



# OpenDoors NEWSLETTER

THE TRUE COST OF FOLLOWING JESUS



ISSUE 1

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Representative image used.

# EXTREME LOVE

**Open Doors workers risk everything to stand with persecuted Christians. All because of love...**

Rebecca\* speeds along a darkened track in illegal transportation, deep in the Chinese countryside. She's on her way to a secret location to visit her "sisters", as she calls them. A group of North Korean women

who've fled or been trafficked into China to become wives or bear children for men they've never met.

The trip is fraught with danger. But for Rebecca, it's worth it – because the women she's meeting are risking everything to follow Jesus.

**"Others like me have been caught and imprisoned,"** says Rebecca. **"But it's a risk**

**"I'm willing to take to share the Gospel. After all, the women take a far worse risk in coming to hear it."**

Rebecca is one of Open Doors' extraordinary workers ministering to Christians who face increasingly extreme and violent persecution. If the North Korean women get caught meeting Rebecca, they could be deported back to North Korea and sent to a prison camp. If caught with a Bible, their entire families could be jailed. The women could even be executed.

Today, more Christians are murdered for their faith than at any time in the last 30 years. It's shocking – but it doesn't deter the North Korean refugee women. **"The ladies have a really miserable life,"** says Sister J\*, who works alongside Rebecca. **"But even though they're suffering and hiding, they're overflowing with joy and hope in Christ."**

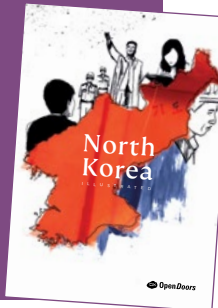
As Rebecca arrives at her secret meeting place, there's a jolt of fear. This gathering is so risky. But extreme persecution demands extreme love – and Rebecca would choose nothing else.

**"God compels our love, despite the danger. Being with the women is my greatest joy," she says. "I would make the journey every time. Even for one."**

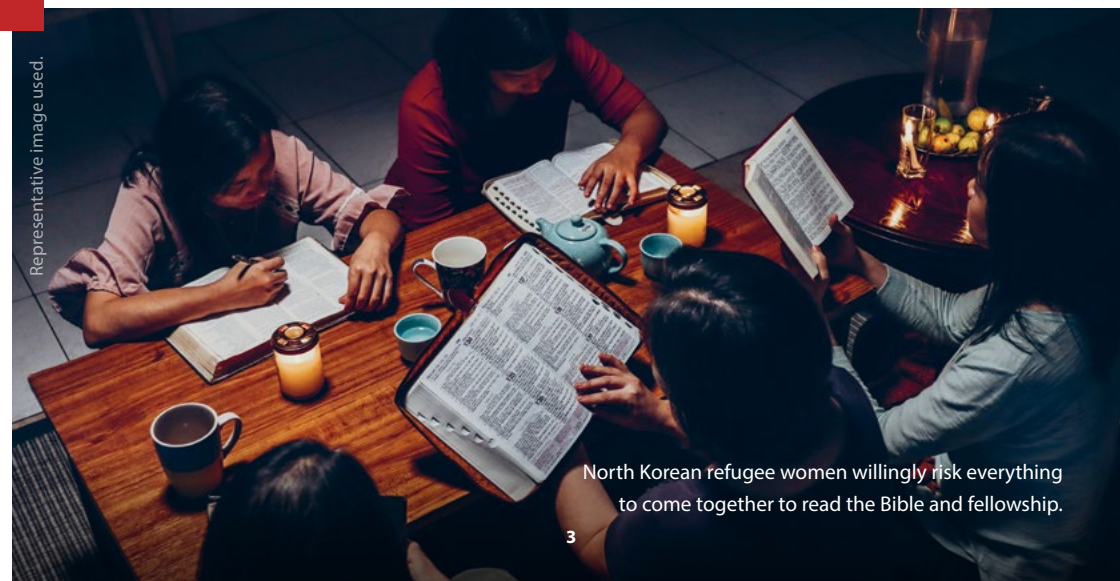
These women and believers in the top 50 countries know the true cost of following Jesus means risking their lives. And so, our workers are willing to risk theirs to be an encouragement to them.

\*Names changed for security reasons.

Download your free North Korea illustrated booklet by visiting [www.OpenDoors.org.za/wwl/nkbklt](http://www.OpenDoors.org.za/wwl/nkbklt) or scan the QR code.



Representative image used.



North Korean refugee women willingly risk everything to come together to read the Bible and fellowship.

# FROM THE HEART



Dear partners and friends

For 30 years, Open Doors has shared the World Watch research results on the persecution of Christians globally. In 1993, 40 countries had high to extreme persecution. This year, 76 countries have high to extreme persecution.

Looking at the scale and intensity of persecution that our family of faith experiences, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. And even more so when one reads about the violence in Sub-Saharan Africa, increased control spreading through digital means in China, and heightened pressure on believers.

North Korea again tops the list, with stories from this country leaving one desperate. As I hear and see the examples of courageous faith and determination to continue following Jesus despite the situations faced, I find that seeing the face of persecution in individuals, families, and churches' testimonies breaks down this sense of helplessness.

I was asked last year: **"Is Open Doors just there to monitor the situation and raise awareness of the trends?"** My answer: **"No – these insights inform and shape how we serve our family on the frontline, both overtly and covertly. And very importantly, it directs prayer."**

All of this is only possible with your engagement. Let's not give up doing good. This year, let's continue the vision that no persecuted Christian would have to stand alone. Let's stand with them. Let's pray, learn, give of our time and resources, and speak out for our family of faith.

Peace

**Lynette Leibach**

Executive Director, Open Doors Southern Africa




 **OpenDoors**

I [www.opendoors.org.za](http://www.opendoors.org.za)

T +27 11 888 9341

F +27 11 888 9362

E [southafrica@od.org](mailto:southafrica@od.org)

 064 867 4730

PO Box 1771, Cresta, 2118



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## **Bank Accounts: South Africa**

Geopende Deure – Open Doors NPC,  
Mercantile Current Account (450105),  
Acc. no. 1051 1501 32

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 or email to [southafrica@od.org](mailto:southafrica@od.org))

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Persecuted  But never alone.