

LETTER WRITING GUIDE

January to June 2019

Dear Friend,

St Francis of Assisi once prayed, *“Lord, make me an instrument of your peace: where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy.”*

Indeed, may the Lord make us instruments of His peace! We see how He’s using our persecuted brothers and sisters to sow His peace where there is hatred, injury, doubt, despair, darkness and sadness.

But the enemy isn’t happy that they’re doing this as they expose his lies and point others to Christ. Sadly, he uses the persecution they endure to try and discourage and immobilise them so that he can silence them and subsequently the Gospel...

So how can you help?

You can *“encourage one another daily, as long as it is called “Today.”* (Hebrews 3:13)

I urge you, on behalf of our persecuted family, to write them a letter as a token of their belonging to the worldwide body of Christ who love, cherish and pray for them as they represent Christ on the front lines of our faith.

Together in His service,



Executive Director
Open Doors Southern Africa

You're letters have been so much more than tokens of encouragement



“Thank you to everyone who has written to us. Bless you. Glory be to God.” – Hadija and Mellina

A few years ago, when Hadija (15) became a Christian, she faced severe beatings and denial of food from her father. One Sunday in December 2012, the beatings were so bad that Mellina, a lady she had befriended at church, intervened and became Hadija’s guardian.

Last year Hadija and Mellina told us how your letters haven’t only encouraged them. Mellina explains, *“These letters have encouraged me to tell people what God has done for us. They’ve been an encouragement to me and Hadija, but also [to] other people in the community.”* Your letters helped encouraged Mellina’s colleague Jay*, for example, whose Muslim husband tried to kill her and their children because she wouldn’t convert.

Your words of encouragement are tokens to Hadija, Mellina and their community of God’s love for them and it reminds them that they’re not forgotten. Hadija and Mellina both say, *“Thank you to everyone who has written to us. Bless you. Glory be to God.”*

Imagine being brutally beaten by 10 Hindu extremists and in that moment realising that they're the same people that killed your fellow pastor. Or imagine watching your husband die from cancer as you can't afford the treatment and your Hindu family refuses to help you pay for it because you're a Christian. Or as a child lying to your Hindu parents, to avoid getting beaten, about your school organising a three-day seminar, and instead attending a Christian children's seminar. Sadly, Christians in India don't have to imagine this because these are the kinds of situations they face frequently, all because they follow Christ.

So, we recently launched an online encouragement campaign to address Indian believers' urgent need for ongoing and renewed encouragement and prayer as they face increasing hostility from Hindu nationalists who want to turn India into a Hindu nation, leaving no room for Christians.

They truly need our encouragement.

You can send:

- Pictures alongside Bible verses, personal encouragements, written prayers. Pictures of people sending the messages.
- Videos of personal encouragement messages, prayer meetings, Biblical content, etc.
- Audio recording of personal encouragement, Christian song (with permission), etc.

to letterwriting@opendoors.org.za and we will make sure that your message is sent to them.



Some guidelines:

- Focus on uplifting and empowering messages about God's love and salvation, as well as those that focus on blessings through persecution.
- Send personal messages, not just general Bible verses as these are more effective. Talk about your personal (spiritual) struggles and how you dealt with them.

If you have any questions, please email letterwriting@opendoors.org.za for more information.

Provide words of hope to traumatised Marta

ETHIOPIA

Writing campaign ends 31 March 2019



Marta grew up in a family that practices folk Islam (a mixture of Islam and traditional religion). In her village, the local witch doctor often asks families for money or even people as payment for the 'spiritual protection' he offers them.

When Marta was very young, the witch doctor asked for her. Her family agreed, and she became his servant and wife. During this time, her Christian aunt visited her regularly and shared the Gospel with her. Marta gave her life to Christ.

When she was in her mid-teens she left the witch doctor and told her family she was a Christian. She kept sharing her faith with them and eventually everyone, except her father, came to faith in Christ.

Marta's life is not easy, but God has been faithful. Her journey to recovery from the darkness she experienced in the witch doctor's house is only starting now. She needs much prayer and encouragement.

Write words of hope to Marta as she continues to work through her trauma. Pray for continued spiritual growth for Marta and her family and for healing from the trauma she has endured.

Uplift the spirit of Eldos and Nurzhan

 **KYRGYZSTAN** Writing campaign ends 30 April 2019

Eldos Satar Uluu (pictured below) from Kyrgyzstan is a young believer from a Muslim background. He was terribly beaten up by three radical Muslim men, last year, in an attempt to force him to return to Islam. He sustained multiple injuries including a brain concussion and had to undergo several surgeries.

Thankfully, he is doing better. But he is emotionally broken and frustrated. His family is being threatened by the relatives of Eldos' attackers to dissuade them from going to the police to lay charges. Unfortunately, the police are also trying to silence the situation.

To add to the stress of the situation, Eldos' oldest sister, Nurzhan, witnessed her brother being attacked. She was six months pregnant but sadly lost the baby due to the stress of what happened to Eldos... She is grieving deeply.

You can send Eldos and Nurzhan words of comfort and strength during this difficult time of pain and loss. You can also pray for God's comfort for them and their family as they work through the trauma of the attack as well as the emotional trauma of Nurzhan losing her baby.



Gyang became the sole survivor of his family

 **NIGERIA**

Writing campaign ends 30 June 2019

In August 2018, Gyang Adamu (27) lost his father, mother and three brothers when Fulani herdsmen attacked his village in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria and killed them.

Away at university in Jos, where he studies civil engineering, Gyang was unaware at first about what had happened. He read on Facebook about an attack that had taken place in which a pastor and his entire family was killed. Realising this could be his family, Gyang tried phoning them to no avail. He then phoned their assistant pastor and his worst fears were confirmed.

"My father and two of my brothers were burnt alive in the room where they hid. My mother was gunned down in the bathroom where she hid. My third brother was macheted on the farm... I couldn't sleep, or cry or utter a single word. I was full of shock."

Your words of comfort could mean so much to Gyang as he struggles to cope with this great loss. Pray for the Lord's comfort and healing for Gyang as he continues to mourn the loss of his family.

Encourage the next generation of Christians

 **CENTRAL ASIA**

Drawing campaign ends 31 Dec 2019

Christian children can face unique challenges because of their faith...

Just imagine that you're not free to attend a church or youth meeting either by law or because your parents won't allow it. That you're not allowed to have a children's book or Bible. Imagine police raiding your parents' secret house church meeting and arresting them, leaving you alone. Or imagine that you're the only Christian in your school. During break time the other children don't play with you and sometimes you come home with your clothes torn because of them bullying you.

Now imagine what could happen if you could encourage such children to stand strong in the faith.

Send your encouragement to them in the form of a drawing (children's drawings are especially welcome) to remind them that they're not alone and that other Christian families are praying for them. Please pray that God would help these children to grow in their faith despite all they face.

***Note that only drawings will be accepted for this specific campaign.**



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 written 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/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:

- Boris, Central Asia
- Karidja, Ivory Coast
- Pastors and their flocks, Colombia



OpenDoors

Serving persecuted **Christians** worldwide



Open Doors South Africa