

LETTER WRITING GUIDE

July to December 2018

Dear Friend,

Have you ever thought about words? What they are and what they can do?

Proverbs 12:18 says, *"The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing."* (NIV)

There is power in our words. Some words *pierce like swords*, cut the heart and cause much damage and hurt. While other words *bring healing*, bind up a broken heart and restore peace.

Sadly, persecuted Christians often hear words that tear them apart and wound their souls. They endure false accusations against them, are called traitors and infidels and are chased away like dogs by those who don't share their faith and despise Jesus.

Your words can be words of healing and encouragement to believers like Boris in Central Asia who has

been rejected by his village for his faith. And in North Korea where believers have limited access to God's Word because of tight security in the country. Or Colombia where pastors and their congregations serve God under volatile circumstances.

While their persecutors try to break them down, you can help build them up by sending them words that bring healing as they serve God on the front lines of our faith. I encourage you to use your words to help strengthen your brothers and sisters amid their storms. Thank you!

Together in His service,



Executive Director
Open Doors Southern Africa

You've helped brighten the Samarinda children's journey to healing



Alvaro



Trinity

In November 2016, Alvaro (5), Trinity (4), Anita (3) and Intan (2) were severely injured in a bomb attack at their church in Samarinda, Indonesia. Little Intan was the most severely injured and passed away a day after the attack...

Alvaro and Trinity suffered from severe burns because of the blast and are still undergoing treatment for their injuries in Malaysia and China respectively. Anita suffered from the least amount of physical injury but she has been suffering from severe psychological trauma – she meets with a counsellor twice a month and is progressing well.

Their parents are grateful for the help received from Open Doors and also for your words of encouragement. Alvaro's father simply said, *"Thank you so much for all of this."* While Trinity's mother said, *"God sends his Church to help us... I am very grateful that we experienced the love and prayers from Open Doors from the beginning."*

Thank you for brightening Alvaro's, Trinity's and Anita's journey to healing through every letter and card that you and your children sent them!

Reach believers in the Middle East on their mobile phones!



MIDDLE EAST

Since launching the encouragement “app” (smartphone application) to send Christians in the Middle East words of encouragement, we have reached over 5 000 subscribers! The page has also shown more engagement with more comments and private messages sent. Many believers have shown appreciation for the page and the encouragement it provides them.

One believer said, *“Amen, may the Lord bless you and strengthen you in the name of Jesus. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your comforting and encouraging words. May the Lord protect you.”*

Believers in the Middle East need your continued encouragement!



Representative image used.

Send:

- A picture you took yourself (not a picture downloaded from the Internet) with a Bible verse or personal encouragement, or your prayer written out (**100 characters** max, for text imposed over pictures; **500 characters** max, for text accompanied by a picture. Images: 1080 pixels x 1080 pixels);
- An original, short video or voice recording, no longer than 15 seconds, with messages of encouragement or prayer;

to letterwriting@opendoors.org.za and we will make sure that your message is uploaded to the “app”.

If you have any questions about this campaign or “app” contact us at letterwriting@opendoors.org.za

Encourage a fellow church leader in the Middle East



MIDDLE EAST

We recently launched a new initiative to address the urgent need for ongoing and renewed encouragement and prayer for church leaders in the Middle East.

We are calling on all **church leaders** to get involved in this initiative to encourage their fellow leaders in the Middle East. We hope this will be a huge blessing to church leaders in the Middle East, as well as to church leaders in South Africa.

If you're a church leader, please email letterwriting@opendoors.org.za for more information.



Representative image used.

Newly-converted Boris needs words of hope



CENTRAL ASIA

Ongoing e-campaign

Boris (23), a brand-new follower of Christ, is facing much pressure from his fellow villagers in Central Asia. They are not happy that he converted to Christianity... Boris has already been beaten up twice and ended up in hospital. He now suffers from severe headaches, memory deterioration and has lost 60% of the hearing in his right ear. Sadly, he is also having difficulties obtaining work due to his memory deterioration. When he recently did get a job, he was unable to remember simple tasks and had to leave.

You can encourage Boris by emailing a note of no more than 30 words to letterwriting@opendoors.org.za. And please keep praying for him for healing from the headaches and memory loss, and that God will provide him with a job.



A unique chance to strengthen North Korean Christians!



NORTH KOREA

Ongoing e-campaign



Representative image used.

Although we are still not able to forward letters to believers in North Korea, we do have an exciting opportunity for you to encourage them!

In North Korea, Christianity is seen as a dangerous, foreign religion, which has to be viciously fought against. So, Christians have no room in North Korea and consequently must live their lives in utmost secrecy. Gathering in large groups is absolutely impossible for Christians. It is life-threatening to even just be recognised as a Christian.

You have a unique opportunity to encourage Christians in North Korea. We currently broadcast seven different radio programmes and we want to end each broadcast by reading a selection of encouraging messages from you.

Write a note of only one or two sentences to encourage believers in North Korea and email it to letterwriting@opendoors.org.za

It will make a massive difference to them. And please continue to pray for believers in North Korea – that God will make seeing eyes blind as they worship Him in secret.

Embolden pastors and their flocks to stand strong



COLOMBIA

Writing campaign ends 30 Nov. 2018

In November of 2016 a revised peace agreement between the Colombian government of President Juan Manuel Santos and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC-EP) was ratified by the Colombian Congress.

This peace agreement, however, has not necessarily brought respite from persecution to Christians targeted by the former FARC-EP... After the signing of the peace agreement, some from the FARC-EP, who were against the peace process, joined the National Liberation Army (ELN) in Colombia.

The ELN continues to fight against the Colombian army, and in the regions of Guaviare, Tibu, El Tarra, Tumaco and Arauca, an increase in violence has been noted. In light of these developments, we'd like to encourage pastors and their congregations who continue to work in these areas, despite the increased opposition.

So, we invite you to send words of encouragement to these pastors and their churches, letting them know that there are believers around the world standing in the gap for them. Pray for the Lord's protection over them and that, despite the increased danger, they will be a bold witness for Christ.



Representative image used.

Some simple guidelines before you start writing



PRAY BEFORE YOU START

Ask God to give you the right words to write. Include one or two Bible verses. For Bible verses in other languages, visit www.biblegateway.com



SHOW SENSITIVITY

Please do not dwell on the recipient's plight, or share about the blessings of life in your country.



KEEP IT SHORT AND SIMPLE

Print clearly. Write in simple English or, if you can, in the recipient's language. Short letters cost less for us to post and are easier to translate.



SECURITY

Please DO NOT MENTION OPEN DOORS in your letters, criticise a country's religion or religious extremists, its government, judicial system or political leaders. It is fine to include your name and country, but NOT your full address.



CARDS AND POSTCARDS

Colourful cards can say so much more than a long letter on plain paper. If you are writing a postcard, please send it in an envelope rather than writing Open Doors' address on the card. If you are sending more than one letter or card, please put all your letters in **one** envelope, addressed to: c/o Open Doors.



HANDMADE CARDS AND ARTWORK

Making cards is a great way of helping younger people to connect with persecuted Christians.



GIFTS

Please DO NOT include money in your letter or card as Open Doors will not be able to forward your gift. It is unsafe to do so and can cause difficulties for the recipient.



NORTH KOREA

We regret we are unable to forward letters to believers in North Korea.



RESPECT

When writing to those in Muslim countries, please do NOT say anything negative about Islam or make references to Israel (even when using Scripture).

Remember to **continue praying** for the person you have written to as you post your cards and letters to:

Letter Writing: Believer's Name, c/o Open Doors, PO Box 1771, Cresta, 2118.

If you have any queries, please contact us on 011 888 9341, or send an e-mail to letterwriting@opendoors.org.za

Do not forget that you can find the latest updates, new writing campaigns, and additional information at www.opendoors.org.za/eng/write

No more letters please

On behalf of the following persecuted believers, we would like to extend a sincere word of thanks for every letter and card written to them! These campaigns have ended, but please do continue to pray for them and their families:

- Abdu, Middle East
- Haoua, Cameroon
- Caroline Riziki, Kenya
- Manda, Democratic Republic of Congo
- Alvaro, Trinity and Anita, Indonesia



Open Doors

Serving persecuted **Christians** worldwide



Open Doors South Africa