

OpenDoors

MAGAZINE | January/February 2026



Cho's impossible story

Taking the gospel
to North Koreans

THERE IS STILL TIME TO INVITE YOUR MP



WORLD WATCH LIST PARLIAMENTARY LAUNCH | 14 JANUARY

There's still time to invite your MP to the World Watch List 2026 parliamentary launch on 14 January. Make sure your MP hears compelling first-hand testimonies from the persecuted church and policy recommendations to help them respond.

Invite your MP at opendoorsuk.org/advocacy



WORLD WATCH LIST 2026 ONLINE

WEDNESDAY 21 JANUARY | 7.30-8.30PM



We are excited to invite you to a prayer event to celebrate the launch of World Watch List 2026!

Join us a week after the World Watch List parliamentary launch to hear highlights, listen to an international speaker and pray for increasing awareness about the experience of persecuted Christians globally. Book your place at opendoorsuk.org

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 one for FREE using our partner *Farewill*.

To find out more, go to 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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COVER: Cho shares the gospel with North Korean refugees in China (re-enactment image)

*Names changed for security reasons

LETTER FROM HENRIETTA

God's impossible plan

"By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it." 1 CORINTHIANS 3:10

Every day, I hear about impossibilities in the persecuted church. In human terms, the church shouldn't be growing in places where persecution is most extreme. In human terms, Christians who've suffered assault wouldn't choose to forgive their persecutors. In human terms, the gospel would never reach the most closed-off places on earth. But, every day, God does impossible things.

When I read Cho's* story of impossible faith (p8), I am reminded of 1 Corinthians 3:10-15. Cho has completed his ministry and gone to glory, but what he has built – faithfully taking the gospel to North Korean refugees – others will build upon. And Cho built on the truth of the gospel: "For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 3:11)

So we can pray big prayers. Let's keep praying the light into dark places. Let's pray for more of God's presence in the midst of extreme persecution – and for His church to keep growing, even where it looks impossible.

And as a new year begins, please also pray for fresh inspiration from the Holy Spirit for Open Doors. Please ask that we continue being guided to share the stories and requests of the persecuted church in a way that encourages people to reflect and respond – whether parliamentarians, Open Doors supporters, or those who've never heard of Christian persecution before. You can play your part by sending your attached World Watch List launch invitation to your MP, so they hear testimonies and policy recommendations about Christian persecution on 14 January – thank you so much.

I pray that, together, we can be part of God's impossible plan.

Every blessing for the New Year,



Henrietta

Henrietta Blyth
CEO, Open Doors UK&I



WORLD WATCH LIST BULLETIN

MALAYSIA

Truth and justice for the Kohs

Praise God that truth and justice have prevailed in Malaysia, with Susanna Koh winning her lawsuit against the state over the disappearance of her husband, Pastor Raymond Koh.

According to the judge, one or more police officials were involved in the abduction, acting 'oppressively and arbitrarily'. The government have been ordered to pay the family RM10,000 (£1,800) per day from the day Raymond was taken until he's found (current total more than £5.7 million). The police have been ordered to reopen the investigation into his disappearance.

"We're overjoyed and thankful to God that we have an honest and fair judgement," says Susanna, who's immensely grateful for your support and prayers.

PRAY That the reopened investigation will bring further resolution and justice.



Susanna Koh reads a statement outside the trial



INDIA Open doors for Kaveri

Thanks to you, Kaveri* (PICTURED) in India has a thriving clothing business that supports her family and enables her to share with others her greatest passion: Jesus.

Kaveri's faith journey began when she met Pastor Varum*. At the time, she was reeling from the absence of her husband, an alcoholic who left home and never returned. "As he talked about forgiveness, peace and hope, something stirred. I felt a peace I had never experienced," she recalls.

"What I am today is because of your prayers."

Kaveri started a prayer group, with 20 women gathering twice a week, but she was accused of forced conversions by Hindu extremists and arrested. After an awful ordeal, Pastor Varum got her

released. "Even in our darkest moments, God sends someone to guide us," say Kaveri.

Due to persistent hostility, Kaveri had to close her clothing business and relocate with her two children. Open Doors partners have since helped her open a new shop, given her persecution survival training and gifted her sewing machines to run a sewing centre for women.

"I'm truly grateful to the Open Doors partners who have supported me," she says. "What I am today is because of your prayers and support. Attending the training programme gave me the strength to move forward.

"God continues to open doors for me to witness about Him, and nothing will stop me – because He is in control."

PRAY That God will open a door for her to start a new prayer group.

MOZAMBIQUE

20 killed in attacks

At least 20 believers were killed after Islamist militants launched attacks on a Christian-majority village in Mozambique. Two churches and 1,300 homes were destroyed, and some 2,000 believers displaced.

The onslaught in Napala village – with al-Shabaab believed to be responsible – is the latest tragedy to affect Christians in the volatile Cabo Delgado province.

"The church in Mozambique is enduring deep trauma," a source told Open Doors. "Many believers and leaders live with fear, intimidation and emotional exhaustion. Although there remains a genuine desire to serve Christ, fear continues to weaken the church's public witness in many areas. But God is working in these hotspot areas."

PRAY For protection, comfort and strength for the church in Mozambique.



Devastation caused by the attacks in Mozambique

UK

Afternoon tea for Arise Africa

A supporter combined her passions for hospitality and the persecuted church by hosting an afternoon tea that raised £450 for *Arise Africa*!



Jan (LEFT) said she was 'thrilled' with the money raised

Jan Clough in Whittington, Lancashire, has supported Open Doors for 30 years. She leads a monthly prayer meeting for persecuted Christians at Carnforth Free Methodist. "As I prepare for that, it becomes more real to me the heartache and injustice of it all," she says. "I'm particularly drawn to the trauma programmes, which are vital in healing and forgiveness."

"My husband, Bob, made his delicious scones, served with cream, jam and fresh strawberries," says Jan. "People were incredibly generous and I was able to share the work of Open Doors."

Has Jan nudged you to use your hobbies and passions to fundraise? Head to opendoorsuk.org/news or follow us @opendoorsuk

IRAN

Convert injured in prison

An imprisoned convert in Iran has been denied proper medical care after falling from her bunkbed, fracturing her spine.

Aida Najaflou – whom many of you have been praying for – was taken to hospital, only to be returned to prison the same day, without the urgent surgery required. Aida already suffers from rheumatoid arthritis and her requests for a lower bed were ignored.

Aida is awaiting a court verdict on multiple charges, including 'collusion' for praying, performing baptisms and sharing Christian content online.

PRAY For medical care, healing and acquittal for Aida.

MORE STORIES

- 10 things to know about violence in Nigeria
- Threatening messages left at churches in Syria
- Resilient faith in Sri Lanka

For more news and updates, head to opendoorsuk.org/news or follow us @opendoorsuk





NIGERIA EMERGENCY APPEAL: THE LIFE-CHANGING DIFFERENCE YOU'RE MAKING

Thank you for enabling the distribution of life-saving relief parcels to Christians displaced by last year's devastating attack in Yelewata, Benue State. Virtue*, a local partner who helped distribute the aid, writes about what she saw, the immense impact of your support and how you can keep praying.



Virtue: When we arrived, the situation was still not good, because people are hungry. When

you ask them what's the biggest problem, most say it's hunger.

The people are really traumatised and need psychological support. They

couldn't smile or sing. They were excited about the food, but you couldn't see it on their faces, because of the trauma they're carrying.

SEPARATED AND DISCOURAGED

In camp, we saw the separation of families. A husband and wife are staying in different places, and children are separated from their parents. Because of the way the camp is organised, women must stay in the same room with small children, but teenagers are in a separate place. It could lead to social, emotional and educational problems. They have a makeshift shelter for children to go to school. But how effective is it? That's the question I keep asking.

A lot of people are really discouraged about God. They'll tell you that they still

trust God, but they have this inner feeling that God isn't there. What's happened to them has really made them lose faith. "Can God really help me? Then why didn't He stop this?" Let's pray that God will strengthen their faith, that they will see Him even through their pains.

"I'm so happy with what you are doing."

"THAT'S WHEN SHE LAUGHED"

There's a tuktuk driver who helps people in the camp. He has an aunt who is displaced. He explained how corruption stops the displaced from receiving food – he's seen it with his own eyes.

"I'm so happy with what you are doing," he told me. "This is the best way of sharing

food." I asked one woman if they are given food in the displacement camp. "Yes, but it's small," she said.

They are really grateful for the way we did the food parcels. They are going directly to families, although some decide to share with others, which we encouraged.

"Let's pray that God will strengthen their faith."

They were excited, they were happy. One of the ladies expressed shock: "Is this food really mine? Everything!" It's been a while since they've seen food like this. They own it; it is theirs. "I'm so excited," she said. That's when she laughed. Before,

she couldn't even say anything. She lost seven people in her household.

YEARNING FOR HOME

Please pray that God will touch their hearts and give them comfort. Most have lost loved ones; many of them have lost livelihoods.

"We want to go back home," they say, after being asked how you can pray. "We're not used to living like this. We're used to working for what we eat. We're used to living in our own homes, no matter how bad the home is; it's still our home. We want to go back."

Let's pray for peace in Benue State, and in Nigeria, that people can go back to their homes and live in peace. Let's pray that God will bring help through the global church.

SHARE THE PETITION

The impact of your incredible response to our emergency appeal is already being felt deeply. Thank you. But the need remains urgent, in Yelewata and throughout Nigeria and sub-Saharan Africa. Please keep praying.



Another way you can help is by encouraging others to add their voice to the Arise Africa petition, which calls for protection, justice and restoration for those affected by violence and conflict in the region. Sign and share today at opendoorsuk.org/ariseafrica

A PRAYER FOR THE DISPLACED:

Dear Lord, You are 'the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles' (2 Corinthians 1:3). We pray that those displaced in Yelewata will know this today through the provision of food and every practical need, the support of others, the power of Your Word, and the awareness of Your presence. Strengthen and protect them, bring peace to Benue State and Nigeria, and make a way for them to return home. Amen.



Is it possible for North Koreans to hear the gospel?



Re-enactment image of Cho ministering to North Korean refugees in China

When Cho* first met Eun-Yeong*, she was hiding from him. She'd made one of the most dangerous journeys in the world – escaping from North Korea – and knew there could be spies looking to find people like her. If discovered, she'd be sent back to face interrogation, imprisonment and even death.

She was right about one thing. Cho was looking for people like her. But not for the reasons she feared.

"LEAVE US ALONE!"

"God be with you!" said Cho when he approached Eun-Yeong, putting his hands up to show he was unarmed. As he drew closer, he saw that she wasn't alone. Another figure was hidden behind a tree. Cho could tell by their dirty clothes and their exhausted, terrified faces that they had only recently escaped across the border.

"Get away from us!" shouted Eun-Yeong. "Leave us alone!"

Cho knew he had to keep her quiet: if they were heard by a passing guard or patrol, they'd all be punished severely. "I'm not here to hurt you," he whispered urgently. "I want to help you. Please, don't shout – we don't know who is listening."

Cho was here with a purpose. An impossible mission. Because he knew that, in human terms, it is impossible for North Koreans to

hear the gospel and choose to follow Jesus. He also knew that he followed the God of the impossible.

CHO'S PURPOSE

We're able to share Cho's story because his ministry is over. A few months ago, he sadly died from a long-term illness and he is now in glory. That's why it's safe to tell you about his extraordinary calling and his work as a secret Open Doors fieldworker.

"My purpose in life is to save souls," he

BELOW Cho made dangerous journeys into the forest to bring the gospel to North Korean escapees (re-enactment image)

said simply. Every week, Cho – known by many as Evangelist Cho – hiked through the mountain forests to find the North Koreans who had risked everything to flee their country.

Christians in North Korea face extreme persecution. Even owning a Bible is enough to get you and your whole family thrown into prison for life.

But Christians certainly aren't the only ones who suffer under the country's harsh dictatorship and dire

shortages: every year, many North Koreans flee across the border to try to find food and work. And Cho tried to meet as many of them as he could.

"Every day, every week, every month and every year I return to the forest to help whoever I find," he said. "Because, with God, anything is possible."

VITAL FOOD

When North Koreans cross the border, they are usually desperate for food – so that's what Cho brings, to show he is a friend.

"Look here," he said to Eun-Yeong and the man with her, Cheol-Ho*, putting down his bag and backing away a few paces. "I have some food and water. It's yours." The desperate couple ate and drank, and began to trust Cho.

"There's also a tarp and some blankets in the bag,"

he added. "I'll come back again to bring you more food. It will be much safer for all of us if I come after dark, so no one is watching. Stay in the shelter until then and make sure you are not found."

The next day, Cho returned. This time he'd brought something even more precious than food.

A PRECIOUS BOOK

Using a headlamp to guide his path, Cho found the couple near where he'd first met them. He'd brought more food and water, and some blankets. As they ate, Cho could see something was troubling Eun-Yeong.

"Sir... can I ask you a question?" she asked. "You carry food around the mountains and you say you do this each week. There must be some reason. So – why do you do this?"

That was the opening Cho had waited for. "It's because of a man named Jesus," he said. "He's the son of God, and He loves you very much. In fact, I brought you a book that's all about Him." Cho pulled out a Bible, handing it to Eun-Yeong.

Immediately, the young woman shook her head. "I don't believe in God," she said. "We're grateful for the food, but we don't want anything to do with



Cho gave Bibles to North Koreans who had usually never seen one before (re-enactment image)

superstition." She pushed the Bible back toward Cho.

"This book is yours to keep," he said. "Read it or don't read it – it's up to you."

He was used to this response. North Koreans often haven't heard of Jesus, but have been warned against Christians. The authorities say that Christians are spies who want to kidnap and abuse them. It can take time to break down this mistrust.

"I give a Bible to every North Korean I meet," Cho would say. "Sometimes they read it. Sometimes they refuse. My job is to tell people about Jesus. It's up to God to touch their hearts. And anything is possible with God."

"SOMETHING I NEED TO TELL YOU"

As often as he could, Cho returned to see Cheol-Ho and Eun-Yeong. One night, Eun-Yeong rushed towards him as he approached. "I have something I need to

tell you," she said. "I've been reading the book you gave us. Then yesterday, I had a dream. There was a person in

my dream. He called me by my name. I think it was this 'Jesus' this book talks about, and I want to find out more about Him."

Cho was delighted! He began explaining the gospel: how Jesus lived, died and rose again to save humankind. They asked question after question, eager to learn more.

When he finally had to leave, he told them: "You know, if you really want to know all about Jesus, I can take you somewhere where there are more people from North Korea; people asking many of the same questions you have. Think about it and let me know tomorrow."

"Anything is possible with God."

SAFE HOUSE

The next day, the couple were waiting when Cho arrived. They'd packed up their few belongings and were ready to join him at the safe house. "I was praying you would say that," he said.

The safe house where Cho took the couple is supported by Open Doors. At the house, North Koreans are cared for and given food and basic necessities. They're also invited to learn more about Jesus from Open Doors local fieldworkers, like Cho.

It was at the safe house that Eun-Yeong and Cheol-Ho dedicated their lives to Jesus! In human terms, it seems impossible

that North Koreans would ever make this decision – but God used Open Doors fieldworkers to ensure it could happen.

But now that they were Christians, being caught and sent back to North Korea was even more dangerous. They might be executed. Even having met a Christian would mean their punishment would be more severe, let alone having chosen to defy the North Korean authorities and decide to follow Jesus themselves.

But Eun-Yeong and Cheol-Ho didn't have to be caught by spies. They chose to go back themselves.

What greater example of God's impossible plan





ABOVE Every year, many North Koreans risk everything to cross the border in search of food and work; BELOW Cho died of an illness a few months ago, but his legacy continues (re-enactment image)

could there be? Despite the dangers, the courageous couple were determined to share their newfound faith with North Koreans desperately in need of the gospel.

A few months later, Cho received a coded message sent from North Korea. It simply said: "Our family has grown to five." Three more North Koreans had heard the gospel and chosen to follow Jesus!

Open Doors estimates there are more than 400,000 secret Christians in North Korea, risking their lives to follow Jesus. Thousands of believers are praying in whispers, asking God to do the impossible once again.

GOD'S IMPOSSIBLE PLAN

Your prayers and gift today can equip Open Doors fieldworkers who bring crucial relief aid, discipleship and the gospel to brothers and sisters from countries like North Korea, Somalia,

Iran, Nigeria and others where Christians face the most extreme persecution.

Cho was part of God's impossible plan. Today, you can be too.

PLEASE PRAY

- Give thanks for Cho's ministry, and the ways in which God has used Cho to grow His church – and ask Him to equip other Open Doors fieldworkers to continue the ministry
- For the gospel to continue to spread inside North Korea and other places where faith seems impossible
- For Eun-Yeong, Cheol-Ho and other members of the underground church to know God's love, strength and protection.

PLEASE GIVE

You can give to support believers from countries where Christians face the most extreme persecution at opendoorsuk.org.

Watch Cho's story at opendoorsuk.org



Interview: Open Doors secret fieldworker

Lydia Lee* shares what she sees in the North Korean church, and her experience of knowing Cho:

Q: WHAT HAS CHANGED IN NORTH KOREA THIS YEAR?

A: The overall situation remains largely unchanged. Hunger and malnutrition continue to plague the population, leading to many deaths throughout the year. North Koreans endure a life shaped by scarcity, surveillance and fear.

Christians cannot gather openly, worship freely or read the Bible. They are often betrayed, because reporting a Christian to the authorities can result in rewards like food, favour or social advancement. Despite these dangers, the underground church in North Korea is alive.

Q: WHAT HAPPENS WHEN NORTH KOREANS ESCAPE?

A: They may be disillusioned with the state, but the main reason they attempt to leave their country is simply survival for them and their families. Escaping has become far more dangerous. There is a high risk of capture and deportation back to North Korea, and the regime views defection as a serious crime. Returnees face severe punishments,

such as imprisonment, torture or even execution. Christians face the harshest fates.

Q: HOW DO OPEN DOORS FIELDWORKERS LIKE CHO HELP?

A: There are safe houses and shelters near the border to reach and support them with basic necessities, such as food, medicine and clothes. We offer thorough pastoral care, Bible training. It is a very special and precious moment for our workers to share Jesus.

In a world where no one could

be trusted, Cho became the one person defectors knew they could rely on. He didn't need to perform miracles. His life was the miracle. To the forgotten, the hidden and the afraid, Cho became the hands and feet of Jesus. Through the quiet power of his life – through his actions, character and love – he deeply moved people and brought about real transformation in their lives.

Q: HOW CAN WE PRAY FOR NORTH KOREAN CHRISTIANS?

A: Ask the Lord to strengthen their hearts with unshakable peace, and to let their hidden faith burn like fire: alive, growing and unquenchable. Ask that His Word would continue to spread in miraculous ways, and that many in North Korea would come to witness His love and power.

"It is a very precious moment for our workers to share Jesus."

Let's also lift up those who help North Korean believers and refugees outside of the country.

Pray that God would fill them with wisdom, strength, comfort and the unmistakable presence of the Holy Spirit. Pray specifically for the safe houses – that they would be sacred spaces of healing and refuge.

Your prayers matter. God hears every word. The underground church in North Korea is deeply grateful for your support and faithful intercession.

THERE'S STILL TIME TO INVITE YOUR MP!



Each January, the launch of the World Watch List draws MPs from across parliament to hear the stories of Christians who continue to live out their faith in places where it costs the most. It's a rare moment of stillness that cuts through the noise of Westminster and turns the attention of those in power to the shared values of faith, freedom and human dignity.

In 2025, over a hundred MPs filled the room. Their presence wasn't arranged by officials or lobbyists: it was prompted by the voices of supporters, like you, who took a few minutes to write, pray and speak up.

IMPACT IN PARLIAMENT

Ruth Jones MP, who will host the 2026 launch, says, "I can honestly say that hearing directly from constituents has shaped the way I've voted, the questions I've asked and the issues I've raised in Parliament."

Last year, Carla Lockhart MP said, "The World Watch List gives us all a focus; it lets us see which countries we really need to pray for – and raise in parliament. I want to thank all

my constituents who reached out to invite me to this event."

"YOUR VOICE COULD OPEN THE DOOR FOR MANY MORE TO BE HEARD."

– Fiona Fearon, Head of Advocacy and Public Affairs, Open Doors

And that impact lasts long after the event ends. When MPs get the opportunity to hear those stories, and meet believers who have lost homes, jobs, or even loved ones for their faith, it stays with them. They remember it in the months that follow. It shapes the questions they ask in Parliament and the issues they choose to speak up about. It's why ministers raise concerns about our

persecuted brothers and sisters in international meetings, why cross-party groups push for change, and why new commitments are made to protect freedom of religion or belief worldwide.

TAKE A BOLD STEP

There's still time to act. Write to your MP today, tell them why this issue matters to you, and invite them to the *World Watch List* 2026 on 14 January by using the tear-off on your magazine letter or visiting opendoorsuk.org/advocacy



JOIN WORLD WATCH LIST 2026 ONLINE

You're invited to a special online event on Wednesday 21 January to pray for the impact of the latest World Watch List.

One week after the release of World Watch List 2026, we're hosting a special online event, giving you the unique opportunity to gain insights into the latest trends and the parliamentary launch, listen to an international speaker, and pray with others.

Coming hot on the heels of the launch, this free event is particularly important in praying that momentum built up amongst MPs and representatives is maintained, leading to urgent, decisive and impactful steps on behalf of our persecuted family.

"I was amazed to see joy amidst such trauma."

ONLINE EVENT ATTENDEE

The event is also a wonderful way to go into the new year freshly

informed and inspired in your support for our persecuted family – whether that's regular praying, leading a prayer group, being a rep for your church, or whatever your invaluable contribution looks like. Could you even use it as an opportunity to introduce others to their persecuted family, perhaps by inviting your small group to attend?

"I found it very informative and extremely moving."

ONLINE EVENT ATTENDEE

PRAYERFUL PARTICIPATION

The event will follow a similar format to previous online events, which many of you have attended, and we pray you find the mixture of videos, updates, first-hand stories and specific prayer requests helpful in deepening your walk with your persecuted family.

"I love being part of a worldwide family, praying together and learning more about our brothers and sisters who are being persecuted," said a supporter after attending a recent Open Doors online prayer gathering. "I felt like a participant, not a spectator," added another.

As our persecuted church family often remind us, we are part of one unified, global body of Christ. "When someone prays for me, they're like my partners," shares Sang* in Vietnam. "I believe that the one who prays for me has the same vision as me."

REGISTER TODAY

If you'd like to participate in this special time together, let us know by booking your place at opendoorsuk.org. We'd love for you to join us!





WELCOME TO A WORLD OF IMPOSSIBLE FAITH

The enemies of Christianity have one aim: to make it impossible to be a Christian.

They pass laws and spread rumours; they close down churches and create an atmosphere of fear and hatred. They do everything in their power to starve the church of oxygen, to scorch the earth so badly that the seeds of faith simply cannot grow.

There's only problem with this approach. It never works.

They silence the sermons, but Christians still tell others about Jesus. They close the churches, but Christians still find places to meet. They ban the Bible, so Christians memorise Scripture instead. They threaten believers with violence, yet Christians refuse to renounce their faith. They abuse anti-conversion laws, create a climate of fear. They put pastors in prison and drive

Christians out of their homes and communities. They do all they can to make the faith impossible, and yet still Christians persevere.

Against the odds, in refugee camps and prison cells, in houses and apartments, faith finds a way. Christianity has a habit of growing anywhere. Tiny as a mustard seed, silent as yeast, it always seems to find a way. Because with man things might be impossible, but with God it's a different story entirely.

"Against the odds, faith finds a way."

THE WORLD WATCH LIST

Every year, Open Doors publishes the World Watch List – an extensive, authoritative guide to the countries where Christians face the greatest persecution. What makes the list special is that it draws directly from the

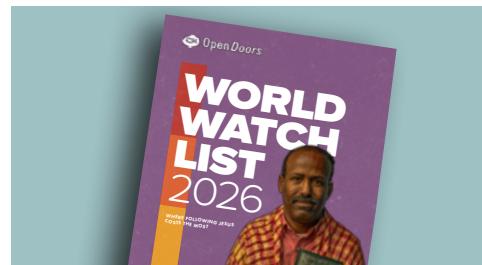
on-the-ground experience of persecuted Christians.

This year's World Watch List resources focus on our inspiring theme: impossible faith. With these free resources, supporters can encounter a world where, in spite of the opposition, faith finds a way. Of course, the persecution is real and often intense. Our persecuted church family are hard pressed on every side. Every day, they face unimaginable hardship and pay an unbelievable price. But they have not been defeated. And with your prayers and support, they can continue: present, growing, resilient, alive.

So join us this year. Step into a world of inspiring stories, incredible courage and, above all, impossible faith. Use these resources to support the persecuted church in powerful prayer. This year, you can be part of God's impossible plan.

YOUR FREE WORLD WATCH LIST 2026

Resources will be available to order from 14 January 2026, for delivery in February.



WORLD WATCH LIST TOP 50

The must-have prayer guide to the world of the persecuted church. Features in-depth information and prayer points for all Top 50 countries, as well as powerful testimonies and a *World Watch List* prayer map.

CHILDREN'S PRAYER PASSPORT AND MAP

Crammed with information and activities, this family-friendly resource is a great way to help children pray for the persecuted church. Perfect for families or for children at church.

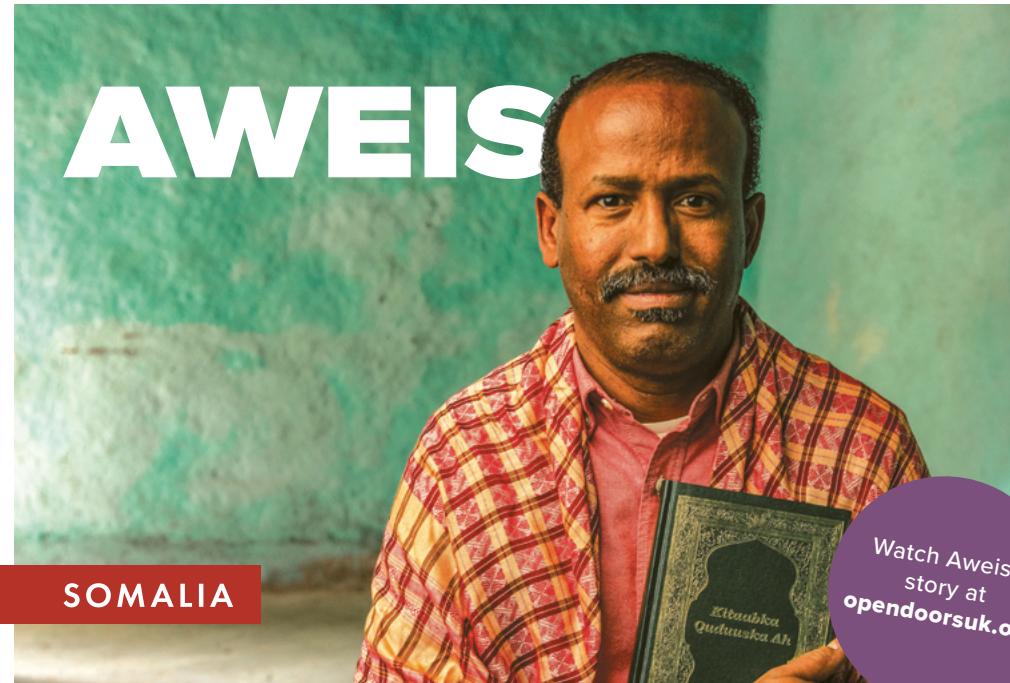
WORLD WATCH LIST YOUTH RESOURCE

What is persecution? Where is it happening? An interactive session outline for youth leaders, with games, videos, stories and Bible content.

WORLD WATCH LIST CHURCHES MAP

A large format display map to put up in your church. Encourage your church to pray for their persecuted church family.

Find out more at opendoorsuk.org/wwl



SOMALIA

Aweis's story is not one we should know about. In Somalia, the church is invisible – hounded by violence, extremism and the fear of discovery. But Aweis's defiant ministry testifies to God's ability to do the impossible in one of the most dangerous places to be a Christian.

Aweis comes from an Islamic background and his father, a Muslim cleric, sought to make him his successor. But when Aweis inadvertently came across a Christian radio station one evening, his life began to change.

For native people, being Somali is synonymous with being Muslim. When Aweis heard a Somali proclaim

Jesus Christ, it was both strange and wonderful. In the following days, he kept tuning in to find out more about Jesus and asked the station for a New Testament. This was while the postal system was still working in Somalia, and he received it by post, not even considering what his family might think or the danger it could cause.

“Every time I faced intensive persecution, I identified with Christ and I felt closer to him.”

However, when Aweis shared his findings with his father, he received his first threat.

“My father said, ‘I cannot stop you from reading your Bible,

but if you become a Christian, I will be the one to kill you.’”

From that time on, Aweis explored the Christian faith in secret.

REJECTED BY FAMILY

To become a Christian in Somalia is to turn one's back on one's entire clan. So, when Aweis became a Christian three years later, he was ejected from his tightly knit community and his life was transformed.

“My family refused to communicate with me, eat with me, spend time with me or include me in family dynamics and discussions. I was an outcast, someone who had defiled the family name,” he says.

But Aweis never regretted his choice, finding deeper communion with Jesus in his suffering: “Every time I faced intensive persecution, I identified with Christ, and I felt closer to him.”

FINDING FELLOWSHIP

For seven years, Aweis walked alone, clinging to Christ but increasingly overwhelmed by loneliness. His desperation drove him to talk to someone who he thought must be a Christian, despite the risk.

Through this step of faith, he found a fellow believer. Such a discovery in Somalia is effectively impossible, but for Aweis, God had made the impossible possible.

Together, they started looking for more believers. Little by little, their community grew, and they reached 14. “It was the happiest time I'd had, since I'd come to the Lord,” Aweis explains.

REMNANT BELIEVERS

However, it wasn't long before persecution began to catch up with them.

Members of the church began to receive visions of persecution. Yet, in one of these visions, a believer said that he heard a voice from a bright light say to him,

“Do not be afraid. You will not be eliminated; you will not be wiped out. Some of you will remain. You will become stronger.”

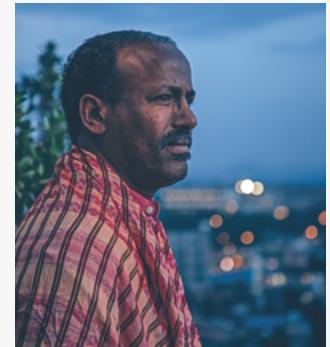
One by one, the Christians were hunted down and killed. In the end, only two were left: Aweis and another believer. The rest were martyred for their faith in Jesus.

GLORY IN SUFFERINGS

What he had experienced was so painful that Aweis decided to leave the country to recover. In the Lord's kindness, he received theological training to continue the work God had begun through him.

Today, Aweis diligently pursues his work in biblical translation and pastoral care for Somali believers in the Horn of Africa. He believes in the importance of discipleship and trauma care for his brothers and sisters, working for the day when the Somali church will be a bright presence amongst its communities.

Ultimately, the true impossibility for Aweis is stopping the work of the gospel. He testifies with boldness, “There is no place where Christ cannot be followed. It's impossible. The Holy Spirit can penetrate every wall.”



LISTEN

“Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.” (Romans 8:17)

LINGER

Amidst isolation and threats, Aweis clung to Jesus. How can you remind yourself that in suffering, you have communion with Jesus?

LIVE

Wherever Somali Christians are, following Jesus comes at a high cost. Where are you being called to be a bold witness for Him?

PRAY

- For Somali believers and their discipleship, that they may be equipped in the face of persecution
- For healing for those who have endured traumatic experiences, that they would trust the promise of glory in suffering with Christ.

Impossible faith?

It seems impossible that North Koreans could ever hear about Jesus. Yet, Open Doors fieldworkers like Cho* are meeting North Korean refugees, sharing the gospel, providing safe houses and food – and seeing the impossible happen. Will you support their ministry today?

BE PART OF GOD'S IMPOSSIBLE PLAN

Every £25 could provide safe housing, food and spiritual aid to someone who has fled extreme persecution.

Visit opendoorsuk.org to make your gift today or phone **01993 460015**. Thank you.

*Name changed for security reasons
Re-enactment image

WORLD WATCH LIST 2026



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