

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY

ENCOURAGE • EQUIP • EVANGELISE



Open Doors

Serving persecuted **Christians** worldwide

DEAR CHRISTIAN LEADER

God is advancing His Kingdom and nothing will prevail against it. We, at Open Doors, are seeing people turn to Christ as Saviour like never before! God is revealing Himself to people in dreams and visions and we stand in awe of the way He is moving over the face of the earth!

One brother from the persecuted Church shared the following:

"I saw a man who was surrounded by a light that shined like the sun. This man told me to stop with all my obligations that were caused by my Islamic faith. 'Just stop with it. It can never give you the peace in your heart that I can give you,' the man in my dream said. I did not know what to think and what to do," shares Yusuf, a secret believer in North Africa. "But my life changed soon afterwards..."

When people in 'closed' countries choose to follow Christ, their decision includes the choice to pay a price for their faith; to possibly even become martyrs.

In this brochure we want to share how you can serve the persecuted Church in a strategic manner. We would also like to share with you how the persecuted Church can serve your church or ministry here in South Africa.

Firstly, we want to illustrate the unique strategic edge that Open Doors enjoys worldwide in serving the persecuted Church.

Secondly, we want to give you an idea of how we serve our persecuted brothers and sisters in more than 60 countries.

Lastly, we want to show you where we fit into God's Kingdom and give you a clear picture of our biblical mandate to serve the whole Body of Christ, abroad and at home.

It's our prayer that you will exalt God together with us, for what He is already busy doing, and that you will be encouraged in your calling to serve God with the passion He has placed in your heart! We also pray that the God of every good blessing will shower you with His goodness and make His face shine on you, your family and your ministry.

Together in His service,



Jan Gouws
Executive Director, Open Doors Southern Africa



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OUR JOURNEY: BROTHER ANDREW

Andrew van der Bijl, a young Dutch missionary, was invited to attend a Communist Youth Festival in 1955 in Poland. In his suitcase he had a couple of Bibles meant for believers in Warsaw.

What he found behind the Iron Curtain was a Church in desperate need of encouragement and Bibles. This is when God called Brother Andrew, as he is now simply known, through the words of Revelation 3:2 (NIV), ***“Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die...”***

Brother Andrew's one-man operation quickly grew into a worldwide ministry. The work of Open Doors broadened to taking Bibles into China, Vietnam and later Africa and the Muslim World, and organising training seminars and practical aid for persecuted Christians. Under Brother Andrew's leadership Open Doors has gone where most Western Christians dare not go. His underground network of indigenous Christians has aided in the secret distribution of millions of Bibles each year, worldwide. Currently Open Doors trains thousands of pastors and

church leaders and provides spiritual and legal support for Christian prisoners. We also provide economic relief for their families and the families of martyrs.

With offices today throughout the world, Open Doors' calling is still the same: Serving the persecuted Church worldwide.

Brother Andrew explains it this way: *“Jesus said we must take the Gospel into every country. If any of them resists – through police, army, culture or even religion – we still have the commission to go, regardless.”*

If you would like to learn more about Brother Andrew and the ministry of Open Doors, order *God's Smuggler* from us, by visiting www.opendoors.org.za or phoning 011 808 9341.

VISION STATEMENT

Our Purpose

To **strengthen and equip** the Body of Christ living under or facing restriction and persecution because of their faith in Jesus Christ, and to **encourage their involvement in world evangelism** by:

- **Providing** Bibles and literature, media, leadership training, socio-economic development and through intercessory prayer;
- **Preparing** the Body of Christ living in threatened or unstable areas to face persecution and suffering; and
- **Educating and mobilising** the Body of Christ living in the free world to identify with threatened and persecuted Christians and to be actively involved in assisting them.

We do so because we believe when one member suffers, all members suffer with that member (1 Corinthians 12:26), all doors are open and God enables His Body to go into the entire world and to preach the Gospel.

Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights addresses religious freedom in the following way, “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.”



God uses us to strengthen and equip the persecuted Church in closed countries, as well as to educate and mobilise Christians in the free world to become actively involved in assisting them.

OUR CORE VALUES

1. We are part of the Body of Christ: A 'people to people' people

Brother Andrew, inspired by Revelation 3:2, tells us that our physical presence is more valued by the persecuted Church than the ten best sermons we could bring. Simply "being there" alongside our fellow persecuted brothers and sisters is the single most important thing we can do.

2. We are persecuted Church motivated

Wherever there are needs to be met, whether that is in a church, school, home or the market place, Jesus meets them there, and that is where we can be found, working alongside the persecuted Church.

3. We are people of the Bible

The Bible reveals God to us and His plans for our lives and encourages us to live as His new creations. When we understand who God is and who we are in Him, we know He is with us in any situation or confrontation.



4. We are people of prayer

We recognise that we are in a spiritual battle (Ephesians 6:10-18) and see the power of prayer as a powerful weapon in the spiritual realm. In prayer we can actively participate in God's deliverance of His children (2 Corinthians 1:10-11).



5. We live and work by faith

We believe the door has been opened for the spreading of the Gospel and has never been closed (Matthew 28:19). Therefore, we go out in faith, through this open door, as we serve the persecuted Church.

6. We are devoted to Jesus Christ and His commission

We want to show the world that there is eternal life available for those in Jesus Christ, and as His witnesses, we can reach the whole world with that eternal truth. The last words spoken by Jesus in John's Gospel are, ***"You must follow Me"*** (John 21:22 (NIV)).

7. We are motivated solely for the glory of God

We desire to serve the persecuted Church in God's strength and for His glory.

KEY ACTIVITIES

Open Doors exists to strengthen members of the persecuted Church to be followers and advocates of Christ in the most hostile places. This ministry started simply through the delivery of Bibles, but has since developed into something much bigger in order to effectively serve the needs of the persecuted Church.

1. Bible and Literature Distribution



Praise God that millions of Bibles are placed in the hands of believers across the world!

We trust in the words of Hebrews 4:12: ***“For the word of God is living and active...”*** In our experience, God uses it as a source of life for persecuted believers and the lost people around them. We take hands with the Body to try and provide Bibles to the millions that do not have their own.

2. Leadership Training and Assistance

In the manner that Philip asked the Ethiopian, ***“Do you understand what you are reading?”*** (Acts 8:30), we do everything in our power to teach persecuted believers everything that Jesus taught His disciples.

3. Christian Community Development

Jesus taught us to not just provide in people’s spiritual needs, but to also give food to those who are hungry, to clothe those who are naked, and to give water to those who are thirsty (Matthew 25:35-36). Therefore, our community development programmes, run in partnership with local churches, serve to provide in the physical needs of believers and also serve as a testimony to unbelievers.

4. Prayer and Advocacy

More than anything else, persecuted believers ask for our prayers, therefore, one of our main functions is to pray for them and to share their prayer requests with the rest of the Body of Christ so that together we can stand in the gap. In countries where Christians enjoy more freedom, we work with churches and partner with ministries to speak up for those who cannot speak up against injustice themselves (Proverbs 31:8).



More than anything else, persecuted believers ask for our prayers.

THEY NEED US TO STAND WITH THEM

“Remember those in prison, as if you were there yourself. Remember also those being mistreated, as if you felt their pain in your own bodies.” Hebrews 13:3 (NLT)

This scripture is fundamental to what we believe in Open Doors. For us it is a command to identify with those who experience persecution as part of their daily lives. We know that this is in correlation with the Father’s heart as **He sees His children as being part of one Body**; sharing one another’s journeys, pains, joys, accomplishments and struggles and in so doing to encourage one another.

As God’s children we are able to draw strength and encouragement from each other. Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians 3:2-3 that we have the ability, through the Spirit, to bring hope and strength to those in difficult situations. Persecuted believers are in desperate need of the rest of the Body of Christ to be channels of encouragement to them, just as Timothy was to the Church in Thessalonica.



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One of our brothers shared the following:

“Sometimes we lose hope. Your support is a sign of hope for us and helps us to continue with our life and persist.”

As we have shared, prayer is the persecuted Church’s number one request and it is a most powerful way to stand with them. Here is why:

“He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and He will deliver us. On Him we have set our hope that He will continue to deliver us, as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favour granted us in answer to the prayers of many.” 2 Corinthians 1:10-11 (NIV)

One of our sisters, Marzieh, wrote this after her incarceration in Iran: *“I would like to thank them for their prayers and support, and the letters they sent us. During this time it wasn’t just Maryam and Marzieh who were imprisoned, but all these prayer warriors. This was a great encouragement for us. We felt their presence alongside us. So please keep praying for those who are in prison for their faith, like believers in Afghanistan and Pakistan and other places. Don’t think that your prayers are unimportant.”*



Marzieh (right), imprisoned for her faith in Iran, testifies that it was the prayers of fellow believers that sustained her.



The threat that persecuted believers face is very real as this burned Bible after violent attacks in Korian village, Pakistan, illustrates.

Take hands with us and stand with our fellow persecuted believers as:

- Some of them are being killed,
- some tortured,
- some imprisoned,
- some lose their spouses and children in forced divorces,
- some are being treated as second-class citizens,
- some face tremendous pressure,
- some daughters are raped and
- some protect their children by sending them to centres far away from home!

Jesus told His disciples that because they hated Him, we, as His followers, will be hated too.

We can make an everlasting difference by standing with them and by making a stand against injustice (Isaiah 58:6).



Often we don't grasp why the Lord allows certain things to happen to our fellow believers. However, we do know that we serve a mighty God Who holds us in His hands.

WE NEED THEM TOO

“And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much bolder to speak the Word without fear.” Philippians 1:14 (ESV)

When a Muslim turns to Christ, there is a good chance that s/he will lose her/his job or family or both. Some believers are even classified as enemies to their country because of their faith. Despite these realities they continue to choose to be followers of Christ; they grow in their relationship with God and become more than conquerors in Jesus.

George Barna, world-renowned market researcher, shared regarding research done in South Africa by Pew and Ipsos that:

- Most South Africans feel that life is not working out for them,
- Fear and distrust rule their world,
- They struggle with authority and feel powerless,
- They have strong biblical views, but they flirt with compromise.

You and I may not face the challenge of persecution to the degree our brothers and sisters do, but we face our own challenges. Being part of the Body of Christ, we can learn from our persecuted brothers and sisters and in turn be encouraged to hold on to the promise that our Lord is always with us, as He is with them too!

Some of the lessons we can learn from the persecuted Church (Romans 1:11-12):

- God does not build His Kingdom on my achievements, but on my sacrifices,
- I need to appreciate the privilege of corporate worship and refrain from complaining about my church,
- God gives me hope when all I am reading is bad news in the newspaper,
- I do not have to be perfect to do the will of God,
- Deliverance comes through endurance,
- Engagement with the persecuted Church encourages me to be a more courageous and fearless witness (Philippians 1:14),
- How to deal with my persecution or oppression,
- Christ often shines His glory through persecution; I will stand anew in awe of His splendour (John 21:19, 12:27-28).

Open Doors desires to be a vehicle of these lessons to the free Church – a link between those who are constitutionally free to express their faith and those who are not.



Despite their circumstances, persecuted believers grow in their relationship with God, becoming more than conquerors in Jesus.

THE STRATEGIC EDGE OF OUR PROJECTS

The Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization (Cape Town, 16-25 October 2010) brought together 4 200 evangelical leaders from 198 countries. It included hundreds of thousands more that participated in similar meetings around the world and in an online capacity. The goal was to bring a fresh challenge to the global Church to bear witness to Jesus Christ and all His teachings in every nation and in every sphere of society. Some of the challenges and ideas discussed are already being addressed and implemented by Open Doors:

We equip persecuted believers to reach the unreached and unengaged peoples.

Our brothers and sisters live in many of the countries where unreached and unengaged peoples live and are, therefore, in a position to reveal God's saving work through Jesus Christ to them.

Persecuted believers reflect the Gospel to illiterate people groups.

The majority of the world's population are oral communicators who are unable to learn through literate means. More than half of them are among the unreached. Among these there are an estimated 350 million people without a single verse of Scripture printed in their language. They read persecuted believers' lives!



Unreached people groups are often illiterate and reliant on oral communication. Under these circumstances the lives of persecuted believers may speak the Gospel of Christ to them.

We make every effort to train and raise Christ-centred leaders in closed countries.

The rapid growth of the Church in so many places remains shallow and that brings its own challenges! Therefore, we focus on training believers to become mature in Christ and strong in their faith.

Persecuted Christians have a unique opportunity to reach the cities of the world.

Cities are of crucial importance in the future of world mission. Half of the world's population currently lives in cities. Some of the largest cities in the world are in closed

countries, e.g. Shanghai, Jakarta, Tehran, etc. Cities are where four major groups of people are most likely to be found: (i) the next generation of young people, (ii) the most unreached peoples who have migrated, (iii) the culture shapers, (iv) the poorest of the poor.

We share Jesus' heart for children.

There are about two billion children in the world and half of them are in the grip of poverty. They have emerged as a new world mission focus – the 4–14 Window, which refers to an age group. Millions are at risk. An estimated thirty million children are being affected by persecution. They represent a large group of influencers, sensitive to the voice of God and willing to obey Him.

Prayer.

Prayer is a command and a gift. As a result of our grassroots networks we can channel prayer requests directly from persecuted believers to the rest of the Body.

Unity in the Church.

This is key to the future existence of our persecuted brothers and sisters and remains an unanswered prayer of our Lord Jesus. We strive to bring the different parts of the Body closer together and to serve the Body as a whole!



REACHING THE UNREACHED

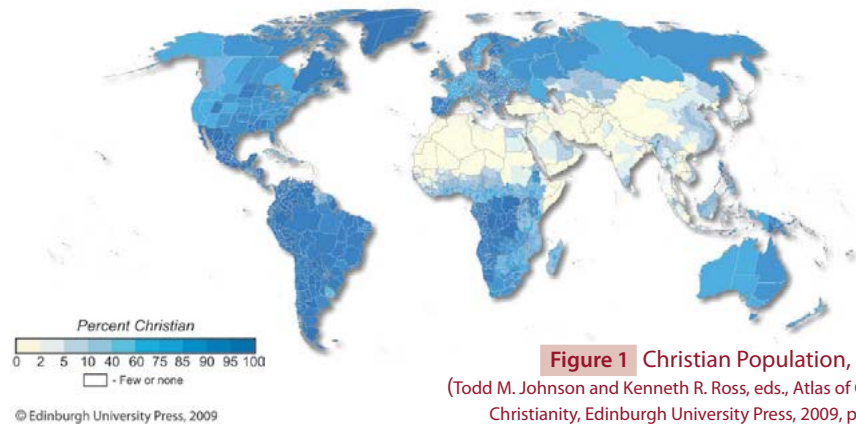


Figure 1 Christian Population, 2010
(Todd M. Johnson and Kenneth R. Ross, eds., *Atlas of Global Christianity*, Edinburgh University Press, 2009, pp. 8-9)

Do you see the correlation between these two maps?

There are a variety of reasons why the white areas in Figure 1 have not been reached with the Good News. One reason has to do with the restrictions these countries impose with regards to the spreading of the Gospel. It is also becoming more and more difficult for missionaries to live and work in these countries.

“But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the Gospel, so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ;” Philippians 1:12-13 (NKJV).

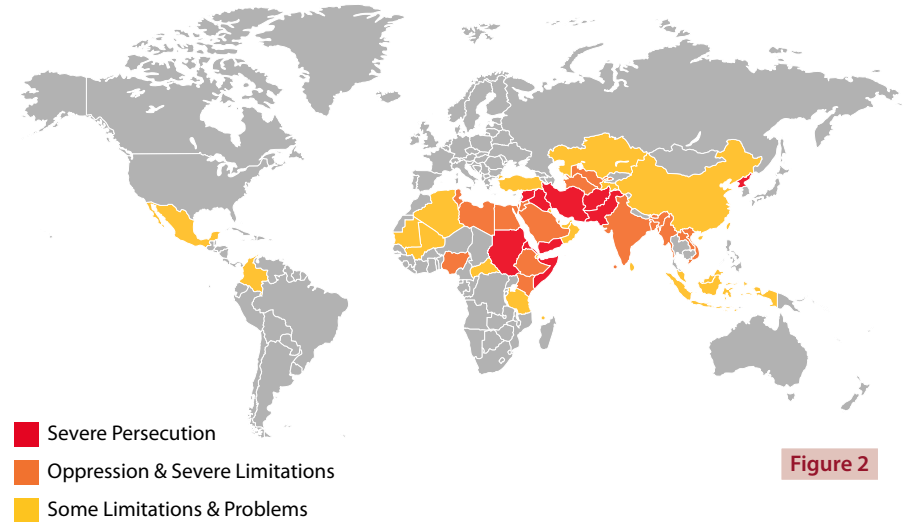


Figure 2

The correlation illustrated by the maps is very significant to Open Doors as our persecuted brothers and sisters live in these countries. It is their home! They are strategically positioned to reach the unreached with the Good News that is burning in their hearts. It is and will be costly! But they are willing to pay the price.

PERSECUTED WORLD

Latin America

White sandy beaches, warm water, friendly people and festivities. It is these aspects of Latin America that are usually the main focus on travel brochures and advertising campaigns. There is, however, more to these countries than their outward beauty and popular tourist attractions. **Kidnappings, torture and the murder of Christian leaders by military muscle and religious extremists are also a reality.**

The Muslim World

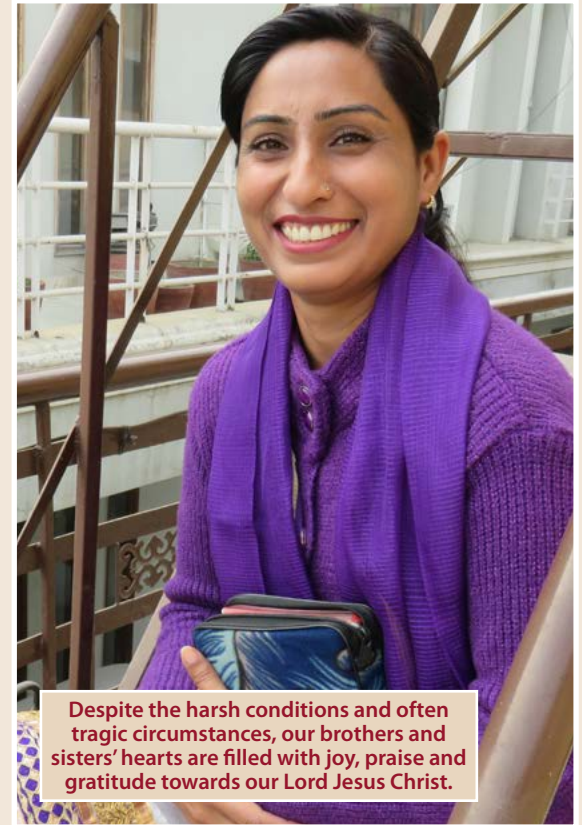
The Muslim World is mostly known for providing countries in the West with the necessary oil to manufacture fuel. However, the Middle East is also the birthplace of the Christian Church. Yet, today **the Church has almost been eliminated** in some areas as a result of Islamic oppression.

Africa

A continent engulfed by famine, military conflicts, long lines of refugees, poverty and genocide. These are the images shown to the world by local and international media outlets. What the media does not report on is that, in the midst of the suffering and heartache, **Africa is witnessing what is perhaps its most rapid growth of Christianity.**

Asia

Besides being **home to 55% of the world's population**, Asia is in the midst of an economic boom and countries such as Russia, China and India are rapidly becoming economic powerhouses. Even more impressive is the spiritual growth of Christians in this region and this despite persecution and even the martyrdom of Christian leaders who stand firm in their faith.



Despite the harsh conditions and often tragic circumstances, our brothers and sisters' hearts are filled with joy, praise and gratitude towards our Lord Jesus Christ.

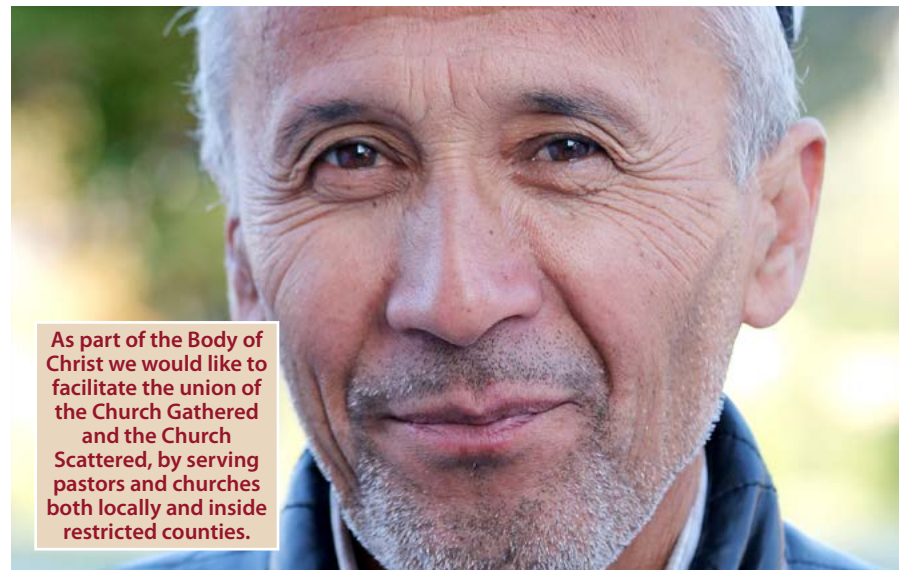
OPEN DOORS WANTS TO SERVE YOU

"Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from His love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate? Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose."

Philippians 2:1-2 (NLT)

How We Serve Pastors and Leaders in Southern Africa:

- We **supply testimonies** that you can share with your congregation,
- We provide you with **short video clips** from the persecuted Church,
- We engage in **strategic conversations** about missions in areas where persecution is prevalent,
- We **communicate information** about our projects on a one-on-one basis,
- We provide you with **teaching material** that we utilise in closed countries, e.g. *Standing Strong Through the Storm*- or *Islam Awareness* seminars,
- We provide you with **research** about countries where persecution occurs,
- We can enlighten you with **persecution trends** upon request,
- We can give you **exposure** to our far-away family,
- We provide **up-to-date news** of acts of persecution in the world.



As part of the Body of Christ we would like to facilitate the union of the Church Gathered and the Church Scattered, by serving pastors and churches both locally and inside restricted counties.

How We Can Serve Your Congregation:

- We can create **awareness of persecution** via tailor-made presentations,
- We will provide you with **campaign material**; e.g. *Dangerous Faith*, which can be utilised in your congregation,
- We will **provide lessons from our brothers and sisters**, which will richly encourage and inspire your members,

- We can **screen professional movies**, which tell the stories of persecution,
- Our youth and student ministry, *Underground*, is a **ministry that serves the next generation of believers** in South Africa,
- Our women's ministry, **takes hands with the women in your church** and is a source of encouragement to women around the globe,
- We can give churches the opportunity to **advocate against injustice** on behalf of our brothers and sisters before their governments,
- We have different ways in which you can **encourage** our persecuted family personally, for example, through *Letter Writing*,
- Members of your congregation can visit the persecuted Church by participating in **Open Doors travel trips** – it is a life-changing experience,
- Our **monthly prayer calendar** shares prayer requests that come directly from persecuted believers,
- We can enhance your **missions training** with more than 60 years of experience in the field,
- Our bi-monthly *Small Group Inspirational Guide* can provide **small group materials to leaders**,
- We provide opportunities for your members **to serve** the Kingdom by **volunteering**.

“As long as there is one Christian in prison for his faith in Jesus Christ, I am not free!” Brother Andrew, commenting on Acts 17:6

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OpenDoors

Serving persecuted **Christians** worldwide