



# Small Group Inspirational Guide

January 2012

## ●●●● How beautiful are the feet of those who bring Good News

Let's read the following: **Philippi – Acts 16:16-40;**  
**Thessalonica – Acts 17:1-10; Berea – Acts 17:10-15; Corinth – Acts 18:5-17**

### **Situation** *(What was the situation facing the disciples and the Church?)*

- Paul and Silas are on Paul's second missionary journey.

### **Origin** *(What was the origin and nature of the persecution?)*

- **Philippi** - Paul casts out a spirit from a fortune-telling slave girl. The owners of the slave girl and the crowd attack Paul and Silas. The magistrates order them stripped, beaten and imprisoned. (16:16-24)
- **Thessalonica** - After Paul's preaching in the synagogue, jealous Jews create a mob riot. Paul's host Jason and other believers are dragged before the city officials. They made Jason and the others post bond and then released them. (17:1-9)
- **Corinth** - The Jews opposed Paul's preaching and became abusive. (18:5-6)

### **Reaction** *(How did the disciples and the Church react to the persecution?)*

- **Philippi** - Paul and Silas prayed and sang in the prison at midnight. (16:25)
- **Thessalonica** - The believers sent Paul and Silas to Berea. (17:10)
- **Corinth** - Paul left them and went to the Gentiles. Many believed. (18:6)

### **Results** *(What happened as a result of the persecution?)*

- **Philippi** - After the earthquake, the prison jailer asked how to be saved. He and his whole family received the Lord and were baptized. (16:30-34)
- **Thessalonica** - The Jews from Thessalonica went to Berea and stirred up the crowds against Paul. (17:13)
- **Berea** - Many in Berea received the message with great eagerness. (17:11)
- **Corinth** - "[M]any of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized." (18:6)

## Lessons and discussion points *(Application to our lives today.)*

- Not all audiences are equally receptive to the Gospel.
  - Do you think that we live in a country and a society that is receptive to the Gospel? Why? Discuss this in the group.
  - Share your testimony of how you came to Christ – pointing out how the Holy Spirit made you receptive to the Gospel.
- “Paul stayed for a year and a half, teaching them the Word of God.” (18:11)
  - How can your group cultivate a lifestyle of discipleship?
- Is there anyone among you with a need or facing a really tough situation? “About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God.” (16:25)
  - Sing songs of praise and pray for one another.

## ●●● Praise the Lord

**For 42 years, Muammar Gaddafi led a tight security system in Libya that monitored his people, whether they were Muslims or Christians. Foreign Christians were allowed to express their faith publicly, but converts from a Muslim Background maintained a low profile from fear of being expelled from their family or being forced to return to Islam.**

**For now Christians will continue in the same way as they were used to - they won't just shout from the rooftops that they are Christians...**

*John\* shares his testimony about a wonderful encounter he recently had in the huge, sandy desert of Libya:* “This morning I had an amazing experience, which I thought I would never experience here, but God is good and mighty. We were travelling by jeep from one location to another location. We were to meet up with a local driver and then he would escort us through the desert to our next location. As we waited for him, we saw we were near an oil field and the guys were all armed with AK-47 machine guns for fear of bandits always robbing them.

“When our contact driver Sammy\* arrived, I heard that he was listening to Christian worship

music! You can just imagine how encouraged I was; God is looking after us. When I asked Sammy what the songs were about, he replied, ‘Blessed are those who dwell in the house of the Lord’.

“May the people in Libya not only experience political freedom, but also personal and religious freedom. May they be freed from the grip of Islam. Please continue to pray for us, especially that God would protect us from harm,” John concluded.

\*Pseudonym

### Prayer Requests:

- Praise God that John\* could know God’s assurance and protection in such a comforting way.
- Pray for other secret believers to experience the same comfort and assurance in places of danger, as John experienced.
- Pray for the small number of Christians that gather in homes. Ask God to give them courage to continue meeting and that their meetings will be blessed.

## ●●● Ethiopia: Unlocking doors that were once shut to the Gospel

**Muzein used to be an esteemed witchdoctor in his village until he befriended some Christians and as a result decided to give his life to the Lord. Following his conversion and the difficulties Muzein encountered with his Muslim family, believers took him under their wing. They decided to send Muzein to a church in Addis Ababa for much needed discipleship training.**

The training equipped Muzein with the necessary skills to reach out to Muslims and to minister to new Believers from a Muslim Background. When they thought he was ready, the church leaders sent Muzein back to his home village. He did not hesitate; instead he was spiritually energized to return home.

In the meantime, the leaders from the church in Metu communicated to the Addis Ababa church their need for a mission worker with a Muslim Background. The church leaders recommended Muzein for the position with complete peace of mind.

When the elders met with Muzein, listened to his testimony and witnessed his zeal for the ministry, they knew God has answered their prayers. Within a short period of time, Muzein got into the saddle and took on his new responsibilities as mission worker. He does this with a “seize the moment” approach.

From day to day he is constantly on the look-out for opportunities. He is always offering a helping hand to fellow citizens, like taking goods to and from the market when he

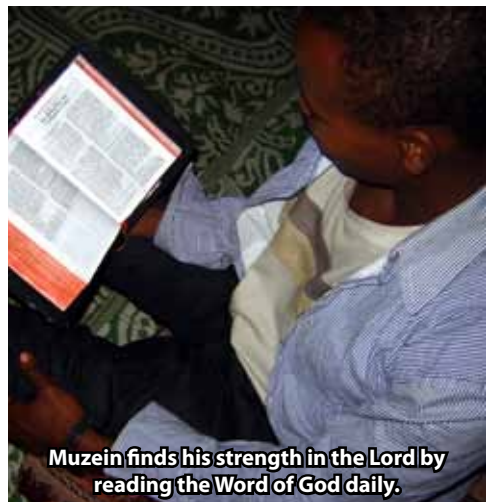
travels there. Muzein explains that generous gestures like these create affable openings to engage on a personal level with them. His servant attitude has already unlocked several doors that were once shut to the Gospel.

Muzein also experiences much resistance: He has been jailed without any charges, are despised by the majority of the villagers and his father does not want anything to do with him.

But Muzein remains resolute in his mission to love and serve the Lord!

### Prayer Requests:

- Pray for God’s sustaining blessings on Muzein’s ministry and for a patient heart when it comes to his family’s salvation – they are all unbelievers.
- Pray for new Christian converts to grow in the Word so that they will remain strong despite the storms of persecution.



**Muzein finds his strength in the Lord by reading the Word of God daily.**

# ●●● Prayer Requests

## Week 1

### TUNISIA

Believers from a Muslim Background in Tunisia are often totally cut off from their families because of their decision to follow Christ. It seems as if these Christians are facing more pressure from their families these days, which sometimes results in people leaving the Church and their faith. Pray for boldness and a full commitment to Christ in the life of each believer.

## Week 2

### IRAN

Pray for the Lord's protection of house church leaders and pastors of Armenian and Assyrian churches in Iran. They are under severe pressure. Many are regularly interrogated by secret police.



## Week 3

### LIBYA

Over the past few months many people in Libya have been injured and killed and families throughout the country are experiencing great loss. Pray for the spiritual and emotional healing of the people in Libya.

## Week 4

### IRAQ

Pray for those who have been direct victims of violence, cruelty, torture and killings in Iraq. Pray that God will minister to their hearts and minds and that He will protect them with the peace that goes beyond understanding.

## Week 5

### TAJIKISTAN

Pray for believers who face opposition, humiliation and threats from their families and neighbours because they no longer follow the traditions and the way of Islam. Pray that God will strengthen them to stand firm in their decision to follow Jesus.

## Week 6

### MAURITANIA

The pressure on the few Christians in Mauritania is growing. A recent attack on Christians has proved that an assembly of the Mauritanian Imams are very angry about what they call, the "Christianization" of Mauritania. Pray for a good witness of believers to the Muslim population.

## Week 7

### MYANMAR

Because Christians are contained within certain areas of Myanmar and are limited in their mobility, the children and the youth have no access to basic education. Pray that God will use His Church in Myanmar to bring hope to the young believers.



## Week 8

### INDONESIA

It is a challenge for Christian workers to disciple new Believers from a Muslim Background as they need to observe strict security precautions in meeting with these believers. Pray that they will receive God's encouragement whenever they experience difficulties because of their work.