

# HOPE REMAINS

## INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER 2020

### INTRO

Thank you for encouraging your church to take part in the International Day of Prayer 2020. Our prayers and our support are vital for their survival.

**Christians in the Middle East, who have survived war, persecution and crisis, now face a new threat: Covid-19. Your support for Open Doors empowers churches to become Centres of Hope across Syria and Iraq.**

- Centres of Hope are ordinary local churches equipped to give food, medicine, comfort and prayer when people need it most.
- In Syria, 20% of churches – about 110 congregations – have either become a Centre of Hope or are part of a larger programme.
- Without this practical support from their church, many Christians would lose hope and look for ways to leave their country.



## BACKGROUND

The church in the Middle East is under attack. The Islamic State may have been largely defeated. But their ideology remains alive. And the extremists' aim is to destroy the Christian presence.

Before the war there were about 1.8 million Christians in Syria, now there are only an estimated 800,000 left.

Open Doors' vision is that the church in the Middle East would not just survive – but play a key role in rebuilding society. Our plan is to transform local churches into Centres of Hope, running projects to benefit the community.

Projects could help people rebuild their livelihoods and earn an income for their family again. Larger programmes, such as the year-long trauma awareness course, are shared between several churches.

Without this support, made possible by churches like yours, many Christians would lose hope and look for ways to leave their country. Christianity in the Middle East could disappear.

## STORY



Dalia, Iraq. Photo available for PowerPoint presentation.

### HOPE REMAINS

“Our suitcases are always packed, in case we have to flee,” says Dalia, describing her life as a Christian on the Nineveh Plain in Iraq. “I warn my children to be very careful. Kidnappings and explosions are often the order of the day.”

Dalia has experienced persecution for her faith for as long as she can remember. Fourteen years ago, her uncle was murdered by Islamic extremists, who said that followers of Jesus did not belong in Iraq.

Though her family have all left, Dalia remains in her country because she feels called to serve the church in Iraq. Thanks to the support and prayers of Christians around the world, through Open Doors, her church has become a Centre of Hope. Dalia has been trained to

run Bible studies with other Christian women and their families.

“We learned how to tell women in Bashiqa about the Lord Jesus, and how to serve them in love. We learned how to make contacts and convey hope.”

After the training, Dalia and her group began regularly organising Bible study meetings for women. “We offer prayer and encouragement. With success, because last summer about 150 women participated. When I hear that a woman is preparing a Bible study at home with her husband and children, it makes me very happy.”

## YOUR SERVICE

Whether you're holding a special service for the persecuted church – or just a short slot, Open Doors will do all we can to resource you.

Please contact BJ Candole if you would like an experienced and trained speaker to participate in your service – directly or online.

There are films and further prayer points available on our website. Please visit [www.opendoors.ph](http://www.opendoors.ph)

Watch the inspiring short films of Dalia from Iraq and Pastor George from Syria. Both are making hope visible to their communities as part of a Centre of Hope.

However you participate in this global prayer event, please encourage the members of your congregation to continue their journey of faith with their persecuted brothers and sisters.

## LET'S PRAY

**Pastor George, from Qamishli, Syria, asks us to pray:**

**Pray that people stand firm in Jesus. Pray that the economy recovers. The war isn't over – pray that Christians will stay in the country. Pray that their basic needs will be met. I often see people searching bins for food. Pray that there will be jobs for the people.**

There are further prayer points available on our website: [www.opendoors.ph](http://www.opendoors.ph)

## YOUR CHURCH'S RESPONSE

### GIVE

If the Lord is leading you and your church to give, you may hold a special offering for Persecuted Christians in the Middle East. This gift from your church, of whatever amount, will help courageous Christians facing extreme persecution.

Php 875 provides a Story Bible for one child in Syria

Php 1,750 for two Story Bibles/two children

Php 2,250 will help contribute in rebuilding a family's home

Php 3,000 will help in distributing regular food packs

Please refer to the IDOP 2020 Response Form for our bank account details and other options in giving a gift. Thank you and God bless you more!

### SHARE

Focusing on the persecuted church in your service is fantastic – thank you! But our persecuted brothers and sisters need longterm help and support. So please encourage your church family to continue the journey.

### KEEP IN TOUCH

Sign up to regular communications and get stories of those who are defying dictators, breaking rules, and risking their lives to follow Jesus. You have options to receive publications from us via mail or email in the IDOP 2020 Response Form.

And with information and prayer points about a different World Watch List country every week, it's a great way to pray through the whole list over year.



Go to [www.opendoors.ph](http://www.opendoors.ph) or contact BJ at 0998-8830821 / [philippines@od.org](mailto:philippines@od.org) if you have other questions on organizing your own IDOP 2020 Program.