

OpenDoors

MAGAZINE

JANUARY | FEBRUARY 2026

IMPOSSIBLE FAITH

MEET NORTH KOREAN
BELIEVERS

STRENGTHENING CHRISTIANS WHERE FAITH COSTS THE MOST

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Cover image: Following Jesus in North Korea is so dangerous, it should be impossible. But with your support, faith will not only survive – it can thrive. Read more on page 4.

GARY'S TAKE



Pastor Gary Stagg
 Executive Director
 Open Doors Canada

Dear Friend,

As Christian persecution continues to rise in our world, the Church remains a living testimony of courage and hope. Even in places like North Korea, despite relentless pressure, believers are not merely surviving—they are flourishing. Their resilience is rooted in unwavering devotion to Christ and strengthened by the prayers and sacrificial support of faithful Christians like you.

In hidden homes, remote villages, and underground gatherings, the gospel continues to advance with unstoppable force. What was meant to silence faith has instead ignited revival. Through persecution, the church has discovered a deeper joy, a purer faith, and a boldness that transforms communities. This is a story of resilience, hope and victory – proof that God’s kingdom cannot be shaken.

As we join our hearts and hands with persecuted Christians around the world, we become an integral part of this story of miraculous strength being written in these last days. With every whispered prayer and every act of solidarity, we become part of a movement that defies opposition.

As we embark on another year, let’s do so with an unrelenting commitment to standing with, and strengthening the most persecuted so the Church remains God’s faithful witness in our world.

Grace & Peace,

Pastor Gary Stagg



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IMPOSSIBLE FAITH

Evangelist Cho shares the gospel with North Korean refugees – but this ministry depends on your support.

Following Jesus in North Korea is so dangerous, it should be impossible. But with your support, faith will not only survive – it can thrive.

Eun-Yeong* was terrified. Crouching in the undergrowth, she watched the man approach. “Get away from us,” Eun-Yeong cried in fear. “Leave us alone!”

Eun-Yeong and her partner Cheol-Ho* were in danger. They’d only just made the perilous journey to escape North Korea, and this stranger could send them back. As defectors, they would face severe punishment – including torture and even death.

But instead, the man placed a bag of food and water on the forest floor. He also left blankets and shelter, and promised to return.

The next night, as Eun-Yeong ate delicious white rice delivered by the kind stranger, she couldn’t help but ask: why do you do this?

“It’s because of a man named Jesus,” came the reply, from Open Doors partner Evangelist Cho**. “He is the Son of God, and He loves you very much. In fact, I brought you a book about Him...”

INDOCTRINATED

For years, Evangelist Cho had been helping North Korean refugees like this young couple. Every day, he hiked through the mountain forests. His mission? “To save souls,” Cho said.

But like most North Koreans he met, Eun-Yeong and Cheol-Ho had been taught to hate religion. Christianity is dangerous and evil, the regime insisted, and foreign missionaries poison children and steal their organs.

And yet, Evangelist Cho’s steadfast care challenged this couple’s assumptions. In their makeshift tent on the North Korean border, Eun-Yeong and Cheol-Ho started reading the Bible...

One day, Cho visited with his usual delivery of food and Eun-Yeong ran to meet him. “I had a dream,” she said breathlessly. “A person called me by name – and I think it was ‘Jesus’ this book talks about. I want to know more... What can you tell me?”

Evangelist Cho smiled. This couple’s lives were about to change forever.

SAFE HOUSES

Cho took Eun-Yeong and Cheol-Ho to an Open Doors safe house. Here, North Korean refugees receive food and care, and have an opportunity

to learn about Jesus. Eun-Yeong and Cheol-Ho threw themselves into Bible study. They gave their lives to Christ – and then made an astonishing announcement: “God is calling us to return to North Korea, to share our new-found faith with people desperately in need of the gospel,” said Eun-Yeong.

It meant risking extreme danger. North Korea has been top, or near the top, of the World Watch List for more than 20 years. Christianity is completely forbidden, and owning a Bible can mean a death sentence. If a secret believer is discovered, he or she may face torture, interrogation or life in a labour camp.

But despite the danger, we estimate there are more than 400,000 Christians in North Korea. They operate in secret, and meet in small, trusted groups.

Now, Eun-Yeong and Cheol-Ho are among them – and they’ve been faithful to God’s call.

One year after Cho first met Eun-Yeong and Cheol-Ho, he received a coded message from inside North Korea. It said simply: “Our family has grown to five.”

ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE

In human terms, faith shouldn’t be possible in North Korea. Yet, even here, the Lord is at work.

Right now, people like Cho are waiting along the border to share the good news with fleeing refugees. Our secret network of safe houses can support thousands of people with relief aid and pastoral care. Christians who plan to return to North Korea can receive vital biblical training from Open Doors partners. And while some believers might re-visit a safe house in future, for many, this may be the last chance to hear the gospel in their life.

None of this ministry can happen without your support.

“WITH MAN THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE, BUT WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE.”

MATTHEW 19:26

Your gifts and prayers can help the most persecuted Christians in the world. You can strengthen the church where it shouldn’t exist. And you can join with Eun-Yeong, Cheol-Ho and evangelists like Cho, to be part of God’s impossible plan.

**Because of the extreme risk to North Korean believers, we’ve disguised identities. This is a true story based on Evangelist Cho’s testimony.*

***Evangelist Cho, an Open Doors partner, died recently – but his ministry continues and his legacy lives on.*

PLEASE GIVE

Every \$35 could provide a Bible and discipleship materials to believers, so they can meet God in His Word.

Every \$75 could help provide safe housing and relief aid to a refugee fleeing extreme persecution.

Every \$114 could help train a leader to care for other believers who have fled persecution.

PLEASE PRAY

- Lift up our brothers and sisters in North Korea, and give thanks for their extraordinary resilience. Ask the Lord to strengthen them with unshakeable peace and growing faith.
- Pray for evangelists like Cho, helping believers and refugees along the border and in safe houses. Pray they would be filled with wisdom and courage.
- Ask that, in the midst of fear, hunger and isolation, North Korean believers would find joy. May they know they are not alone – and that Christ himself walks with them.

WORLD WATCH LIST 2026

An annual ranking of the top 50 most dangerous countries in which to live as a Christian. **COMING JANUARY 14**

1 INVITE YOUR MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT TO A SPECIAL PRESENTATION OF THE 2026 WORLD WATCH LIST AT PARLIAMENT

On March 25, we will be heading to Ottawa once again to present the 2026 World Watch List to our parliamentarians.

This special presentation of the World Watch List is our opportunity to inform the Canadian Government about the current realities for the more than 380 million Christians worldwide who experience high levels of persecution and engage them in championing policies that promote freedom of religion and protect persecuted believers.

You have been instrumental to the success of this event in the past. In previous years you have sent post cards, written emails and made phone calls inviting your Members of Parliament asking them to attend. Would you do it again?

Enclosed with this magazine, we have included a postcard for you to fill out and send to your MP. Sending an invitation is easy!



1. Grab the post card included in this magazine
2. Fill out your MP's name, your name and postal code
3. And lastly, drop it in the mailbox – no stamp required!

You can also send your MP an invite by email by visiting:
www.opendoorscanada.org/inviteyourmp

2 GET YOUR FREE COPY OF THE 2026 WORLD WATCH LIST

Visit www.opendoorscanada.org/WorldWatchList to download your free guide. (Available for download on January 14).



If you prefer a hard copy of the 2026 World Watch List prayer guide, you can return the enclosed slip with your request for a hard copy or contact the office.*

Call: (905) 636-0944
Email: opendoors@odcan.org

*Shipping to Canadian addresses only

3 YOU ARE INVITED to the online 2026 World Watch List release event on Sunday, January 18, 7pm EST

VIEW ONLINE AT:
www.youtube.com/OpenDoorsCanada

PRAY FOR FAITH TO BE POSSIBLE

A thriving Somali church? Impossible, people said. And yet, something extraordinary is happening – and Christians need your prayers.



When Aweis' underground church in Somalia grew to 14 people, it was one of the happiest times of his life. He'd spent years following Jesus alone, listening to radio broadcasts in secret, and fervently prayed he might meet another Christian.

"What was once seen as impossible became possible because God was in it," says Aweis. "I had somebody I could sit with to learn the Bible. It felt like the whole world was open to me."

But within two years, it was all over – in the most shocking way imaginable...

"Twelve of the 14 people in our church were killed for their faith," says Aweis, his face dark with sorrow. "We had no doubt we were being targeted. You could be sitting in a café, enjoying your meal, and somebody could come and attempt to decapitate you... cut your head off."

Amid such violent persecution, it's surely impossible to follow Jesus. Somalia has been in the top 10 of the World Watch List since 1993. And yet, faith is not only surviving – it's thriving. And today Aweis, in exile in another country, is at the heart of it.

"People thought it would be impossible for the Somali church to grow because of all the killings," says Aweis. "But what was impossible is, in fact, now possible. The growth of the church in Somalia is huge."

Aweis is currently working on the Somali Bible translation, and is developing discipleship material and leadership training. He is open about his identity and ministry, despite receiving constant threats. Like persecuted Christians around the world, Aweis depends on your prayers.

"Pray for us to be stronger spiritually," says Aweis. "Pray we thrive in the midst of persecution, that we become more Christ-like, so when Muslim persecutors see us, they think, 'Wow they are different, we want to be like them.' Pray they see the light and become disciples of Christ."

"Because there is no place where Christ cannot be followed," he adds with conviction. "It's impossible."

"WITH MAN THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE, BUT WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE."

MATTHEW 19:26



PRAY FOR CHRISTIANS WHERE FAITH SHOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE

- In North Korea and most countries on the World Watch List top 10, Christians gather in small, secret groups. Pray God would protect these beautiful expressions of His Church.
- Pray that believers in nations hostile to the faith will know they are not alone – even if they must follow Jesus without meeting another Christian.
- Ask God to give hope to our persecuted brothers and sisters living in countries on the World Watch List, that they have the strength and stamina to keep serving Him.



DISCIPLESHIP MADE POSSIBLE

Faith should not be possible in Yemen. But your support is not only strengthening Christians here, you are raising up future leaders too.

Khaled* sat in the university director's office, processing the news that he'd been expelled after telling another student about Jesus. Suddenly, Khaled's father opened the door, crossed the room and slapped Khaled hard across the face.

It was a moment of pure humiliation. But Khaled's nightmare was just beginning...

When they arrived at home, Khaled's father exploded in a fury. He grabbed a whip and beat Khaled until the family begged him to stop. "It was like he'd lost his mind," remembers Khaled. Hours later, this young man was homeless – and all alone.

Khaled grew up in a family of strictly religious Sufi Muslims. It was only at university, with access to the

internet, that he heard about Jesus. Khaled began following a Yemini Christian on YouTube, plucked up the courage to message him one day, and was introduced to Open Doors partners who began secretly discipling him. Khaled was even baptised in an online service.

Now, rejected by his family and with nowhere to go, Khaled turned to these Christian brothers – and they became a lifeline.

"These disciple-makers were like my backbone in those tough days," says Khaled. "We prayed together and they encouraged me. I had bruises on my back, arms, sides and face. Yet in those hardest days, I grew closer to my Father."

Thanks to you, Khaled got the support he needed at a critical time. And today your gifts are continuing to help this young man, who our partners believe could become a leader in the Yemeni church. Khaled is being coached by a pastor in another country and receives financial aid. Our team are even helping Khaled start a business, to generate funds to support the church.

At one time, it might have been impossible for Khaled to remain in Yemen. The nation has ranked in the World Watch List top five for years. But because of your steadfast support, Khaled now cannot imagine leaving...

"My parents view me as a loser, a man with no future, an infidel," says Khaled. "But I want to stay. I want to start a local church among trusted followers of Christ. I want to baptise Yemini Christians here. If we leave to other countries, who will tell people that Jesus saved them? It's not easy, but it is necessary."

He added, "I used to be terrified, but now I know God is with me and will protect me."

*name changed and representative images used for his safety



PLEASE PRAY

- Give thanks for Khaled's brave faith and commitment to remain in Yemen to serve God.
- Ask the Lord to bless Khaled's plans and use him powerfully in the Yemeni church.
- Pray for Yemen's secret believers, who are among the most persecuted in the world.

GOOD NEWS

MALAYSIAN COURTS RULE IN FAVOUR OF SUSANNA KOH



For almost six years Susanna Koh has been involved in a legal battle for her husband Raymond. In November, the courts awarded her the victory.

An answer to prayer! Susanna Koh is the wife of Pastor Raymond Koh, who was abducted by government forces in 2017. Since 2020, Susanna has been fighting a legal battle for her husband's rights, as well as for those of other abducted citizens. In November, the High Court finally ruled in her favour, instructing the government to pay reparations to the Koh family. Susanna said, "We are overjoyed and thankful to God that we have an honest and fair judgement." Though this will not bring Pastor Raymond back it is somewhat a vindication and a closure for the family of Pastor Raymond Koh.

YOUR SUPPORT STRENGTHENS PERSECUTED WOMEN IN CENTRAL ASIA



Your support helps Central Asian churches reach out to those in need, like Asial and her children, who found friendship, hope, and life in Christ.

Asial* from Central Asia is one example of the women being helped by your support. She and her children were abused by her husband, and after they were able to escape, they were alone with no help. Asial brought her children to a community event organized by a Christian church because they provided food, and while there she discovered friendship and care she had never known. The church connected her to a women's outreach group, who introduced her to Jesus and provided help and care for her children. Thanks to your prayers and support, lives are being changed!



TRAVEL TO LATIN AMERICA

Join us for an exciting opportunity to bring love and encouragement to believers in Latin America.

Spring 2026

Max age: 50

Fall 2026

Max age: 60

For more information, and to apply, visit
www.opendoorscanada.org/travel
or email travel@odcan.org

FAITH SHOULDN'T EVEN BE POSSIBLE HERE.

AND YET...

**"WITH GOD ALL
THINGS ARE
POSSIBLE."**

MATTHEW 19:26

In North Korea, following Jesus is so dangerous it should be impossible.

But along the border, evangelists like Cho* are waiting to minister to fleeing North Koreans.

Will you support them?

Strengthen the church where it shouldn't exist.

EVERY \$75 could help provide safe housing and relief aid to a refugee fleeing extreme persecution.

Be part of God's impossible plan. Give now at www.opendoorscanada.org or call (905) 636-0944. Thank you.

*Pseudonym and re-enactment image used for security reasons.

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