

OPEN DOORS: SERVING THE PERSECUTED

BJ CANDOLE, OPEN DOORS PHILIPPINES

"Lord, when you were on earth, You made so many blind eyes, see. This time, please, make seeing eyes, BLIND!"

This was the prayer of Brother Andrew, then a young Christian from the Netherlands, each time he passed by immigration border guards, so that the Bibles and Christian literature hidden in his luggage and beetle car would not be seen and confiscated. He was entering Eastern Europe, then under Communism, and Christianity was heavily restricted. Bibles were illegal, *church gatherings were prohibited, and numerous believers imprisoned.*

"All the time they couldn't find the Bibles?" Brother Andrew was asked in a TV interview. "I've never lost one Bible in 20 years!"

It was the 1950s, and it marked the humble beginnings of Open Doors, an international ministry serving Persecuted Christians worldwide, founded by "God's Smuggler" himself, Brother Andrew.

Today, after more than six decades, Open Doors is present in almost 70 countries where believers are under religious persecution, still anchored on the verse God used to call Brother Andrew: *"Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die,"* Revelation 3:2. Alongside Bible and literature distribution, Open Doors conducts holistic trainings for church and ministry leaders; provides socio-economic development for the disadvantaged and discriminated because of the faith; and an advocacy in high-level, international fora, *all to strengthen the faith of Persecuted Christians.*

In the annual **WORLD WATCH LIST**-Open Doors' list of 50 countries where Christians face extreme persecution, **North Korea** has been #1 since 2002, punishing any citizen who worships other gods other than their leaders; **China and Myanmar's** tightening surveillance (using advance technology) on any religious activity puts them at #14 and #16 respectively; while Islamic extremism continue to threaten Christians in **Syria and Turkey**, #12 and #41.

In the **Philippines**, despite our status as being a Christian-majority, brothers and sisters in tribal groups, communities, and islands down **South** also experience persecution in forms of abuse, discrimination, violence, and even death. *Imagine getting beaten up by your own family because you chose Jesus!*

But the story doesn't end here.

Persecuted Christians continue to be shining beacons of the Gospel even in the face of danger. **Ming* from China** is back to doing ministry even after being arrested and imprisoned for smuggling Bibles, random house raids by the police, and losing his business; **Ko Aung* from Myanmar** has learned to forgive his persecutors; and **believers in Syria and Turkey** share the help they get to their Muslim neighbors in the aftermath of the devastating February earthquake as a testimony of God's love. *Talk about faith in action!*

And, you too, can be part of this exciting ministry! As Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 12:26-27, *"If one part suffers, every part suffers with it. If one part is honored, every part*

rejoices with it. Now you are the Body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it."

As the Lord leads you this Missions Month, you can join:

1. By PRAYING

With the **Open Doors Magazine** and monthly **Prayer Calendars**, intercede daily for the Persecuted Church in your personal quiet time and family worship.

2. By GIVING

Help provide for the needs of Persecuted Christians, pastors, and families worldwide.

3. By GOING

Travel with Open Doors in 2024 and meet your persecuted brothers and sisters face to face! Nothing beats being there, telling them they are not alone in the battle.

To know more, please visit or approach anyone at the Missions Ministry Booth located at the 2nd floor lobby. You may also reach us through SMS/Viber: +63998-8830821 or any of our social media accounts: *Facebook, Instagram, X, YouTube: @OpenDoorsPH* or email us at www.opendoors.ph/philippines@od.org.

Join us today!

The Persecuted Church may be a suffering church, but it is also a **victorious** church! Paul continues, *"We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed"* 2 Corinthians 4:8-9. ✨