

OpenDoors®

FRONTLINE FAITH

Sharing The Inside Story Of The Persecuted Church

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Impact Edition

A Letter From Mike



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@_mikegore

Hello,

Welcome to one of the most important editions of Frontline Faith this year.

For those of you who are new to the ministry, Open Doors is a charity but we work a little differently. We know there are always things that will try to stop us from following Jesus. We can't avoid that, but we can overcome it, together.

We serve a movement of Christians courageously following Jesus all over the world, no matter the cost. For over 70 years, we have been helping them write their stories of courageous faith.

This is a very special edition of Frontline Faith, because every year we release an edition that looks at the increasing cost of faith. We see the struggles and the trials the Church has to overcome to follow Jesus, but we also see hope.

We look at this 'Impact Report' as how God is moving around the world, and the ways in which we got to be a part of it, in 2018.

We can get so caught up in the day-to-day, it's important to lift our eyes and see how God is still building His church across the globe.

When I look at this past year, I am so encouraged by the persecuted church. I see their lives as lessons on how to overcome everything that tries to pull me away from God, like distraction and materialism— all the temporary yet tempting pleasures of this world.

I remember meeting with a pastor in Central Asia who had recently stepped down from senior leadership, to run the children's ministry.

It was one of the most courageous acts of servant leadership I have ever seen, because, in his country it was illegal to share the gospel with anyone under the age of 16.

And if anyone was going to pay the price and go to prison, it would be him.

Can you imagine if a senior leader of a church in Australia stepped down to lead the kids church? Knowing full well it could cost them everything?

That's the beauty of the persecuted church. They have taught me to hold on to everything loosely except Jesus.

But I've also been inspired by the way the Australian church has reached out to support and be part of our global body of Christ.

I was moved when we saw over 1,000 people stand One With Them in 2018 and donate one day's wage to the persecuted church. More than 440 of those people were first time supporters of the ministry, which to me is a beautiful example of how Christians across Australia are seeing the importance of supporting the persecuted church and standing shoulder to shoulder with the global body of Christ.

You see, this partnership is reciprocal. One part of the body is no more important than the other. The free church needs the persecuted church, and vice versa.

Together, we are helping people follow Jesus all over the world, no matter the cost.

We are the Church.

I hope this issue of Frontline Faith helps you lift your eyes and see what God is doing.

We're in this fight together. So, read on, look what the Lord has done even in the midst of persecution and see how we're part of a movement of Christians courageously following Jesus, all over the world, no matter the cost.

Let us write our stories of courageous faith, together.

Mike Gore
CEO Open Doors Australia and New Zealand

OPEN DOORS LIVE

PODCAST

Bringing The Persecuted Church To Life

Episode 25 – From The Field

Listen now on Apple, Spotify, Soundcloud or Podcast Addict on Android.

opendoors.org.au/podcast



We Are The Church

Welcome to the 'Impact Report.'

This edition is all about how, together, we are helping people follow Jesus all over the world, no matter the cost.

This report is more than just numbers. It is the global body of Christ at its finest, supporting and strengthening believers across 70 countries, in 2018.

In the last year we have changed lives for Christians in Iraq, Central Asia and Syria.

We've started bakeries, clinics and ministries to deaf communities.

Together, we've opened centres of hope for children in countries where it's illegal to preach the gospel to people under the age of 16.

We've run drug rehabilitation clinics for former criminals.

Together, we've even started safe houses that protect former prostitutes and their children who now follow Jesus.

Thank you for choosing to help people follow Jesus all over the world, no matter the cost.

We're writing our stories of courageous faith, together.



Global Impact

For more than 2,000 years, faith in Jesus has come at a great cost, and it's only intensifying.

In 2018, we saw a shift.

Since 2017, the amount of emergency relief and trauma counselling has gone down. However, the need for discipleship, social services, jobs and rebuilding has increased.

In Iraq, after the rise of the Islamic State in 2014,

we worked through the local church to provide emergency relief for Christians who had lost their homes or churches.

Two years later, we helped families living in IDP camps by providing them with education programs, trauma care and marriage counselling.

Now, Open Doors has created jobs and micro-business loans to keep Christians in the area and ensure the church remains in their country.

While our work constantly changes, our goal does not.

We help people follow Jesus all over the world, no matter the cost.

Thank you for helping people write their stories of courageous faith.



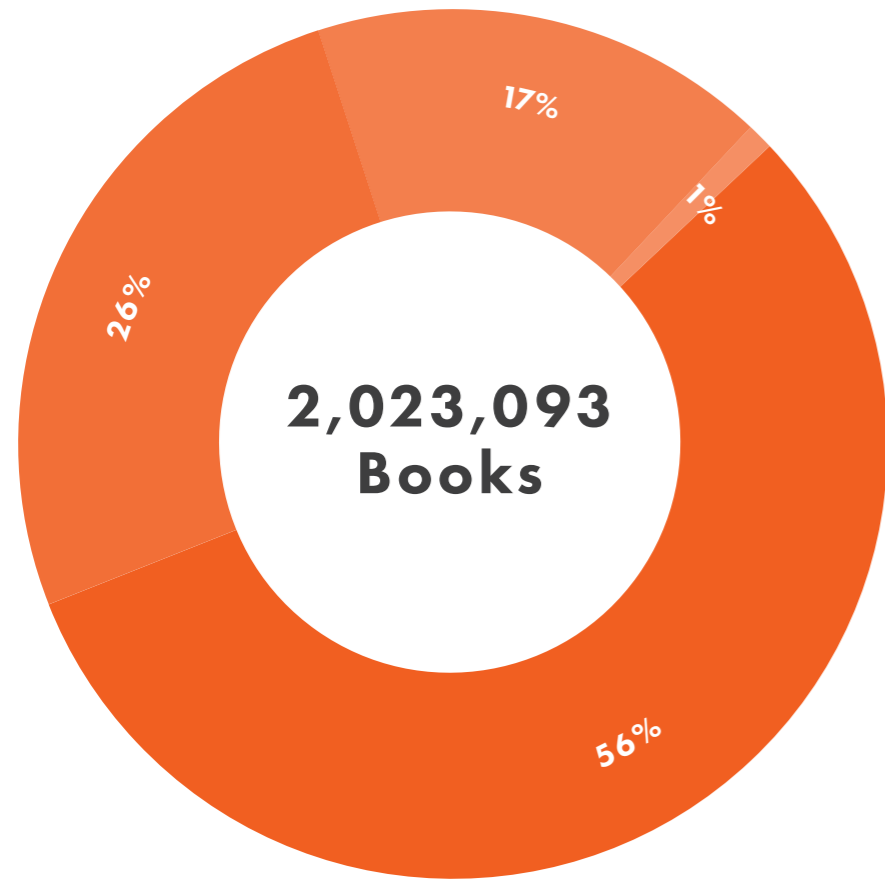
158,000+
Received Christian discipleship training



3,631
Church construction projects

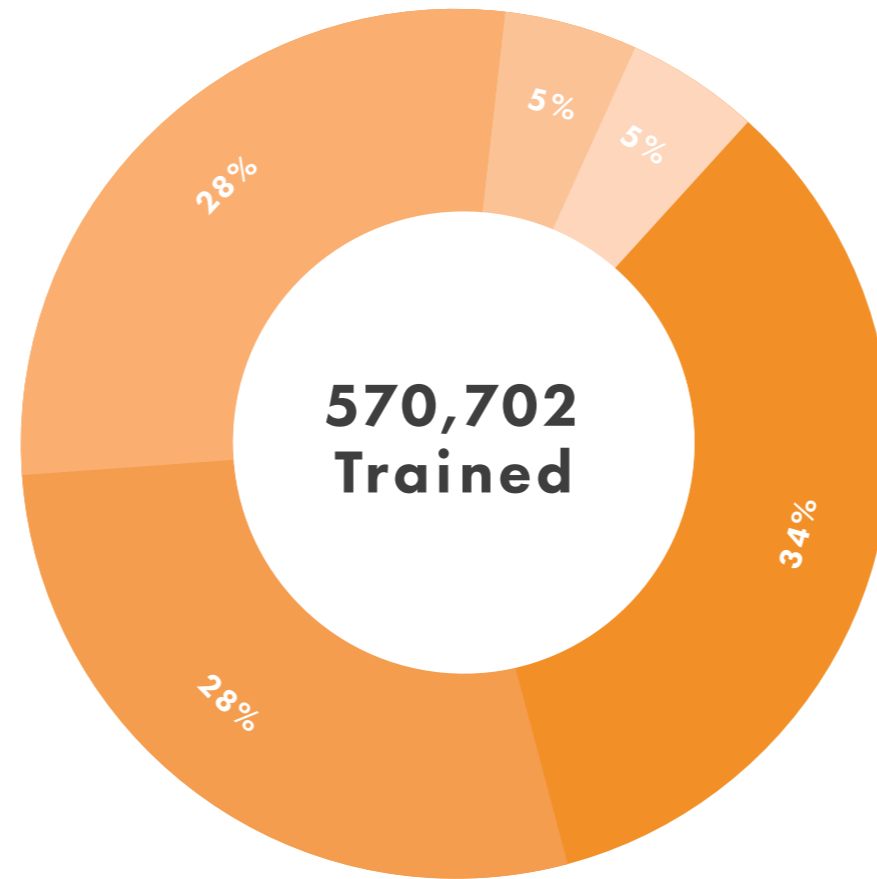


3,853
People sheltered through Safe House Projects



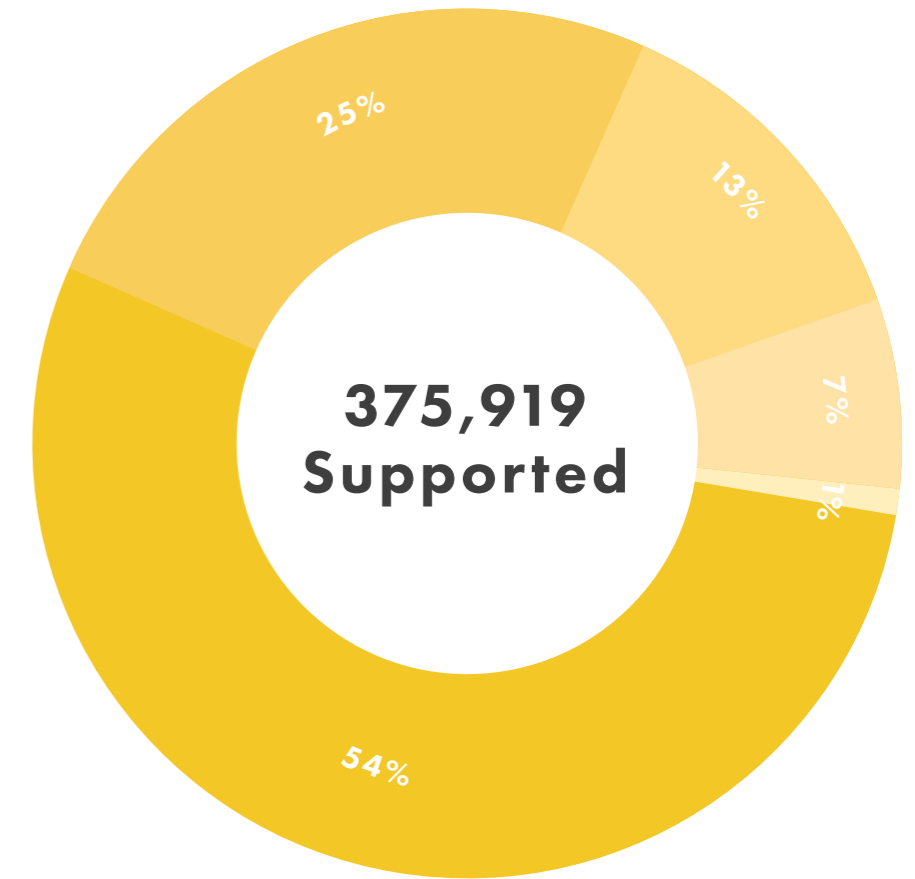
1. Bibles & Christian Literature

- 56% Christian Literature
- 26% Training Materials
- 17% Bibles
- 1% Other



2. Training

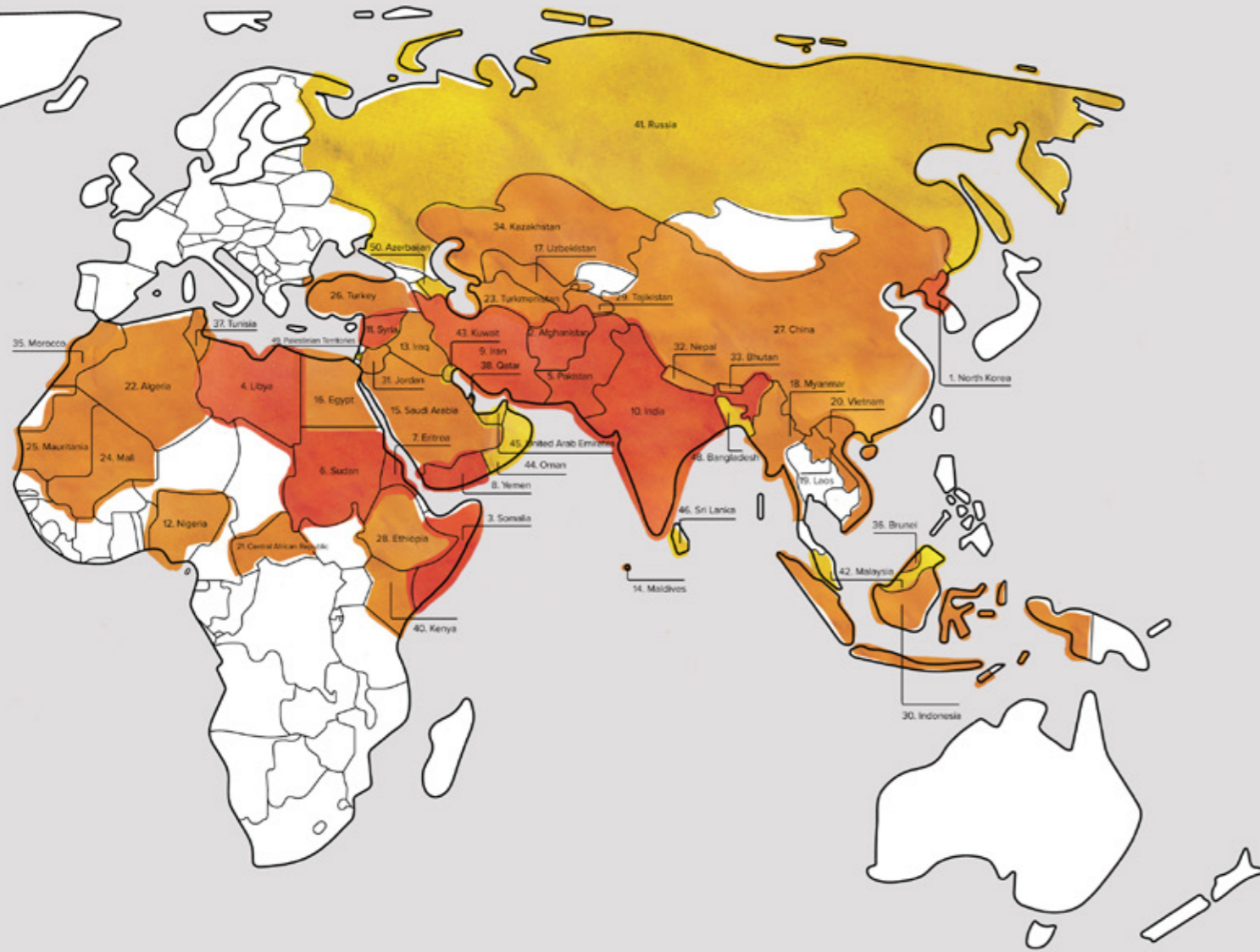
- 34% Persecution Preparation
- 28% Discipleship
- 28% Other (Leadership, Family, Counselling)
- 5% Bible Training
- 5% Trauma Counselling



3. Practical Support

- 54% Relief Aid
- 25% Social Services
- 13% Community Development
- 7% Livelihood Support
- 1% Other

The Cost Of Following Jesus



This map represents the places where it is most costly to follow Jesus.

It also shows where God is at work, building His Church.

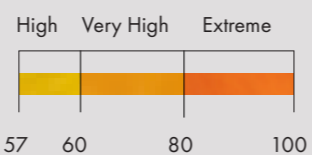
There are always things that will try to stop us from following Jesus. We can't avoid that, but we can overcome it, together.

Meet the movement of Christians courageously following Jesus all over the world, no matter the cost.

For over 70 years, we have been helping them write their stories of courageous faith.

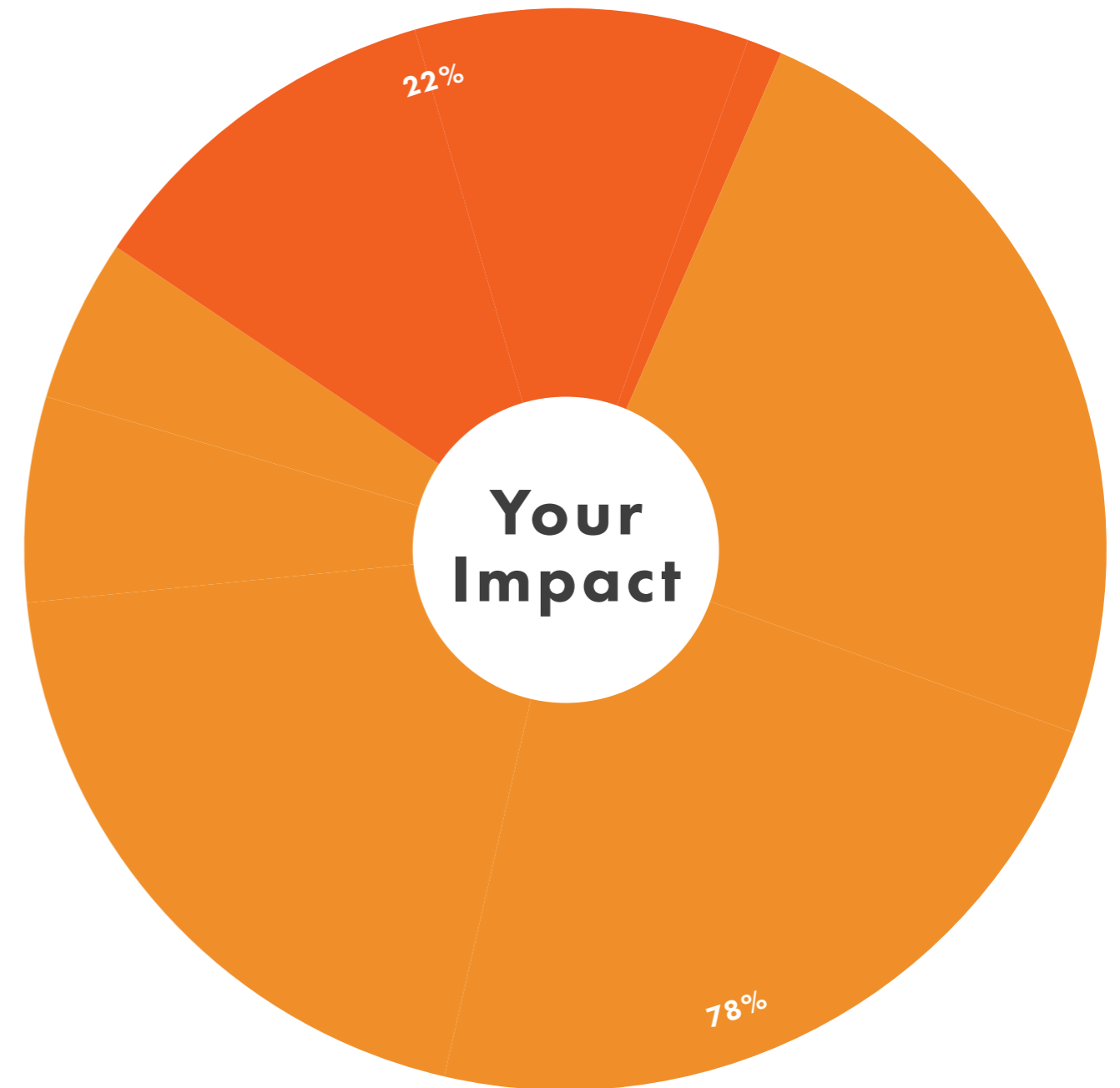
Together, we are the Church.

Score Chart



The Australian Impact

Together, We Are The Church



78% Global
We help more than 245 million Christians who pay a high price for following Jesus all over the world. We strengthen the Church as they courageously follow Jesus, no matter the cost.

22% Australia
Your funds support our small, passionate team who work hard to ensure the ministry does what we set out to do. This includes fundraising, administration and our ministry to the Australian church.

"I love you, I love you, but I love Jesus more."

— Ibrahim*, former Muslim from Algeria.

When Ibrahim* heard the gospel, he decided to leave Islam and become a Christian. His father and brothers beat him in front of his wife and children.

Ibrahim's children begged him to deny Jesus.

"Daddy, daddy, please renounce your Christian faith, return to Islam, so you can always be our father," they said.

Ibrahim turned to his children, bleeding and bruised.

"It was so hard to hear them saying that... But I couldn't renounce Jesus, I couldn't renounce my faith. I said to my children: 'I love you, I love you, but I love Jesus more.'"

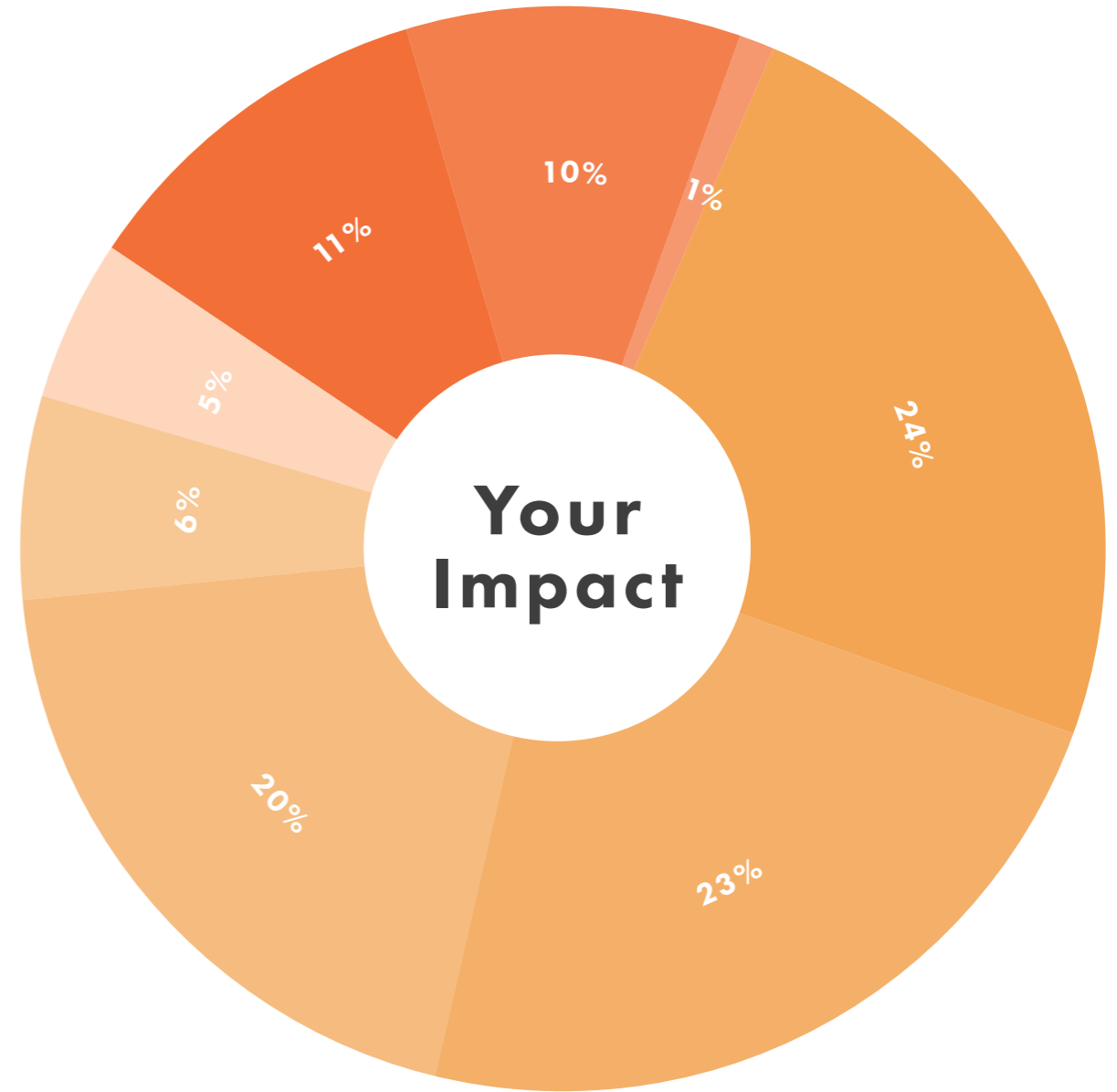
"If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple."
— Luke 14:26



*Name changed for security purposes.

The Australian Impact

The Breakdown



- **24% Local Ministry**
Mobilising and encouraging the Australian church to pray and be bold in their faith
- **23% Practical Support**
Emergency support, supporting families and job creation
- **20% Training**
Bible training, discipleship and trauma counselling
- **11% Administration**
Finance and ministry costs
- **10% Fundraising**
Mobilising the Australian church to raise funds
- **6% Bibles And Literature**
Strengthening the Church through the Word of God and other Christian literature
- **5% Research And Advocacy**
International advocacy for persecuted Christians
- **1% Infrastructure**
Long term infrastructure for ministry growth



Garissa University Campus, Kenya

"I learned that in every suffering you go through, God is still there."

– Margaret*, Kenya

"When you feel your heart break, when you are down, when there is no more [purpose to] life, I want to tell you there is hope. Trust in God for He is faithful."

This was how Margaret chose to respond after Al-Shabaab militants stormed her university in Garissa, Kenya, in 2015. The gunmen took over 700 students hostage and killed anyone who was a follower of Jesus. Margaret hid under her bed for 14 hours. The attack killed 148 people.

Even in the midst of suffering, Margaret knows God is still there.

"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord your God..."
— Isaiah 43:2-3a

*Name changed for security purposes.

The Australian Impact

A Closer Look

1. Strengthening The Indian Church

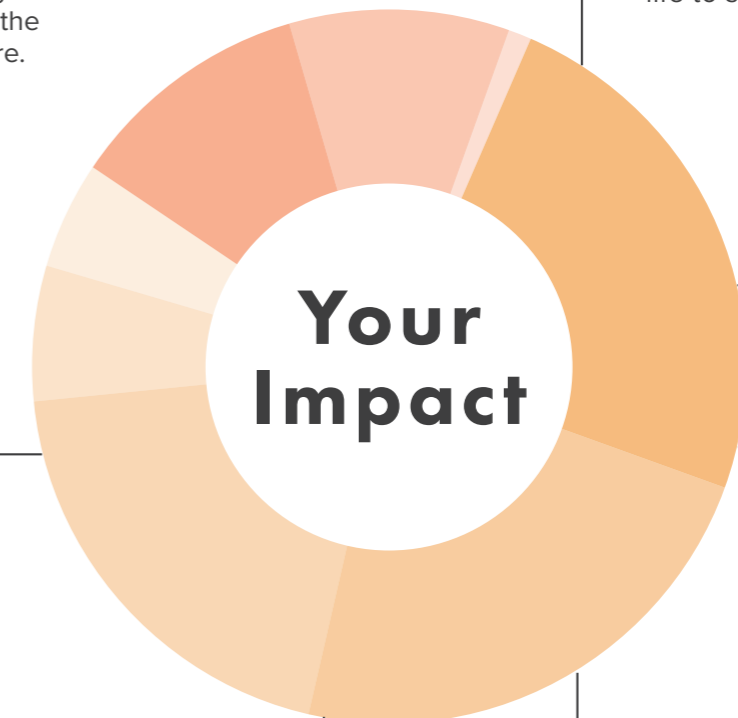
Together we raised over **\$61,000** to train young believers to stand strong in persecution and ensure the Indian church has a future.

2. Open Doors Live

Over **1,400** people gathered across Australia to worship, pray and join with the persecuted church. We can't wait to do it again this year, across four cities, also launching in Toowoomba.

3. One With Them

In 2018, we put the call out for the first time and saw over **1,000** people take their faith from their private to their public life to stand One With Them.



4. Crisis Relief

Violent persecution from Fulani Herdsmen has affected thousands. You raised over **\$99,000** to help the Nigerian church rebuild and remain.

5. Support Refugee Families

You helped provide **160** Iraqi families and orphans in Jordan with trauma therapy, education and regular food packs.

6. IDOP

Over **5,700** people came together to pray with the persecuted. We know there are many things that try to stop us from following Jesus. But we can overcome them, together.

To the 3,800+ Frontline Partners who give generously each month, we want to say thank you. Together, we are helping people follow Jesus, no matter the cost. You are helping believers write their story of courageous Christianity all over the world.

This is the Church in action.

You can join a movement of Christians who courageously follow Jesus, no matter the cost and become a Frontline Partner today.

Hope For The Future

A Lesson From A Widow Of The Persecuted Church



Verlaine started her own business and can now support her family.

Is it possible to find God in the midst of grief and trauma? When Islamic extremists killed Verlaine's* husband, she was forced to find hope, even in the darkest of places.

When Verlaine's village in the Central African Republic was attacked, she fled with her family and hid in the bush. They were forced to stay there for days, not daring to make a single sound.

But they couldn't stay hidden forever.

The Islamic extremist group started shooting into the bush and chased out Verlaine's family, along with hundreds of others.

"While we were running, they shot at us," Verlaine said. "They killed my uncle... He fell down in a pool of blood. Everybody, even the children, saw it happen."

In the Central African Republic, most of the population are Christians, however, extremist groups make life difficult for

many believers. Churches are attacked and Christians are threatened and beaten. Fear and violence are a daily reality.

Verlaine's village was just one of many subject to such attacks. But Verlaine's terror was far from over.

"They forced my husband into their camp," she recalled. "They tied my husband and they pushed him to the ground and then beat and kicked him. Very hard. I cried and pleaded with them to stop: 'Please kill me,' I said. 'Leave my husband. I have four children with him. If you kill him, who is going to take care of the children and me?'"

But the extremists didn't stop there.

"They shouted at me. And after beating him longer, they took kerosene..."

As she watched, they burned Verlaine's husband alive. She could do nothing but look on.

Working Together

Witnessing her husband's death was highly traumatic for Verlaine. With no home to go back to, and her children and parents to look after, the future looked uncertain and terrifying.

In a refugee camp, Verlaine was able to receive some food, but the mental trauma she faced was overwhelming. And she was not alone. When Open Doors assessed the situation, it became apparent that many refugees at the camp were suffering from the effects of intense trauma, and were struggling to deal with emotions of shock, depression, anxiety and anger.

Verlaine began to attend counselling programs hosted by Open Doors. Together, with your support, we also trained local leaders on how to recognise trauma and to have the tools for basic counselling.

Three leaders in Verlaine's village have helped her begin to heal after her trauma by visiting her regularly, listening, and sharing God's Word with her.

"I have good hope for the future."

"The counselling helped a lot," she said. "In the beginning when they visited, I always shed tears because it reminded me of the things that happened.

"But through time and much counselling the Word of God touched my heart. I do not always cry anymore."

Pastor Danway* is one of the leaders who was trained by Open Doors and regularly visits Verlaine.

"Before Open Doors trained us, we didn't know how to help people with trauma," he said. "We saw them. Many of them. But we didn't know what to do or say. Verlaine is a woman whose husband was killed. She saw it with her own eyes. We thank God that Open Doors taught us how to talk to people like her."

Hope For The Future

Even in the midst of persecution, the church wants to remain. Together, we have been able to empower local believers living amongst conflict and crisis.

Six years after the trauma of losing her husband, Verlaine joined a savings group run by Open Doors, and took out a loan to start her own business. She now earns enough money to feed her family, as well as enough to build a new house.

"It is important for the healing process of traumatised people that we encourage them to be active again," said Pastor Danway. "When they have something in their hands to take care of, it boosts their self-confidence and then it is easier for them to deal with what happened to them."

"Before the counselling my life seemed useless," Verlaine said. "I was skinny and weak... A few months ago, I would tremble with fear whenever I heard noise. But now my mind is clearer, and I can see a change in my body. I look healthier. I have good hope for the future."

Verlaine's story reminds us that when the Church is unified, we can have hope for the future, together.

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope." — Romans 15:13

To our Frontline Partners who support the persecuted church monthly, your generosity is the motor of this ministry and helps people follow Jesus all over the world, no matter the cost.

To join the movement visit opendoors.org.au/frontline

*Names changed for security purposes.



Damaris with letters of encouragement from the global Church.

When Faith Feels Lost

Encouraging The Global Body Of Christ

What happens when faith feels lost? Damaris had only been married to her husband, Jackson, for a week when he was martyred for sharing the gospel.

A group of men, angry at Jackson's evangelistic ministry, lured him and his friend into a trap. They killed them and set their bodies on fire. Jackson could only be identified by his clothing.

"I've never before faced such a difficult situation in my life," Damaris said. "I could do nothing. I could not even pray. I just existed. I felt God had forsaken me. How could God allow this to happen to me?"

Letters From The Church

Damaris felt isolated and alone. During this time, Open Doors was able to visit with letters from people like you who had heard her story.

"[They] came and prayed with me and brought me a card. I realised there were people who were concerned about me: the body of Christ.

"After some time, they came back again with so many letters! People were encouraging me and telling me they were praying for me. People told me, 'We are praying with you, we are praying for you.' That started building my faith again. Receiving those letters was the first time I could smile or laugh again. Until then I had felt very gloomy. After this visit, I started praying again. I thought, 'If people are praying for me, why can't I?'"

"I continued receiving the letters from people all over the world. People sent letters from Germany, Norway, Canada, India... I said, 'This is God, because these are people I do not know, yet they are so concerned that they would send letters. I felt loved once again. Bitterness started melting away. I thank God for these people.'"

"I want to encourage people going through fire to stand firm and serve God, and He will help them to heal others."

Restoring Faith

Letters from people like you encouraged Damaris to find solace in God and to continue sharing Him.

"I want to encourage people going through fire to stand firm and serve God, and He will help them to heal others," said Damaris.

"Sometimes I just say, 'Thank you, Jesus.' This loss made me stronger than I used to be. Being healed was not for my sake but to tell others about what God can do with their lives and to encourage them that God is able to heal them.

"I feel that we are in the same family, even if we have not met. Every time I read those letters, tears come to my eyes because they minister to me... They have kind of motivated me to continue in the faith and continue to serve God even more than I did before."

"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."
— 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Letter Writing Campaign

Encourage Yana in Nigeria

Something beautiful happens when we realise the persecuted church and the free church are one. Write letters to encourage the suffering body of Christ as their stories of courageous Christianity inspire us to follow Jesus no matter the cost.

In 2014, Yana's daughter, Rifkatu, was kidnapped from her Nigerian secondary school by Islamic extremist group, Boko Haram.

"We will wait for her to come back. No matter how long it takes," Yana said. "We have placed our total trust and dependence on God, knowing He is the only one that can save them."

Pray for the girls who have not yet come home and write to encourage Yana as she waits for any news of her daughter.

Send your letters by **30 August 2019** to 11/10 Gladstone Road, Castle Hill NSW 2154



Do:

- Print clearly in English
- Be brief and encouraging
- Provide your name and country only

Don't:

- Mention Open Doors
- Send money
- Criticise a country
- Make proposals to help

Sixty Second Stories



Koné

“You have built this church.”

– Koné*

What happens when the body of Christ is united? When we support our brothers and sisters, the local church is strengthened and believers can learn to stand in the face of persecution, even if it comes from their own family.

Koné* grew up in the Ivory Coast as a follower of a traditional African religion. Her husband turned on her when Koné decided to follow Jesus. He insulted her, beat her and turned her children against her. He threatened to kill her if she didn't deny her faith in Christ.

But Koné held onto her faith and started the only church in her area, which now has over 30 members.

Together, with our local partners, we were able to provide Koné's church with an audio Bible as most of them are unable to read. We also helped start literacy and discipleship classes.

The head of the village said “I thank you all for this work...you have built this church.”

“From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.” — Ephesians 4:16



Nimal

“I will never let a person go without sharing my faith.”

– Nimal*

What would you risk to share the gospel with those who don't know Jesus? When Nimal* was 21, his life changed forever and a passion to share his faith was born.

He attended a Christian gathering in a neighbouring village in Sri Lanka.

“It was a music evening where they distributed tracts,” he said. When I got the tract I was thinking of using it to light my cigarette, but I felt a surge of electricity through my body. I was drawn to the music and felt compelled to go to the front. There I knelt.”

Nimal began to passionately follow God. One day, he was attacked at gunpoint because of his faith. Despite this, he continued to share the gospel wherever he went.

Together, we helped Nimal start his own brick making business, which allows him to interact with members of his community each day.

“My business [gives me] an opportunity to witness to many non-Christians. Generally, as a Christian, I will never let a person go without sharing my faith.”

“Declare his glory among the nations, his marvellous works among all the peoples!” — Psalm 96:3



Fatuma

“Jesus is able to mend everything.”

– Fatuma*

What happens when following Jesus publicly could cost you everything?

In Ethiopia, working in ministry comes with many risks. Especially for women, who often experience isolation, attacks and threats because of their public faith in Jesus.

After dealing with discrimination and threats from her own family, Fatuma* attended a two-week trauma workshop ran by our local partners.

At the workshop, Fatuma and the other women studied the Bible. In the afternoons, they participated in therapeutic crafts like Kintsugi, where broken ceramics are turned into beautiful artwork.

“As I mended the broken pieces of the plate, I realised God has picked up all my broken pieces and has healed me,” Fatuma said. “Jesus is able to mend everything. Thank you for making this very special time possible.”

“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” — Isaiah 41:10

*Names changed for security purposes.

Join The Movement

As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

– 1 Corinthians 12:20

Our Frontline Partners are faithful, bold believers who give monthly to help people follow Jesus all over the world, no matter the cost.

Last year, our Frontline Partners gave over 1.9 million dollars to strengthen the body of Christ even in some of the most difficult places on the planet.

Thank you!

Your Story Starts Here

Every Christian is trying to follow Jesus in today's world. We can show you how.

There are always things that try to stop us from following Jesus. We can't avoid that, but we can overcome it, together.

Together, we can deliver Bibles to Christians in places where it's illegal to own one. We can train new believers who met the Lord in prison and now plan to start a house church.

Together, we can support widows whose husbands were killed for sharing the gospel. Or counsel new Christians from Muslim backgrounds, who have lost everything for following Jesus.

Together, we can help your brothers and sisters be the light of Jesus in war zones, labour camps, Islamic extremist villages and prisons.

There are so many reasons to be part of a movement of Christians, courageously following Jesus all over the world, no matter the cost.

As a Frontline Partner, we will make sure you are equipped with stories, devotionals, prayer updates, podcasts and that you are the first to receive exclusive invitations to events. You will also receive exclusive travel opportunities to meet with the global body of Christ in countries where faith costs the most.

Join the movement, and we can begin writing our stories of courageous faith, together.

Your Story Starts Here.

Visit opendoors.org.au/frontline



OpenDoors®

OPEN DOORS LIVE

**The Persecuted Church
Are Coming.**

**Worship With Them.
Pray With Them.
Learn From Them.**

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Sydney | 24 August
Toowoomba | 29 August
Brisbane | 31 August**

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OpenDoors®

SERVING PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS WORLDWIDE

