



# OpenDoors **NEWSLETTER**

**STAND AS ONE WITH CHRISTIAN YOUTH IN AFRICA**



**ISSUE 3**

Africa's youth alive with possibility, p. 2-4 • How to pray for youth in Africa, p. 5  
What you need to know about Arise Africa, p. 6 • Join us, p. 7

# Africa's youth alive with possibility

**Did you know that the Church in sub-Saharan Africa is primarily made up of young people under the age of 25, with nearly 200 million youth, making it the Church with the most young people worldwide?**

These youth could be a driving force in the region for the Gospel, as well as for innovation and social care for the elderly.

Unfortunately, young people in the region are particularly vulnerable due to economic and social factors. Their socioeconomic struggles, along with terrorist organisations political goals, could push them to join one of the many such organisations.

Africa's growing persecution is having the greatest impact on its young population. Their continued presence on the continent and within the Church is being threatened like never before.

Some of the pressure points youth face include being cut off from their social networks, not having a Christian parent, and experiencing sexual violence, as shared through the testimonies of Ruth (22), Traore\* (17) and Munah\*...

\*Names changed for security reasons.





Ruth (22)

## Hopeful despite rejection

It's easy to imagine **Ruth** on a university campus, relaxing with friends between classes. Unfortunately, when she became a Christian at age 14, she had to grow up quickly and abandon her hopes of a tertiary education.

When her family learned of her newfound faith, they abandoned her, and her friends avoided her. ***"Isolation is painful. It's hard to understand how my family, who used to love me, could suddenly hate me. All of this creates horrible feelings,"*** shares Ruth.

Still, Ruth remains hopeful, even if her life hasn't turned out the way she thought it would.

***"May God be praised, even if life is hard now, even if I'm not living the life I thought I would and continued my schooling like my peers, I'm still here saying tomorrow will be better."***

Thanks to your support, Ruth now owns her own small hair salon after doing a short course on hairdressing.



Traore (17)

## Persecution strengthens missionary dreams

When extremists murdered **Traore's** father in Burkina Faso in 2019, he, too, had to grow up quickly. Recalling fishing, soccer, and other activities he and his father used to enjoy, Traore says: ***"We can't do these things anymore. If you don't have a father, there are things you can't do."***

Extremist groups target men, especially Christian men like Traore's father, because the entire family becomes vulnerable when husbands and fathers are gone.

Traore's father's death could have set him on a destructive path, but he isn't like most teenagers. Regardless of what has occurred, Traore wishes to be a force for the Gospel in his country.

***"It's true that studying is good, it can provide a job and money, but my vision doesn't go in that direction. No, what I'm interested in, is to become a missionary. I want to do this because of our actual situation."***





Munah

## Broken shards reflect Christ's greatness

**Munah's** family's choice to forsake the ways of their Muslim tribe came at a great personal cost. They were ostracised by their tribe, and then one day, the unimaginable happened.

***"Our parents went to fellowship. An uncle came. It was almost 7 pm. I was laying on the bed. He raped me. Because he was a grown-up, I was unable to defend myself,"*** shares Munah.

Munah was hospitalised for a month after the assault. Two years after the assault, her rapist passed away in prison while Munah received trauma care.

***"I wondered why I was alive. But after trauma training, I was healed. I thank God that I continued healing gradually."***

***"I started becoming a caregiver to those who had similar problems. I desire to continue helping people with similar problems so they can't go through the same challenges."***

We thank God that these young people could overcome the anguish and loss of persecution and be a light for the Gospel, thanks to your prayers and support. Unfortunately, this is not the case for all young people. Many more need our help

Open Doors wants to ensure that young people in Africa REMAIN – present, resilient and relevant – despite hardship. We want to make sure they're equipped to be productive where they are and remain resilient in the face of growing persecution, so they can actively participate in living out the Gospel in their environment.

You can come alongside our young family by standing up to violent persecution so that they may have hope and a future on our continent. Visit **[www.opendoors.org.za/ariseafrica](http://www.opendoors.org.za/ariseafrica)** to find out how.



# HOW TO PRAY FOR YOUTH IN AFRICA

Because of the large percentage youth represent in Africa, they're also the most affected by the growing persecution.

Here is how you can pray for the next generation of the sub-Saharan Africa Church.

## PLEASE PRAY

- » Youths who come to faith in Christ often face extreme isolation. Pray that the Lord will help them to know that they're not forgotten and that He will continue to provide for them.
- » In some places in Africa, youths are seen as a commodity that can be easily exploited. Pray for urgent action to help give youths a voice and channel their energy towards something good and wholesome.
- » Persecutors often punish youth for the faith of their parents through things such as sexual assault and bullying at school. Pray that all plans to end Church growth by persecuting youths will come to nothing.



**"LET NO ONE DESPISE YOU FOR YOUR YOUTH,  
BUT SET THE BELIEVERS AN EXAMPLE IN SPEECH,  
IN CONDUCT, IN LOVE, IN FAITH, IN PURITY."**

1 TIMOTHY 4:12

# ARISE AFRICA



## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

The future of the Church in sub-Saharan Africa is at risk unless we act...

### What's happening to Christians in sub-Saharan Africa?

Violence is at an all-time high. Jihadist groups like Boko Haram, Islamic State and Al-Shabaab operate amid chaos and banditry in countries like Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Somalia and Mali.

### What's the impact of this violent persecution?

People's faith can be shaken by persecution and trauma. They might give up on Jesus or become radicalised. The Church is destabilised as people are displaced and their livelihoods destroyed.

### But isn't Christianity thriving in Africa?

It's true there are more Christians in Africa than anywhere else in the world. It's a youthful, growing Church. But some brothers and sisters face an unprecedented onslaught.

### What's Arise Africa?

It's an invitation to you – to stand up to violent persecution. Over four years, as part of our global campaign, we aim to reach and support four million Christians in sub-Saharan Africa.



#### Together, we'll see:

- ▶ Persecuted Christians supported spiritually, physically and emotionally.
- ▶ The global Church awakened and actively praying, giving and speaking out.
- ▶ Change on the ground to counter extremist ideology and rampant violence.

**Will you stand up to violent persecution in sub-Saharan Africa?**



# Want to do more for your persecuted family?

## Here's how!

### Host a tea for your persecuted sisters this Women's Day

Join women across the country for our annual Tea4Them event on 9 August and throughout August.

### It's as easy as 1, 2, 3:

1. Sign up on our website to host a Tea4Them for our persecuted sisters. Here you will get everything you need.
2. Invite your family, friends and community to be part of your event.
3. Come together for a time of fellowship and prayer for your persecuted sisters in the faith.

Visit [www.opendoors.org.za/tea4them](http://www.opendoors.org.za/tea4them) for more info and to sign up.

### Be a voice for our family in Africa

Join us as we embark on a multi-year campaign to support our family in prayer, giving and raising awareness.

Become a campaign ambassador in your church for our family in sub-Saharan Africa and be a voice for your family in the region.

Find out more at [www.opendoors.org.za/ariseafrica](http://www.opendoors.org.za/ariseafrica).

### Join us on a trip and meet your persecuted family

Join us on a trip to uplift and pray with your persecuted family.

North-East Africa from 3-10 September  
Mexico from 17-27 September

**Applications close 31 July 2023.**

Email [travel@opendoors.org.za](mailto:travel@opendoors.org.za) for more information.



# FROM THE HEART



Dear partners and friends

It's often said that children and youth are the Church of the future. This is true in the sense that they will be its leaders and decision-makers in the coming years, but I've been challenged by the fact that our children and youth are also the Church of today.

On our continent, youth aged 15 to 24 account for 20% of sub-Saharan Africa's total population. That's nearly 200 million individuals. They're the largest generation the region has raised and make up the majority of the Church in the region.

It's always encouraging to hear of a child or young person who makes wise choices, lives courageously and stands up against the tide like Ruth, Traore and Munah (see pages 2-4).

Thinking of that you may wonder:

***How is that possible amid persecution? How do parents, families, educators, and mentors give hope to the next generation and help them withstand persecution?***

As salt and light in the community, the local Church often facilitates equipping and building up young Christians to be resilient in the face of persecution.

Young people need to know that they are created in God's image and have value today and in the future. This must be communicated at an early age, as Barna Group research shows that one's worldview is formed by age 13. Helping the local Church to see children and youth as essential to the current Church and incorporate them in its growth is vital.

Thank you for partnering with Open Doors to make this happen.

Peace

*Lynette*

**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



## **Bank Accounts: South Africa**

Geopende Deure – Open  
Doors NPC,  
Capitec Business  
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. 12000238471

(Please fax proof of payment  
to +27 11 888 9362 or email  
to [southafrica@od.org](mailto:southafrica@od.org))

All information compiled by  
Open Doors Southern Africa  
and correct at time of printing.  
No reproduction without  
permission. Contact us at  
[southafrica@od.org](mailto:southafrica@od.org).

Printing done by Resolution Litho

REG # 2004/023397/08

Persecuted  But never alone.