dead – and other radical militants.

In addition, Islamic leaders, clan leaders, extended family and ‘normal citizens’ all put pressure on Christians from a Muslim background to recant, sometimes using torture or physical attack. Converts risk harassment or discrimination at check-points, universities, workplaces and government buildings; they may also lose jobs, inheritance rights or the ability to marry.

Open Doors works through local partners and churches to support the church in Iraq through Bible distribution, training, crisis relief and practical support for displaced believers.

Tens of thousands of Christians remain displaced following the IS insurgency in 2014. But many have now returned. [Watch this series of videos about their courage and commitment to their home.](#)

Will you bring Hope to the Middle East? [Find out about the Hope For the Middle East campaign – and order a free wristband to help you pray.](#)

17 MAY

A PRAYER FOR THOSE WHO HAVE LOST HOMES OR POSSESSIONS

*Lord God,
We pray for those who have suffered loss because of
their faith;
those whose houses have been destroyed,
whose possessions have been taken,
whose land has been stolen,
whose churches have been burned or bombed.
We pray for the victims of extortion and greed,
who have no recompense because they are
Christians.
Bring comfort, Lord, we pray, provide for their needs,
and lead them to a safe place.
We pray also for those who have suffered other
kinds of loss;
loss of childhood, loss of innocence, loss of hope.
Pour peace into their hearts,
and heal them from traumatic memories.
Make us, Lord, restorers, repairers, rebuilders.
Let us resupply their lives with what they need,
giving freely from our abundance,
as You have given so freely to us.
Lord God, may Your kingdom come,
Amen.*



15 SYRIA



Militant Islamic groups are a clear threat to all Christians in Syria. In areas controlled by radical Islamic groups, most historic churches are demolished or used as Islamic centres. The amount of opposition a church receives can depend on its political reputation. Church leaders, particularly, are targeted for abduction. Government authorities restrict the activities of evangelical Christians and converts to prevent instability. Christians from a Muslim background face pressure from their families to recant, as their conversion brings shame on the family.

Through local church partners, Open Doors supports the church in Syria with Bibles, training, relief aid, trauma care and helping displaced Christians to rebuild their homes and livelihoods.

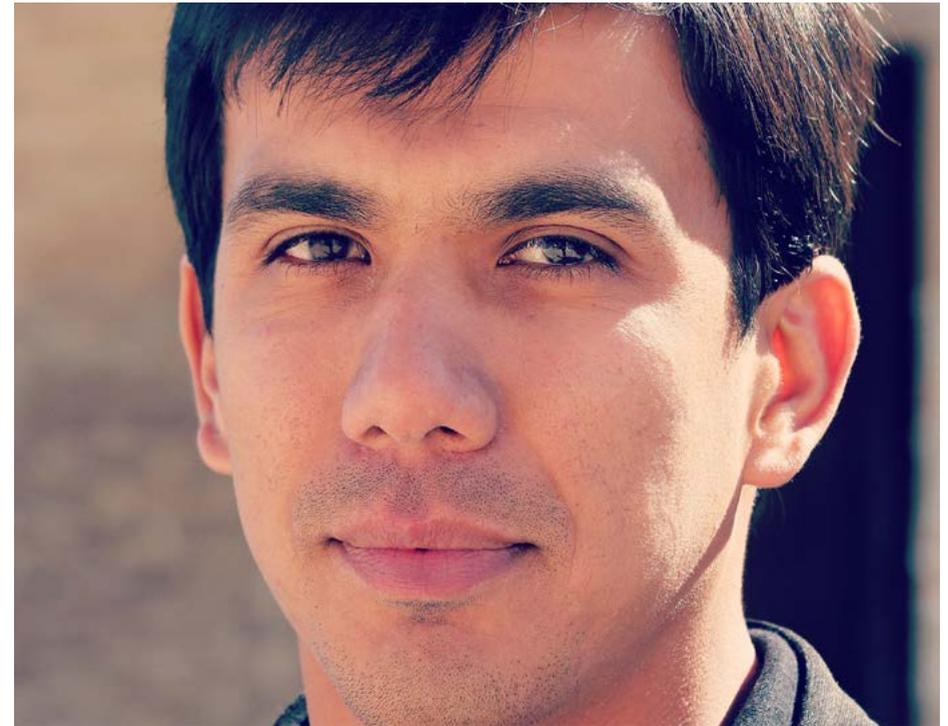
[‘Kidnappings and bombings cannot stop the church in Syria.’](#) Read the stories of Syrian Christians who have decided to stay in their country and care for their hurting community.

As the war in Syria escalates, Open Doors church partners are courageously continuing their work. **[Help us to send vital aid to desperate families.](#)**

18 MAY

A PRAYER FOR THOSE UNDER SURVEILLANCE

*Lord Jesus,
Be with all Your disciples who are under suspicion,
all Your followers who are being followed,
whose lives are lived against a background hum
of fear.
Give comfort and courage to the watched and the
whispered about,
the spied upon and the shadowed,
those who have to hide their beliefs, disguise their
actions, and watch their steps.
Refresh and renew those exhausted from the need
for constant vigilance.
Protect all those who gather in secret,
strengthen the underground networks of
believers around the world.
Give wisdom to their leaders, so that they know who
to trust, when to speak and when to stay silent.
Thank You for their faith and perseverance,
and for the courage of those
who, despite the penalties for being caught,
still try to share Your truth and love.
Lord Jesus, may Your kingdom come,
Amen.*



16 UZBEKISTAN



Christians from a Muslim background experience pressure and violence from family, friends and local community.

In addition, the police, secret services and urban authorities monitor religious activities by bugging homes, tapping phones, infiltrating groups and monitoring church services. Non-registered places of worship are raided, religious materials confiscated, believers interrogated, leaders arrested and churches fined.

Open Doors strengthens the church in Central Asia with Christian literature, training, relief aid and socio-economic development projects.

[Central Asia: The Forgotten church.](#) This video from our [Fast Food resource](#) features stories of Bible smuggling and secret meetings from persecuted church leaders in Central Asia.

[Pray through the World Watch List: sign up for email updates.](#)

A PRAYER FOR THE REBELLIOUS

*Lord Jesus,
You challenged the authorities.
You were called rule-breaker, rebel, criminal.
Today we pray for all those who follow You,
instead of following the rules:
the dissident citizens of the Kingdom of God.
Give courage to those who are faced with the
choice to obey God or obey man:
all those who will not bow before false gods,
who question the official line, ignore the state
propaganda.
Be with the churches who insist on meeting
even though they have been ordered to close.
Be close to those who read banned Bibles in secret
and whisper hymns in the darkness.
We remember especially all those in the prisons and
the labour camps.
Give them courage to speak out where speaking out
is possible.
Give them humility and wisdom,
patience and love.
Protect them, inspire them, and may we do all we
can to let them know
that they are not forgotten or alone.
Lord Jesus, may Your kingdom come,
Amen.*



4 SUDAN



In Sudan the government is strictly implementing a policy of one religion, culture and language.

Freedom of expression is highly curtailed and the persecution of Christians is systematic: arrests on charges of espionage; churches demolished; indiscriminate attacks in areas like the Nuba Mountains. Believers are afraid to share their faith. Some disguise their identity even after death, being buried in Muslim cemeteries. Despite this, brave pastors are speaking up against the treatment of the church.

Through partnerships with the Sudanese church, Open Doors provides training, community development, practical assistance and trauma care to persecuted Christians.

[A graduation ceremony with a difference.](#) For Christians in Sudan, there are not many occasions for celebrating. **[But this video shows a joyous occasion](#)** – a graduation ceremony for brave new pastors who will serve persecuted Christians.

A PRAYER FOR THE POWERLESS

*Lord God,
Lord of all power and might,
We pray for those who feel powerless and weak:
those running on empty,
the exhausted and the scared,
They have nothing left, Lord.
They have given everything.
So fill them, we ask, with Your power:
give strength to those who have no strength left,
give hope to those who feel the situation is
hopeless,
give the victory to those who feel that everything
is lost.
Send them more of Your Spirit, Lord.
Be present in such a powerful way,
that weakness turns to strength,
defeat turns to victory,
despair becomes hope,
and the darkness is flooded with light.
May Your treasure be found in these jars of clay,
may they rise like eagles, and shine like stars.
Lord God, may Your kingdom come,
Amen.*



1 NORTH KOREA



Persecution is led by the state which sees Christians as hostile elements that have to be eradicated.

Due to constant indoctrination, neighbours and family members, including children, are highly watchful and report anything suspicious to the authorities. If Christians are discovered, they are deported to labour camps as political criminals or killed on the spot; their families share their fate. Meeting for worship is almost impossible, so is done in utmost secrecy. The churches shown to visitors in Pyongyang serve mere propaganda purposes.

Open Doors supports the church in North Korea with emergency relief aid and Christian materials, and provides shelter and training to North Korean believers in China.

“God’s Princess helped me survive a North Korean labour camp” - [Read the inspiring story of Esther](#), who survived a labour camp and found God.

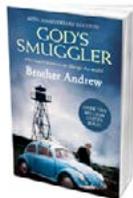
What is it like to follow Jesus in the worst place in the world to be a Christian? Here are [Six Steps for Surviving in North Korea](#).

CONNECT WITH YOUR PERSECUTED FAMILY

Thank you for praying with the persecuted church. Want to go deeper with your persecuted family? Our range of digital and print resources will inspire you with the latest stories of courage and sacrifice from the persecuted church. Your own faith will grow as you discover that following Jesus is worth the cost.

God's Smuggler

Are you new to Open Doors? [Order your free copy of the international best-seller, God's Smuggler](#) – the amazing story of Brother Andrew, the founder of Open Doors.



Weekly/monthly emails

Get the latest news and prayer requests direct from the persecuted church and pray through the World Watch List by [signing up for our weekly or monthly emails](#).

WAKE UP THE WORLD TO EXTREME PERSECUTION

In too many countries Christians have to keep their faith a secret. We don't have to. These resources will help you use your freedom to wake up the world to the extreme persecution facing your persecuted family.

Wake up your church

[The World Watch List Church Pack](#) gives you everything you need to tell your church about the extreme persecution facing their family in Christ. Contains service guide, World Watch List map, and resources for youth and children.



Wake up your MP

Sign up for emails from Open Doors' Advocacy team for the latest ways to put persecution on your MP's agenda.

Wake up your friends

Follow Open Doors on Facebook and Twitter for the latest films, testimonies and stories of courage and faith from the persecuted church, and share them with your friends.

You can find all these amazing resources – and more at www.opendoorsuk.org/resources

