

Underground, under pressure but growing

When you lead an underground church network in China, danger is everywhere

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Persecution has never been far away for Ling*, a Christian in south-west China. For her, your support keeps her going.

It started immediately after she and her husband Song* came to faith in Jesus. They'd returned home to their families, eager to share the Gospel. But when Ling refused to join in with ancestral worship, things turned ugly.

**Representative names and images used for security reasons.*

"The pressure on me was immense," remembers Ling. "My brother-in-law hurled insults and threatened to hit me."

Persecution continued even after Ling and Song's families converted to Christianity. The wider community felt shocked, angry and betrayed, and targeted Ling's family with gossip and rejection.

More recently, persecution has come from the authorities. Ling is

certain she's being watched, her mobile phone tracked. This secret surveillance fills her with fear.

But through it all, Ling has boldly shared her hope in Christ. And your support has strengthened and developed this faithful woman into a courageous leader in China's underground Church.

Protected and strengthened

Today, Ling runs a network of secret fellowship groups. It started small: Secret meetings in

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humble homes, believers praising and praying fervently. But it grew...

People started walking for hours to join a group. Numbers increased. Ling's husband, Song, stepped up to lead as well, and the couple joined a local missionary team dedicated to sharing the Gospel with ethnic minority communities.

Recently, thanks to your gifts and prayers, Ling attended Open Doors discipleship training. She attended discreetly to avoid scrutiny and benefited from being with other leaders of the underground Church, as they

shared stories, encouraged each other and grew in faith.

Matian*, our partner who facilitated the event, said: “The enemy does not rest, and the spiritual battle grows ever more intense. The devotion of those who came to our discipleship training deeply stirred my heart.”

Your support also allows our partners to visit Ling and offer practical aid, comfort, prayer and renewed hope.

It's a risk – but it's vital. Several training events had to be cancelled after the authorities detained Christians, so travelling to meet isolated believers is even

more important.

“Seeing the fruit of our people-to-people ministry is touching,” added Matian. “God is using Open Doors to come alongside village believers like Ling. Your support has deepened believers' understanding of God's word, strengthened faith amid persecution, and helped them know they are not alone.”

Through your gifts and prayers, Open Doors partners with believers like Ling, to strengthen believers living where faith costs the most.

To find out how you can help, visit www.opendoors.org.za/behind-closed-doors.

Your support at work

A snapshot of how your gifts and prayers are helping persecuted Christians around the world

IMPACT IN INDIA



It's been three years since ethnoreligious violence rocked Manipur State in northeastern India. The conflicts left thousands displaced, hundreds dead, villages and homes destroyed, and hundreds of churches burned or attacked. Many Christians were targeted, and believers are still dealing with the trauma of the violence. Through your gifts and prayers, Open Doors partners were able to walk alongside believers like Thoinu* and her husband Muan*, who were caught in the fighting.

Because of the violence, the couple was forced to flee Manipur and find a home in a neighbouring state of India. They didn't have jobs and faced an uncertain future.

"The burden [came] and we were so tense," Thoinu remembers. "But we still gave all our faith in God, because God has always provided. We don't have money ... but then we have God." Thanks to your support, Open Doors partners were able to provide them with urgent aid – essentials such as groceries, toiletries, blankets, and mosquito nets.

Because Open Doors has been working through partners in India for many years, your gifts have also supported longer-term needs. Our partners were able to provide some baking equipment to Thoinu, so the family can earn enough to make a living and even support several pastors in Manipur who are helping believers as they recover from the violence.

Despite all they've endured, they hope to serve others and encourage people who have been through similar trials. Thank you for standing with God's people in India!

KEEPING NORTH KOREANS STRONG



Representative photo.

Recently, an Open Doors fieldworker shared a letter (edited for security reasons) that he received from a North Korean believer. It reads:

Dear brothers and sisters,

Have you been at peace in the Lord?

We have been using your support for our ministry. Many believers are in great need, and we help those who are in the most need.

We, the North Korean Christians, are united in the same faith as you and devoted to a life centred on the Lord. We strive to prepare and equip the next generation to follow the Word's guidance and fulfil the Great Commission of our Lord. Under your guidance and support, we grow to be faithful servants of God ...

Today, I will end my letter here. Thank you and all the people who work for us.

Your support makes it possible for us, through our secret networks outside the country, to equip North Korean believers with Christian materials, provide food aid and medicines, operate safe houses for refugees, and create and broadcast Christian radio programmes that beam into North Korea.

Our fieldworker adds his thanks: "None of this would have been possible without the steadfast prayers and generous support of believers worldwide. They know the verse 'If one part suffers, every part suffers with it' (1 Corinthians 12:26). Not only do they know it, but they also act upon it. So thank you, on behalf of our entire team, for everything you do."



When Pastor Khoun* and his family accepted Christ, persecution wasn't far behind. Their village in Laos has traditional beliefs that are very difficult to leave without significant opposition. The pressure on Pastor Khoun built until, finally, his community gave him an ultimatum: "If you do not leave Jesus, we will destroy your house, and you will have to leave the village," they told him.

Pastor Khoun responded that he would never renounce his faith. "I told them that I had done nothing wrong. They insisted that believing in Jesus was against their animist traditions and customs. They told me, 'Your God is very strong, and our animism is weak.'"

"I questioned them boldly – If you know this, why don't you believe in Jesus?"

But they didn't listen. And a short time later, they destroyed his home. Pastor Khoun and his family were forced to flee.

Since that day, Pastor Khoun and his family have not been able to return to their village. They remain in the detention area and miss their home very much. They continue to feel the pressure of following Jesus in an area and country hostile to their faith.

"Life is a struggle; we have very little food and resources," Khoun shares.

Through your prayers and support, Open Doors' local partners are responding to these needs. They regularly reach out to Pastor Khoun and other Christians living in the area to bring practical aid, including food and grocery supplies. Pastor Khoun also attended a recent persecution-preparedness seminar led by Open Doors. The experience, he says, has encouraged him to be even more concerned about the Gospel. Thank you so much for your care for Pastor Khoun and others who are forced to live out their faith under constant pressure!

Your gifts and prayers make this work possible – and show believers across the world that they're not alone. Thank you!

Strengthen faith under pressure!

In many places around the world, followers of Jesus are forced to worship Him underground and under pressure, but they do it anyway. Your gift today can help strengthen believers who share your faith – but not your freedom.

Visit www.opendoors.org.za/behind-closed-doors to learn more. Your gifts and prayers make such a big difference for those who face persecution and oppression because of their faith in Christ!



**Throughout this newsletter, representative names used for security reasons.*