

Open *Doors*

MAGAZINE | March/April 2025



No more shame

Jorina wants women
like her to see change



WORLD WATCH LIST 2025 TOP 50

Pray for Christians in the top 50 countries where following Jesus costs the most.

Get your free *World Watch List 2025 Top 50* and pray for our courageous brothers and sisters around the world. You'll find inspiring testimonies, expert information and the latest prayer requests.

Order today: opendoorsuk.org/wwl

LEAVE A LEGACY OF HOPE

You can give your persecuted family hope of a brighter future by including a gift to Open Doors in your Will. Your gift will mean a lifetime of support for those who suffer for following Jesus.

If you have not yet made a Will, you can make a Will for FREE using our partner *Farewill*.

To find out more, go to opendoorsuk.org/legacy or phone 01993 460015.



This Easter, help children to think about what it means to follow Jesus.

When Mrs Pilate's serving girl accompanies her mistress to Jerusalem, things don't turn out quite as she expects.

Mrs Pilate's Serving Girl is a fresh, funny, thought-provoking children's book set against the background of the Easter story.

Order your FREE copy today!

opendoorsuk.org/mrspilate



Open Doors is an international ministry serving persecuted Christians and churches worldwide.

Open Doors supplies Bibles, leadership training, literacy programmes, livelihood support and advocacy services. We also mobilise the church in the UK and Ireland to serve Christians living under religious persecution.

If you have any questions about the work of Open Doors, or would like to reprint any of the articles in this magazine, please do get in touch.

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COVER: Jorina supports other women in Bangladesh who, like her, face persecution for their faith and gender

LETTER FROM HENRIETTA

All one in Christ

“There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

GALATIANS 3:28

When I travelled to Bangladesh a few years ago, it was the first time I truly saw the reality faced by Christian converts. Opposition doesn't just come from outsiders – often it is the people who know converts best who take the most offence to their faith. Just as Jesus prophesied, I heard stories of father against son, mother against daughter – converts' persecutors are often members of their own household.

That's one of the things that is particularly distressing about the humiliating attack Jorina faced in Bangladesh: she knew her attackers well (see p8). The second is that they were women. When we talk about gender-based violence, the perpetrators are usually men. It's hard to read that it was women who persecuted Jorina. It shows how this persecution can spread through a whole community.

I'm very touched that, despite this persecution, Jorina is committed to her faith – and it's inspiring that she's also determined to teach other female converts in Bangladesh about God's original intention for women. She knows they were never second-class citizens in God's plan.

In a culture where women – and particularly Christian women – face intense subjugation and discrimination, Jorina's message is radical and transformative. You and I can be part of spreading that message. Our prayers and support are needed to make Jorina's ministry possible.

Persecution happens to both men and women. But for our Christian sisters it is often hidden away behind closed doors. The fact that we see them and know what's going on, hear their stories and pray for them means such a lot. We can help Christian women know that, even though they may not be seen in their cultures, we see them. Together, let's see change.



Henrietta

Henrietta Blyth
CEO, Open Doors UK&I

WORLD WATCH LIST BULLETIN

NORTH KOREA

Secret believer reveals faith to wife

A North Korean believer made a beautiful discovery when he took the enormously brave step of telling his wife about his deepest secret: his faith.

After his first wife died, the secret believer remarried but, like many Christians in North Korea, he kept his faith hidden from his new wife. If she disclosed it to the authorities, even

by accident, it would have unthinkable consequences.

“It didn’t feel right,” he told an underground Open Doors fieldworker. “I wanted to be transparent with my wife. I contemplated and prayed, prayed and contemplated. Then I decided to gather all my courage and tell her my deepest secret.”

“She started to cry,” he continues. “Because she had been a secret believer all her life. She desperately wanted to tell me she followed Jesus.”

Open Doors fieldworkers outside North Korea are helping this couple practically and spiritually. “They are in need of so much, but they rarely ask for help,” says the fieldworker. “And I know for a fact that they help many, many people around them. Even the ones who have hurt them, even the ones who would lock them up if they knew about their true identity as Christians.”

PRAY For strength, encouragement and protection for the couple.

NEPAL

Kumari discovers her value and beauty

A Nepalese woman says a women’s seminar run by Open Doors local partners has reminded her of her ‘inner beauty’.

After suffering with a severely swollen face that hospitals were unable to treat, Kumari* went along to church after a friend shared the gospel with her. “I accepted Christ as my Saviour, and miraculously, the very next day, I was healed,” says Kumari, who has since suffered persecution from her husband and neighbours for her new faith.

“I am blessed through this seminar and learned so many things which I never knew,” she continues. “I realised that women are valuable and can do a lot for the family, society and church. I learned that God created man and woman in His own image, and I learned about my inner beauty. I often feel ugly; however, this seminar has reminded me

that God created me, and I am beautiful.

“I cannot read the Bible as I am illiterate. But I love a Nepali song, which says, ‘Surrender my life on the holy altar of the Lord.’ Hopefully, I can read the Bible someday.”

PRAISE God for Kumari’s salvation and healing.

BELOW Kumari feels blessed by the seminar from Open Doors partners



KYRGYZSTAN

Bible torn to pieces by brother

A new believer from Kyrgyzstan is recovering from an awful attack by her own brother, during which her Bible was torn to pieces.

After becoming a Christian, Leyla* was given a Bible by a friend and she read it secretly in her room. But her brother found it. He destroyed the Bible, kicked Leyla out of their home and threatened her, accusing her of bringing shame to their Muslim family.

Leyla is now staying with a friend and remains determined to hold on to her faith, but she is afraid.

Kyrgyzstan rose more places in the latest World Watch List than any other country (jumping from 61 to 47).

PRAY For Leyla’s healing and for her family to embrace Jesus.

BELOW The torn remains of Leyla’s Bible



NIGERIA

At least ten killed in attacks

At least ten believers were killed in a spate of devastating attacks on Christian-majority communities in Nigeria.

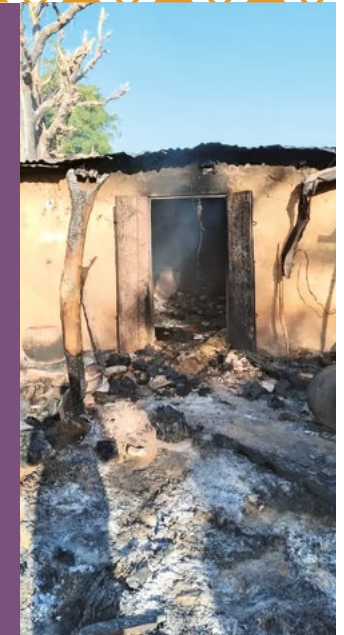
The attacks happened from the end of December and into January, affecting seven communities in Chibok LGA (Local Government Area), Borno State. Several people were also wounded and 12 churches were damaged, looted or burnt. Many homes were targeted. In the most deadly attack, in Shikarkir, eight people were killed and 57 homes destroyed.

More than 4,000 people have been displaced by the attacks, with many having lost homes and possessions. Most of those who have fled are women and children.

ABOVE A destroyed home after one of the terrible attacks

Open Doors local partners are planning on delivering emergency relief aid to 500 households in the area.

PRAY For protection of Christians in Nigeria, and for God’s unfailing comfort to surround all those affected by the attacks.



MORE STORIES



- Serving secretly as a Somali believer
- Mixed feelings for Syrian Christians
- Thank you from the Arabian Peninsula

Head to opendoorsuk.org/news or follow us @opendoorsuk for more news and updates.

*Names changed for security reasons

MPs URGED TO 'USE YOUR VOICE'

Over 100 MPs at World Watch List 2025 parliamentary launch



Henrietta Blyth, CEO of Open Doors UK & Ireland, addresses MPs at the World Watch List parliamentary launch

Watch launch highlights at opendoorsuk.org/advocacy

“Please, use your voice as members of parliament to call out instances of persecution, violence and discrimination.” That was the rallying cry from local partner Eti*, as she shared first-hand details of Christian persecution in Bangladesh. Her call was heard by 104 MPs at the World Watch List 2025 parliamentary launch on 15 January, co-hosted by the Bishop of Winchester and the Rt Hon. Sir Stephen Timms MP. And all those MPs were there thanks to your invitations and prayers!

Eti was one of several speakers during the event who made clear that religious freedom is under threat around the world.

“The churches and Christian communities in Sudan are in a crossroads of survival and extinction,” shared Yasin*, field director for East Africa. “As Members of Parliament, please use your voice to ensure UK aid reaches all groups within Sudan regardless of their religion and Christians are not denied access to this aid.”

FIRST-HAND TESTIMONIES

The World Watch List parliamentary launch is an opportunity for MPs across

the political spectrum to discover the countries where persecution is most extreme, and to hear the latest persecution trends, but it is much more than that. It may be the only time in the year when an MP hears first-hand, heart-felt testimony about the pain and fear caused by the denial of human rights.

“Thank you to my constituents for reaching out to me.”

“Seeing the range of people from across parliament is such a great encouragement,” shared David Smith MP in his new role as UK Special Envoy for

Freedom of Religion or Belief. The re-appointment of this role is a wonderful answer to the prayers of many Open Doors supporters.

“Yesterday, I attended the launch of @OpenDoorsUK’s #WorldWatchList 2025. We have a responsibility to champion the rights of religious minorities and keep them on the agenda.”
– Bambos Charalambous MP on X

Smith continued: “It’s a fixture in the parliamentary calendar, and that’s a testimony to the importance of the work that Open Doors does – and also to the importance of freedom of religion or belief. We’ve got to recommit ourselves to tackling persecution in every way that we can.”

“Seeing the range of people from across parliament is such a great encouragement.”

“FREEDOM OF RELIGION MATTERS”
Many parliamentarians at the event shared how impactful they found the stories and statistics shared.

“The Open Doors Watch List for the year 2025 has been launched in Parliament and as always it is a stark reminder of the level of abuse our Christian brothers and sisters face across the world.”
– Baroness Arlene Foster on X

“Many people don’t know that this sort of thing actually happens,” said Preet Kaur Gill MP. “So the World Watch List is really integral and important to educating all of us, but also making sure that we speak up and we use our voice.”

“Freedom of religion and belief matters because, if we care about human rights, we have to care about them in every part of the world,” added Tim Farron MP. “Very often, religious freedoms are the first to go. The UK needs to be aware of this, which is why the World Watch List is so important.”

“I attended the @OpenDoorsUK report launch just now. The World Watch List 2025 details religious persecution across the globe. I’m grateful for the work they do to highlight this important cause.”
– Sir Edward Leigh MP on X

THANK YOU TO CONSTITUENTS

Alongside Eti’s and Yasin’s addresses, the assembled MPs were visibly moved after watching a powerful video of Pastor Barnabas in Nigeria. He spoke about the millions of Christians who are displaced by violence and conflict in sub-Saharan Africa, saying: “Politicians don’t talk about it. Government don’t talk about it. Nobody talks about it.” Thanks to your invitations, politicians are now talking about it. As MPs told us, they are truly motivated and guided by the letters and emails they get

from constituents like you. “The work of Open Doors in highlighting this issue is really important – I got a significant amount of communication about it,” confirmed James Naish MP. “I’d like to say thank you to my constituents for reaching out to me. It does make a difference.”

*Name changed for security reasons

SEND THE REPORT

Your role isn’t over! You have the opportunity to make sure even more MPs are talking about the crucial issue of religious persecution.

If your MP came to the World Watch List 2025 parliamentary launch, do send them a thank you message – it really reinforces how important the event is. If your MP wasn’t able to attend, you can send them a digital copy of the World Watch List 2025 report.

Together, we can put religious freedom on the radar of MPs across all parties – and support them as they use their voice for change.

Send the report at opendoorsuk.org/advocacy





SHAMED FOR HER FAITH.

WILL JORINA SEE CHANGE?

Jorina can't forget the most shameful thing that's ever been done to her.

When a dozen women in Jorina's village in Bangladesh asked her to meet with them, she thought they wanted to learn about the gospel. Jorina and her husband, Shirajul, had recently become Christians and were excited to introduce other Muslims to Jesus. "We didn't feel the need to hide it from others," she says. "We believed we needed to share the truth with others."

But that wasn't why the women had called Jorina to meet. Instead, they surrounded her and made her strip naked. "I couldn't believe how any of this was even possible," she says, still brought to tears by the memory. "There were so many of them. I had no choice."

A HUMILIATING ATTACK

Their cruel demand comes from a common misunderstanding in this region of Bangladesh. Because Ephesians 1:13 says "When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit," some Muslims believe that Christians have a literal 'mark' or 'seal' on them.

"I told them, 'I don't have any seal on my body,'" Jorina says. "They told me to shut up." Of course, they couldn't find anything. In a culture where women are expected to be very modest, this attack was especially appalling and shaming to Jorina.

PICTURED Jorina has faced persecution from her community in Bangladesh

“I cried a lot in that room,” remembers Jorina. “After a while, they kicked me out and I returned home. When I got back, I didn’t share this with anyone. How could I? How was it even possible to talk about such a thing?”

What made this humiliating attack particularly painful was that Jorina knew her persecutors. Before she converted to Christianity, these women had been her friends – people she’d interacted with every day. Now, they rejected and persecuted her.

“IT FEELS AS IF ALL CHRISTIAN WOMEN ARE JUST AS GOOD AS DEAD.”

A ‘SECOND-CLASS CITIZEN’

Throughout Open Doors’ ongoing See. Change. campaign, we have been sharing stories that highlight the specific vulnerabilities of Christian women around the world. In most of these stories, the persecutors have been male. You may have read accounts of Christian women and girls suffering at the hands of their fathers, brothers, husbands or other men in the community. What marks out Jorina’s attack as particularly shocking is that the people shaming her were women.

It demonstrates how the demeaning of Christian women can spread through

a whole culture. Jorina was already considered a second-class citizen for her gender. Choosing to become one of the country’s tiny Christian minority compounded this.

“After our conversion, in the eyes of the Muslims, we were seen as terrible people. They hated us and treated us differently,” Jorina says. She puts it very starkly: “For Islamic leaders in my village, it feels as if all Christian women are just as good as dead.”

It’s no wonder that the women who persecuted Jorina felt entitled to cause her harm. As a woman, she had few rights. As a Christian, she might as well not exist.

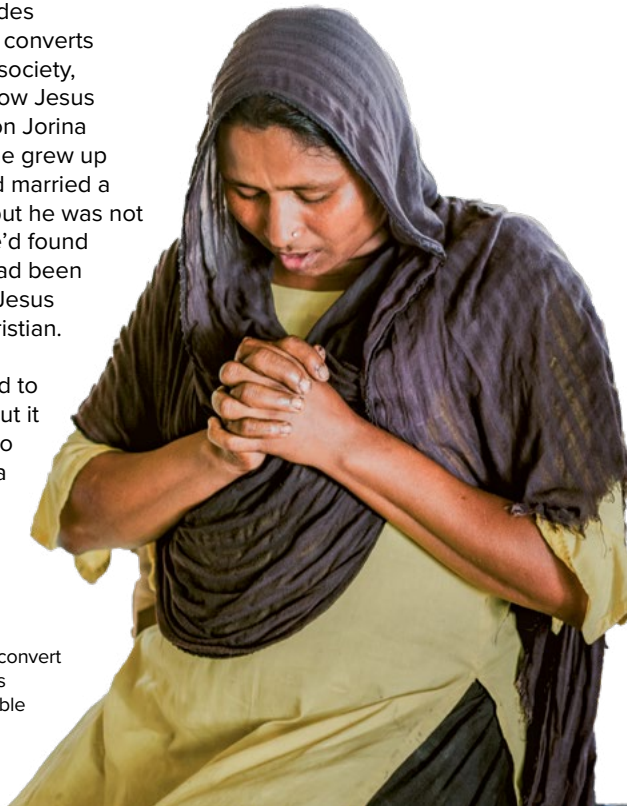
DECIDING TO FOLLOW JESUS

Given the attitudes towards female converts in Bangladeshi society, choosing to follow Jesus wasn’t a decision Jorina made lightly. She grew up as a Muslim and married a Muslim man – but he was not satisfied that he’d found the truth, and had been learning about Jesus from a local Christian.

“I was interested to know more about it but, according to village culture, a woman cannot talk and sit together with a

stranger,” Jorina remembers. She made a courageous decision: “One day, with a brave heart, I asked my husband: ‘Who is this man? What are you talking about with this stranger? I want to join you.’” Many men in their community would have rejected such a request, but Shirajul agreed. Together, they learned about Jesus. “After he left, my husband and I sat together, thinking about what to do next.”

They didn’t rush in to their decision. For the next two years, the couple continued learning about Jesus while also studying Islamic literature. Eventually, they were convinced that the Bible was true. Jorina and Shirajul both decided to follow Jesus and were baptised.



RIGHT As a female convert from Islam, Jorina is particularly vulnerable

DEATH THREATS

Intense opposition came quickly from the couple’s family and community, and continues to this day. “My husband received death threats from all sides, even from his nephew,” says Jorina. “They were saying, ‘In all our generations, they are the only ones ruining our family’s reputation in society by becoming Christians.’ When my mother-in-law passed away, they didn’t even allow us to attend the funeral service.”

Jorina’s two children also experience discrimination. She remembers her son coming to her one day saying: “My friends always tell me that, since we are Christians, we have no religion and can’t go to heaven. They tell me that they will burn us alive.”

All Jorina could do in response was pray and



ABOVE Jorina teaches and encourages other women who have converted from Islam

commit her son to God’s safety. She knew that filing an official complaint was futile. The local authorities would do nothing to help a Christian family like hers.

EXTRAORDINARY FORGIVENESS

There was a time in Jorina’s life when this ongoing

ordeal would have filled her with hatred – but she’s transformed since she met Jesus. “After becoming a Christian, the biggest change in my life was that I had to love everyone and learn to forgive others,” she says. “I can’t live with anger anymore. I used to quarrel with others, lie and do many

PROTESTS LEAD TO PERSECUTION IN BANGLADESH



Bangladesh has risen three places on the World Watch List in the past year, largely because of an increase in violence. Many Christian properties, particularly schools, were closed as a result of widespread upheaval that began last summer and forced Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to resign.

The protests in August 2024 were largely started

by student groups angry about job quota systems, but radical groups used the chaos as a cover to attack Christian communities, especially converts.

“In many areas, radical groups are compiling lists of converts to attack their houses,” shared a local Open Doors partner. “No one is secure – they are very vulnerable and easy

targets for the perpetrators.”

Houses and farms were looted and destroyed, and Christians were attacked and given death threats. Many Bangladeshi believers have been forced from their homes.

Read more at opendoorsuk.org/bangladesh

bad things, but now I don't do such things. After receiving Christ and reading from the Gospels, I can now love others and treat them well."

When asked if she has forgiven the women who humiliated her, Jorina is clear: "Yes, I forgive them. It was difficult. They wanted to check for a 'seal' on my body, but Christ knows us without that, and we receive salvation through Him. They too can receive that same salvation. I pray that for them."

CHURCH COMMUNITY

Through every season of her walk with God, Jorina never loses sight of what first led her to Jesus. The Bible is her source of strength through every difficult situation. "We should be obedient to God's Word," she says, referencing Matthew 19:29: "My God said, 'If anyone believes in me and leaves their home, children and everything for me, then in eternal life, they will receive a hundred times more than what they have left behind.'"

One of the blessings Jorina experiences is her church community. Christian friends were the first she felt able to tell about her humiliating persecution, and their support brought her much-

RIGHT Jorina has learned her true worth in God's eyes, and wants to share that truth with other women like her

needed healing. Now she is determined to help other Christian women who, like her, are vulnerable for their faith and gender.

"AS BELIEVERS, WE VALUE WOMEN AND WANT THEM TO KNOW JESUS CHRIST."

ANANNA TRAINING

Jorina is a facilitator for 'Ananna' – which means 'unique woman' in Bengali. It's a discipleship programme funded by Open Doors local partners, and gives women the precious opportunity to learn the fundamentals of the

Christian faith and understand God's design for women.

"We need this because, in Bangladesh's Muslim culture, people often don't give value to women," says Jorina. "But, as believers, we value women and want them to know Jesus Christ. We want to pray for them and to encourage them.

"Just like me, the women I am working with now should also participate in the Ananna training. They really need it. Not only those women but also their family members can come to know more about God through this. Pray that they can get the training. Just as I am receiving these opportunities, pray that they, too, can receive the same

opportunities to serve and work for the Lord."

"YOU ALWAYS STAND BESIDE US"

The Ananna programme is one of several ways that your prayers and gifts can help Jorina's ministry. "When I go through persecution, or when any of our church members go through persecution, [Open Doors partners] always stand beside us," she says. "When we didn't have a place to worship or hold our church services, we received support to build this house church.

"During any persecution, we call [Open Doors partners]. Then they are present with us, offering support in legal matters and financial assistance, if needed."

Without this committed support, these women would be very vulnerable. With it, they can help the whole church be resilient. It's only possible with your prayers and gifts. So many Christian women – in Bangladesh and many other countries – are repeatedly told they have no value and are 'just as good as dead'. The *See. Change.* campaign rejects this lie – and aims to ensure that women like Jorina are seen, valued and empowered to fulfil their God-given potential. Today, will you help this vision become a reality?

PLEASE PRAY

Jorina asks for your prayers: "Please pray for my family. Pray for our security when we have our worship and prayers in the house church. Pray for God's guidance. Despite all the persecution, we are standing firm in our faith in Christ. Pray that we can continue to stand firm and that, through us, many others may receive salvation." Please pray for Jorina's ministry with women and for all Christian women who are persecuted for both their gender and their faith.

You can find more *See. Change.* prayer points in your Prayer Diary.

PLEASE GIVE

You can make a gift to support persecuted Christian women at **opendoorsuk.org**. Thank you.

- **Every £22** could give a month of vital practical support to a woman who is persecuted for her faith
- **Every £32** could help give a woman discipleship training so she can learn and grow to become more like Christ
- **Every £50** could help give legal assistance to a woman who has been persecuted for her faith.

SEE. CHANGE.

You have various opportunities to join in prayer for persecuted Christian women this year:

- Join the *See. Change.* prayer breakfast on 5 April at Open Doors' office in Oxfordshire
- Visit the *Tears of Gold* exhibition of portraits by persecuted women from Nigeria. It's showing at Lincoln Cathedral (24 February – 9 March), Coventry Cathedral (29 March – 13 April), Temple Baptist Church, Pontypridd (7-15 June) and Truro Cathedral (17 October – 2 November)
- Order your free *Tears of Gold* portrait pack to help you pray for persecuted Christian women.



Find more details at **opendoorsuk.org/seechange**



Motivated by a miracle: Q&A with Manga, Nigeria



It's a day Manga will never forget: Tuesday 2 October 2012. He and his family were at their home in northern Nigeria when Boko Haram militants stormed in. Tragedy ensued, as did a miracle that has profoundly motivated Manga's faith. It's also given him a voice for others like him – and that's why he's urging people to sign the *Arise Africa* petition.

Q: TELL US HOW YOU SURVIVED THE ATTACK.

A: The militants took me, my brother and my dad outside where they asked us if we will deny our faith and convert to Islam. We said no. They killed my dad and I was filled with fear. When they knifed me, I was bleeding so bad that they assumed I would die, so they left.

During the attack, I remembered Jesus's prayer on the cross. I said, "Father,

forgive them, for they do not know what they're doing (Luke 23:34)." Miraculously, the pain vanished. I felt the presence of God. I felt the hands of the Lord on my neck. I was clinically dead, but God restored my life.

Q: HOW HAS THE ATTACK AFFECTED YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD?

A: Sometimes people encounter Jesus through teaching, church revivals or worship. But for me, it's

through hardship, trauma and pain, and the gift of life. I should've been dead. I'm healed totally. When I awake each day, it's a miracle.

"I was clinically dead, but God restored my life."

My dad is not alive today, but I am – it's for a reason. Every day I spend on earth I want to make God famous. I will not waste my time on regret, grief

and anger, but on knowing God and fulfilling His works.

Q: SINCE THE ATTACK, WHAT'S BEEN MOST CHALLENGING?

A: I miss my dad and I cannot go back home to be with my family. Daily we are mindful of our security. What if we're being hunted? What if we're attacked? Our life is not normal anymore. My anchor is that we are pilgrims in this world – we have a home that awaits us which is far better than this world.

Q: WHICH BIBLE PASSAGES MEAN MUCH TO YOU?

A: There are many, especially the Lord's Prayer. I have searched my whole life and there is no greater prayer that defines my life and faith. I wish that everyone really, really looks at its words and takes it seriously with revelation, not just to memorise and recite it.

"Your prayers are always renewing my strength."

Every day, when I look at myself in the mirror with this scar, I remember Matthew 6:12: "Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who have sinned against us." I live each day with forgiveness for the persecutors, and I pray for their salvation.

Q: HOW HAVE THE PRAYERS OF OTHERS IMPACTED YOUR LIFE?

A: The scar is there, but the pain is gone, and it's because of your prayers. I believe you don't only

Watch Manga being interviewed by John Bostock, professional footballer and founder of Ballers in God, on our YouTube channel, [@opendoorsuk](#)



hear my story, but you pray with me, and your prayers are always renewing my strength. It makes me happy to know that you're praying for the persecuted church. Do not pray for us but pray with us, so that we will be stronger and standing firm in the faith.

Q: AS YOU LOOK TO THE FUTURE, WHAT GIVES YOU HOPE?

A: There are high levels of violence and the church is suffering, but the church is still awakening. Even persecutors are coming to know Jesus. The church is still being strengthened. To the glory of God, the church is still coming alive.

Q: HOW CAN WE PRAY FOR OUR PERSECUTED FAMILY IN NIGERIA?

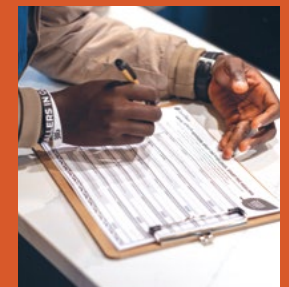
A: More of God's strength and peace. Even in affliction

or trouble, the peace of God is what gives us joy and strength. Please pray for strength to remain firm, and that our fire for Him will keep burning.

Q: WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO SIGN THE ARISE AFRICA PETITION?

A: There are 16.2 million Christians displaced in sub-Saharan Africa. Many are paying with their lives. As a part of the persecuted church, I am pleading with you that this needs to stop. Please sign this petition. We want you to come in support and in agreement, to make it known to the government that there is a need for restoration for the body of Christ and the church to come back to its glory, for them to worship in peace. Together, we can stop the violence and start the healing.

Sign the *Arise Africa* petition at [opendoorsuk.org/ariseafrica](#) and please share with your family, friends and church. Thank you!



Manga signing the *Arise Africa* petition

Help children to explore the Easter story with

MRS PILATE'S SERVING GIRL

"This is a story about a Roman soldier called Pontius Pilate.

And his wife, called Mrs Pilate.

And her serving girl called... well, we'll get to that."

Mrs Pilate's *Serving Girl* tells the story of a young slave girl and a week in Jerusalem which changed her life forever. For one thing, her mistress, Mrs Pilate, can't sleep – which puts her in a really, really, really bad mood. Then there is this mysterious Messiah that people keep mentioning. Who is He? Why are people so excited about Him? And will Mrs Pilate's *Serving Girl* get into trouble for finding out more?

As well as helping children to explore the Easter story, *Mrs Pilate's Serving Girl* also looks at how, around the world today, people still get into trouble for following Jesus, and how discovering the truth about the Messiah can completely transform who you are and what you do with your life.

Why not introduce the children in your life to *Mrs Pilate's Serving Girl* this Easter? Order your free, full-colour picture book today.

SHARE IT WITH YOUR CHURCH OR CHILDREN'S GROUPS

Along with the book, there's also an animated video version and free downloadable resources, including all-age service

ideas, a teaching session and a children's activity sheet. So you can share the story with everyone!

MRS PILATE'S SERVING GIRL

- 24pp full-colour storybook
- Animated video
- Activity sheets
- All-age service ideas
- Children's teaching session



ORDER YOUR FREE COPY TODAY!



opendoorsuk.org/mrspilate



WITNESS

Sharing the faith of the persecuted church.

How are the Beatitudes relevant today? What are we to make of Jesus's well-known words in Matthew 5, where he explains how the poor, the grieving, the humble and even the persecuted are 'blessed'?

Witness is a new book and small group resource which uses the testimony of the persecuted church to see what this 'blessed' life might look like. Stories of powerful encounters with persecuted Christians are interwoven with thought-provoking biblical

reflection to help us explore what Jesus meant in the Beatitudes, and learn from our brothers and sisters who witness, every day, to the reality of those promises.

"They carry hope in their heart... that's why we want to be a witness"

"I've had so many remarkable encounters with brothers and sisters in Christ that have transformed me," says Eddie Lyle, former Open Doors President and CEO, who co-wrote the book with author and Open Doors staff member Nick Page. "It's made me re-evaluate the way that I seek to follow Christ in my life. And I don't want to see those stories forgotten."

But *Witness* is not a book of reminiscences: it's about how we live as Christians today. It's a book which explores how the way we live, and who we are, can point people to Jesus.

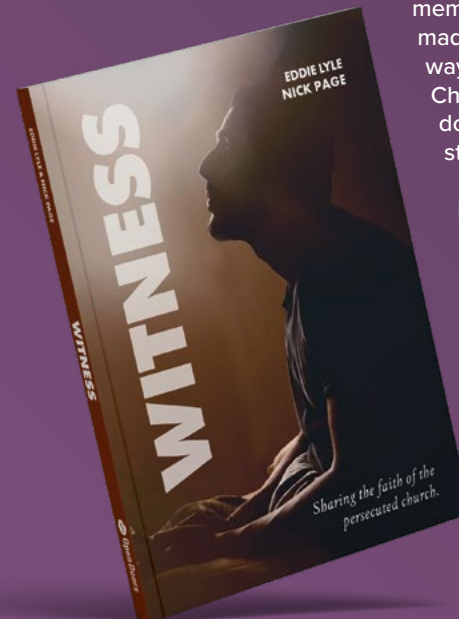
"The book is about how the lives of persecuted

Christians witness to those around them," says Nick. "But it's also about what we can learn from that, about how we can be witnesses to Jesus in our culture and context."

Through 12 chapters, and a discussion guide for small groups, you can be challenged and inspired to explore how living out these values of the Beatitudes can serve as a powerful witness to our society.

As Eddie puts it: "I've seen individuals that have experienced things, have been involved in things that are beyond description, and they have not been consumed by the darkness. Somehow, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, there's been a light within them that is un-put-out-able. They carry hope in their heart. And that's why we want to be a witness."

Order your free copy of *Witness* today, and download the discussion guide and videos, at opendoorsuk.org/witness.





EYEWITNESS

Batoul

FROM NORTH AFRICA

It was Batoul's* father who introduced her to Jesus. Once a fundamentalist Muslim, who beat his wife and daughters, his transformation after becoming a Christian was evident.

Batoul was thrilled, but her mother and sisters were not. "My mother was grateful for her new, loving husband," she explains, "but, like my sisters, she couldn't accept his conversion and the idea of him becoming an infidel."

Batoul grew close to her father and accompanied him at Bible studies. She learned about Jesus with delight and was baptised at 16. "I was convinced that life with Jesus is worth all the sacrifices," she says.

CLOSENESS REPLACED WITH CRUELTY

She assumed her conversion would mean little to her mother and sisters – but she was wrong. "To my misfortune, I paid the price for both my father's conversion and my own. They didn't dare to persecute my father, so they turned on me."

"Life with Jesus is worth all the sacrifices."

Before her father had become a Christian, Batoul had enjoyed a close relationship with her mother and sisters. Now, that closeness was gone. Her mother, Amina*, kept her away from church. Her sisters beat her and asked how much money she'd accepted to convert.

"What price did they pay for your betrayal?" they demanded.

At dinner times, they forced Batoul to eat by herself. "In my culture, we eat from the same plate, so I felt like an animal eating alone. That was their intention. It was very hard for me to see my own mother – who should have been tender and close to me – instead persecuting me alongside my sisters."

Rather than rushing to her defence, Batoul's father distanced himself from her mistreatment. "I don't want trouble with you or with your sisters," he would say. "You are all my daughters." He entrusted her care to a church leader.

Batoul felt utterly abandoned. "I had no family, I had nothing, and my faith was shaken because I didn't perceive that Christ was with me," she remembers. "I only saw that the people who were with me gave up on me. I considered ending my life."

A NEW FAMILY

Thankfully, God was not finished with Batoul and brought her to the attention of an Open Doors partner, Brother Youssef*. "He strengthened me, reminding me to look up to Christ and remember how He was persecuted, crucified, beaten

North Africa

Did you know?

Open Doors works with local partners and churches in North Africa to provide leadership and discipleship training, livelihood support, legal aid, trauma counselling, Bibles and pastoral care.

and endured great suffering," says Batoul.

She also began to attend Brother Youssef's secret house church, which is mostly a congregation of converts from Islam: "Church is the family I was seeking since I came to believe as a child."

"It's through prayer that I can get through this."

Batoul's relationship with her mother and sisters is better now, although they still ask her to convert back to Islam. Today, with the support of Open Doors partners, she reaches out to isolated Christian girls and women in similar situations.

"I don't feel lonely," Batoul says, "but sometimes I still feel the pain! It's through prayer that I can get through this. In all the sadness, I behold Christ in my life because when I remember that He's with me, I feel joyous."

*Names changed for security reasons

Word

"Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." (Psalm 73:25-26)

Wait

Have there been times of isolation or rejection where you have struggled to sense God's presence? Bring those situations before Jesus and ask the Holy Spirit to renew a sense of His closeness to you.

Witness

Batoul was strengthened and upheld by her church family. Ask God to show you how you can be a source of support and encouragement to someone around you who might be struggling with isolation or rejection.

Pray

"I pray the Lord would strengthen North African women, that they would believe in Him, and that they would not be afraid but encouraged."- BATOUL



PRAY WITH THE WORLD WATCH LIST 2025 TOP 50

Packed with prayer points, information and stories of courageous faith, you can order your free *World Watch List 2025 Top 50* – and other resources – to help you, your family and your church continue to pray with your persecuted church family. Find everything you need at opendoorsuk.org/wwl

Watch Batoul's story at opendoorsuk.org

NO MORE SHAME.

HELP HER SEE CHANGE.

Jorina in Bangladesh faced a humiliating attack. Women in her community forced her to strip naked, looking for a physical 'mark' of her conversion to Christianity. "It feels as if all Christian women are just as good as dead," she says.

But you can help Jorina end the shame. With your support, she is determined to teach and encourage other women who face persecution. Today, will you help courageous women like Jorina see change?

Every £32 could help give a woman discipleship training so she can learn and grow to become more like Christ.

Visit opendoorsuk.org or return the enclosed envelope to make your gift today. Thank you.



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PERSECUTED WOMEN SEE. CHANGE.

 **Open Doors**