

# Open*Doors*

MAGAZINE | May/June 2025

## Fleeing bullets and bombs

Help faith survive  
for displaced  
Christians



# WITNESS

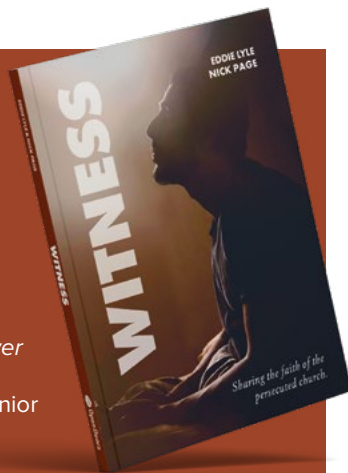
*Sharing the faith of the persecuted church.*

A new book and small group resource from Open Doors.

- Extraordinary encounters with the persecuted church
- Thought-provoking biblical reflection
- Explore what it means to be a witness to Jesus today.

*"Witness is a powerful book... It demonstrates the deep power of discipleship and beckons us into the adventure of being witnesses for Christ, no matter what."* - Malcolm Duncan, Senior Pastor, Kensington Temple London City Church

Order your free copy at [opendoorsuk.org/witness](https://opendoorsuk.org/witness)



## VOLUNTEERS' WEEK

2-8 JUNE 2025  
#VolunteersWeek



We want to say a massive **THANK YOU**. Every year hundreds of volunteers use their time, skills and energy to support the persecuted church. Could you join them?

We are currently looking for:

- Office volunteers
- Prayer group leaders
- Advocacy reps
- Volunteer speakers
- Events volunteers

Find out more about all the roles and apply at [opendoorsuk.org/volunteer](https://opendoorsuk.org/volunteer)

## 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](https://opendoorsuk.org/legacy) or phone 01993 460015.



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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### Open Doors UK & I

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**COVER:** Daw Nye Ku church, bombed by the Myanmar military © 2025 Free Burma Rangers

## LETTER FROM HENRIETTA

### Bread and Word

***"Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord."* DEUTERONOMY 8:3**

God's people have always faced displacement. As far back as Moses, we can see His followers having to trust Him through a time of hardship and danger. During the long years of the Israelites' displacement, before they reached the Promised Land, God kept them fed with manna from heaven. But, as Moses says in Deuteronomy, "Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord." They are words that Jesus referred to Himself, when in the desert for 40 days and nights.

I find it very inspiring that this message is still paramount for Pastor Yang\* in Myanmar (p6). He and his family – and his church – are displaced from their homes by terrible conflict and targeted persecution. Pastor Yang's family face severe food shortages and never know when they'll have to flee yet again. In the midst of this, he holds onto the Word of God. He and his family recite Psalm 23 every night. They are sustained by training from Open Doors local partners, and they take real comfort in Scripture. Pastor Yang understands the eternal value of God's Word.

And, despite constant fears for his young family, Pastor Yang also reaches out to help other displaced believers keep going. He knows what it's like to be alone, so he wants to make sure that others aren't.

We can join Pastor Yang in showing displaced Christians that they aren't alone. With danger coming from multiple sides, you can help ensure these believers receive vital food aid and training rooted in the Word of God. They know both are crucial.

Thank you, and every blessing,



*Henrietta*

**Henrietta Blyth**  
CEO, Open Doors UK&I

\*Name changed for security reasons



# WORLD WATCH LIST BULLETIN

## UK

### Running for their lives at Silverstone

A father and son from Dunblane, Scotland, combined their passions for Formula 1 and the persecuted church by running the inaugural Silverstone Run Fest and raising £250!

Paul Ford tackled the half marathon, whilst his son Matthew did the 10km, coming third in his age category! Participants could also do one mile or 5km.

"I was born in Kitwe, Zambia, less than 100 miles from the border with the Democratic

BELOW Paul running the half marathon



ABOVE Matthew in the 10k race

Republic of Congo (DRC), which is 35<sup>th</sup> on the World Watch List," says Paul. "Sometimes, whilst we think problems are all far away, in reality, they're not.

"Matthew and I have an interest in Formula 1 and have attended Silverstone frequently. Being an international circuit, I thought the synergy of running for international Christians facing persecution was strong. Hopefully, we provided some exposure for them."

Are you looking to use your gifts, time and experiences to help your persecuted family? As well as fundraising, you can also volunteer with us. Head to [opendoorsuk.org/act](https://opendoorsuk.org/act) to find a role or activity for you.

### MORE STORIES

- Sasha forced to burn her gospels
- What does Syria's new constitution mean for Christians?
- How you helped seven women transform their church

Head to [opendoorsuk.org/news](https://opendoorsuk.org/news) or follow us @opendoorsuk for more news and updates.



## IRAN

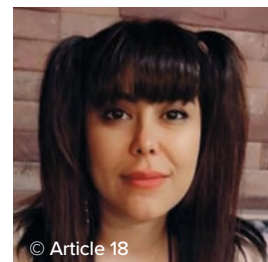
### Pregnant woman among converts sentenced to prison

Three Iranian Christian converts have been sentenced to a combined total of over 40 years in prison.

Narges Nasri (37) (BELOW) – who is pregnant with her first child – has been sentenced to 16 years' imprisonment. Abbas Soori (48) has been handed a 15-year term, and Mehran Shamloui (37), a musician, a sentence of 10 years and eight months. The sentences comprise punishments for various 'offences', including involvement in house churches.

In another recent incident reflecting the brutality facing many Christians in Iran, Amir-Ali Minaei was beaten in prison for requesting referral to a heart specialist.

**PRAY** For strength, peace and the release of all Christian prisoners, and healing for Amir-Ali.



© Article 18

## DRC

### 70 abducted and suspected killed

Our brothers and sisters in north east Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) have been left reeling after 70 people, including Christians, were kidnapped and reported to have been killed.

Twenty believers were captured in Mayba on 13 February by suspected militants from the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), a group with ties to so-called Islamic State (IS). People from the community later gathered to work out how to release those taken. However, ADF militants surrounded the village and captured a further 50 people.

It's been reported that all 70 were later found dead at a church in Kasanga. At the time of writing, Open Doors contacts are aware of at least ten of these believers' bodies having been found.

"The ADF is part of a growing extremist network that wants to wipe out Christianity in the region. If nothing is done, more attacks will follow," says Illia Djadi, Senior Analyst for Freedom of Religion or Belief in sub-Saharan Africa for Open Doors.

**PRAY** That God's comfort will engulf those affected, and for protection of believers in DRC.

## CAMEROON

### "You've shared in our sufferings"

Amidst the suffering facing millions of displaced Christians in sub-Saharan Africa, your support is a blessing – and that includes believers in Far North Cameroon.

The government has advised people to leave the region altogether, such is the threat of Boko Haram militants. Whilst many have left their homes, others can't – they're farmers and their land is their survival. Instead, each day from 3pm, they climb to the mountains for the night. "We don't dare sleep at home," says a villager.

To support believers in the region, local partners recently provided 366 relief packages. Many have received trauma care.

"You come to us, the displaced people," says Pastor Moustafa\*. "You sit on the mat or even on the ground with the refugees. You cry with the orphans. You listen to the widows and cry with them. You go to the hospital and visit the wounded. You pray with us and you pray for us.

"Then, after you've discussed it with God, you bring your help. What you are doing is a blessing of the Lord for us. You have shared in our sufferings. Our people know that outsiders care for them.

We are no longer alone in this suffering. Thank you for all your support."

**PRAY** "For protection and that the amount of suffering will decrease," says Pastor Hamza\*, "and that our people can find food to eat."



ABOVE Christians in Far North Cameroon prepare for their daily trek to the mountains

Watch video at [opendoorsuk.org](https://opendoorsuk.org)

\*Names changed for security reasons

# NO SAFE PLACE



© 2025 Free Burma Rangers



## THE MOVING STORY OF PASTOR YANG

Pastor Yang\* is often exhausted and scared. He and his young family in Myanmar have had to grab what they can and flee – not once, not twice, but many times. Most citizens face danger in Myanmar's ongoing civil war, but the conflict is being used by those in power as an opportunity to increasingly target Christians and other minority groups.

### ROBBED AT GUNPOINT

Pastor Yang recalls one of the attacks, by a radical group, that displaced much of his congregation. "Members of my

church were blindfolded and forced to lie down as guns were pointed at them," he says. "They were not allowed to speak. Their houses were searched for money and valuables. The radical groups took everything valuable."

This wasn't an isolated incident – the church members were assaulted in this way several times. Pastor Yang's own home was targeted: "They took my motorbike and stole 150,000 kyats, which was our emergency fund." That's worth about £55, which is two months' minimum wage in Myanmar. "As a result of these attacks, many church members





## DISPLACED BELIEVERS

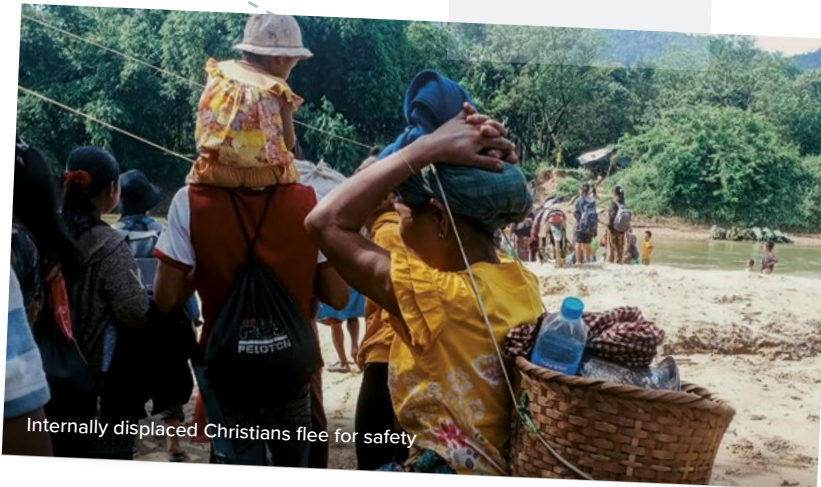
chose to flee from the village.”

### RELENTLESS DISPLACEMENT

Pastor Yang and his family are never able to feel truly at home. The displacements are relentless. “We moved to another, safer place. We stayed there for a week. There also problems arose,” he says. “Then we fled to the village where my in-laws live. We stayed there for two months. We had lots of trouble there too – we moved again.”

### “AS A RESULT OF THESE ATTACKS, MANY CHURCH MEMBERS CHOSE TO FLEE”

As a new parent, Pastor Yang wants to see his wife and children feel safe and secure. The family have never experienced that.



Internally displaced Christians flee for safety

“The burden of moving from one place to another with very young children weighs heavily on me and my wife,” he says. “We have had to live amidst the sounds of gunfire and bomb explosions. All this deeply traumatises my wife. My children fear the loud noises. As a husband and a father, sometimes I feel helpless that I cannot make my own family feel safe.”

### A COMPLEX CLIMATE

The threat doesn’t just come from these radical groups. The situation in Myanmar is very complex. Ever

since the military coup in 2021, which deposed the government, widespread fighting continues in various parts of the country. The new military government and groups of militia remain violently opposed, and the conflict has displaced millions, with many killed and many more properties and livelihoods destroyed. As a result, Myanmar faces an ongoing humanitarian crisis.

All Burmese people are vulnerable, but Christians face a far greater threat in the Buddhist-majority country.

“Even before the coup, we Christians had few privileges,” Pastor Yang explains. “We faced many hindrances when we tried to conduct worship services and church activities.” After the coup, this discrimination turned deadly, as military airstrikes often target churches and majority-Christian areas.

“The conditions of Christians and Buddhists are not the same,” he says. “Many Christians have been killed in

many instances. If we look at the whole country, there are only a few cases of Buddhist villages and monasteries being destroyed. Churches were targets of [military] attacks. They intentionally destroyed tribal people’s and Christian properties.”

### “AS A HUSBAND AND A FATHER, SOMETIMES I FEEL HELPLESS THAT I CANNOT MAKE MY OWN FAMILY FEEL SAFE.”

Even while living in displacement, believers continue to face discrimination. When aid is distributed, Christians are denied the much-needed food and other essentials that are given to displaced Buddhist people.

### GUIDED ALONG RIGHT PATHS

In the face of these extreme difficulties, Pastor Yang turns to the Bible and prayer as sources of resilience. “Our family prays together every night, asking God to give us the strength to go through this Red Sea in our lives,” he says. His wording is a reminder that, as far back as Moses, God’s people have often sought and found His favour

during periods of anxious displacement.

Particular verses sustain Pastor Yang and his family. “Every night, we recite Psalm 23 before we go to bed,” he says, “and we spend much time reciting Proverbs 3:5-6.” In Psalm 23, David says words still deeply pertinent to the plight of Pastor Yang and millions of displaced Christians around the world: “He guides me along the right paths for his name’s sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me.”

Proverbs 3:5-6, meanwhile, declares: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and



Pastor Yang makes dangerous journeys to support other church leaders

## HOW ARE CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED IN MYANMAR?

- Since the 2021 coup, Christians have faced persecution from both the military government and from opposing, nationalistic rebel groups
- Myanmar’s military junta has long discriminated against Christians, the majority of whom belong to ethnic groups such as the Kachin, Kayah, Karen and Chin, and many Christian leaders have been penalised for speaking out against the coup
- Military airstrikes often target churches and Christian areas – far more than Buddhist monasteries and communities; thousands of Christians have been killed and many more families are displaced
- ‘Anti-conversion laws’, supposedly to prevent forced conversion, are abused to persecute Christians – even for sharing Bible verses on social media
- Christians are discriminated against in aid distribution, education and in the job market
- Buddhist nationalism is also on the rise: Christians and other religious minorities face opposition from family, community, radical Buddhist monks, insurgent groups and more, who portray Christianity as a ‘foreign’ religion.



A church that was bombed by the military © 2025 Free Burma Rangers

## DISPLACED BELIEVERS

he will make your paths straight.”

In both of these precious passages, Pastor Yang and his family see hope and wisdom. The paths they have to walk – or to run – are dangerous and uncertain. But they can see certainty in God’s guidance. “Living in the conflict area and going out for daily chores is stressful,” says Pastor Yang. “Every time we ride our motorbikes, we remember God’s promises in Scripture.”

He adds: “We remember God for small things, because we could be killed at any moment. I pray, ‘God, help me come back home safely so that I can see my wife and children.’”

### BATTERED PHYSICALLY, MENTALLY AND SPIRITUALLY

It’s clear that Pastor Yang feels a holy responsibility to serve other displaced Christians in his region, who are also facing increased risk of persecution and discrimination. He knows that it isn’t always possible, from his own resources.

“My church members are my family members. They are my spiritual children,” he says. “Being a father in the family and a pastor in the church, it is impossible to focus only on my family’s difficulties. I cannot ignore them.”

He adds: “Our church members also left their homes. I visit them on bicycle,

Pastor Yang is supported by Open Doors partners in leading training for displaced Christians

as my motorbike was stolen. Our main problem is the lack of basic needs. Church members have no more jobs. No income. We are battered physically, mentally and spiritually.”

### “YOUR HELP IS VERY MEANINGFUL AND IT BRINGS US JOY.”

He sees their need for food and spiritual nourishment, as he visits displaced believers in far-flung places. “People who are down physically and mentally really thirst for the Word of God,” he says. “If we can have programmes to encourage them while they are in need, it will be a great benefit to them.”

### OVERJOYED

With your help, Open Doors local partners can help answer the fervent prayers of believers like Pastor Yang. He first met local partners after his family’s most recent displacement, when they were feeling particularly exhausted and defeated from repeated upheavals.

“I was overjoyed to meet the Open Doors partners. They are so passionate to serve persecuted believers like me,” says Pastor Yang. “I soon partnered with them in reaching out to the displaced believers.”

Pastor Yang was able to attend persecution survival training, and he can pass on what he learned. “I now facilitate workshops for church leaders and pastors because I know, like me, they need this time of fellowship for encouragement.”

### INCREASING FAITH

Your gifts and prayers can answer the physical and spiritual hunger of displaced Christians.

“Despite our desperate financial situation, we try to help our church members and other fellow pastors as much as possible in this time of economic hardship,” says Pastor Yang. “In the past, I could not do so, and it made me extremely sad.”

With your support, Open Doors local partners will be able to provide much-needed food to the displaced believers Pastor Yang knows. “We distribute rice, cooking oil and onions to the most needy ones,” he says. “They cry out of joy. When we had much, we were not mindful of it – but when we have nothing, even one kyat [1/30th of a penny] means a lot.”

He adds: “If we don’t provide food to the Christians who are really displaced and in need, I cannot imagine what their lives would look like. The help is for physical needs, but it also helps their faith to increase.”

### “THIS IS BECAUSE OF YOU”

Pastor Yang is deeply thankful for any support and prayers you can offer to him and his community. “Your help is very meaningful to them and it brings us joy,” he says. “I praise God for people like you who fear and love God and are willing to help people.

“By the grace of God, we are able to conduct training among the needy people. To the most needy people, we are able to distribute some food and Bibles. This is because of you. Yes, it is because of your prayers and your support. Thank you very much.”

The need is far from over. Christians in Myanmar continue to face persecution and discrimination, as well as the terrible impact of conflict. They don’t know how long they will have to be displaced from their homes, or how many more times they will have to gather up their belongings and flee.

Your gifts and prayers can sustain displaced believers – not just in Myanmar, but across the world – showing they are not alone. Today, will you help their faith survive in the face of this ongoing ordeal?

Your prayers and support will help Pastor Yang continue his ministry

## PLEASE PRAY:

Pastor Yang makes these prayer requests:

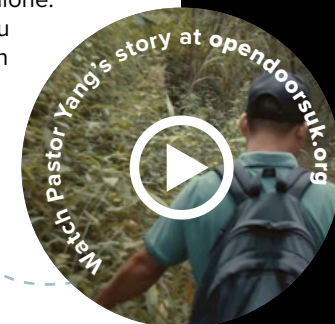
- “For food supply for survival for my church members”
- “For support for my family, especially when my children get sick”
- “That Christians in Myanmar can worship God freely and without fear.”

Find more prayers for displaced believers around the world in your Prayer Diary.

## PLEASE GIVE:

- **Every £23** could help equip a displaced believer with a biblical response to persecution, so they can persevere in their faith.
- **Every £36** could give a month’s urgent relief aid to three displaced believers.
- **Every £62** could help give biblical training to a church leader, to strengthen their faith and their congregation.

You can give to support displaced believers at [opendoorsuk.org/displaced](https://opendoorsuk.org/displaced)





# Romi in Malaysia met God in His Word – thanks to you



Beyond the vast palm oil plantations, the landscape starts to change. The forest turns from palm trees to rubber trees, each adorned with tiny buckets to collect the natural latex of that day's harvest. You climb into the mountains until, finally, you arrive at a village, with chickens and dogs roaming around, and children racing one another in and out of the fruit trees.

This is where Romi lives and works and worships. This is where Romi learned what it really means to be a Christian.

## "I JUST FOLLOWED ALONG"

For all of his life, Romi called himself a 'Christian', but it was an elastic term. His family celebrated Christmas, but they also joined in with the practices and superstitions

of his community, including visiting the local witch doctor.

"In our culture, believing in witchcraft was normal," Romi says. "Witch doctors could heal – that's what we believed. I just followed along."

## "Now we know how to pray and share what we learned from the Bible."

He tried reading his mother's Bible, but it wasn't in his native language so he struggled with the meaning. "I didn't really understand what I was reading," he says. "There was no one there to teach me about Scripture and what it meant."

## OUT OF THE OLD LIFE

Like many others, Romi knew about Jesus, but he didn't know Jesus. "We've known the name 'Jesus' forever," he says, "but we never thought of Him as our Saviour."

Then, one day, a Chinese evangelist arrived in the village and truly explained the gospel to Romi. And everything changed. "I was 34 years old when I truly became a Christian," Romi says. "That's when I truly met the Lord Jesus Christ."

For the first time, Romi understood the reality of following Jesus. "That experience completely changed my life – stepping out of the old life and into the new one."

But Romi still didn't have a Bible in his first language. It's something almost all of us can take for granted – but many of the persecuted church don't have access to God's Word in a language they know well.

Thankfully, that's where you stepped in.

Because of the support and prayers of people like you, an Open Doors partner was able to join the community – bringing with him Bibles and study materials in Romi's mother tongue. "The pastor [Open Doors partner] also taught us from the Bible and disciplined us," Romi says. "Now we know how to pray and share what we learned."

## REAL FAITH, REAL CONSEQUENCES

Romi had learned the reality of a relationship with Jesus, but a real faith has real consequences.

"I have neighbours and friends who have different views than I do," Romi says. "They don't care about us or want to hang out with us anymore."

For Romi and believers like him, rejecting Christianity would make life easier. It would improve their standing in the community, give them more access to government benefits and guarantee better futures for their children.

"I worry that in the future young people will change their religion from Christianity to another religion," he

says. "That happens often, even though we are active Christians. If a Christian woman, for example, wants to marry a Malay man, she has no choice but to convert to his religion. That's my worry for the future."

## "We keep holding on to Jesus."

That's why, with your help, Open Doors continues to support believers with discipleship materials and training programmes to help them stand strong.

"We've learned so much from the discipleship programmes," says Romi. "Many believers didn't know how to share or discuss the Scriptures with each other, but they now share what they read with each other and share testimonies."

## KEEP HOLDING ON

Faith in Jesus can be fragile in this part of the world. Without access to Bibles and

discipleship programmes, many believers will give up their faith in Christ. That's why Open Doors partners work to ensure each persecuted Christian has access to God's Word, along with the tools to understand it.

Thanks to your support, Open Doors partners can be there for Christians in Malaysia when the times are tough and when the rubber hits the road.

"I hope that believers will continue to believe in Jesus Christ," Romi says. "No matter the resistance we might face as Christians, we keep holding on to Jesus."

## PLEASE PRAY:

- Give thanks for the work of Open Doors partners providing Bibles and training materials for persecuted Christians.
- Pray that Christians in Malaysia like Romi will be strengthened and empowered to stand strong.

BELOW Discipleship programmes from Open Doors partners are helping faith grow in Romi's community





# The world is talking about Arise Africa – thank you!



“Nobody is talking about it.” This is what Pastor Barnabas from Nigeria (PICTURED ABOVE) said in his interview last year about the displacement crisis in sub-Saharan Africa – more than 16.2 million Christians have fled their homes due to violence and conflict. But now, thanks to your prayers and actions, people across the world are starting to talk about it and take a stand with our persecuted brothers and sisters.

## Gaining momentum...

### AROUND THE WORLD

Launched last year, Open Doors’ *Arise Africa* campaign is a global response to the call from the African church to help them stop the violence and start the healing. Since then, the *Arise Africa* petition – which calls

for protection, justice and restoration for believers – has already amassed over 200,000 signatures from



**Petition: over 200,000 signatures from 193 countries**

193 countries, with Open Doors supporters in the UK and Ireland contributing over 36,000 so far. Thank you! Globally, huge numbers of supporters have been faithfully praying for our persecuted brothers and sisters, and have raised over £4 million!

### IN THE MEDIA

Open Doors Brazil have highlighted the displacement crisis across sub-Saharan Africa in the media, with around 100 mentions across external news outlets and radio broadcasts.

And Open Doors Sweden reached out to Kanal 10, Sweden’s largest Christian TV channel, who dedicated three hours of airtime to *Arise Africa* material.

LEFT More than 16,000 churches in Brazil and Latin America prayed for believers across sub-Saharan Africa



### AT CHURCH EVENTS

An evangelical church in the Netherlands hosted two services in February to pray for believers in sub-Saharan Africa, which drew 2,000 people and raised over £40,000 to support Open Doors’ work. In Spain, on the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church, around 800 churches used *Arise Africa* to focus their prayers. And Open Doors Italy hosted a photo gallery exhibit in Rome, featuring images from the Open Doors trauma centre in Nigeria.



**2 million people are praying**

Here in the UK and Ireland, Open Doors have teamed up with various Christian leaders

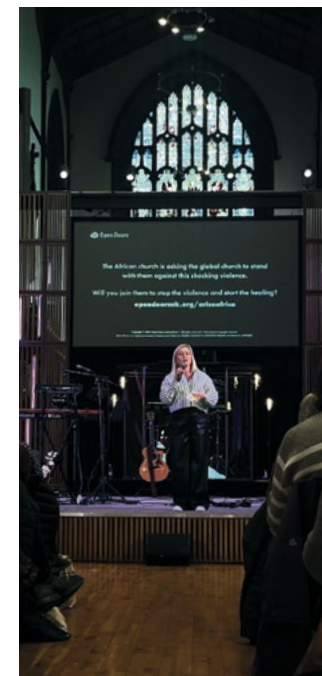
ABOVE RIGHT Lou Fellingham asked people to sign the petition at the Made For You conference

at events in March to share the story of Pastor Barnabas, with amazing results.



**£4 million raised globally**

In Edinburgh, at the women’s Made For You conference hosted by worship leader Lou Fellingham, 332 people signed the *Arise Africa* petition. And over in Aberdeen, at the Glorious conference, we collected 148 signatures. “Being able to join together to remind the ladies that we belong to a bigger family, and some of that family are in great need at this time, has been so informative and moving,” Lou shared. “To be able to sign the *Arise Africa* petition has been powerful.”



## HELP STOP THE VIOLENCE AND START THE HEALING BY SHARING THE PETITION

Thank you for all the different ways you have engaged with *Arise Africa* so far – all your prayers, gifts and actions are already making a huge difference for displaced believers. Can you help us gather as many signatures as possible before we present the petition to the African Union, United Nations, EU and local governments around the world, next year? If you haven’t already, you can sign online, or download a petition sheet to share with your church at [opendoorsuk.org/ariseafrica](https://opendoorsuk.org/ariseafrica)

### “THE CHURCH MADE US FEEL LIKE FAMILY”

All of these actions are already making a huge difference for displaced and traumatised believers – like Farouk\* in Cameroon. A mother of eight, and grandmother of 20, Farouk fled her village after a series of relentless attacks by Islamist extremist militants who want to impose Sharia – Islamic law – in her region.

Farouk arrived in a new area, where she was welcomed and cared for by Pastor Youssef’s\* church, thanks to your prayers and gifts. “The church made us feel like we were family,” says Farouk.

“Thank you for all the food that you have given me. It will help us a lot. Thank you so much.”

Farouk has also received much needed spiritual care. “When I arrived here, I was sick, tired and discouraged. But now I feel better. There are people here with whom I can share my troubles and difficulties. Slowly, I learn to cope with all the misery that has happened to me.”

\*Names changed for security reasons



# SCATTERED CHURCH

A prayer  
and worship  
session for  
your church

In *Scattered Church*, a new *Arise Africa* church resource, you'll find challenging and inspiring stories from persecuted Christians in sub-Saharan Africa. The downloadable pack will help you and your church respond creatively – sharing stories, singing worship and praying together.

One of the stories you'll find in *Scattered Church* is Rebecca's. She couldn't sing or dance – at least, not anymore, having witnessed atrocities that nobody should ever have to experience.

Her village in northern Nigeria, like many others, was attacked by a group of Fulani militants. She saw the



rebels murder her husband, along with many others in the village. A few months later, the militants returned; this time, they murdered her son.

Rebecca attended the trauma centre run by Open Doors partners. For days, Rebecca sat there expressionless, frozen in sorrow. "The breakthrough came during an art therapy class," says Tirham\*, a counsellor. "We told them to draw a picture that represented their struggles. Rebecca drew a picture of a coffin and a crying face. It was unbelievably sad."

The women were invited to place their paintings at the foot of a cross that had been erected. "The moment I laid my picture at the cross, a lightness of heart came over me – I rediscovered my peace," says Rebecca.

Slowly, Rebecca returned to life. Her voice, only a whisper to begin with, started to sing the worship songs as she sat. And then something else happened: her foot

started tapping along to the music. Finally, the following morning, Rebecca stood up – and she started dancing.

Stand alongside Rebecca, and countless other Christians like her, by hosting your own *Scattered Church* session.

## SCATTERED CHURCH

- Fully downloadable church resource
- Videos from Africa
- Song suggestions, creative prayer ideas and other activities
- Ideal for church services or house groups.



# CHURCH ON THE RUN

Collective  
fundraising  
activity

If you've read previous Open Doors magazines, you'll know that 16.2 million Christians are on the run from violence and conflict in sub-Saharan Africa. But are your family, friends, colleagues and even your church aware of this crisis?

Fundraising is a wonderful way to spread the word about causes close to our hearts. You can do just that with *Church on the Run*, an *Arise Africa* resource that aims to get churches and groups on the move – be it walking, running, cycling, swimming, skating or whatever suits you – to raise funds and awareness for our displaced brothers and sisters in Africa.

**"I felt connected to my wider church family as we were doing something that would help make a difference for them."**

LORNA, OPEN DOORS FUNDRAISER

How you go about doing that is entirely up to you, but you might like to think about distances and fundraising targets that reinforce the

*Arise Africa* campaign. For example, everyone in your group could walk or run 16.2km together, or you could work towards a fundraising target of £1,620. The choice is yours! Every £500 raised could meet the basic needs of a group of 50 believers in Africa for a month.



The money you raise will help people like Pastor Soré from Burkina Faso. He and his wife, Teresa, and their two children were driven from their homes by militant violence, and today they live in a makeshift shelter with 15 other Christians who they've taken under their care.

"The ministry helped me with seeds and fertilisers," says Pastor Soré (ABOVE). "It helped me to grow crops and feed my family members. They also helped us with food, including rice and oil. We wholeheartedly praise God for such blessings and thank the ministry."

He adds: "I do believe that we are displaced, but Jesus is not and will never be displaced from our lives. He is always with us. This truth strengthens my faith and helps me in this difficult time."

Think what a difference you can make – and you get to do it whilst having fun with your friends!

## CHURCH ON THE RUN

- All the info you need to start fundraising
- Inspirational stories, innovative ideas and helpful tips
- Ideal for a small group to fundraise together.

## DOWNLOAD TODAY

Help stop the violence and start the healing for persecuted Christians in sub-Saharan Africa. Head to [opendoorsuk.org/ariseafrica](https://opendoorsuk.org/ariseafrica) to find out more, download your free resources and get started!





## EYEWITNESS

# Long and Ha

## FROM VIETNAM

The village elder and the police demanded that Long and Ha leave the community. When they refused, the mob tore down their home in a matter of moments. Long, Ha and their young son had no choice but to flee in the dead of night, leaving their belongings behind. To make matters even more fraught, Ha was eight months' pregnant.

The family are far from alone in the ordeal they faced. Open Doors researchers have found evidence in the past year of Christians being forced to leave their homes in 78% of the countries on the World Watch List. In some countries, like Myanmar and Nigeria, the number of affected believers is enormous. In Vietnam, this form of persecution is relatively rare – but every forced displacement is, of course, devastating to the Christians facing this cruelty.

### CARING CHURCH

Pastor Tan and his church are rallying to support



TOP LEFT Their temporary house using what was left of their old home ABOVE Long and Ha's destroyed home

systems holds that everything – from stones to plants, forests to weather systems – have spirits that, in some cases, make them idols of worship. Animists believe that if anyone in the community abandons the village traditions, the village elder won't be able to summon these spirits to their village – the spirits that are supposed to bring luck, health and wealth.

### HELPLESS AND HOMELESS

This is why Long and Ha faced hostility from their community. Despite growing pressure, they continued to embrace Christianity as they were discipled by Pastor Tan. But then came the night when the village elder – accompanied by the village chief, police officers and a baying crowd – disrupted not only the couple's sleep, but their whole lives.

It was the middle of the night when Long\* and his wife, Ha\*, woke to shouts from their village elder. "Go! Leave the village right now or we will destroy your house!"

Only months earlier, the couple from the H're tribal group lived undisturbed in their village in central Vietnam. That all changed when Pastor Tan\* reached their home to share the gospel. They became Christians, began attending gatherings with believers from other villages and, in an enormously courageous move, stopped participating in their village's religious traditions.

The H're people, who are mostly subsistence farmers, follow animism. The belief

## Vietnam

### Did you know?

Vietnam dropped nine places in the World Watch List, largely due to a drop in incidents of violence. However, as Long and Ha's story shows, many Christians remain vulnerable to violent attacks.

Long, Ha and their family, helping them find temporary refuge. Unable to provide new construction materials, church members bravely returned to the family's destroyed house to salvage anything they could find to build the family a temporary shelter. Open Doors local partners are also providing food and clothing.

Despite fleeing their village, opposition remains in a different form, with the authorities now blocking them from officially being part of another village. This is making it difficult to look for jobs, receive social services support and enrol their son in school.

But with the constant care and encouragement of Pastor Tan and their church, and Open Doors supporters like you, Long and Ha are persevering in their faith. They know they aren't alone but have a worldwide family who are standing with them.

\*Names changed for security reasons

## Word

"Jesus replied, 'Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.'" (John 14:23)

## Wait

Spend a few moments soaking in Jesus's words and how much it must especially mean to believers like Long and Ha. They've been displaced from their home, but Jesus will never be displaced from their hearts.

## Witness

Knowing that God has made a home with us through the Holy Spirit is quite a thought – one that should make us confident in His power to work in and through us. How can you let this impact your witness in the days and weeks ahead?

## Pray

**"Please pray that Long's family will continue to look unto Jesus. May they continue to be encouraged through the community God has provided them." – OPEN DOORS LOCAL PARTNER**

## Get informed and inspired

Have you heard about Open Doors' wide-ranging set of World Watch List resources to help you go deeper with your persecuted family? This includes...

- Top 50 booklet
- Children's Prayer Passport
- Display map
- Quiz night fundraising pack

Head to [opendoorsuk.org/wwl](https://opendoorsuk.org/wwl) to discover more!







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# THERE'S NO PLACE ~~LIKE HOME~~ THAT'S SAFE

Pastor Yang\* has to keep moving his family from bullets and bombs. Civil war in Myanmar is intensifying the persecution Christians already face, and believers like Pastor Yang are vulnerable from all sides.

"I feel helpless that I cannot make my own family feel safe," says Pastor Yang. Will you help their faith survive?

**Every £36 could give a month's urgent relief aid to three displaced believers.**

Visit [opendoorsuk.org](https://opendoorsuk.org) or phone **01993 460015** to make your gift today. Thank you.



Scan here to  
give your gift.

LEFT TO RIGHT Pastor Yang has to constantly flee war and persecution. Christians flee a church that is targeted by persecutors.

\*Name changed

**DISPLACED BELIEVERS**

 **OpenDoors**