



NEVER ALONE

2023: A YEAR IN REVIEW



**“STRENGTHEN WHAT
REMAINS AND IS
ABOUT TO DIE.”**

REVELATION 3:2



Thanks to your support, Open Doors field partners handed out more than 130 Bibles to Christian youth in northern Nigeria, May 2023



ABOUT OPEN DOORS

It was back in 1955 that a young Dutch missionary went to Communist Poland with a suitcase full of gospel tracts. Behind the Iron Curtain, he found isolated Christians who thought the world had forgotten them, and churches desperately in need of Bibles.

He prayed and opened his Bible – and found these words: “Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die.” (Revelation 3:2)

That man became known as Brother Andrew, that verse became his mission – and his trip changed the world.

Brother Andrew made countless journeys across Europe in the following years, smuggling Bibles in his blue VW Beetle. He developed a trademark prayer:

“Lord, in my luggage I have Scripture I want to take to Your children. When You were on earth, You made blind eyes see. Now, I pray, make seeing eyes blind. Do not let the guards see those things You do not want them to see.”

As the ministry grew, other needs emerged. As well as Bibles, persecuted Christians around the world needed leadership, education, practical support.

Brother Andrew went to be with the Lord in 2022. But today, your support means Open Doors works in more than 70 countries to support Christians who dare to follow Jesus no matter the cost. With your gifts and prayers, millions of persecuted believers know they are not alone.

Thank you for standing with them.

A LETTER FROM BJ



“TRULY I TELL YOU, WHATEVER YOU DID FOR ONE OF THE LEAST OF THESE BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF MINE, YOU DID FOR ME.”

MATTHEW 25:40

You are such a blessing. In a world where persecution of Christians is intensifying, your kindness means our persecuted brothers and sisters are never alone...

You are the reason a widow in Nigeria has an income to feed herself and her children.

You are the reason a secret believer in North Korea has the strength to follow Jesus.

You are the reason a Muslim-background believer in the Middle East is growing in faith.

Looking back over the past year, every second you spent in prayer for your persecuted family made a difference. Every kind donation helped someone in desperate need.

Your support reached more than eight million persecuted believers with training, practical support, advocacy and Scripture material.

Across the world, persecution worsened in 2023. At the same time, your commitment grew stronger. You helped Open Doors reach 7% more Christians than in 2022, expanding our ‘presence’ ministry to ensure persecuted believers are never alone.

You’ve provided trauma healing, encouragement, online support and fellowship where it’s needed most. And you’ve launched ingenious projects which help Christians cope with economic challenges, and build bridges to the wider community.

In future, I fear religious persecution will increase, driven by political instability, climate change, population growth, and the drift towards dictatorships among governments.

But I know you will not forget your brothers and sisters risking everything to follow Jesus. Together, we will stand with Christians facing persecution and discrimination, so they are never alone. Thank you.

Yours in Christ,

BJ Candole
Manager, Open Doors Philippines



Abdulla* fled Afghanistan after the Taliban took control, and now lives in Central Asia. This faithful believer risks everything to follow Jesus and disciple other Afghan converts. Your support is providing Abdulla with training to strengthen his faith and ministry.

“My initial plan was to go further, towards Europe, for a better life,” said Abdulla. “But I prayed, and now I’m sure God is calling me and my family to serve here. We can see how God is blessing us.”

**Name changed for security reasons*

YOUR GLOBAL IMPACT

More than 365 million Christians suffer high levels of persecution and discrimination for their faith. That's one in seven Christians in the world. Your faithful support and prayers make a difference. *Thanks to you, people risking everything to follow Jesus are never alone.*

HOW YOU HELPED IN 2023



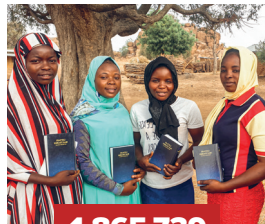
668,462
PEOPLE RECEIVED
ADVOCACY SUPPORT



3,667,593
PEOPLE RECEIVED
BIBLICAL TRAINING
AND DISCIPLESHIP



565,126
PEOPLE WERE HELPED
WITH SOCIO-ECONOMIC
SUPPORT



1,865,739
PEOPLE RECEIVED
BIBLES AND
CHRISTIAN LITERATURE



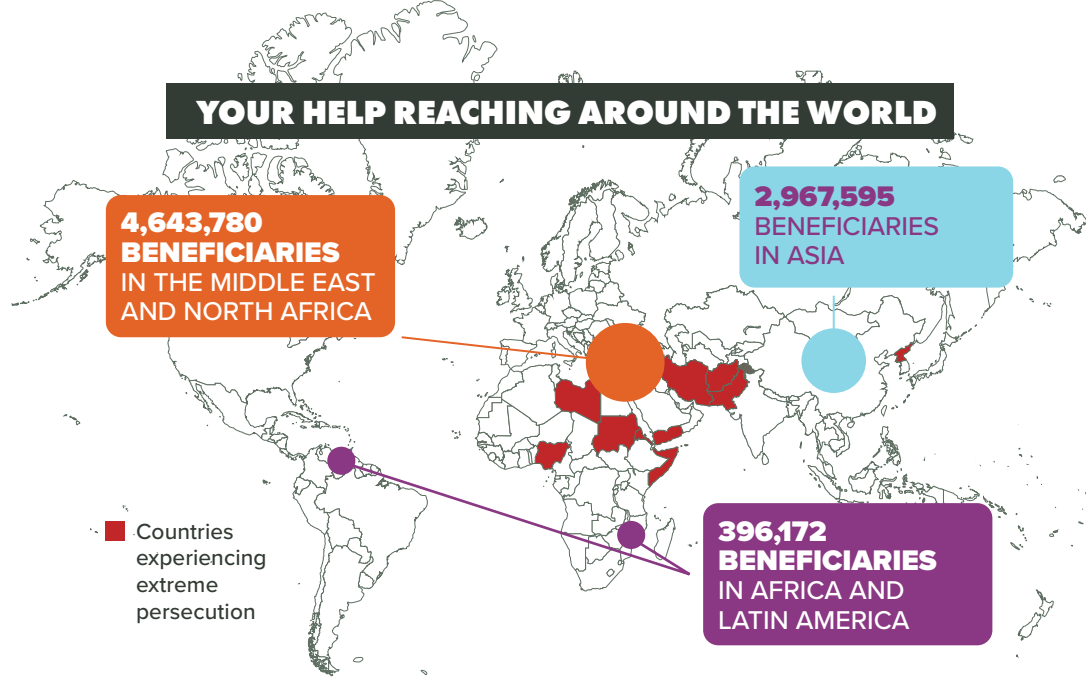
1,240,627
PEOPLE WERE SUPPORTED
THROUGH PRESENCE
MINISTRY AND RESEARCH

8M+ PEOPLE
WERE SUPPORTED
AROUND THE WORLD,
A 7% INCREASE
COMPARED TO 2022

77% MORE PEOPLE
BENEFITTED FROM
OPEN DOORS PRESENCE
MINISTRY, MAINLY
ONLINE PROGRAMMES,
COMPARED TO 2022

10% MORE
BIBLES AND SCRIPTURE
ITEMS DISTRIBUTED
COMPARED TO 2022

YOUR HELP REACHING AROUND THE WORLD



YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION

AYUBA'S STORY

When Ayuba* heard Boko Haram were heading for his village in northeast Nigeria, he fled. He knew the violence inflicted by these Islamic extremists would be brutal.

The next day, Ayuba returned and discovered his father's body. He'd been beheaded. Then Boko Haram sent a list of people they wanted to kill next. "My name was on it," said Ayuba.

This young man immediately went into hiding. But your support found Ayuba – and you've given him a future.

You provided trauma counselling to address Ayuba's desire for revenge. You ensured he had money to support his siblings. And you helped him join a vocational training course, leading to a good job.

"This training will help me in the future, and allow me to support the church," said Ayuba. "Thank you, my brothers and sisters, for your support. I pray God will bless you and your families."

**name changed for security reasons*



YOUR IMPACT IN AFRICA AND LATIN AMERICA

Violent persecution in Sub-Saharan Africa is unprecedented. In 2023 there were more killings, more attacks on Christian schools, clinics and churches, and a surge in believers forced to flee their homes.

Meanwhile, in Latin America, religious freedom violations are becoming more aggressive and frequent. Persecution is increasing faster in Nicaragua than almost anywhere else in the world.

Your support reached believers under extreme pressure.



\$10M+
spent on socio-economic development work in these regions in 2023



45
care-giving ministries established in Ethiopia, providing trauma healing and counselling



50,000+
persecuted believers supported in Latin America

The focus for Open Doors' work in Africa and Latin America in 2023 was socio-economic development, with more being spent in this area than any other.

Thanks to you, a number of 'bridging projects' were launched. These strategic schemes demonstrate God's love to local people through projects that benefit the community. They include schools, mill houses, water boreholes and literacy classes. By building favour with the community, these projects challenge local perceptions of Christians and protect the church from harm.

Open Doors partners have come alongside believers with trauma counselling, relief and rehabilitation ministries.

In Latin America, 54,622 persecuted Christians were supported with training, mentoring, literature and advocacy work. Most support went to believers in Colombia, followed by Nicaragua.

YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION

EZANA AND FASIL'S STORY

Ezana and Fasil* longed for one thing: *a safe childhood.*

These young twins live in southern Ethiopia, where evangelical Christians are relentlessly persecuted. Their father is a bold preacher – so the family is a target.

Ezana and Fasil attended a school supported by Open Doors, but it only went up to a certain age and they were due to leave. They feared for their safety in a public school.

Thanks to you, their school has been expanded and more classes added. Now the boys can stay on to learn and live out their faith in safety. "They are the next generation for the gospel," said the twin's father Ermias*. "They are the hope for the church."

**names changed for security reasons*

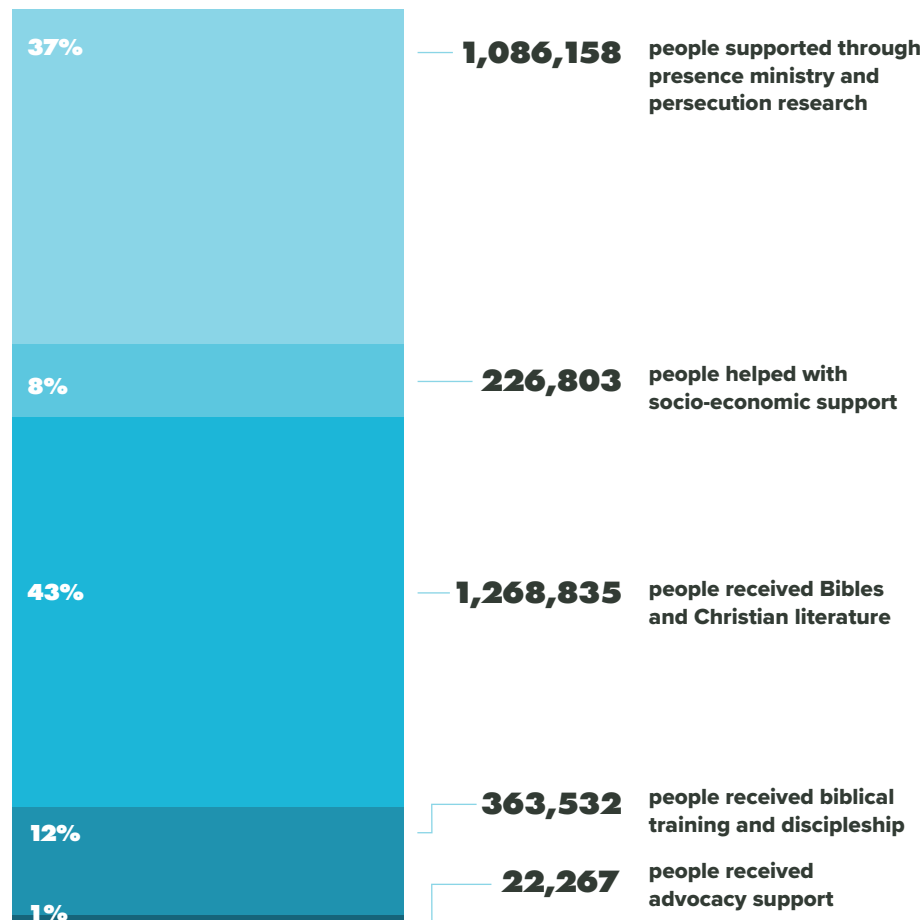


YOUR IMPACT IN ASIA

Asia is home to some of the most dangerous places on earth to follow Jesus.

In North Korea, believers face torture and death. In China, an estimated 10,000 churches were closed or destroyed in 2023. In India, the radical Hindu government is opening the door for a dramatic increase in violent persecution.

Your support strengthened the church in Asia as a powerful witness.



Supporting the church in Asia to be salt and light was a key priority for 2023, with around two-thirds of all beneficiaries equipped to be witnesses for Christ. Your gifts provided discipleship materials, training, healing and church restoration projects.

Context-relevant training was run for 1,000 Christians in rural Laos, and leaders in North Korea were equipped with intensive discipleship training. In Sri Lanka, Bible training inspired three-quarters of Christians to display Christ-like behaviour, reaching out with love to their community, according to feedback.

Prayer gatherings were organised among mainstream churches in Malaysia and Indonesia, to encourage people to pray with their persecuted brothers and sisters. Meanwhile, social media and online work reached 20% more people (including isolated believers) in Central Asia.



30% GROWTH in believers reached in Indonesia and 25% growth in Myanmar



15% MORE believers supported in North Korea in 2023



2X MORE PEOPLE reached in Malaysia, compared to 2022, through discipleship and Sunday school teacher training



YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION

MING'S STORY

Ming* is part of China's underground church. A Bible smuggler who's been rejected by his family and arrested by the authorities, he is under constant surveillance.

Recently Ming's home was searched by the authorities again, and he narrowly avoided jail. Ming feels weary and distrustful – but your support strengthens his faith.

An Open Doors partner regularly meets with Ming, to provide discipleship training and prepare him to lead an underground church in future.

Ming has this message for supporters like you: "Thank you for praying. I feel I am not by myself. I feel God has been looking after me, protecting me from being put in prison. You energise and encourage me to stay committed to the call of sharing the gospel."

**name changed and representative image used for security reasons*

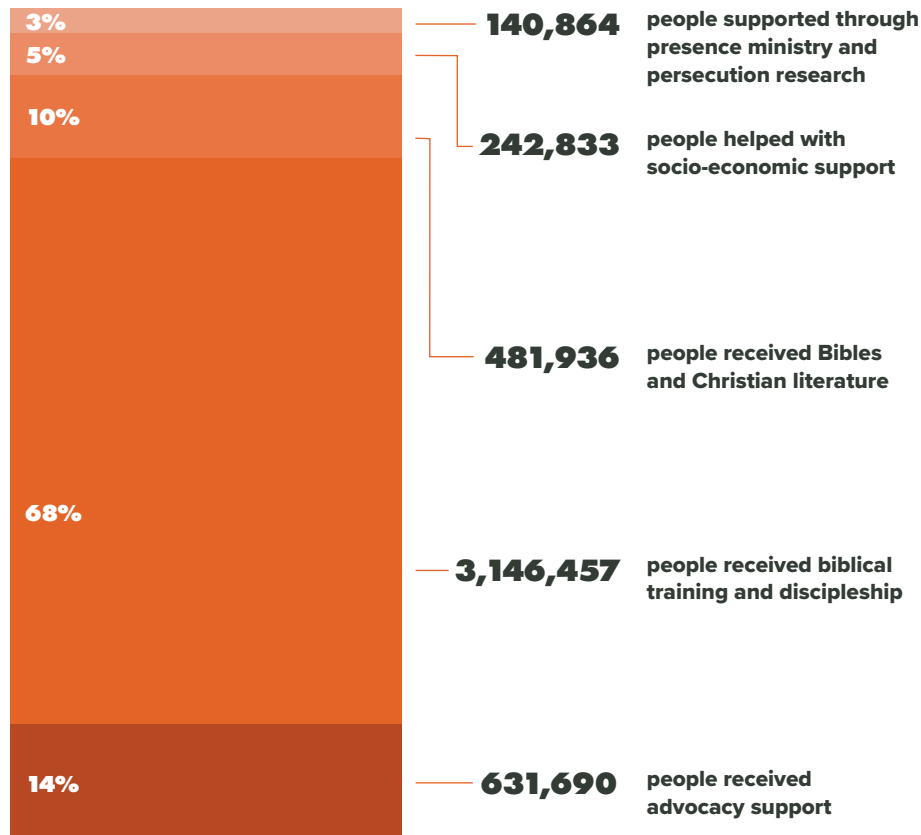
YOUR IMPACT

IN MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Life is precarious and volatile for Christians in the Middle East and North Africa.

Political turmoil and conflict has sparked an exodus of believers, seeking security elsewhere. Natural disasters, including the huge earthquake in Turkey and Syria, have added to the instability. Meanwhile, Muslim-background believers in North Africa are under increasing pressure and churches are being forcibly closed.

Your support ensured persecuted believers are never alone.



6,050 CHURCHES

worked with Open Doors in 2023, a 17% increase compared to 2022



14

brothers at risk of the death penalty were released in a North African country in 2023



3X MORE PEOPLE

were supported in Yemen compared to 2022

Open Doors expanded its reach across the Middle East and North Africa, with humanitarian crises in places like Yemen opening up opportunities to connect with Christians. Our work grew in several North African nations, as well as in Israel/Palestine, and our investment in social media has reached many isolated believers.

Your support also saw new church partners come on board. In Egypt alone, 3,144 churches were supported in places where Christians face intense persecution. Your gifts and prayers are helping churches shine as 'Centres of Hope', bringing God's love to communities under pressure.

We also saw fruit from Open Doors' long-term advocacy work. In one North African country (which we can't name for security reasons), we finally secured freedom for 14 brothers facing the death penalty. In another country, in the Middle East, detained believers were released.

YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION

SAHAR'S STORY

Tears rolled down Sahar's* face as a car took her away from the family home. Her husband had discovered her secret faith and thrown her out. Would she see her children again?

Sahar went to prison, in Iran, for her faith. But today she's safe in a neighbouring country, reunited with her sons. Because of your support, Sahar now helps other women risking everything to follow Jesus.

Sahar runs an online and in-person ministry reaching Iranian and Afghan women with the gospel – with a special focus on women rejected by their families and communities...

"Christian women need prayer, love, counselling and teaching," said Sahar. "I do as much as I can. God gave me a vision and, thanks to you, I am pursuing it. Seeing God use me to bless others is very precious."

**name changed for security reasons*



**"IF ONE PART SUFFERS,
EVERY PART SUFFERS
WITH IT... YOU ARE THE
BODY OF CHRIST, AND
EACH ONE OF YOU IS
A PART OF IT."**

1 CORINTHIANS 26-27



YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION BETHANY'S STORY

It's hard to imagine the pain and sorrow endured by Bethany. But thanks to you, she has a future...*

Several years ago, Bethany's daughter Mary* was abducted by Fulani militants during an attack on their home in northern Nigeria. For 54 days, Mary was held captive and sexually assaulted. Bethany paid a ransom to secure Mary's release – but the payment left the family destitute.

Mary was traumatised by what happened. She attended an Open Doors healing programme – and things began to look brighter. "My daughter came back full of hope and love," remembers Bethany.

But tragedy struck again. Mary became ill and, in February 2023, she suddenly died.

It was hard to comprehend. "Just when I thought God was wiping my tears, I had the pain of losing Mary," said Bethany.



Bethany and her remaining daughters

What happened next is a reminder of the extreme danger faced by Christians in Sub-Saharan Africa, where violence is unprecedented and believers risk everything to follow Jesus.

**"MY BRETHREN
IN CHRIST, I AM
GRATEFUL TO
YOU ALL."**

Just months after her daughter's death, Bethany herself was kidnapped while working in the fields. "I cried all day and night and prayed to God to rescue me," said Bethany. "All these events left me heartbroken and helpless."

Thankfully, you were there for Bethany.

Your support brought Bethany to an Open Doors trauma healing course, after her release. "The one week I spent in the centre has brought joy, hope and reassurance of God's love," said Bethany. "It helped me know I am not alone."

And your kindness didn't end there. Thanks to you, Open Doors partners were able to build a house for Bethany on a small plot of land which belonged to Mary. Your generosity has given Bethany a new start – and hope for the future.

"My brethren in Christ, I am grateful to you all," said Bethany, tears rolling down her face. "You gave yourselves to do this for me. I lack the words to say thank you, but God will bless you."

**names changed to protect our persecuted family*

THANK YOU FOR FAITHFULLY SUPPORTING YOUR PERSECUTED FAMILY.

*"Bear one another's
burdens, and so fulfil
the law of Christ."*

GALATIANS 6:2



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