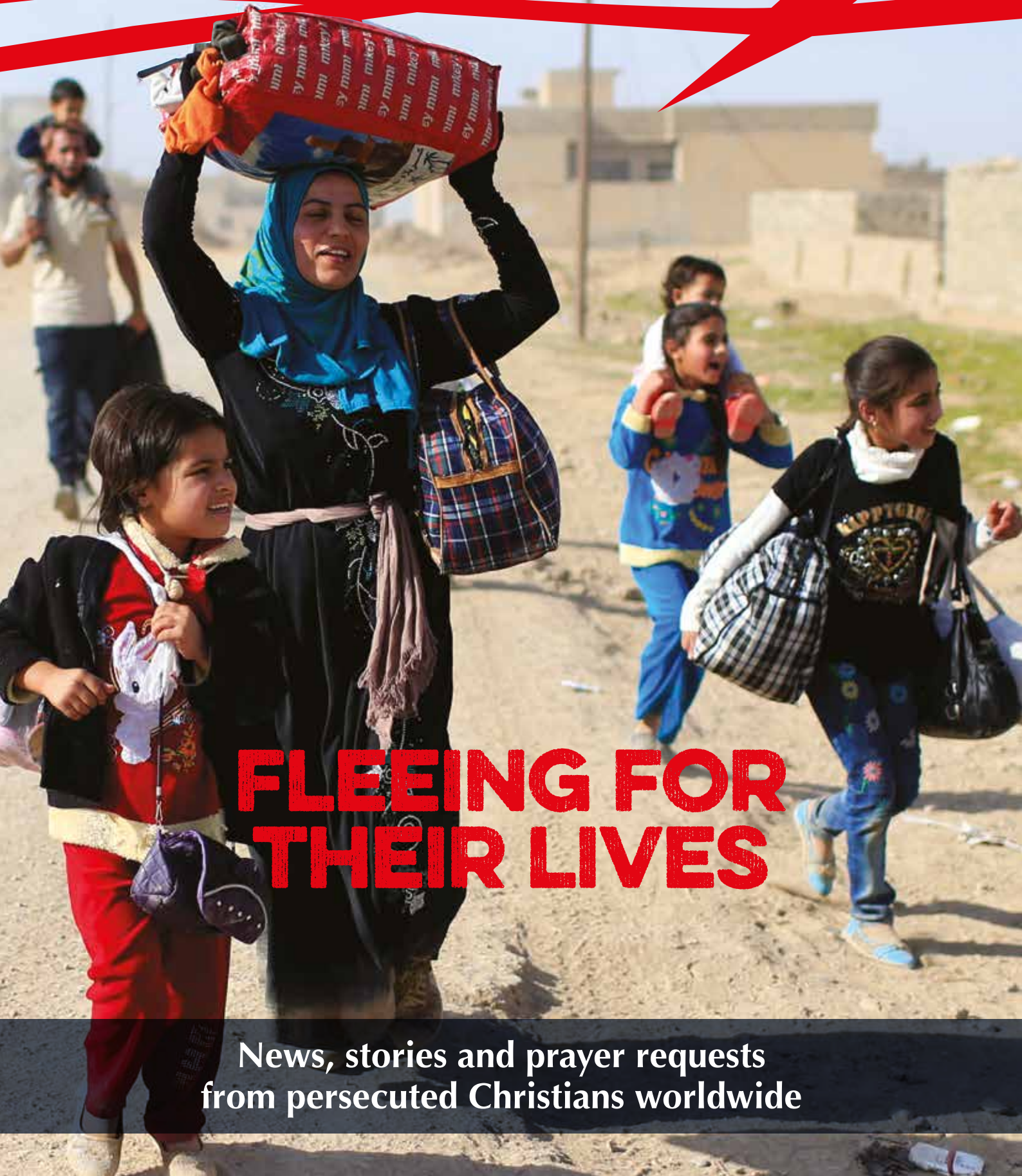


july aug 2017

voice of persecuted christians

release



FLEEING FOR THEIR LIVES

News, stories and prayer requests
from persecuted Christians worldwide



Welcome

by Paul Robinson, CEO

**Do good to
those who
hate you**
(Luke 6:27)

My colleague Tom recently visited Lebanon and was really moved by the way Christians there are caring for refugees. You can read his inspiring report on page six.

That may not sound that surprising or unusual at first; after all, aren't Christians supposed to look after those in need?

However, if you look at it in the context of the history of hostility between parts of Lebanon and Syria, it takes on a much more impressive aspect. Lebanon was actually occupied by its neighbour for 29 years until 2005, during which time a great deal of suffering was inflicted.

Now, as the world knows all too well, the Syrians are the ones suffering horror upon horror – with many fleeing over the border into Lebanon as refugees from the civil war.

But rather than reject those in need coming their way – a justifiable response in the world's eyes — Christians in Lebanon are caring for their desperate neighbours, truly putting into practice Jesus' call to do good to those who hate us.

And as they do so, God is working miracles. Syrian refugees are hearing the gospel and getting saved, their children are being healed, and they know they are accepted and loved by God!

The gospel's redeeming power is spreading even in the direst circumstances.

As Tom told me: *'In the midst of poverty and uncertainty, through people who love Jesus, God is building His kingdom. No matter how desperate their lives are, adults and children are experiencing the love of God. Christians are doing good to those who would have hated them and vice versa and God is pouring out amazing blessing.'*

He added: *'I was so touched by meeting one family who had practically nothing yet extended warmth and hospitality to us. Sure, they were carrying huge burdens and uncertainties but they had come to know Jesus after their child was healed through the prayers of a local Christian and you could see the joy in their faces.'*

That's the good news: that Jesus is calling Syrians to Himself. But with that comes a huge challenge for Christians in Lebanon: resources are at breaking point as more and more refugees come into the church.

Our sister ministry is doing what it can to help, but the needs are vast.

On page seven you can find out how to support this vital work. And please pray for those who have come to faith and for the church in Lebanon which is seeking to care for them and to put Jesus' words into action.

- **Keep an eye out for my Chair Chat video at youtube.com/ReleaseInternational, which looks at how to put Jesus' words into action.**

Cover photo: Iraqi families flee from Islamic State. Photo: Reuters/Ahmed Jadallah.

**LOVE
KILLS
HATE**

God commands us to 'Do good to those who hate you'. Read Helen Berhane's reflection on page 18 to discover how we can follow this command today.

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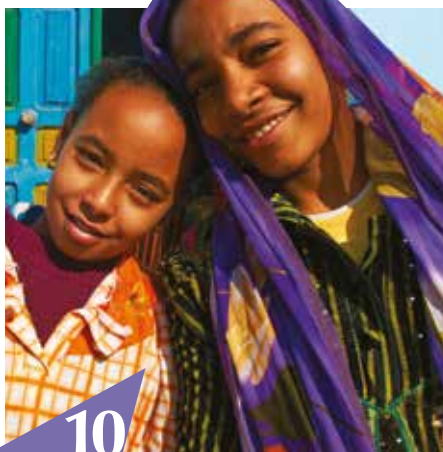
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reflects Eritrean gospel singer Helen Berhane

release
INTERNATIONAL
voice of persecuted christians

Release helps Christians in the UK and Ireland to actively engage with their persecuted brothers and sisters around the world: praying with them, standing with them, helping them, and learning lessons of true Christian discipleship with them.

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FAITH UNDER FIRE

Christians kidnapped by terrorists in Philippines

Thousands of people fled the city of Marawi, Mindanao, in the south of the Philippines, after militants kidnapped 14 Christians and burnt down St Mary's Cathedral.

The Filipino army attacked some of the terrorists whom the Government has since identified as belonging to the Abu Sayyaf and Maute Islamist terrorist groups. Two soldiers and a police chief were killed in the firefight.

• *Pray for Christians in the Philippines, especially in the south of the country, where several Islamist terrorist groups have been active. Please pray for the safe return of these 14 believers.*

Mourners carry a coffin of one of the victims. Photo: Reuters/Mohamed Abd El Ghany.

Gunmen kill 28 Egyptian believers

Gunmen killed up to 28 Coptic Christians and wounded more than 20 in Upper Egypt in May.

The group were on their way to visit a monastery in the Minya district. Ten masked men dressed in military uniforms stopped their two buses, climbed in and started shooting.

It is believed that there was a cameraman with the terrorists filming the attack. One bus was carrying mainly children.

'This is a very sad day for Egyptian Christians and for our nation,' said our partner.

'Please pray for God's comfort for the families of those who died and are injured.'

Release's partner is providing support to some of the families of those killed and injured in the attack.

To make a gift to help persecuted Christians in Egypt please see page 11.

• *Pray that the church in Egypt would stay strong and look to the Lord for help after yet another violent assault on Christians. Pray that the Egyptian Government would put in place measures to protect more fully Christians outside the capital.*



Pair injured defending church

A Christian man and woman were left with serious injuries after Chinese officials pushed them off a wall during a protest at their church.

The pair suffered spinal and neck injuries after falling several feet at Banling Church in Zhejiang province in May.

The two were among a crowd of protesters who had assembled when about 100 officials from Wenzhou city arrived to install surveillance cameras. The authorities had ordered churches across the city to set up cameras on their premises voluntarily – or have them installed by force.

As church members tried to resist the camera installation, some scaling a church wall, they clashed with officials.

One hospital refused to admit the injured man: he had to be taken for treatment at a second hospital in Wenzhou. Doctors attending to the woman failed to give her proper treatment until her family demanded that she be seen.

Many churches in Wenzhou city reportedly now have cameras installed, though others have successfully resisted such efforts.

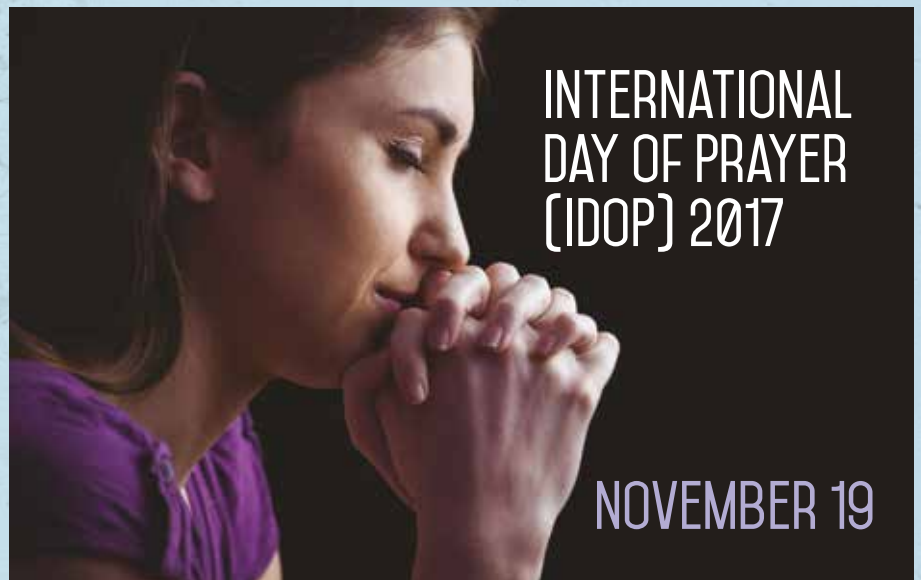
• *Please ask God to heal and restore our brother and sister in Wenzhou to full health and strength*

Twelve children detained in Eritrea

Eritrean security officials have arrested all members of the Kale Hiwot church in Adiquala, near the Ethiopian border, including 12 children, the youngest of whom is just two months old.

According to our partner, they were picked up one by one from their homes in May.

• *Please pray for these dear brothers and sisters especially the children. Pray that they would know God's presence with them and that they would be freed soon.*



Take part in this year's IDOP and help generate a tidal wave of prayer to support persecuted Christians around the world!

It's expected that hundreds of churches will join in — and we hope yours will too.

Materials for use at IDOP will be described in the next edition of Release and at releaseinternational.org. These will include resources to support our latest campaign for Eritrea (see page 12).



The UK Religious Liberty Commission, of which Release is a member, is urging churches to dedicate the whole month of November to remembering persecuted believers.

LEBANON



Tens of thousands of Iraqi and Syrian families have been displaced by conflict and persecution by Islamic State. Photo: Reuters/Thaier Al-Sudani.

FLEEING FOR THEIR LIVES

Release's Tom Hardie recently visited Lebanon and met Christian refugees who have fled conflict and persecution – and saw how Release partners are caring for them.

'Ahmed' (not his real name) was brought up in a strict Sunni Muslim home in Iraq, but fell in love with a Christian girl. They married and his wife kept her faith to herself, not allowing her in-laws to discover her Bible.

However, curiosity got the better of Ahmed and, thinking that the Old Testament and the Koran were the same, he began to read his wife's Bible. As he did so he began to experience real peace and after a period of three years gave his life to Christ.

Knowing how his family would react if he openly declared his new-found faith, he too kept his beliefs secret – at least to start with.

Ultimately though it was impossible to hide them in a community where lack of attendance at the local mosque would be noticed. At first his family tried to pressure him to return to Islam, but Ahmed stayed true to his new faith, even when it cost him his job.

Then one day as he was driving home he was stopped by three men dressed all in black who dragged him from his car. In the beating that followed his skull was fractured.

Ahmed was taken to hospital and was interviewed by the police — but that was not the end of the matter. He began to receive threats and knew he had to get himself and his family

out of Iraq. 'It is OK to be a Christian where I am from but not if you have converted from Islam,' he told me.

The young family managed to board a flight to Lebanon, where they are now being cared for by a local church. Ahmed is happy to share his story but is understandably concerned about his family's ongoing security.

'I forgive those who beat me and pray they and the Government will come to faith in Jesus. But I know that those who hate me can easily get a plane to Lebanon and come and kill me,' he said.

It seems that converts to Christianity are at risk wherever they live and wherever they're from. In Lebanon Syrian and Iraqi refugees are being cared for by local Christians — but they often struggle to provide for their needs.

One pastor told us: *'There is an open heaven in Lebanon at the moment. I know I could walk into the street and within half an hour 20 people will have got saved. That is not the problem. The problem is caring for these new believers. We do not have the resources. We are struggling to provide for those in our congregation.'*

In the Bekaa valley, a fertile plain that was once the breadbasket of the eastern Roman empire, we met a family of Syrian refugees living in a two-room shelter. They are the fortunate ones – most are surviving in tents.

Healing

Despite having very little they welcomed us with sweet chai (tea) and even sweeter smiles. We learned that one of the children had been healed of a brain aneurysm after being prayed for by Christians and as a result the family had come to faith in Christ.

And that miraculous healing was not unique. A child in another family had been unable to walk until Christians had prayed for the youngster.

SHARING THE LOVE OF JESUS

In the middle of nowhere a small group of Iraqi Christian refugees are involved in teaching the children of poor migrant workers. These Iraqis are working unpaid to teach the children and share the love of Jesus.

'We cannot go back to Iraq because Sunni militias will kill us,' they told us. 'Saddam Hussein left us alone because we never did anything wrong, but now there are no Christians left.'

I asked them how they felt about those who had destroyed their homes. They replied: *'God forgive them.'*

LEBANON

Population: 6.3 million

Capital: Beirut

Government:
Parliamentary republic

Religion: Muslim 54%,
Christian 40.4%,
Druze 5.6%.



'Ahmed' came to faith after reading his wife's Bible.

WILL YOU HELP CHRISTIAN REFUGEES IN LEBANON?

Persecution by Islamic State and continuing conflict have forced many tens of thousands of Christian families in Iraq and Syria to flee for their lives.

Partners of Release are caring for Christian refugees in Lebanon: but the needs are almost overwhelming.

Your love gift can help to provide food, clothing, medical supplies and shelter for suffering families in the name of Jesus.

Please show your compassion for these precious Christian families today.

- Give using the attached card
- Call: 01689 823491
- Give online at releaseinternational.org

Photo: Reuters/Mohammed Salem.



PRAY FOR
CHRISTIAN
REFUGEES
in the
Middle East

Father God, we pray for all
Christians forced
to flee for their lives in the
Middle East.

Be with Your people
as they seek shelter and support.

Be their strength and shield,
When they are surrounded by
enemies.

Be their rock and refuge,
Even in the hardest places.

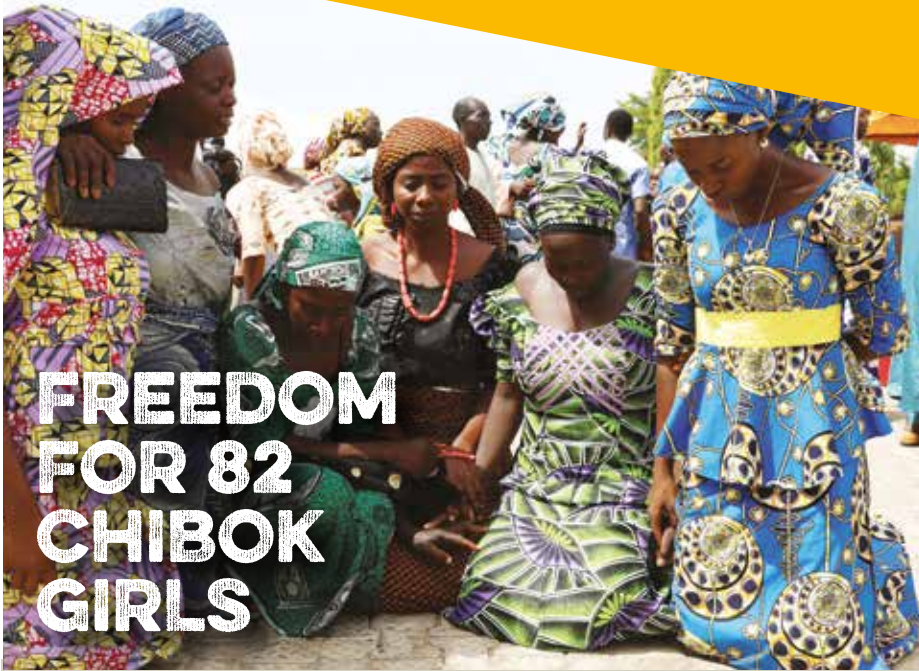
Be their hope, now and
forever.

Be exalted, Lord God,
Above the nations.

In the mighty name of Jesus
we pray,
Amen

Please use this prayer in your
church or housegroup.

GOOD NEWS



FREEDOM FOR 82 CHIBOK GIRLS

Some of the girls pray after being reunited with their families. Photo: Reuters/Afolabi Sotunde.

We thank God for the release of a further 82 girls who were abducted by terrorist group Boko Haram from a secondary school in Chibok, Nigeria, in April 2014.

The girls were set free in exchange for the release of a number of Boko Haram commanders by the Nigerian authorities. It is estimated that 100 more remain in captivity.

Release's partner in Nigeria continues to provide trauma-healing workshops for Christian children and families who have suffered violent attacks by both Boko Haram and Fulani militants.



Thanks to all the churches that took part in this year's Great Outdoors Church Service in May. Pictured here are members of Esher Green Baptist Church, Surrey, who met on their local green to pray for persecuted Christians in several countries including Iran, Sudan and Pakistan.



PEDAL POWER!

Congratulations to James, our Development Manager for Scotland, and his team of ten who completed their sponsored bike ride from Glasgow to Edinburgh in May – raising a fantastic £5,000 for persecuted Christians. 'Thanks to everyone who took part or who sponsored us; it was a great day,' said James.

Our admiration also goes to energetic retired vicar Robert de Berry who had completed half his mammoth 750-mile sponsored ride from Cape Wrath to Peacehaven as Release went to press.

You can read the latest at mydonate.bt.com/fundraisers/robertdeberry3 where you can also sponsor Robert.



‘I AM VALUABLE’

Our Release Women Manager recently saw first-hand how your gifts and prayers are helping vulnerable Christian women in Egypt to discover their true identity in Christ.

Christian women in Egypt face double discrimination because of their faith and the status of women in their nation. They are often marginalised and face persecution and oppression in almost every area of society.

On my most recent visit to our Strength to Stand (S2S) groups in and around the capital Cairo, I was deeply moved to hear these courageous women testify – despite their great difficulties – that God is powerfully changing their lives and strengthening their Christian faith.

‘I am valuable’ was a phrase that we heard repeatedly during our visit. It was evident that this was an almost revolutionary concept to some of these precious women.

Working together in their groups, they realise that they are all highly valued by God and that they have dignity – regardless of what their society or family members may tell them.

On one occasion we met some of the Christian facilitators who lead the S2S groups. When I looked at the women gathered in one small room, I noticed

that some had very sad eyes. The pain that they bear is real but, at the same time, these sisters in Christ seemed to bubble with enthusiasm about reaching out to the women they care for.

On that day, I saw beauty in brokenness, and joy and peace that surpasses understanding.

I was reminded of Jesus’ words: *‘I will build My church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it’* (Matthew 16:18).

These precious women are indeed building His church through love and forgiveness. **For some of them, it is a daily battle, a daily choice, but their attitude and actions are having a powerful impact on their families and the next generation.**

OVERCOMING EVIL WITH GOOD

Some of you will remember the young Egyptian Christian 'Tabitha' (not her real name) who spoke last year at our Release Women National Conference.

She told us how a local man was disrupting her father's business and making threats against her, her sister and her mother. Threats of rape, kidnap and violence against Christian women in Egypt are very real.

After sharing her story at the conference we prayed for Tabitha and her family – and today we are seeing some of those prayers answered!

Although the problem is very much still there, her mother and father have this year 're-found' a living faith in Jesus. Her father told us how he could now forgive this man who wished them harm, and even love him. In fact Tabitha's father has sought ways to help the man with his own business.

Praise God for this family's wonderful testimony of God's love working through them in such a difficult situation.



Relatives mourn for the victims of an attack by gunmen in Upper Egypt that left up to 28 Christians dead in May 2017. Photo: Reuters/ Mohamed Abd El Ghany.

MAKE A GIFT THAT CAN CHANGE SOMEONE'S LIFE FOREVER

The persecuted Christian minority in Egypt remains under severe pressure from the state, legal system and militant groups.

In May, for example, up to 28 Christians were killed in an attack by gunmen on two buses in Upper Egypt.

You can help these courageous Christians by sending a gift today. Here are some things your gift can make possible:

- Support for Christians who have been violently attacked, and their families
- Setting up and running Strength to Stand groups to transform the lives of poor and marginalised Christian women

Please will you give a gift today?

- **Call: 01689 823491**
- **Use the attached card**
- **Give online at releaseinternational.org**

**THANK
YOU**



Request your free copy of our 10-minute film which features the moving testimonies of Egyptian Christians who are bringing hope to their nation – despite persecution.

Call: 01689 823491 or use the attached card.

Pray 173

HELP BRING FREEDOM

FOR ERITREAN PRISONERS OF FAITH

Eritrea today is like one giant prison where hope has disappeared and where the majority of people are denied simple freedoms, basic human dignity and human rights.

Many thousands of Eritreans continue to leave their homeland as refugees every year —risking everything to find a better life for themselves and their families.

In 2002 the Government of Eritrea closed down all unregistered evangelical and Pentecostal churches, beginning a systematic campaign of persecution that has resulted in thousands of Christians being detained and imprisoned in appalling conditions during the past 15 years.

Eritrean Christians continue to need your support, your love and your prayers: which is why we are now launching our new Pray173 campaign.

WHY 173?

Our Eritrea partner has identified 173 Eritrean prisoners of faith by name, many of whom have been jailed for more than 12 years. That's 173 prisoners without visitation rights, without any real hope of being released, having never been charged or been granted a trial.

We know the names of 173 men, women and even children, but there are other prisoners whose names we don't know.



**TWEN THEODROS:
DETAINED SINCE 2005**

Pastor Richard Wurmbrand, who helped to inspire the founding of Release in 1968, spent a total of 14 years in prison because of his faith.

He wrote:

'Whoever wishes to meet Jesus must first meet him in places where brothers and sisters of Jesus are hungry, thirsty, naked, unwanted, sick or in prison. Whoever keeps himself distant from these places remains distant from Jesus.'

Hebrews 13:3 urges us to:

'Remember those in prison as if you were together with them'.



**PASTOR HAILE NAIZGHI:
DETAINED SINCE 2004**

Remembering those imprisoned for their faith in Christ is not just thinking about them from time to time: it is to pray for them daily and to help meet their practical needs.

That's why Release, together with our partner Release Eritrea and many Christian brothers and sisters inside Eritrea, believe that now is the time to pray for Eritrea like we have never prayed before. It's time to commit to



**DR KIFLU GEBREMESKEL:
DETAINED SINCE 2004**

serious prayer and to see God's Holy Spirit open prison doors and set the captives free. It's time to Pray173.

WHAT IS PRAY173?

Pray 173 is an appeal to Christians across the UK and Ireland to commit to pray for 173 Eritrean prisoners of faith for 173 days.

We will provide you with the names of some of these individual prisoners. We will provide you with prisoner profiles to fuel and inform your prayers and we will give you 173 brief daily prayer points. Regular

information will be available through Facebook and Twitter.

Over the past 12 years Release, with your help, has faithfully supported our persecuted brothers and sisters inside Eritrea.

We believe now that people will die in prison unless we pray and they are released. We believe God can change the hearts of kings and presidents, of officials and governments.

Will you now commit to pray for 173 days for Eritrean Christians in prison and believe God for a miracle?

THREE WAYS TO SUPPORT ERITREAN PRISONERS OF FAITH TODAY

- 1 Use the **perforated card** enclosed to make a commitment to pray regularly for Eritrean Christians who have been imprisoned long-term, and to request the Eritrean Embassy in London to release these prisoners as a matter of urgency.
- 2 **Tell** your friends about our new Pray173 campaign and ask them to pledge to pray. Additional pledge cards are available by calling us on 01689 823491.
- 3 Consider making a **gift** to support Christian prisoners of faith and their families, as well as former prisoners. Conditions in prison are harsh, and most of the families of prisoners struggle to meet their basic needs. Many of the prisoners who have been detained long-term have suffered ill health and even torture.

Please make a gift

- **using the attached card**
- **at releaseinternational.org**
- **call: 01689 823491**

Check out the latest updates at releaseinternational.org/pray173



'I thoroughly support the Pray173 campaign. Long-term prisoners of faith inside Eritrea need a breakthrough from God. Your prayers can help make that possible.'

Dr Berhane Asmelash, Director of our partner Release Eritrea





When Molly joined our Change Makers mentoring programme, she never thought she'd have two amazing visits meeting persecuted Christians in Sri Lanka ...

After 18 hours of travel, and my first time flying, we were greeted in Sri Lanka by a wall of humidity.

We had a busy stay, getting up at what seemed like unearthly hours of the morning to travel here, there and everywhere. But it was all worth it for the smiles we were bombarded with!

The point of this mission trip was to encourage those we met and help where we could. The morning after our arrival we headed to a kids camp and had a fantastic time, sharing about God's miraculous powers through storytelling and arts and crafts.

My favourite part of the camp was the talent show. There were children singing, dancing, reading poetry, doing drama sketches. You name it, it was there!

The applause after each act was so touching, and everyone was so proud of all the kids. They'd been inspired to be the best they can be and everyone felt accepted and appreciated.

When I left Sri Lanka I thought that would be my first and last visit: but several months later I got a phone call from Release asking if I could join another group of young people going out to visit. Of course, I said Yes!

My second trip, although equally rewarding, was completely different.

We got to visit several homes and heard amazing stories from pastors and their children. Stories of how they'd brought the most unlikely of people to Christ



– and how they'd escaped various situations of danger and conflict.

Speaking to the young children especially, we spoke of dreams and aspirations and the pathways they're taking to reach them. They told us of the troubles that come with being young Christians and trying to achieve those



Kids from Christian families in Sri Lanka have an amazing time at the camp run by Release's partner.

dreams – but through all these trials one thing that remained was their faith in God.

With no wavering doubt, they knew that God would get them through – even at such a young age.

It made me realise that many of the petty things I worry about are unnecessary in the grand scheme of thing. Each pastor and child we spoke to helped give me a clearer understanding of what the world is like, how tough it can get but also how great God is!

God is at work!

They told us of the wonderful ways that God is at work through His people: like healing people from diseases, providing clean water for whole communities, buying a building for church, and enabling children to go to school. At the camp I worked with the younger kids and found that having fun was

the best way to show love. Last year it was playing outside with parachutes and water balloons. This year 'Duck Duck Goose' was their game of choice. Although incredibly tiring, especially after playing it for almost three days, the faces of the kids lit up every time!

This trip made me feel how close we are to the people of Sri Lanka, and how possible it is to help by praying for them, visiting or sending resources.

It certainly pushed me forward in my journey to help people and gave me the right mindset to face difficult circumstances. It provided me with a fresh meaning to life itself with God. I think life is so much brighter and cooler than we often make it out to be!

One thing Sri Lankan believers have taught me is to chill out and smile – as God will help us in all things. 

Release Potential
**CHANGE
MAKERS**
BE THE CHANGE YOU WANT TO SEE

BE THE CHANGE!

Are you 17-23? Want to travel and use your voice to help others? Looking for an adventure in God? Applications are now open for our year-long flexible discipleship programme Change Makers which starts in September. Change Makers help support our persecuted family through fundraising, prayer, mission and campaigning. Places are limited.

Call us on **01689 823491** or check out releasepotential.org.

JOIN US THIS SUMMER AS WE VISIT HIDDEN CHRISTIANS IN SOUTH EAST ASIA...



WHO DO WE WANT TO TAKE?
UK CHRISTIANS AGED BETWEEN 18-30 WHO WANT TO SHOW LOVE TO THEIR EXTENDED FAMILY THROUGH ACTION AND ENCOURAGEMENT



WHAT WILL WE BE DOING?
DURING OUR 10 DAY TRIP WE WILL BE VISITING AND ENCOURAGING CHRISTIANS WHO ARE PERSECUTED FOR THEIR FAITH. THERE WILL BE OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP RUN YOUTH TRAINING SESSIONS, SPEAK ON RADIO TO ENCOURAGE LOCAL BELIEVERS & EXPERIENCE THEIR CULTURE FROM A UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE!



HOW MUCH?
WE REQUIRE A £300 DEPOSIT BUT YOU HAVE UP TO ONE YEAR TO PAY THE BALANCE IN FULL. EACH PERSON ATTENDING MUST CONTRIBUTE A TOTAL OF £1,200 - THIS WILL INCLUDE ALL YOUR FLIGHTS, TRANSFERS, FOOD & ACCOMMODATION

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT releasepotential.org/mission-trip OR CALL 01689 823 491 & SPEAK TO LOLA (TEAM LEADER)

release
potential

UCCF FORUM 2017

We'll be at the UCCF Forum for Christian Union leaders (August 29-September 2) at Oswestry in Shropshire. If you're coming, do stop and say hello at our stand!

**release
POTENTIAL**



PAKISTAN

THEIR LIGHT SHINES IN THE DARKNESS

Laura Hayes joined Release in March as Director of Engagement. Recently returned from a ministry team visit to Pakistan, she shares how you are helping the gospel of Jesus to shine in dark places.

It's a great honour and pleasure to be part of the family of Release International. I thank God for calling me to this most vital of global ministries.

It was a profound experience for me to visit Pakistan. The Christian minority there numbers more than four million believers, compared to a total population of more than 180 million!

We heard so many sad testimonies of suffering – including false imprisonment, arson, rioting, lynchings, petrol bombs, suicide bombings, rapes, torture, abduction and beatings.

God opened my eyes and my heart on many occasions. We prayed with a father who lost two of his beautiful daughters in the Easter Sunday bombings in Lahore last year (see photo). Then we hugged his youngest daughter who had survived. At these moments you encounter God and Jesus Christ in a profound way.

So many, many evils are routinely witnessed here that they almost defy the imagination. But Jesus knew all about depravity, sin and the evil one.

And yet, in the midst of remote Islam-dominated villages, there are Christian churches where hundreds of poor, marginalised people gather to be strengthened and inspired by the Word of God and the promises of our Lord Jesus Christ.

These fellowships are intense and glorious beacons of light, singing out in praise of God, in defiance of the dangers and darkness around them.

As I saw so often, your prayers, gifts and love that we carried to the church in Pakistan meant so much to these wonderful believers.

I want to thank you for being deeply involved with us, including prayer groups, supporting churches, funders and passionate volunteers – all of you who make our life-transforming work possible through God's grace and provision.



*Christians light candles for the victims of last year's Easter bomb attack in Lahore.
Photo: Hussain Rana Sajid/PA Images.*



Laura Hayes (right) and Release volunteers meet survivors of last year's bomb attack in Lahore.

Let's pray together that the Holy Spirit will empower persecuted Christians throughout Pakistan, and that these faithful believers will continue to declare that the Lord alone is their refuge and fortress, their God in whom they trust (Psalm 91:2).

PAKISTAN APPEAL

Thank you to everyone who gave so generously to our recent appeal to support persecuted Christians in Pakistan. If you'd like to donate, you can still do so by calling 01689 823491.



After two weeks cycling through Scotland, Robert de Berry and his team reach the English border as part of their 750-mile sponsored ride in aid of persecuted Christians. Sponsor Robert at: mydonate.bt.com/fundraisers/robertdeberry3.

KEY PAKISTAN PARTNER ON TOUR

One of Release's key partners in Pakistan has been visiting churches in the UK and Ireland to share his experience of how the gospel is changing lives despite intense opposition.

He is an engaging speaker with a passion to both serve persecuted Christians and to share the gospel in unreached areas of his nation.

In July he is visiting Northern Ireland and taking part in meetings at these venues. Don't miss out!

July 25 7.30pm

Living as a Christian in Pakistan

Faith Mission Bookshop, 2 West St, Portadown, Craigavon BT62 3PL

July 27-28 9am to 9am

24 hours of prayer for Pakistan

First Donegore Presbyterian Church, 2 The Burn Rd, Parkgate BT39 0JY

July 28 7.30pm

Service in partnership with Divine Healing Ministries

St John's Church of Ireland, 3 Doagh Rd, Ballyclare BT39 9BG

July 29

10.30am and 12pm meetings

St Columba's Parishes, 31 Church St, Omagh, BT78 1DG

release & your church



Invite a Release speaker to your church

To request a speaker for your church or fellowship group, please contact your nearest Development Manager:

Ben

North of England
Tel 07969 361557

Geoff

Central England & Wales
Tel 01234 271855

Kenneth

South of England
Tel 07540 530153

Stephen

Ireland
Tel 028 9334 0014

James

Scotland
Tel 07977 936554

Kate

(Release Women)
Tel 01689 823491

INSPIRING FAITH



'The underground church is a poor and suffering church, but it has few lukewarm members ... Whoever has known the spiritual beauty of the underground church cannot be satisfied anymore with the emptiness of some Western churches.'

Pastor Richard Wurmbbrand was imprisoned for 14 years in communist Romania in the 1950s and 1960s. In 1968 he inspired the founding of Release, which today continues his ministry to serve persecuted Christians around the world in the name of Jesus.

THE WORD

DO GOOD TO THOSE WHO HATE YOU

Luke 6:27

God's all-powerful love in our hearts enables us to do the impossible, writes Eritrean gospel singer Helen Berhane, a former prisoner of faith who was arrested and repeatedly tortured because of her Christian faith.

Every good gift that comes to us comes as a gift from our amazing Father in heaven. Sharing in the sufferings of Christ always brings us deeper into fellowship with Jesus – and for this gift we must be thankful.

How can I respond with hatred to those who help me to be more like Christ? How can I hate people like the prison guard Suleiman who beat me from my head to my feet, who beat me so badly he almost killed me and left me unable to walk?

Saleh was only doing his job, only carrying out an order. He was doing what he thought was right. But with every blow, God was using him to draw me closer to Himself and to make me more like Jesus.

While he was beating me with a wooden baton I could see the lostness in his eyes – but God gave me the courage and the strength to be able to do good to this man who was beating me with such venom.

When someone hates us we must

show them a better way. When someone hates us for doing good and loving Jesus Christ, then we must understand that their minds are darkened. They have not experienced the goodness, grace and forgiveness of a loving God.

Here is a great mystery: when we respond to hatred with the love of God, it sets us free!

It enables us to be free even if we are in prison, whatever or wherever that prison is. And it allows us to be thankful.

In prison I was able to say: thank you for the cold nights, thank you for the hot days, thank you for the hunger, for the sickness, for the bugs that bite my body, thank you Lord, thank you!

God so loved the world that He sent His son into the world to die for those who would hate Him, harm Him and ultimately put Him to death.

This is the gospel that I must share with everyone – not just those who treat me well.



WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

In recent weeks the UK has experienced terrorist attacks in both Manchester and London: bringing home the challenge of how we respond to those who hate us.

- If you were detained and tortured, could you forgive your persecutors?
- Could you still give thanks to God?
- How can we do good in practical ways to those who seem to hate us?

These are the challenges that many of our Christian partners face on a daily basis – and which are now increasingly part of our own experience.

There may be some who choose to hate me and harm me because I am a Christian – but God's love compels me to do them good.

See the back page for how you can order Helen Berhane's moving autobiography *Song of the Nightingale*.

Celebrate ten years of ministry to persecuted Christian women

LOVE
—
NEVER FAILS



Saturday, October 7, 2017

10.30am-3.30pm

**St Michael's Church, Chester Square,
LONDON SW1W 9EF**

Admission £10

Join us for a special conference with guest speaker Helen Berhane, Eritrean gospel singer and former prisoner of faith (to be confirmed).

- Come and hear what God has done in the lives of persecuted women over the past ten years. Be inspired!
- Come and find out how you can make a difference as we look ahead to the next ten years. Be challenged!
- Come and pray together for your sisters around the world. Be encouraged!

Open to both men and women.

For more details: call 01689 823491 email info@releaseinternational.org for more details.

LEAVE A LEGACY OF LOVE



'Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven' (Matthew 5:10)

Remembering those who are persecuted in your Will is vital to help Release International continue supporting Christian families in need worldwide.

If you are thinking about making or updating your Will, please contact Paul Jones to request our legacy brochure, or to discuss how your legacy could be used.

Telephone:
01689 823491 or email:
pjones@releaseinternational.org

*Persecuted Sudanese Christians
receive Bibles in their own language.*

BE INSPIRED

DISCOVER HOW GOD IS AT WORK IN THE MIDST OF PERSECUTION AND SUFFERING.

DARING DEVOTION

RELEASE INTERNATIONAL



Our latest book *Daring Devotion* explores key themes of discipleship through the eyes of persecuted Christians, inspiring us to love more and to trust God more. Ideal for small group discussion.

£6 including P&P
(or six copies for £30 inc P&P)

INTO the DEN of INFIDELS

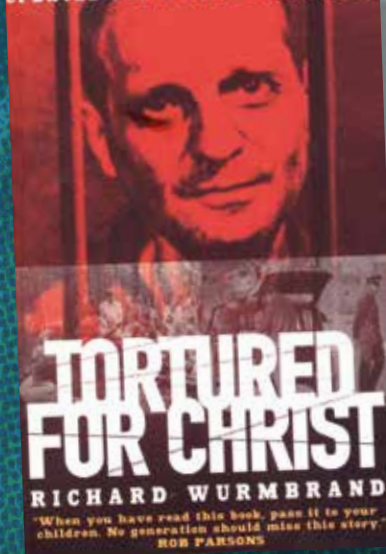


Our Search for the Truth

Read the compelling stories of eight Muslims in Egypt – the intellectual capital of Islam – as they persevered until they discovered the truth of the gospel.

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UPDATED FOR A NEW GENERATION



Richard Wurmbrand's classic account of his life in prison in communist Romania in the 1950s and 1960s. His call to act on behalf of persecuted Christians is still powerfully relevant today.

£8 including P&P



Eritrean gospel singer Helen Berhane tells the inspiring story of how she was detained for two years because of her Christian faith. Despite brutal beatings and abuse, Helen was able to show Christ's love to her persecutors. A remarkable account of triumphant faith.

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release
INTERNATIONAL
voice of persecuted christians