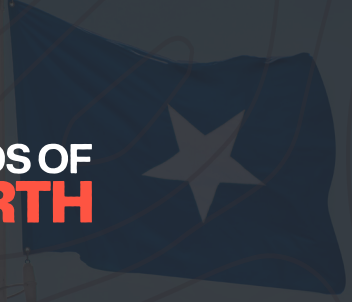




TO THE ENDS OF
THE EARTH



THE TEN **MOST WANTED** **NATIONS** FOR CHRIST

PRAYING THE LAST
NATIONS HOME



HopeChannel





10 NATIONS • 10 PRAYERS • ONE MISSION

This prayer guide was made possible
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HopeChannel

90 CHANNELS
120 LANGUAGES
1 BILLION VISION

Hope Channel International is a global Christian media ministry broadcasting the gospel of Jesus to places where missionaries cannot go: closed nations, restricted regions, and unreached homes.

Through satellite, radio, and digital platforms, we reach millions who have never stepped inside a church and never will, unless the gospel comes to them.

The Ten Most Wanted Nations for Christ: Praying the Last Nations Home

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3.6 BILLION

U N R E A C H E D P E O P L E

*“The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few;
therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest
to send out laborers into his harvest.”*

MATTHEW 9:37-38

While you read this, **billions**
are living and dying without ever
hearing the name of Jesus.

For every 100 people on Earth,
43 have never heard the gospel.

Turn the page.
Read each story. Pray each prayer.
You are standing in the gap.

NORTH KOREA

26 MILLION PEOPLE · MOST CLOSED NATION ON EARTH

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is, by every measurable index, the most dangerous country on Earth in which to follow Jesus Christ. For over seven decades, the Kim dynasty has demanded absolute worship – a totalitarian cult of personality that tolerates no rival allegiance, least of all to the God of heaven.

Christians face imprisonment, torture, and execution. An estimated 50,000 to 70,000 believers are held in brutal labor camps – sprawling prison complexes where starvation rations, forced labor, and summary killings are routine.¹ Owning a Bible is punishable by death, and the sentence extends to three generations. Secret believers worship in silence, never knowing who they can trust. A single whispered prayer, overheard by a neighbor, can condemn an entire household.

The regime demands absolute allegiance; following Jesus is the ultimate act of defiance. The state classifies citizens into loyalty categories, and those with Christian ancestry are permanently relegated to the lowest class – the Songbun system ensures that the sins of faith are visited upon children and grandchildren.²

And yet, the underground church endures. Open Doors estimates that between 300,000 and 500,000 secret believers exist inside this sealed nation, worshipping a King whose kingdom no dictator can destroy.

¹Open Doors, World Watch List 2026: North Korea Country Dossier (January 2026). North Korea has topped the World Watch List as the world's most dangerous country for Christians for over two decades.

²The Songbun system classifies all North Korean citizens into three broad categories – “core,” “wavering,” and “hostile” – based on perceived loyalty to the regime. Christians and their descendants are classified as “hostile” regardless of personal conduct.

PRAYER FOCUS

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” – Joshua 1:9

Courage and supernatural protection for secret believers who risk everything to follow Jesus. Pray for those in labor camps to feel God’s presence in the darkness. Pray the gospel reaches those who have never heard His name. Pray for the day when North Korea’s doors will open and the church will rise from the underground into the light.

PRAYER

“Father in Heaven,
You see what no surveillance camera can detect – the faith burning inside hearts that have never spoken Your name aloud. I lift to You the secret believers of North Korea: those whispering prayers in the dark, those enduring labor camps for the crime of loving You, those passing down faith to their children in hushed tones, knowing discovery means death for the entire family. Strengthen them with a courage that defies every human calculation. Be their companion in solitary confinement, their bread when rations fail, their hope when the darkness feels absolute. I pray for the estimated 50,000 believers in prison camps – that Your presence would be more real to them than the walls that hold them. And Lord, I ask boldly: open North Korea. Let the doors swing wide. Let the church that has survived in whispers one day sing aloud. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

SOMALIA

18 MILLION PEOPLE • AL-SHABAAB CONTROLS LARGE REGIONS

Somalia is considered one of the hardest places on Earth to be a Christian. In a society where Islamic identity and clan identity are fused into a single fabric, leaving Islam means tearing yourself from everything – family, clan, livelihood, safety, and often life itself.

Leaving Islam means certain death. Believers cannot reveal their faith to anyone – not spouses, not parents, not children. There is no visible church, no gathering of believers in any public or even semi-private space. Discovery by Al-Shabaab, the Al-Qaeda-affiliated militant group that controls large swaths of southern and central Somalia, means public execution – often by beheading or stoning – staged as a spectacle to terrorize others from following the same path.¹

Christians live in complete spiritual isolation, unable to fellowship with a single soul. Many have never met another believer. They read Scripture – when they can access it – alone, in hiding, often from a phone app disguised behind other applications. And yet, the Spirit moves, even here. Reports from underground networks suggest that the number of secret believers, though impossible to verify, may be growing – nourished by satellite television broadcasts, shortwave radio, and dreams in which, according to multiple testimonies, Jesus appears to seekers who have never heard His name from any human voice.²

¹Open Doors, World Watch List 2026: Somalia Country Dossier (January 2026). Somalia has ranked second on the World Watch List for four consecutive years.

²Multiple mission organizations, including Hope Channel and SAT-7, report a growing pattern of Somali Muslims encountering Jesus through dreams and visions – a phenomenon documented across the Islamic world that has drawn significant missiological attention.

PRAYER FOCUS

“I will never leave you nor forsake you.” – Hebrews 13:5

Prayer that believers worshiping in total isolation would encounter God’s presence through dreams, visions, and the quiet witness of satellite broadcasts reaching into Somali homes.

PRAYER

“God of the Solitary,

You promise that You set the lonely in families. I pray for Somali believers who have never met another Christian – who carry their faith entirely alone, unable to share it with a spouse, a parent, or a child. You are their only fellowship. Be enough. Be more than enough. I pray for those who first heard Your name through a satellite broadcast or a shortwave signal piercing the night – confirm what they heard. Send them a dream, a verse, a moment of unmistakable encounter that anchors their faith when doubt presses in. I pray for those who have seen Jesus in visions and are searching for what the vision means – send someone to explain, as Philip was sent to the Ethiopian on the desert road. Protect the Christ-followers whom Al-Shabaab hunts. Confuse the plans of those who seek their lives. Station angels around the believers whose own families would kill them if they knew. I pray for the Somali diaspora – in Nairobi, in Minneapolis, in London, in Columbus – that Your church would welcome them with open arms and Your gospel would reach them there. And I pray for the clan elders and the imams – that You would visit them, too, with the truth that sets captives free. Amen.”

YEMEN

33 MILLION PEOPLE • WORLD'S WORST HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

Civil war has devastated the country. The conflict between the internationally recognized government and the Houthi rebel movement, now grinding past its tenth year, has created what the United Nations has called the world's worst humanitarian crisis. Over 21 million people – more than two-thirds of the population – need humanitarian assistance. Millions face famine. The infrastructure of a modern state – hospitals, schools, water systems – has been systematically destroyed.

In this context of total collapse, the few Christians left face persecution from all sides. Converting from Islam brings severe punishment under both the Houthis and the recognized government; Yemen's legal code treats apostasy as a capital offense.¹ Aid workers are targeted by extremists. The few believers worship in complete secrecy, surrounded by death and destruction. House churches that once met quietly in the port city of Aden and the capital Sana'a have been forced to cease meeting entirely as the Houthis tightened their grip on northern Yemen.

Hope feels impossible here. And yet, hope is exactly what is needed. Yemeni believers report that the very desperation of war has opened hearts that were closed for generations. When everything else has been stripped away – security, health, family, home – some have begun to ask whether there is a God who sees their suffering. Into that question, the gospel speaks.²

¹Open Doors, World Watch List 2026: Yemen Country Dossier (January 2026). Yemen rose to No. 3 on the 2026 list, reflecting the increasing influence of the Houthis and the forced closure of dozens of Christian house churches. A Christian convert was killed by family members during the reporting period.

²Reports from closed-country ministry networks indicate a small but growing number of Yemeni seekers accessing Christian content through satellite broadcasts and internet platforms, particularly among youth disillusioned by years of conflict.

PRAYER FOCUS

*“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.” –
Matthew 5:9*

That the desperation of war would become an open door for the gospel – and that seekers asking ultimate questions in the ruins would find the Prince of Peace.

PRAYER

“Prince of Peace,

Yemen has known nothing but war for a decade. Its children have grown up hearing only the sound of bombs. Its people are starving, and the world has looked away. Into this abyss of suffering, I ask You to speak. You have always been drawn to the broken places – the Samaritan road, the pool at Bethesda, the cross at Golgotha. Draw near to Yemen now. I pray for the tiny remnant of believers worshiping in secret, surrounded by devastation on every side. Sustain their faith when hope feels like a luxury they cannot afford. Give them daily bread – literally, Lord, for many are hungry – and the bread of life that sustains the soul. I pray for the house churches the Houthis have forced to close – let the scattered believers find each other again. I pray for the Yemeni seekers who are asking, for the first time, whether there is a God who sees their suffering. Answer their question with Yourself. Protect the aid workers risking their lives to bring relief and the broadcast signals carrying Your name into homes across this shattered land. And I pray for peace – real, lasting, covenantal peace – to come to Yemen. Let the weapons fall silent. Let the hungry be fed. Let the gospel be heard. Amen.”

SUDAN

46 MILLION PEOPLE • CIVIL WAR ERUPTED AGAIN

Sudan's civil war – which erupted in April 2023 between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces – has become one of the deadliest conflicts of the twenty-first century. An estimated 150,000 people have been killed. Over 13 million have been displaced – the largest displaced population in the world.¹ And the church, which briefly dared to hope after the overthrow of dictator Omar al-Bashir in 2019, finds itself once again under siege.

After decades of Islamic rule, a transitional government brought hope for religious freedom. Apostasy laws were repealed. Christians were invited into the political process for the first time. But the military coup of 2021 shattered those gains, and the civil war of 2023 obliterated them entirely. Churches face destruction from both sides of the conflict: more than 165 have been forced to close since the war began, with many deliberately bombed, ransacked, or commandeered as military bases.² Pastors have been singled out for violence. Forced conversions to Islam have resumed. Christians in the Nuba Mountains – home to the largest concentration of believers – face daily aerial bombardment.

The future remains uncertain, but the church continues to gather, even under fire. Sudanese Christian leaders report that even as buildings fall, new churches are being planted in refugee camps and displacement sites. Bibles are in unprecedented demand. The harvest is ripe, even in the killing fields.

¹Open Doors, World Watch List 2026: Sudan Country Dossier (January 2026). Sudan rose to No. 4 on the 2026 list. The civil war has killed an estimated 150,000 people and displaced over 13 million – nearly half the population.

²The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy, "The Forgotten War on Sudan's Christians" (May 2024), documented that more than 165 churches have closed since the start of the war. On Christmas Day 2025, a government drone strike killed 11 Sudanese Christians in a church procession.

PRAYER FOCUS

“He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.” – Psalm 147:3

An end to the bloodshed and a just peace. Healing for a traumatized nation. Protection for believers in the Nuba Mountains under daily bombardment. Pray for Sudanese Christian leaders to be strengthened in their witness. Pray that the church scattered by war would plant seeds wherever it lands.

PRAYER

“God of the Scattered,
You promised that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. Sudan is bleeding, and the world is barely watching. An estimated 150,000 are dead. Thirteen million are displaced – the largest displaced population on Earth. Churches have been bombed, ransacked, and turned into military barracks. On Christmas Day, a drone killed eleven of Your children walking to worship. I cry out: how long, O Lord? And yet, even as I grieve, I see Your hand at work. New churches are springing up in refugee camps. Bibles are in demand like never before. Believers displaced from Khartoum are planting the gospel among people groups they never would have reached from their living rooms. You are turning exile into mission. Heal the trauma of Your people – it is deep, and it is real. The Sudanese church leader Rafat Samir has said, “It is not just our buildings that have been broken down, but also our people.” Mend what is broken. I pray for the Christians of the Nuba Mountains under daily aerial bombardment – cover them. I pray for the converts from Islam facing forced reconversion at gunpoint – give them the words of the Spirit in that hour. Bring this war to an end. And let the Sudanese church emerge from the fire refined, not destroyed. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

ERITREA

3.6 MILLION PEOPLE · “AFRICA’S NORTH KOREA”

Over 500 Christians are imprisoned in metal shipping containers in the desert – scorching by day, freezing by night. This is the signature method of the Eritrean government’s campaign against unapproved religious expression: confinement in corrugated steel boxes, without ventilation, sanitation, or adequate food, in one of the hottest climates on Earth. Only four religious groups are permitted by law: the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church, the Catholic Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and Islam. All others – Pentecostals, Baptists, evangelicals, charismatics – are banned. Their members face arrest, torture, and indefinite detention without trial.¹ Many have been imprisoned for over a decade, forgotten by the world. Not by God.

Eritrea’s totalitarian government, led by President Isaias Afwerki since independence in 1993, exercises absolute control over every aspect of life. There is no independent judiciary, no free press, no civil society. Military conscription is indefinite – some conscripts have served for twenty years – and refusal is punished with imprisonment. In this suffocating environment, unregistered churches are viewed as threats to state control. Pastors have been arrested during worship services; congregations have been rounded up en masse. Some prisoners report being forced to sign statements renouncing their faith as a condition of release. Most refuse.²

¹Open Doors, World Watch List 2026: Eritrea Country Dossier (January 2026). Eritrea ranks No. 5 on the 2026 list. The government recognizes only four faith groups; all others, including Pentecostals and Baptists, are banned.

²Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have documented cases of Eritrean Christians imprisoned for more than fifteen years without trial, held in underground cells, shipping containers, and military detention facilities across the country.

PRAYER FOCUS

“I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

– John 16:33

Prisoners to endure and not lose faith. Families left behind without providers. International pressure to secure the release of those held without trial. Refugees risking death crossing the Sahara and the Mediterranean to carry their faith with them and plant churches wherever they land.

PRAYER

“God of the Imprisoned,

You have never been locked out of a prison. I lift to You the believers of Eritrea – hundreds held in metal containers in the desert, baking by day, freezing by night, year after year, with no trial and no end in sight. Some have been imprisoned for over a decade for the crime of worshipping You outside the four permitted denominations. Most have refused to sign papers renouncing their faith. Give them the grace to keep refusing. I pray for their families – wives raising children alone, parents aging without news, congregations scattered and shepherdless. Provide for them in ways that only You can. I pray for the prisoners who have led cellmates to faith even in detention – multiply their witness behind those walls. Turn every shipping container into a chapel. I pray for the pastors arrested mid-sermon, for the congregations rounded up en masse – let not one of them be lost. I pray for the hundreds of thousands of Eritrean refugees who have fled across borders, crossing deserts and seas at terrible cost, burying friends along the way. Plant churches through their diaspora – in Sudan, in Ethiopia, in Europe, wherever they land. And I pray for President Afwerki’s heart – that the God who turned Saul into Paul can turn a persecutor into a protector of the faith. Amen.”

SYRIA

22 MILLION PEOPLE • OVER HALF DISPLACED BY WAR

Syria was home to some of the oldest Christian communities on Earth – heirs to the faith that first received the name “Christian” in Antioch (Acts 11:26). Before the civil war, approximately 1.5 million Christians lived in Syria. Today, that number has fallen below 300,000.¹

Yet ancient Christian communities that existed for 2,000 years have been devastated. Millions of Syrian Christians are now refugees in camps abroad, longing to return home. Historic churches in Aleppo, Homs, and Damascus – some dating to the earliest centuries of the faith – have been reduced to rubble. Many who remain face uncertain futures in a country where the political landscape continues to shift, and where religious minorities remain vulnerable to extremist violence.

But the story of Syrian Christianity is a story of resurrection. Despite everything, Christians have not abandoned Syria. In Aleppo, churches that were shelled during the siege have been rebuilt – sometimes with Muslim neighbors helping to lay the bricks. In Damascus, ancient congregations still gather for worship in sanctuaries that have echoed with prayer for seventeen centuries. And across the diaspora, Syrian Christians carry their faith with them, planting churches in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Germany, and beyond. Many have lost everything: homes, families, futures. Except their faith. And that faith is the seed of everything that will be rebuilt.²

¹Open Doors, World Watch List 2026: Syria Country Dossier (January 2026). Syria ranks No. 6 on the 2026 list. Open Doors’ partners in Syria report that the uncertainty of the last decade has caused some Syrians to question and seek – meaning an increasing number of people are asking about Jesus.

²Christian communities in Aleppo and Damascus have undertaken significant rebuilding efforts since the reduction of active conflict. Multiple church denominations – Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant – have coordinated reconstruction projects alongside interfaith community restoration initiatives.

PRAYER FOCUS

“Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?”

– *Isaiah 43:19*

Return and restoration for displaced families. Hope for refugees who have lost everything. The ancient church to rise from the ashes and bear witness once again to the risen Christ. Pray for the new seekers to find faith, fellowship, and the peace that surpasses understanding.

PRAYER

“Ancient of Days,

The believers of Syria worship in churches that have stood since the apostles. They belong to the land where Your followers were first called Christians in Antioch. For two thousand years, the faith has endured here – through Rome, through Islam, through Ottoman rule, through French mandate. And now through civil war. A community of 1.5 million has been reduced to 300,000. I pray for those who remain – rebuild what has been destroyed. Restore the ancient churches of Aleppo and Homs, stone by stone, congregation by congregation. I pray for the millions in exile – in the camps of Lebanon, in the cities of Jordan, in the apartments of Berlin – sustain their faith far from the land their ancestors have called home for two millennia. Do not let them lose hope of return. I pray for the churches of Aleppo rising from rubble, and for the Muslim neighbors who helped lay the bricks – bless them and draw them to Yourself. And I pray for the new thing You are doing: the seekers, the questioners, those whose suffering has cracked open hearts long sealed by tradition and fear. Meet them where they are. As the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch, let Syria once again be a place where people encounter Christ and are forever changed. I ask this in the name of the One who makes all things new. Amen.”

PAKISTAN

231 MILLION PEOPLE · BLASPHEMY LAWS WEAPONIZED

False accusations of blasphemy destroy lives overnight. Pakistan's blasphemy laws – which carry a mandatory death sentence for insulting the Prophet Muhammad – have become weapons wielded against Christians by neighbors, business rivals, landlords, and anyone with a grudge.¹ Entire Christian communities have been displaced by mob violence based on nothing more than a rumor. The process requires no evidence: an accusation alone is enough to trigger a mob, a police arrest, and years of imprisonment awaiting trial.

Young Christian girls are kidnapped, forced to convert, and married to their captors – a widespread system of human rights abuse. The legal system offers little protection. Judges who acquit blasphemy defendants receive death threats. Defense lawyers have been assassinated. The case of Asia Bibi, a Christian woman who spent eight years on death row for blasphemy before her acquittal and flight to Canada in 2019, drew global attention to this crisis – but Asia Bibi's case was exceptional only in its visibility.²

Believers carry on, trusting in a justice that transcends earthly courts.

Pakistan's Christian community – estimated at 3 to 4 million – traces its roots to the earliest centuries of the faith, and its resilience under pressure is a testimony to the enduring power of the gospel in hostile soil.

¹Open Doors, World Watch List 2026: Pakistan Country Dossier (January 2026). Pakistan ranks No. 8 on the 2026 list. According to the Center for Social Justice Pakistan, over 2,000 people have been accused under the blasphemy laws since their current form was enacted in the 1980s.

²The National Commission for Justice and Peace (NCJP), a Catholic organization in Pakistan, documents an average of 1,000 cases per year of forced conversion and forced marriage of Christian and Hindu girls, most between the ages of 12 and 25.

PRAYER FOCUS

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” – Matthew 5:10

Protection for Christian families and young girls targeted for kidnapping and forced conversion. Courage for believers to stand firm in the face of overwhelming injustice. Pray for Pakistani lawmakers who seek to reform blasphemy laws. Pray for the church in Pakistan to grow in strength.

PRAYER

“Righteous Judge,
You see every false accusation spoken against Your children in Pakistan. You see the Christian man imprisoned on a neighbor’s lie and the family destroyed by a rumor whispered to settle a grudge. You see the young girls kidnapped from their homes, forced to convert, and married to their captors – some as young as twelve. You see, and You do not forget. I pray for justice. Give courage to the judges who know the accused are innocent but fear for their own lives if they acquit. Protect the defense lawyers who risk assassination to represent the falsely accused. I pray for Asia Bibi and the thousands whose cases never reached the world’s attention – those still sitting in prison cells, waiting for a verdict that may never come. Vindicate them. I pray for the Christian communities of Punjab and Sindh, living under the constant shadow of mob violence – for the families of Jaranwala who watched twenty churches and hundreds of homes burn in a single day. Give them the faith to rebuild what hatred destroyed. I pray for Pakistani lawmakers who know the blasphemy laws are unjust but lack the political will to reform them – give them holy courage. Strengthen Pakistan’s 3 to 4 million believers to stand firm, to love their persecutors as You commanded, and to bear witness to a kingdom where justice reigns forever. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

LIBYA

7 MILLION PEOPLE • POLITICAL CHAOS AND ARMED MILITIAS

Since the fall of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011, the country has fractured into territories controlled by competing governments and armed militias, all of them hostile to Christianity. What was once a single authoritarian state has become a patchwork of fiefdoms – lawless, volatile, and lethal for anyone professing faith in Christ.

Christians in Libya are overwhelmingly migrant workers from Sub-Saharan Africa – Eritreans, Ethiopians, Nigerians, Ghanaians – who form the majority of the believing community and face both religious persecution and racial exploitation.¹ They are trapped between two threats: as Christians, they are targeted by Islamist militias; as African migrants, they are preyed upon by human traffickers and forced labor networks. Many have been sold in open-air slave markets – a horror that drew brief international attention in 2017 before the world moved on.

Importing Bibles is illegal. There is no safe place to worship. The church exists only in whispers and secret prayer. Small groups of believers meet in private apartments, rotating locations to avoid detection, communicating through coded messages. In the coastal cities of Tripoli and Misrata, migrant Christians gather in overcrowded rooms, sharing Scripture from memory when no Bible can be found. Their faith is forged in fire – and it holds.²

¹Open Doors, World Watch List 2026: Libya Country Dossier (January 2026). Libya dropped from No. 4 to No. 9 on the 2026 list, primarily due to a decline in verifiable violent incidents – not an improvement in conditions, but a reflection of the difficulty of documenting violence in a country without functioning institutions.

²International Organization for Migration (IOM), Libya Situation Report (2025). The IOM continues to document the exploitation and trafficking of Sub-Saharan African migrants in Libya, many of whom are Christians fleeing persecution in their home countries.

PRAYER FOCUS

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” – Psalm 119:105

That migrant believers trapped between trafficking and persecution would become the unexpected missionaries who plant the church in North Africa.

PRAYER

“Lord of the Nations,

You have placed Your people in Libya not by accident but by providence.

The migrant believers from Eritrea, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Ghana did not choose this posting – but You have stationed them in a land where no missionary can go. Give them eyes to see their suffering as a sending.

Protect them from the traffickers who exploit their bodies and the militias who target their faith. I remember the believers who were sold in open-air slave markets – You see them, Lord, and You do not forget. Deliver them.

Where Bibles cannot be imported, let Your Word be carried in hearts that have memorized it. I pray for the small groups gathering in Tripoli apartments, rotating locations, communicating through coded messages – be their shepherd in the wilderness. Give them bread for the journey and water in the desert. I pray also for the handful of Libyan converts from Islam, cut off from family and clan, living under the threat of honor killing. You are their father now. Give them courage to stand and wisdom to survive. May their witness plant seeds that one day bear fruit across all of North Africa – in Libya, in Tunisia, in Algeria – wherever the gospel has yet to take root. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

IRAN

87 MILLION PEOPLE · FASTEST-GROWING CHURCH IN THE WORLD

Iran is the great paradox of global Christianity. The Islamic Republic's theocratic government – which treats conversion from Islam as apostasy punishable by death – presides over the fastest-growing church in the world. Experts estimate between 800,000 and 1 million believers, up from a few thousand in 1979 when the Islamic Revolution swept the Shah from power.¹ The growth is so explosive that some researchers describe it as the most rapid numerical expansion of Christianity in Iranian history – surpassing even the earliest centuries of the faith, when Persian Christians were among the first to carry the gospel eastward.

The growth is driven by satellite broadcasts – including Hope Channel Farsi – social media, and a remarkable phenomenon of dreams and visions in which Iranians report encounters with Jesus. House churches have become the backbone of Iranian Christianity: small, mobile, relationally dense, and extraordinarily resilient. The government's response has been intensified surveillance, raids on home gatherings, confiscation of Bibles and Christian literature, and lengthy prison sentences for church leaders. Pastors have been charged with “acting against national security” for the crime of leading Bible studies.²

Despite persecution, millions are coming to faith through satellite TV and dreams of Jesus. House churches multiply faster than the government can close them. A spiritual awakening is happening in one of the most hostile nations on Earth. What was meant to silence the church has only made it louder.

¹Operation World and Elam Ministries, Iran: Church Growth Estimates (2024-2025). Multiple research organizations corroborate the rapid growth of Christianity in Iran, though precise numbers are impossible to verify given the clandestine nature of the church.

²Article 18, Annual Report on the State of Religious Freedom in Iran (2025). Article 18 documents ongoing arrests, interrogations, and prison sentences targeting Iranian Christians, particularly converts from Islam and house church leaders.

PRAYER FOCUS

“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”
– John 1:5

Pray the awakening spreads to every corner of the nation and beyond its borders. Pray for Iranian believers in prison to be strengthened by God’s Spirit and to become witnesses even in captivity.

PRAYER

“God of the Impossible,

What is happening in Iran defies every human expectation. A theocratic government that punishes conversion with death is presiding over the most explosive church growth on Earth. You are doing this. I stand in awe and I pray: protect what You have started. Shield the house church leaders discipling thousands in secret – give them wisdom, stamina, and the joy that sustained the early apostles under similar pressure. Guard the satellite signals that carry Your gospel through closed borders into living rooms and hearts. I pray for the believers in prison, charged with “acting against national security” for the crime of leading Bible studies. Sustain them. Make their trials a testimony that shakes courtrooms and confounds judges. I pray for their families enduring the shame and hardship of having a loved one imprisoned for faith. I pray for the millions of Iranians disillusioned with institutional religion – may their disillusionment become a doorway to the living Christ. I pray for the dreamers and the seekers encountering Jesus in visions they did not seek and cannot explain – confirm their encounters through Your Word and through Your people. Raise up pastors and teachers to disciple the harvest. And let this awakening spill across borders into Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and the entire Persian-speaking world, until every Farsi tongue confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord. Amen.”

AFGHANISTAN

41 MILLION PEOPLE • TALIBAN RULE SINCE 2021

When the last American military transport lifted off from Kabul's Hamid Karzai International Airport on August 30, 2021, it carried with it the final vestiges of any institutional protection for Afghan Christians. The Taliban's return to power was swift, absolute, and devastating for the small community of believers who had quietly grown during the two decades of Western presence.

There are zero legal churches in the entire country. Since the Taliban takeover, Christians face death from both government and family. The underground church meets in secret, constantly relocating to avoid detection. Baptism is a death sentence – the irrevocable, visible sign that a Muslim has crossed the point of no return.¹ Every gathering is a risk. Every prayer is an act of extraordinary courage. And still, they gather.

What makes Afghanistan's situation uniquely perilous is the convergence of state enforcement and tribal honor culture. Even if the Taliban were unaware of a conversion, the believer's own family would likely carry out the killing. In Pashtun culture, leaving Islam is a stain on the entire clan – a dishonor that can only be cleansed by blood. Digital surveillance has made even online fellowship dangerous; the Taliban's intelligence apparatus, trained during twenty years of insurgency, now monitors internet traffic and social media for any trace of Christian activity.²

¹Open Doors, World Watch List 2026: Afghanistan Country Dossier (January 2026). Afghanistan has been ranked among the most dangerous countries for Christians since the Taliban's return to power.

²Multiple reports from International Christian Concern and Voice of the Martyrs document the Taliban's systematic use of captured American biometric databases and digital surveillance tools to identify and track suspected converts.

PRAYER FOCUS

“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you.” – Isaiah 43:2

Protection for house churches meeting in fear. Wisdom for believers hiding their faith from neighbors, coworkers, and even their own families. Openness to the gospel.

PRAYER

“Lord Jesus,

You were once a refugee in a foreign land, carried to Egypt by parents fleeing a king who wanted You dead. You know what it means to be hunted for who You are. I bring before You the believers of Afghanistan – those hiding in Kabul, those scattered across Pakistan and Iran and Central Asia, those who lost everything when the last plane left. Give them wisdom to know whom to trust. Shield their digital footprints from those who search for them. For believers who cannot tell even their own families, be the family they have lost. I pray for Afghan women who have come to faith – doubly invisible under Taliban rule, doubly vulnerable, doubly precious in Your sight. Grant them access to Your Word and to fellowship, even if only through a whispered phone call or an encrypted message. Sustain the underground church. I pray for the believers who chose to stay – who could have fled but believed You called them to remain in the land where Abraham once sojourned. Vindicate their faith. Let the church grow in the dark like seed beneath the soil, watered by tears and prayer, until the day it breaks into the light. In Your name I pray, Amen.”

YOUR RESPONSE

*“Continue steadfastly in prayer,
being watchful in it with thanksgiving.”*

COLOSSIANS 4 : 2

Prayer is the most powerful thing you can do for the unreached. Here are three ways to keep the mission alive:

- **Pray through this guide once a week.** Let it become a rhythm in your devotional life. The nations you have just read about will not change overnight, but God hears every prayer – and He moves in response to the persistent intercession of His people.
- **Share this booklet with someone.** Invite them to pray alongside you. When two or three gather in His name, He is there – and the prayer of agreement carries a weight that heaven recognizes.
- **Become a Mission Partner.** Join the global community and support Hope Channel’s mission to carry the gospel to the last, the least, and the lost.

THE HARVEST IS WAITING.

WILL YOU SEND US?