

OPEN DOORS



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60 years of serving persecuted Christians

By Mervyn Smith

1 Corinthians 12:26: "If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it."

Imagine for a moment Bridgnorth Baptist Church being closed down. Living in fear because of your faith and having to meet secretly. Imagine living daily with the likelihood of being attacked. Of seeing your homes burned and fellow Christians being injured or even killed. Imagine being forced to deny Jesus, fleeing your home, possibly your country. This is happening every day to millions of Christians in thousands of churches around the world.

Just over 60 years ago a young Dutch missionary, Brother Andrew, travelled to Poland and discovered the reality of persecution for the first time (you can read about his experiences in the famous book *God's Smuggler*). As a result of his work behind the Iron Curtain in those dangerous Cold War years, Open Doors began. Today Open Doors works in over 60 countries in their provision for Christians under pressure. Open Doors provides practical support to persecuted Christians, such as food, medicines, trauma care, legal assistance, safe houses and schools, as well as spiritual support through Christian literature, training and resources.

The persecuted Church family, our brothers and sisters in Christ, is facing greater challenges than ever before. The needs of the persecuted Church are growing. But with great need comes great opportunities and perhaps we can contribute by being part of that! We are a large family and Open Doors cannot do the work alone because the church is not divided into persecuted and free. One body. In the coming weeks and months, you will hear more and perhaps be challenged to consider how our church might stand with our persecuted family as a partner church. If you know of or even support the work of Open Doors already that's wonderful, but if not I urge you to find out more by looking them up on www.opendoorsuk.org. What you discover will certainly make you think and I suspect make you aware that we have much to be thankful for in the UK.

In closing please consider this prayer from Pastor Douglas, Erbil, Iraq:

Without Your grace we cannot survive, Lord God.

Even if there is enough food and there are good medicines. Come with Your grace into our lives.

Thanks to your grace we can see that You are really here, that Your strength is still present here, and that the Holy Spirit is working in our lives.

We are weak, but belong to You, to You alone. We will follow You for all time.

Amen