



OpenDoors NEWSLETTER

Same faith. Different lives.



ISSUE 4

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HOPE REMAINS IN THE MIDDLE EAST – THANKS TO YOU

Apo and Jina, Syria.

A few years after we first met Apo and his mother, Jina, we returned to visit them earlier this year to see how they were doing. We went with them to one of the Centres of Hope in Syria. There we watched Apo (now 10) running after a ball as he played football with other boys.

Apo lost his father nine years ago when he was just a toddler. His dad was kidnapped by extremists while on a work trip in Syria – all because he was a Christian. He never returned. His body was never found, but officially Jina is now considered a widow by Syrian law.

We tried to talk to Apo, but he was so energetic that he struggled to sit still. We still managed to ask him what he remembers about Christmas. Like many other children around the world, Apo remembered his present. ***“I got a mountain car toy that climbs walls with a remote control and an airplane,”*** he shares.

“That is what I like most about Christmas; they distribute gifts.” Perhaps one day, as he grows in his faith, he will see that the greatest present is the one God gave by sending his Son to earth because He so loved us.

As he continued to share about Christmas, he stopped and declared: ***“I’m longing for Christmas to come.”***

Before we could ask him something else, Apo switched to a topic that was more on the front

of his mind. ***“I play basketball, and sometimes the coach trains me, and we play against another team. I also have swimming class and play football.”***

Hearing the children’s laughter in the school yard at the Centre of Hope was touching. It’s hard to think that all those children grew up during war where they’ve seen terrible things happen around them or even to their own families as Apo did.

Despite this, we can praise God because thanks to your support Apo, Jina, and many like them have hope. At the Centre of Hope in Aleppo, on top of the spiritual nourishment, Jina receives food parcels and winter fuel, and Apo attends children’s Bible groups. Jina is even training to be a beautician.

“How would a widow survive without the help you provided?” she said. “You helped me to find this work, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart. I pray God will bless you and open new doors for you to continue to help us in Syria,” says Jina.

Thank you so much for supporting our family in the Middle East so they can stay in their countries to be a light for Christ. You’re bringing hope to the Middle East!



Join us as we show and remind our persecuted families in the Middle East that they are not alone through our ***One Million Prayers of Hope*** global initiative. Sign up to pray with us at www.makehopelast.org and continue to ***Make Hope Last.***

Scan to pray.



Amal لَمَأ

- a hope that is progressive



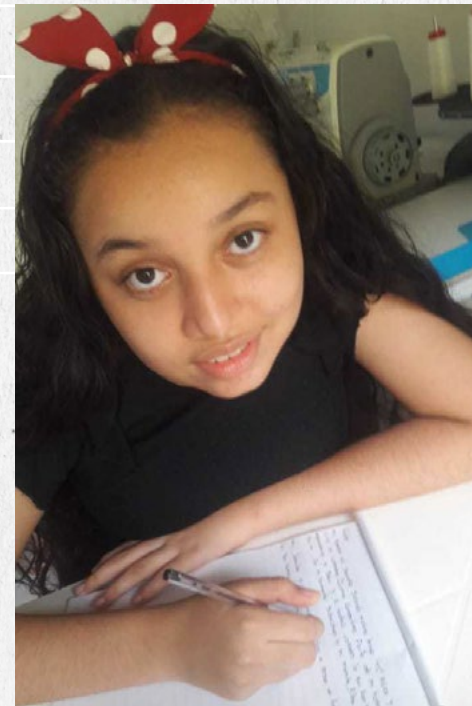
A few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to visit the Middle East and commune with young believers from communities that have experienced war, persecution, and economic instability. Along with young believers from various parts of the world, we explored the meaning and importance of hope.

I learned that hope in the Arabic language comes in two words. One is the expectation based on recent events: **Rajaa** رَجَاء ("I hope it rains today"). The other one is the long-term assured and progressive expectation of the unseen: **Amal** أَمَل ("I am hoping for a better future for my children").

Hope in the mundane is one that goes to waste, but hope built on faith and assurance allows space for a great change

and revolution to take place. Our hope for the Church in the Middle East is **Amal** أَمَل, a long-term progressive expectation for sustained change in this beautiful region. For an ever-bright light and anchored hope for the betterment of believers in its countries. And Open Doors has partnered with Christians to help make sure that this hope will last so it will be active and progressive from one generation to the next.

So what kind of hope will you speak on behalf of the Church in the Middle East? Be a part of our vision to make hope last in the Middle East and unite with believers around the world in prayer for the Middle East. Scan the QR code on page 3 of your newsletter to add your light to our One Million Prayers of Hope initiative.



"Thank you for everything you have done for me." - Daniela

In 2020, we shared with you the story of Daniela, whose father, Pastor Plinio, was murdered because of his ministry work in Colombia, which was a threat to drug lords and rebels in the country. Daniela wrote a letter to Open Doors, thanking our partners for their support.

Hello

My name is Daniela, I'm 12 years old and I live in Colombia. I thank God and each one of you for everything you have done for me, my brother and my mother.

I was at the Children's Centre to celebrate Christmas. My family and I felt good there. It was an honour to share with everyone, to know that they care and pray, not only for us, but for children all over the world.

This year, we received help to live in a new house. I like the house because it's comfortable and simple.

I have no words to express my gratitude to everyone who prays for us. I want to say to those who suffer persecution that our God is faithful and helps us in all times.

Daniela



MAKE HOPE LAST THIS CHRISTMAS

Children and youth, who are just at the start of their journey with Jesus, are targets of persecution just as much as adults. All of this has an impact on their faith and self-esteem, and they wonder: Why am I suffering because of Christ? Is He worth it?

The only way they can persevere in the face of persecution is if we invest in their faith and help them establish a solid connection with their Saviour.

This Christmas, we want the next generation to know that wherever they may be or whatever challenges they may face, they have a family in Christ who loves and supports them.

Today, you can make a difference in the lives of future generations by investing in the next generation of the Church:

R240 could provide two children with gifts and their families with a food package.

R460 could send four children or youth to a Christian camp.

R1 060 could help a Christian child receive an education through a Bridge School or Tuition Centre.



New Gifts of Hope catalogue now out

Give a gift that helps encourage our persecuted family in their darkest hour. Keep the flame of hope burning brightly in the lives of our persecuted family through your *Gift of Hope*, now available on our website at www.opendoors.org.za.



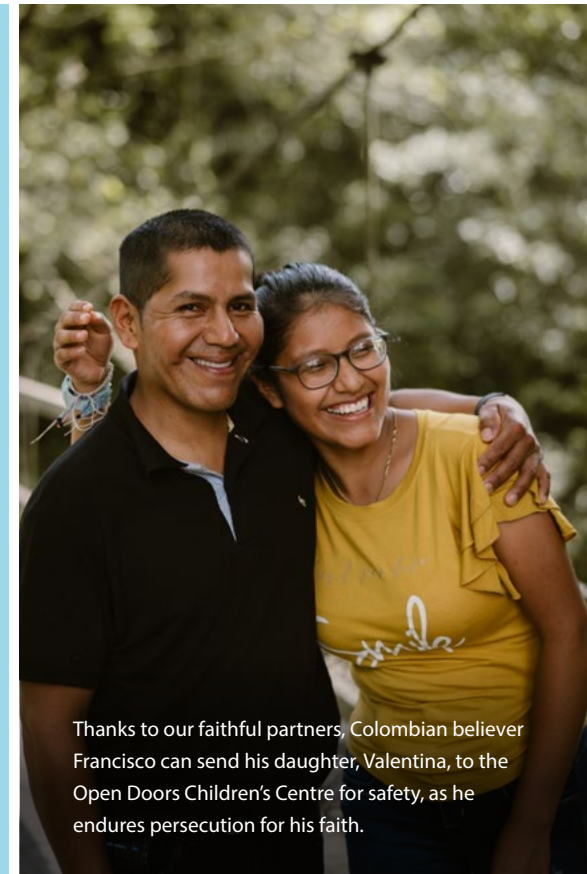
Scan to give.

We're thankful for the legacy of hope left by our faithful partners

Most people leave a last will and testament to ensure their families are cared for when they die. As Christians we're privileged that our family includes millions of believers from around the world, some of whom feel led to include our persecuted family in their legacy.

We at Open Doors are thankful to our partners who've passed on to eternity and left our ministry organisation a gift in their estate. We honour and remember the significant impact the following people made in the lives of our persecuted family in 2022:

- MJ Myburgh
- CMV Bruwer
- AJVW Swart
- AS Smit
- S Strydom
- WG Meyer
- SC Cloete



Thanks to our faithful partners, Colombian believer Francisco can send his daughter, Valentina, to the Open Doors Children's Centre for safety, as he endures persecution for his faith.

Valerie's legacy

Valerie left her legacy to help continue the ministry's work among our family. *"Although my life hasn't always been easy, persecuted Christians around the world face much worse. People are kidnapped, imprisoned and even killed for their faith – but they remain firm and refuse to renounce Jesus. Open Doors is working with them to help them grow, and to stand with them.*

"The persecuted Church needs all the help we can give them. It gives me wonderful peace of mind to know that Open Doors will use that money wisely and prayerfully." For more information on a legacy for Open Doors, email southafrica@od.org.

From the heart



Dear partners and friends

Even though Christmas celebrations have been over-commercialised, taken for granted or become busier as people rush around in preparation for the festivities – I pray that this year, for each of us, advent would be a season of intentional adoration and celebration of Immanuel – God with us.

As this is the last newsletter of 2022, it's a privilege to look back on the past year and acknowledge the Lord's faithfulness and **you**, our partners. Thank you for responding to the prayer requests, appeals for support, opportunities to host events and for travelling with us. You have positively impacted many lives in our family of faith.

Reading the feedback from those who were strengthened to remain a light in their communities because of previous years' Christmas campaign gifts is encouraging. Thank you for being a part of that over the years.

There is one more important opportunity

before this year ends to secure the wellbeing of children living in places where following Jesus is dangerous through our end-of-year campaign.

Children are one of the most vulnerable groups when it comes to persecution, with the persecution of children being isolating, identity-shaping and harsh. The effects of persecution can be severe and long-lasting.

Being connected to a local church and community where they're known, loved and protected is vital. Your support of Open Doors' partnerships with local churches and community organisations provides this connection. So please consider joining us in keeping hope alive in their lives this Christmas.

Peace

Lynette Leibach

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Open Doors Southern Africa



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Persecuted  But never alone.

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Geopende Deure - Open Doors NPC, Nedbank Business Account (198765), Acc. no. 113 750 4552

Bank Account: **Namibia, Geopende Deure - Open Doors NPC, Nedbank - Windhoek (461609), Acc. no. 1-2000-23847-1**
(Please fax proof of payment to: +27 11 888 9362)

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