



PRECIOUS

THE OPEN DOORS MAGAZINE

**Worthless?
Or worth everything.**

2024 Volume 2

NO WOMAN IS WORTH



Simin, from Iran, lost her home,
job and freedom to persecution.

Image is representative

AN HLESS



Women are already vulnerable in the Middle East – but Christian women are made to feel worthless. You can help a woman know her value in Christ.

Anger blazed in her father's eyes as he flipped over the kitchen table and roared at Sara*. *"All this time you asked about Christianity, I thought it would pass. But apparently I did not raise you right!"*

He snatched Sara's phone and locked her in her bedroom. Sara remained there, trapped, for 10 whole days. Later, she discovered her father had erased her name from the family records.

It was a brutal, ruthless rejection – all because this young woman had turned her back on Islam *and chosen Jesus instead.*

For months, Sara, who lived in Iraq, had been reading a Bible given to her by a Christian friend. The loving God she discovered in

Scripture couldn't be more different from the God of Islam she'd been raised to fear. "After I found Christ, my life transformed completely," said Sara.

But now, spurned by the family she loved, Sara felt worthless. *She's not the only one.* More of her story on the next pages.

UNDER ATTACK

Across the Middle East, women are vulnerable. They have fewer rights than men and limited opportunities. But if a woman is also a disciple of Christ, her vulnerability is exploited and she becomes the target for intense persecution.

"GOD BROUGHT ME TO MY LOWEST, ONLY TO LIFT ME UP AGAIN."

While men tend to face violent, physical and public attacks for their faith, the persecution of women is insidious and cruel. According to Open Doors' latest report on Gender-Specific Religious Persecution, the *value* of Christian women is under attack.

Women are shamed by sexual violence, devalued by forced marriage, and stripped of their identity by the loss of work and independence. Often, their suffering is hidden because persecution happens behind closed doors.

SIMIN'S STORY

Simin*, from Iran, was a young nurse when she opened a Bible for the first time – and God touched her heart.

"In the Bible, women have so much value. We are seen!" she exclaimed. "I felt I was walking with Jesus, and it changed me."

But faith cost Simin dearly. Her family mocked her. Her father said she'd lost her mind. "Islam and the regime in Iran



Your support can provide Scripture material to nurture the faith of persecuted women, and help them know their value in Christ.

destroyed the identity of women and almost all women are broken," she said. One day, Simin's home was raided by police – and her sense of worth was stripped away.

"My husband and I were in prison for 18 days. Just a few hours after we were found guilty, the hospital called to say I was fired," said Simin. "We realised the only way to survive and keep serving Jesus was to flee Iran. It was terrifying, but we had to sacrifice."

GOD-GIVEN POTENTIAL

No woman should be made to feel worthless. Women like Sara and Simin need to know their value in Christ. They need your help to fulfill their God-given potential.

"IN THE BIBLE, WOMEN HAVE SO MUCH VALUE. WE ARE SEEN!"

Your gifts and prayers can provide persecuted women with desperately needed leadership and discipleship training, trauma care and pastoral support. At Centres of Hope across the Middle East, you can help women grow in



faith, start their own businesses, and support one another.

For Sara, rejected by loved ones, the care of her global church family means the world. She escaped her father and now attends a Centre of Hope church in northern Iraq. Her dream is to get an identity card which states her Christian faith.

"I've never regretted the decision I made," said Sara. "God brought me down to my lowest, only to lift me up again."

And for Simin, who lost her home, job and freedom, your support strengthens her to serve other women. "I'm getting better, mentally and spiritually. I'm not there yet, but I understand the pain of other women and I want to comfort them."

Two different stories. Two women made to feel worthless by persecution. But one powerful church family, which can lift up persecuted women so they know their value in Christ.

**Names changed to protect their identities*

Will you help persecuted women know their value in Christ?

PLEASE PRAY

- For Simin, that her faith will grow and she'll have the strength to support other women.
- For Sara, that she would deeply know her value as a cherished, unique child of God.
- For courage for women across the Middle East who are shamed, mocked and made to feel worthless because of their faith.

PLEASE GIVE

Every PHP 1,350 will provide Biblical literature to four Persecuted Christian women help nurture their faith.

Every PHP 1,850 will provide food for a persecuted Christian woman and her family for a month.

Every PHP 3,100 will help a persecuted Christian woman to start a livelihood for her own income.

Open Doors Philippines is a ministry serving persecuted Christians and churches worldwide.

We supply Bibles, leadership training, literacy programs, livelihood support, and advocacy services.

The World Watch List is Open Doors' annual list of the top 50 countries where Christians face extreme persecution. More than 365 million Christians today suffer persecution and discrimination for their faith in Christ.

Invite Open Doors Philippines to speak in your church! Contact us to schedule an Open Doors speaker to lead your next Prayer Meeting or (missions) Sunday Worship.

CONTACT US:

Open Doors Philippines


(+632) 8924-4381 to 82


(+63) 998-883-0821


philippines@od.org


FIND US ON:

www.opendoors.ph

 facebook.com/opendoorsph

 twitter.com/opendoorsph

 youtube.com/opendoorsph

 @opendoorsph

Open Doors Magazine
2024 Volume 2

Printed in March 2024

WORLD WATCH LIST

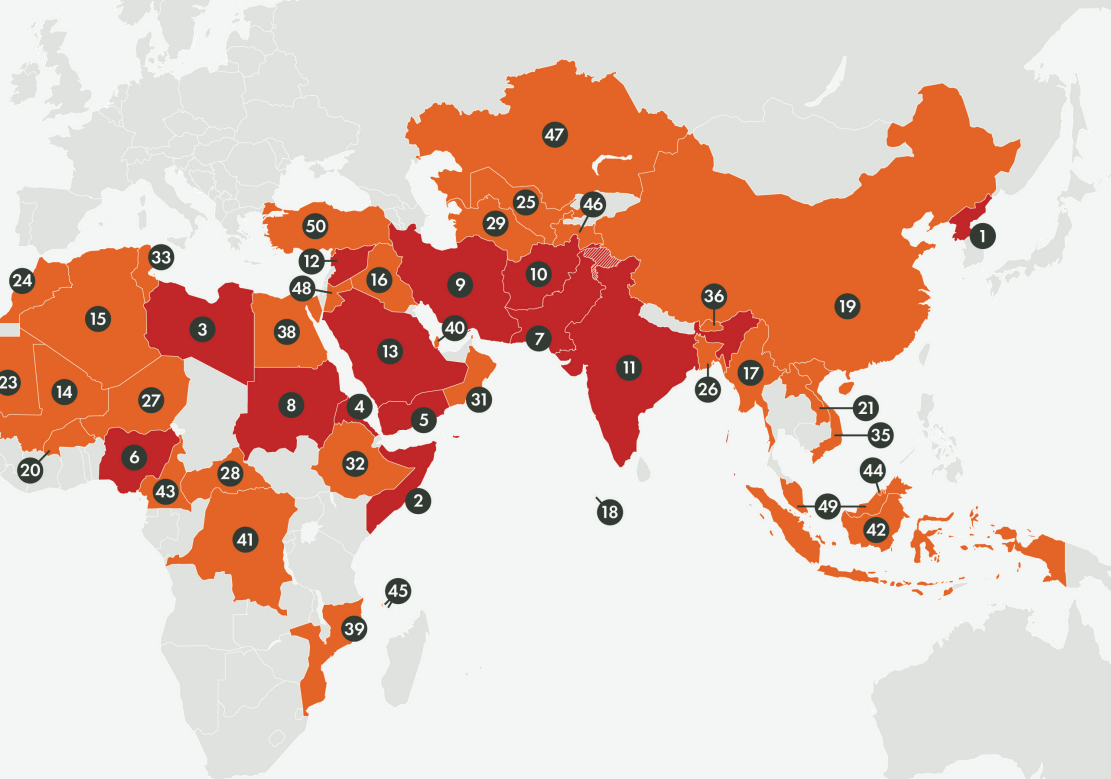
OPEN DOORS' VISION IS THAT NO CHRISTIAN SUFFERS



Know more,

IST 2024

ERS PERSECUTION ALONE



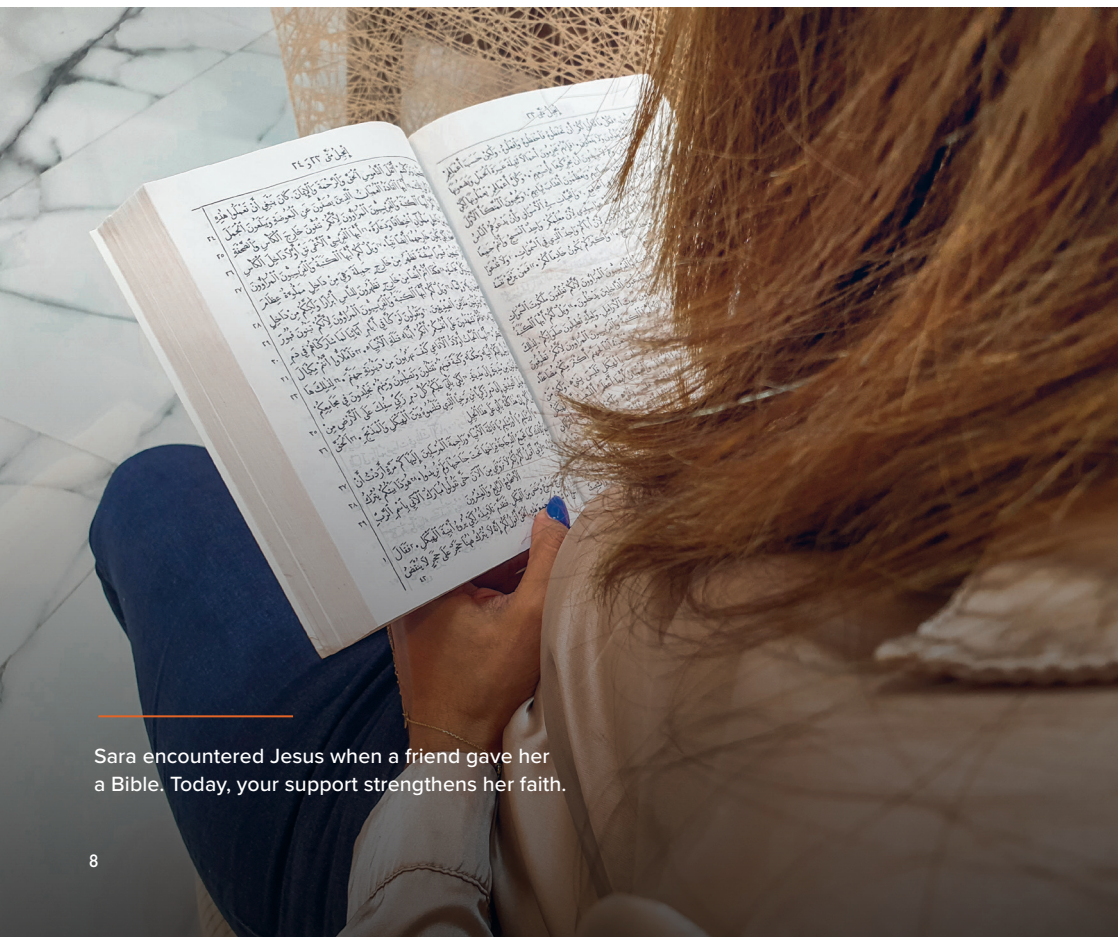
- | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| 11 India | 21 Laos | 31 Oman | 41 Congo DR (DRC) |
| 12 Syria | 22 Cuba | 32 Ethiopia | 42 Indonesia |
| 13 Saudi Arabia | 23 Mauritania | 33 Tunisia | 43 Cameroon |
| 14 Mali | 24 Morocco | 34 Colombia | 44 Brunei |
| 15 Algeria | 25 Uzbekistan | 35 Vietnam | 45 Comoros |
| 16 Iraq | 26 Bangladesh | 36 Bhutan | 46 Tajikistan |
| 17 Myanmar | 27 Niger | 37 Mexico | 47 Kazakhstan |
| 18 Maldives | 28 Central African Republic | 38 Egypt | 48 Jordan |
| 19 China | 29 Turkmenistan | 39 Mozambique | 49 Malaysia |
| 20 Burkina Faso | 30 Nicaragua | 40 Qatar | 50 Turkey |

pray, and support your persecuted Family today!

www.opendoors.ph

FINDING HER VALUE

When Iraqi believer, Sara, was rejected by her family, she felt worthless. Thanks to you, she's discovering her value in Christ.



Sara encountered Jesus when a friend gave her a Bible. Today, your support strengthens her faith.

The door slammed shut and Sara's* father turned the key. She was locked in her bedroom...

For 10 days, Sara remained in that room with nothing to eat, while her father simmered with rage at her new-found faith in Jesus. "I would have preferred if you ran away with a man to get married, and not done this," he told Sara.

It's hard to believe this bright young woman, a medical student in Baghdad, Iraq, could be made to feel so worthless. Sara loved her father, and the rejection was deeply painful. But she did not give up on Jesus. "I felt lonely and hopeless, but I kept my faith and kept praying to God."

Miraculously, Sara escaped and fled north. However, as an unmarried woman and a convert, she was extremely vulnerable. Her father had erased her name from the family records, and she was continually harassed by men.

"God brought me to my lowest, only to lift me up."

But God guided Sara into a Centre of Hope – and towards your faithful support.

Sara turned away from the hurt and shame caused by loved ones, and stepped into the arms of her global church family. There, thanks to you, Sara is valued, empowered and strengthened in her faith.

"Before, my life was empty," said Sara. "I didn't have the joy and peace that I have now in my heart. Now, I am grateful for all the bad things I've been through because I know God better and I was transformed into His image."

Today, Sara attends a church which is an Open Doors' Centre of Hope. There are more than 100 Centres of Hope in Iraq, and more across the Middle East. Your generosity means these centres shine as beacons of light, providing persecuted

believers with spiritual, practical and emotional help.

With your gifts and prayers, Centres of Hope run Bible studies and distribute Scripture, provide health and medical aid, and run income-generating projects, education and trauma healing.

Sara has not only received training to grow as a disciple, she's also part of a women's group where she feels safe and loved. She knows her value in Christ, and is courageously beginning to share the gospel with others.

"My dream is to get an identity card that says I am Christian, that I belong to Him in my ID," said Sara. "I have never regretted the decision I made for Jesus. God brought me down to my lowest, only to lift me up again."

**Name changed to protect her identity*



Thanks to you, Iraqi women take part in discipleship trainings.

WWL
16

PLEASE PRAY

- Ask that Sara's faith and ministry in Iraq would grow.
- For Sara's father, that God will touch his heart and reveal Himself.
- For protection over Sara, and other persecuted women in the Middle East.

A DONOR'S TESTIMONY

Roseanne is one of Open Doors' Philippines faithful partners and this is her testimony of her journey with Open Doors as she continues to partner with persecuted women.



WHY DO I SUPPORT PERSECUTED WOMEN? LET ME COUNT THE REASONS:

1. I support the persecuted for it is a command.
2. I support the persecuted because of my parents' influence.
3. I support the persecuted because of a persecution experience.
4. I support the persecuted because my Savior Jesus Christ was persecuted.
5. I support the persecuted women because I simply just like to do it.

As a child, my parents taught us, their children that praying for the children of God is a command. As a teenager, we were encouraged to continue to pray for the Christians who are suffering because of their faith in Christ. I remember receiving and using the prayer guide of Open Doors. I saw my parents fervently praying and giving to Open Doors. I was influenced to do the same. Later in my teens, as I involved myself in various evangelistic activities, I experienced (very mild) persecutions. That was the time I seriously and consistently prayed for the persecuted Christians and started giving a small portion from my allowance. Then as I matured spiritually, I committed myself to pray and financially support the work of Jesus Christ in areas where Christians are persecuted. Also, I learned as I studied the Bible, that Jesus my Savior was also persecuted. I want to give back to Him. Recently, I chose to support the persecuted women because I like to do it following Ephesians 6:18 "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people."

I thank the Lord for using my parents and Open Doors to make me aware of the persecuted Christians specifically the women around the world and for enabling me to be a part of fulfilling Matthew 5:10, blessing those who are persecuted because of righteousness.

Roseanne is a Sunday School teacher in Berean Gospel Church of Quezon City. She also teaches in a Chinese Christian school.

NO TURNING BACK

This reflection is from Vui*, a Filipina Open Doors field worker who has been serving the Persecuted Church in Asia since 2015. She hails from the Bicol Region, and a graduate of BA Communications at a university in Cebu.



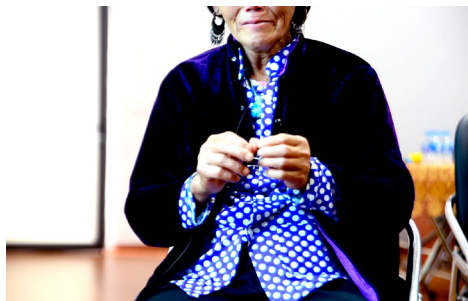
Chu* is a Hmong tribal believer in northern Vietnam, the first Christian in her remote village. Her abuse came at the hands of her husband, prompted by village leaders who, in turn, were pressured by the communist government to force her to deny her faith.

“When I wouldn’t say no to Jesus, he hit me with [a heave stick] again and again.”

She points to the bruises on her neck, head, and arms. With each vicious blow, Chu screamed in pain.

Although only with the clothes on her back, and

painfully losing her family, Chu finally decided to leave home. “I am following Christ, there’s no turning back.”



I met Chu in February 2020, just days before the country’s borders were shut due to Covid. But my recollection of her is still vivid and my heart still aches whenever I would remember what she told me the first time I met her four years ago.

“Please bring me to your place. I don’t want to stay here any longer,” Chu pleaded to me as she wrapped me in her warm embrace, voice hoarse from crying.

I could feel her deep longing for a family and community that understands her and could nurture her faith in Christ. Although I couldn’t bring her back to the Philippines where we have the privilege to exercise our faith freely with our loved ones, Chu’s courage in boldly choosing Jesus is something I want to see more in my journey with God. Her decision to stay despite the consequences is an inspiration and encouragement to me to remain in Christ no matter the challenges.

I tell Chu that so many women throughout the world need to hear and be inspired by her story as well. She shares the truth that she has learned firsthand: “My encouragement for them is to continue to lean on God and keep faith no matter what, [to be] willing to abandon all things for the sake of God.”

Chu is one of my faith heroes—a character who was as if fleshed out from the Bible. An ordinary woman made extraordinary by our God.

**pseudonym*



SHE PAID THE PRICE

SHOW SIMIN HER VALUE

The cost of following Jesus is huge for women in Iran and the Middle East. Simin* lost her home, her job, her freedom.

No woman should be made to feel worthless.

Today, you can help persecuted women like Simin fulfill their God-given potential by providing leadership and discipleship training, trauma care and pastoral support.

Will you help persecuted women know their value in Christ?

Every PHP 1,350 can provide Biblical literature to four persecuted Christian women to help them grow in the faith.

Every PHP 1,850 can provide food for a persecuted Christian woman and her family for a month.

Show your support for your persecuted sisters in Christ! Use the Response Form, or contact us at 0998-8830821 (SMS, Viber), or e-mail us at philippines@od.org.

Thank you.



OpenDoors