

ONE VOICE

*Honouring
Our Pastors*



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VOMC
Voice of the Martyrs Canada

THE WHOLE WORLD IS OUR PARISH



“Many Christians are concerned only with their own personal relationship with the Lord. But Christ is the life around them.

It is He whom you can see in the hungry, thirsty, naked, sick and enslaved humanity.

Religion is only He and I, forgetting that the love between a [person] and Christ is always a love in a broader relationship: He, His whole creation and me. A Christian, as an heir of God, shares His responsibilities. *The whole world is [our] parish*, including our brothers and sisters in [hostile areas and restricted nations].”

Pastor Richard Wurmbrand
VOM's International Founder



Voice of the Martyrs

ONE VOICE is one of the primary tools used by Voice of the Martyrs Canada to engage the Canadian Christian community and bring awareness of believers who suffer because of their faith in Jesus Christ.

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with Pastor Richard Wurmbrand

Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version, unless otherwise indicated.

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ONE BODY. ONE VOICE.

Called to Carry, Chosen to Lead Honouring Our Pastors

By Floyd A. Brobbel
CEO for Voice of the Martyrs Canada



“Obey your [spiritual] leaders and submit to them [recognizing their authority over you], for they are keeping watch over your souls and continually guarding your spiritual welfare as those who will give an account [of their stewardship of you]. Let them do this with joy and not with grief and groans, for this would be of no benefit to you.”

Hebrews 13:17 AMP

Pastor Luai was imprisoned seven times in Myanmar, with each sentence lasting several months. While in prison, guards regularly tortured the valiant preacher in an attempt to demoralize and discourage him from continuing in ministry after his release. When Pastor Luai refused to break under the tormenting pressure, he was threatened with death.

I met Pastor Luai and his family after they fled persecution in Myanmar and settled in Mae Sot, a city located along the border of Thailand. This region serves as a refugee centre where many displaced people are vulnerable to exploitation and often relegated to various forms of slave labour. Pastor Luai believes he was called of God to

establish a church in Mae Sot and provide ministry to the beleaguered Burmese refugees there. When asked how he maintains his focus despite such hardship, Pastor Luai shared that he often reflects on Galatians 2:20 (ESV):

"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

Pastor Luai also told me that many displaced Burmese hope to eventually return to their homes. With this in mind, his prayer is that every new believer who returns would be firmly rooted in Christ and fully equipped to live as a faithful witness in Myanmar for God's glory.

"Leaders [pastors] have power [authority], but power is safe only in the hands of those who humble themselves to serve." – John Stott

Devoted pastors, who are gracious gifts from God to His people, have been called to shepherd their flocks with humility, tenderness and steadfast love. With prayerful hearts, they open the Scriptures, point us to Christ, and keep watch over our souls – as they themselves endeavour to live under the authority and care of the Chief Shepherd. Through their faithful service, we witness both the mercy of God and His loving provisions being extended for the strengthening of His church.

As pastors diligently equip church members to live in obedience to Christ's Great Commission, which must be carried out in the spirit of the Great Commandment, this mighty work of God is actively being accomplished. Every follower of Jesus is then called to bear witness to the Gospel of God's grace and truth, loving our neighbours as an expression of our enduring devotion to Him.

Pastors understand that this calling cannot be fulfilled by mere human strength alone. Rather, it requires the

empowering presence of the Holy Spirit ministering within and through each of our lives, as well as our faithful participation in the fellowship of the local church – a place of belonging where believers can be nurtured, disciplined, and then sent out to reach others for the glory of God.

As Pastor Luai's story reminds us, bearing witness to Christ often means facing the world's opposition. Jesus prepared His disciples for this reality when He said, *"Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves"* (Matthew 10:16 ESV). For this reason, pastors must also prepare those in their care to overcome suffering for the sake of Christ. They are to lead by example, encouraging the church to remain steadfast, wise and Christlike in the face of hostility.

This month's issue of *One Voice* celebrates the gift of pastors within the body of Christ. These faithful spiritual leaders need our prayers, encouragement and care as they serve the church with love and faithfulness.

- Pray that they would remain faithful, joyful and strong in the Lord.
- Encourage them as they diligently labour among us by preaching, shepherding and providing spiritual care.
- Respond to their ministerial efforts by drawing nearer to God and living sacrificially for His glory.

Pastors not only spiritually nurture those in their care, but they also equip disciples for active ministry service. And just as a parent rejoices when witnessing their child's first steps, pastors likewise experience great joy when the members of the churches they shepherd grow in grace and shine the light of the Gospel through their daily lives.

Grace and peace,



Shepherd to a Scattered Flock



During the Christmas season of 2021, church meetings were still small as a result of pandemic restrictions. Pastor Jawahar's church, which he had led for nine years, was no exception. After a simple worship service on Sunday, December 26th, he and his wife Amulya hosted a prayer meeting for a few church leaders in their home. Unfortunately, their prayers were soon interrupted by sounds of people shouting. Hindu activists, who were accompanied by several police officers, had gathered outside, demanding action against the Christians. "They were yelling," Pastor Jawahar states, "accusing me that I am converting the village people."

Although the threatened Christians explained that they were only praying, the police sided with the accusers. "They forcefully took three of us...to the police station, where they beat us very badly," the pastor recalls. While at the police station, the Christians were physically assaulted for nearly an hour. Outside, about 150 Hindu radicals surrounded the building, shouting slogans and accusing the three men of holding a forced "conversion meeting."

Two individuals from a distant village claimed they had been summoned to Pastor Jawahar's church and compelled to listen to a Bible reading before being sprinkled with water in a conversion ceremony. They also claimed that the Christians promised them free education for their children and complimentary health care if they converted to Christianity.

Following an investigation, authorities cited what they considered clear proof of the crime: a Bible and a pot capable of holding water. The prosecution based its entire case on that little evidence and the accusations made by the two strangers.

After Pastor Jawahar's arrest, Amulya struggled to find legal help for her husband. The first lawyers she retained charged exorbitant fees and were not motivated to put up a vigorous defense for him. Amulya had to borrow money at crippling high interest rates to pay for their legal fees, even registering family land as collateral.

Meanwhile, Pastor Jawahar waited in jail, hoping church members or friends from his ministry organization would visit to provide needed fellowship and counsel. Fearing more legal problems, however, no one ever visited. “No one came to meet or even call me,” Pastor Jawahar says. “Not even once did they call [my wife] to find out how she was doing, how the kids were, and what their needs are.” In fact, the church had already scattered in fear and still remains closed today. Relatives of the other two arrested elders blamed Pastor Jawahar for getting their family members imprisoned, further isolating his own loved ones.

As Amulya continued to seek legal counsel, VOM’s ministry workers became aware of the family’s plight and immediately alerted a team of Christian lawyers. With their legal help, Pastor Jawahar was finally granted bail after spending 45 days in jail. Perplexed and heartbroken, however, the pastor mourned the loss of his church, the uncertainty of his case, and the crushing debt they had incurred since their initial search for legal help. The land

that had been used for collateral, which could have helped support the family, was instead taken by the lawyers previously hired by Amulya.

In July 2023, Pastor Jawahar and the two elders from his church were convicted and sentenced under the state’s anti-conversion laws. Each of them were sentenced to two years in prison and a fine of 50,000 rupees (about \$700 CAD). They are currently out on bail as they appeal their conviction to a higher court. Throughout this time, VOM’s in-country Christian workers have been assisting Pastor Jawahar and his family. In addition, the family is receiving spiritual encouragement through a church in another village.

“My faith is still strong,” he affirms. “And though we have struggles...we are growing more in our faith.” Despite the abandonment he felt after his arrest, Pastor Jawahar’s love for his congregation has not diminished. May the Lord honour this faithful pastor’s desire to continue serving the people of his church and others in the community.

SUPPORT PASTORS IN INDIA

In India, where almost half of the country’s 28 states have anti-conversion laws, threats of arrest and imprisonment are daily realities for church leaders. According to VOM’s ministry workers, arrests can result from complaints made by opposing community members – even if there is no direct evidence.

In response, VOM Canada’s trusted ministry partners have launched a legal helpline to provide persecuted believers with immediate support when they experience opposition. This vital initiative is making a difference by:

- Offering direct legal representation and advocacy for Christians facing unjust charges.
- Raising awareness of religious freedom violations to foster a greater public understanding of the challenges encountered by minority faith groups.
- Launching legal action against anti-Christian legislation.

You can help support this project through VOMC’s *Legal Defence Fund*: www.vomcanada.com/donate

The “*Madman*” of a Vibrant Church

The path leading Moises de Prada from a promising student to a celebrated scientist, and then eventually a Christian pastor, may have been baffling to Cuba’s Communist authorities. But for this Cuban citizen, who was raised in a Christian home, hiding his beliefs was never an option – despite the pressures of residing in a Communist society. “Working in science and being a Christian was almost incongruent for the Communist Cuban system,” Pastor Moises explains. “I was continuously called by Cuban security officers [who] tried to persuade me...that it wasn’t commendable to go to church.” Unswayed by the Communist rhetoric, this unwavering pastor continued to follow Christ. Eventually, after 12 years as an academic, he sensed the Lord’s leading for him to serve in ministry. During 1996, he answered that call and began overseeing a church. Then the opposition increased....

Communist Party officials and state security officers began showing up at Pastor Moises’ church to badger and intimidate the Christian leader. “But the Lord made me of iron,” he says with a laugh. “I give thanks to the Lord because He has given me peace in the middle of the crisis.” When the intimidation tactics failed, governing authorities attempted to bribe Pastor Moises, offering him a position as an informant against other Christians. “They

put a little card on the table and told me, ‘Look, it is better for you to collaborate with us,’” Pastor Moises adds.

When he declined, the authorities threatened this courageous pastor and his family. “God gave me the courage to stand up to them,” he continues. “I split the card in two and threw it on the table.” That day, Pastor Moises thought that the officers, one of whom had drawn his pistol, would kill him there in the office or on the street. Disregarding the threat, he turned his back on them and walked out.

BREAKING DOWN WALLS

The first church Pastor Moises led was initially comprised of eight congregation members who met together for worship services in a crumbling dilapidated building that had a dirt floor. It was located in an area of Cuba where there was a high crime rate. As many of the youth in this area had lost hope for the future (like many other citizens of this Communist country), they were aimless and destructive.

As Pastor Moises and his congregation repaired the building, and the church began to grow, he learned that the Communist authorities wanted to either confiscate or demolish the property to build a youth centre. But not all the governing delegates had agreed with these plans.

As one official reminded the others, this once hopeless community has been transformed by the church. “Since the pastor arrived here,” the official declared, “crime [has dropped to] zero because 80 percent of the youth are inside the church!”

Despite the church’s positive impact, demolition crews still appeared at the scene. At times, Pastor Moises told the government workers to go ahead and pull the building down while he and the congregants remained inside. “The [demolition workers] looked at me like I was crazy,” Pastor Moises recalls. Though unorthodox, the Christian leader’s resolve succeeded, and the demolition efforts eventually stopped.

The next church that Pastor Moises served was larger, consisting of 230 members in a city of approximately one million. Although he had an enormous vision for the congregation, the church’s narrow colonial-style building wouldn’t have been able to accommodate future growth. Since buying a suitable property in Cuba would have been nearly impossible – plus the construction of a new church

building was considered illegal – the only option would be to purchase five houses in a row and then connect them all the way to the corner of the street. Pastor Moises encouraged his church members to fervently pray about this possibility. Heeding his advice, the congregation gradually bought each of the houses as the properties came up for sale. They then removed the unwanted walls between them so the houses could be expanded and joined together. In the end, the church was able to accommodate 1,000 people. One church member admitted his initial skepticism. “Pastor, when you said that we were going to build all the way to the corner,” he laughed, “we thought, ‘This pastor is a madman!’”

REACHING A CITY VIA ‘DOOR BY DOOR’ EVANGELISM

Expanding the church building was only the beginning of Pastor Moises’ ambitious ideas. Another was a campaign he named “177,000 Doors.” His plan involved dividing the city into 12 sections and assigning a leader to each section.



Pastor Moises and his wife, though faced with constant opposition, remain committed to Gospel proclamation in Cuba.

The commissioned teams then went door to door, sharing the Gospel and inviting people to church. Sure enough, they achieved the goal of reaching 177,000 households.

Within the next few years, the congregation grew to about 2,000 members, and eight additional churches were planted around the city. But that major evangelistic event also drew unwanted attention. "The police went looking for us," Pastor Moises states, "and took us to the Justice Ministry." The authorities told him and the church's team leaders that they needed legal permission to conduct such an enormous campaign – permission they had never been officially granted. Following their release, the church members were issued a warning to stop their evangelistic outreaches. Instead, they simply moved to new locations. Thankfully, the outreach campaign continued after that without any further interruption.

A MESSAGE OF HOPE

The Communist government was concerned about the campaign for more reasons than just church growth, as it also reflected a new pastoral unity in the city. By then, Pastor Moises had begun to meet with leaders of other denominations for prayer and encouragement, and this

multi-denominational effort alarmed Communist officials, who often tried to sow dissent and distrust in and among the churches to counteract their influence.

Even so, Pastor Moises wanted to further demonstrate the unity that is taking place within the body of Christ by organizing a Palm Sunday procession. Aware that undercover state security officers were embedded in many churches, he didn't announce the procession in advance. Instead, he told the congregants, "This Sunday, come with comfortable shoes, because we are going to do something special!" Working alongside other trusted Cuban church leaders, the route was planned and banners were made featuring slogans such as, "Christ Is The Solution" and "Jesus Loves You." Then, when that Sunday morning arrived, Pastor Moises announced the surprise. "Today is a very special day," he told his anticipating church members. "We are going to go out to the street and march." The congregation members enthusiastically poured out onto the street. As they marched from one church to the next, thousands more joined the procession, handing out Gospel tracts and declaring Christ's salvation throughout the city.



Cuban authorities have damaged and destroyed many churches, such as the one pictured above. Left: An evangelist distributes Bibles and Christian literature during a community outreach.



Communist officials confronted the leaders of the procession, claiming they were anti-government, but the leaders testified that the only message they were conveying was one of hope in Jesus Christ. Although the churches involved in the march suffered repercussions, including charges of wrongdoing and increased threats, Pastor Moises still speaks of that day with elation: "It was worthy to see; one of the glorious things that truly brought honour to God!"

SEEING IT THROUGH

Eight years ago, Pastor Moises moved to Havana to take up his third pastorate, while also assuming the leadership of his denomination. Upon arriving to the city, he was greeted with a summons from the state security office. The officials sarcastically congratulated him for "curing the last town of its sins," making it clear that he would continue to be monitored.

Such encounters still bring some concern, but Pastor Moises has learned to accept the constant pressure. "God gives us the courage to be able to face the harassment." Though he understands why many people leave Cuba for the promise of a better and freer life elsewhere, he points his congregants to Hebrews 12:1-2 (ESV), urging them to endure and finish the race set before them: "...let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to

Jesus, the Founder and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross...."

Pastor Moises is not unsympathetic to those who feel the persecution is too much to bear, noting that he too has considered leaving. "Humanly speaking, it is not worth [residing] here," he confides. "But the calling of God has kept me in Cuba, nothing else. It is worth it to administer the church and serve Christ.... My desire is that we will be free to preach Christ in the squares, in the parks, in the streets, in the stadiums, [and] in the hospitals.... I am not motivated by anything else."

HEART CHECK

In Cuba, a country where following Christ is costly and countercultural, Pastor Moises has chosen **courage** over **comfort**. Ask God to develop within you the same courage and clarity that Pastor Moises has demonstrated so you can also follow Christ faithfully, no matter the cost. What one bold 'step of faith' could you take this week?

Finding Jesus in a Chat Room

By Julie Fitz-Gerald
Associate Editor for VOMC

Born to a Hindu Brahmin family residing in the bustling city of Chennai, India, Ashwin Ramani never imagined that one day he would lead a vibrant evangelical Baptist congregation in London, Ontario. Today, the 42-year-old pastor of West Park Church is shepherding multitudes into the family of Christ, many of whom come from the multiethnic, multicultural communities surrounding the church.

As Jesus calls more people into His fold, those converting from faith traditions like Sikhism, Islam or Hinduism often face persecution within their tight-knit communities – and even from their own families. It's a reality that Ashwin understands firsthand, after discovering the truth of Jesus in an online chat room at the age of 18.

Back in 2001, Ashwin entered his first year of university in Chennai, studying business and happily living at home with his parents, grandparents and elder sister. They were a close, loving family that enjoyed long conversations around the dinner table, chatting about stories from the past. As part of the Brahmin caste, Ashwin's family held an upper-class status in Chennai, with their ancestors likely having served as priests in the Hindu temples of Tamil Nadu state.

Like most members of their Hindu community, they did not think highly of Christians.

"I had never seen a Bible, never been to a church, and had a very negative view of Christianity," admits Ashwin. "Growing up as a Hindu Brahmin, Christians were seen as the lower caste in India, and I didn't want anything to do with them. There was this stereotype that Christians try to convert others into their religion, so I held anybody who was a follower of Jesus in low regard." Choosing to step away from an upper caste is rare. "You inherit this from birth," he continues. "The idea is that over a series of births, you graduate through the caste system, eventually earning enough deeds to make it to the top caste: Brahmin."

Ashwin's understanding of his Hindu faith, however, began to unravel when he was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes at age 12. Teachings on karma left him wondering what he might have done to deserve his suffering, and the experience sparked deeper questions about God that remained unanswered throughout many of his teenage years.

As Ashwin entered university, the Internet was taking India by storm, and he was fascinated by the opportunity to

engage with people around the world. “That was mind-blowing technology at the time – to think that I could talk to somebody from the United States or Canada,” recounts Ashwin. “It was in those chat rooms, interestingly, that total strangers witnessed to me about Jesus. That was the first time I heard the Gospel message.”

“It was in those chat rooms, interestingly, that total strangers witnessed to me about Jesus. That was the first time I heard the Gospel message.”

The truth of a God who extends grace – not karma – clicked into place. “I realized that *karma* and *grace* are the exact opposites,” he explains. “*Karma* requires you to pay off all your debts and suffer for your actions, but *grace* is the undeserved favour that God gives us despite our actions.”

One day, a book arrived in the mail containing stories of young adults whose lives had been transformed by Jesus. Ashwin devoured it. “The book talked about the power of the Gospel – that no matter what they had done, Jesus loved them so much that He died on the cross for their sins and He pursued them. I was glued to that book like a magnet.”

Ashwin became convinced. At 18 years old, he converted to Christianity – the first in his Hindu family to do so. Breaking the news to his loved ones was painful. He still remembers the shock and disappointment on their faces. “Growing up in a home where our identity revolved around religion – and in an honour-shame culture – my decision to follow Jesus was seen as bringing shame on the entire family. It was the hardest decision that I had ever made.”

His parents were devastated. Daily arguments often ended

in tears as relatives desperately tried to change his mind. “The persecution I faced was not physical, but emotional and verbal,” he recalls. “My family felt the weight of shame within the community because of my decision.” Despite being ostracized and viewed with suspicion, Ashwin was not deterred from his faith in Christ. Within a year, he had led his sister to the Lord as well.

Sensing a call to ministry, Ashwin entered Bible college in Bangalore and then moved to a remote region in northwestern India to pastor a small church. It was there that he met his wife, Aboli. Originally from Nagaland in northeastern India, Aboli’s work for the global Christian organization, Youth with a Mission, commissioned her to assist with the children’s ministry at Ashwin’s church. The two of them formed a bond, eventually marrying in 2007.

Together, they sought to serve God in a way that would bring Him maximum glory – and a new dream began to take root. The church Ashwin pastored was started by a missionary couple from Calgary’s well-known Centre Street Church, which had just sent a mission team to Ashwin. As the group settled in and conversed, talk turned to Ashwin’s interest in higher theological education. The team told him about Ambrose Seminary in Calgary and, before long, he submitted his application to enroll in a Master of Divinity program. Ashwin and Aboli were heading to Canada!

Arriving in Calgary during 2009, Ashwin and Aboli expected to spend a few years studying before returning home. Instead, they discovered a growing mission field. “We came with the assumption that Canada is a Christian country,” says Ashwin. “But we quickly realized that is not the case.” As they observed Canada’s changing demographics, they sensed God calling them to evangelism in their newly adopted country. Often referred to as “reverse mission,” ministry teams from the majority world increasingly come to

the West (including Canada) to spread the Gospel. Ashwin and Aboli knew they had been called.

"God's bringing the various people groups to Canada and we have an amazing opportunity to fulfill the Great Commission, making disciples of the nations right where we are," explains Ashwin. "We felt like God had been preparing us all along for this kind of cross-cultural ministry."

Ashwin busied himself in his studies, supporting his educational pursuits as a night security guard at Ambrose Seminary. Yet, the couple experienced significant culture shock as they tried adjusting to life in Canada. Coming from a highly communal society, they found the country's individualism challenging, particularly when their first child was born and the support of family was far away. Through those years, they learned to rely on the church community as their spiritual family.

The shock of the freezing cold winters was offset by the stunning beauty of the Rockies towering over the Albertan landscape, so clearly pointing to the Creator God. As opportunities for ministry gradually expanded, Ashwin joined the staff of Centre Street Church, helping launch an outreach initiative for newcomers while developing a growing preaching and teaching ministry.

After 13 years on staff at Centre Street, Ashwin earned his Doctor of Ministry degree from Asbury Theological Seminary in Kentucky. His dissertation was on the topic of *revival*, something he experienced firsthand. "I studied the history of revivals and how God time and again orchestrates these outpourings of the Spirit, which reverse spiritual decline in the state of the church. I was on campus when the Asbury Outpouring happened in 2023. I'll never forget seeing such an incredible, sweet move of God."

After earning his doctorate, Ashwin felt restless. Through prayer and fasting, he and Aboli felt called to step out in

leadership for a new season of ministry. West Park Church in London, Ontario, was looking for a lead pastor. In 2024, Pastor Ashwin and his family headed east to take up the reins at West Park.

The move has been a good one. Regular attendance averages about 1,700, representing a rich tapestry of diverse cultures and backgrounds. "In some ways, I see this as a multicultural taste of heaven; a mini representation of Revelation 7:9 – with every tribe, every tongue gathering before the throne room of God.... It's a representation of what the future is going to be like."

To connect with the surrounding community, West Park launched "Bridges," an outreach that has already served more than 50 families through various practical programs and support. Over the past two years, the church has grown by 20 percent, an increase that Ashwin attributes to partnering with God and allowing the Holy Spirit to do the work as West Park connects with surrounding neighbourhoods. The congregation is in the habit of doing life together, similar to the communal approach that Ashwin grew up with in India.

His upbringing has also taught him the true cost of discipleship. "Sometimes we think persecution is for people who live on the other side of the world. But all who live Godly lives in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, and it looks different where we are.... Having suffered for Jesus has prepared me with that foundation to be able to say, 'I believe in the power of the Gospel to bring life change and transformation.' This is a message worth proclaiming."

From discovering Jesus in an online chat room to leading a thriving church in London, Ontario, Pastor Ashwin is a living testimony to God's grace and the life-changing power of the Gospel.

Pastor Ashwin and his wife, Aboli, now live in Canada with their four children, sharing the Gospel with people from many cultures and backgrounds.



VOM Global Reports

CENTRAL ASIA: Pray for the Encouragement of Pastors



Pastors throughout Central Asia are serving faithfully in the midst of many challenges.

Ministry workers in Central Asia request prayer for pastors in need of encouragement amid their many hardships. One pastor admits his feelings of loneliness and discouragement. "He realizes the need to say 'no' to some things that he can't take on and that he must try delegating more," explains one of VOM's ministry workers. "He also longs for the opportunity to share his feelings and weaknesses with other pastors..." A different pastor reported that his entire flock of chickens had been wiped out by disease. He relied on the flock for additional income to cover expenses and his ministry work. Pray that pastors serving in Central Asian nations will be encouraged in their labours for the Lord, and that they would find new ways to encourage one another. May they also experience God's provision for their every need as they continue to advance the Gospel.

MIDDLE EAST: Christians Recently Detained Without Charges

Since the beginning of 2026, more than two dozen Christians (including converts and church leaders) in a Middle Eastern nation have been arrested and detained without any charges. "Family members haven't been able to contact them," states a concerned VOM ministry worker, adding that at least three Christians mysteriously disappeared without anyone knowing what happened to them. "The situation is bad," he reports, "and families are struggling."

The ministry worker asks us to pray on behalf of those who have been arrested, specifically mentioning the following requests. Pray that: 1) the detained Christians will be divinely protected; 2) these believers and their families will sense God's peace as they prayerfully wait for freedom; and 3) upon their release, they will be permitted to continue their Christian activities.



In the face of uncertainty, Christians in the Middle East are steadfastly holding onto their faith.

NIGER: Pastor Escapes Abduction

In November 2025, a pastor in Niger was abducted by Islamists in the middle of the night, driven across the nearby border into Nigeria and taken to a remote area. His captors told him that he was brought to a place where they regularly executed Christians, and then they spoke of their intent to kill him as well. After tying him to a tree, they went to sleep.

As they slept, the pastor untied himself and managed to escape. He ran through the bush for hours before eventually finding help. A VOM in-country worker requests prayer for this pastor and other persecuted Christians in Niger, where Christians make up less than two percent of the population. These believers often encounter tremendous opposition from militant Muslims.



A new believer being baptized in Niger, a country where followers of Jesus encounter increasing threats.

UGANDA: Pastor Receives Surgery Years After Acid Attack

A Christian convert from Islam, who is now a pastor, received further facial reconstruction surgery as he continues to recover from an attack that took place 15 years ago. Pastor Umar Mulinde, a former Muslim leader, left Islam to follow Christ in the 1990s. While on his way to a Christmas gathering with his

church members on December 24th, 2011, he was attacked by a radical Muslim who poured acid on his face.

Over the years, Pastor Umar's wounds have caused him much pain and discomfort. He has since been struggling with tissue blockages in his nose and ears, making it difficult for him to breathe. With VOM's help, he received greatly needed surgery which has cleared the blockages. "I am much better now and can breathe freely," he affirms. "I am sincerely grateful to God and to VOM."

CANADA: Ottawa Briefing Sheds Light on Persecution in Nigeria

Rev. Yunusa Nmadu, CEO of Christian Solidarity Worldwide Nigeria and a credible ministry partner of VOMC, spoke on March 24th in Ottawa at an in-depth briefing about Christian persecution in Nigeria. This special presentation was organized by VOMC, Open Doors Canada and Cardus. During the briefing, Rev. Yunusa addressed the intense violence presently facing followers of Jesus in Nigeria. His informative message brought clarity to the misinformation that has been circulating over the years concerning this troubled West African nation. To view Greg Musselman's subsequent podcast interview with Rev. Yunusa Nmadu, go to vomcanada.com/video/ottawa-briefing.



Rev. Yunusa addresses the ongoing violence against Nigerian Christians, shedding light on a critical global issue.

Called to *Shepherd*

In the remote regions of northern Sierra Leone – where more than 87 percent of the population either follows Islam, traditional African religions or animist beliefs – local pastors are courageously serving on the front lines of ministry. Carrying out the work of evangelism is extremely difficult, as many communities lacking the presence of Christianity remain deeply influenced by spiritual darkness.

With few missionaries able to access these areas, the responsibility of sharing Christ's truth often rests on the shoulders of the country's faithful indigenous pastors. Yet, these Christian leaders are lacking the resources required to sustain and expand their ministries.

In collaboration with VOMC's trusted ministry partners, pastors in Sierra Leone are now being equipped with solar-powered *iBIBLE* computer tablets from RevelationMedia. Loaded with *The Real Story of Jesus* and other Christ-centred content in Krio – the language of the people – these tablets are uniquely suited for ministry in high-risk and remote environments. Discreet, durable, and requiring no electricity, they allow pastors to share the Gospel to those in need of salvation, while also fostering discipleship among new believers.

The impact is already being felt. "As we played *The Real Story of Jesus* through the *iBIBLE* [media presentation]," reports Pastor Alpha, "hearts were touched as they watched and listened with deep hunger. Many questions flowed from the villagers about Jesus Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit, revealing a people truly searching for truth."

What followed was a profound move of God's Spirit. "Tears, joy and hope filled the atmosphere as light entered a community that had long lived without access to the Gospel," he adds. "The people earnestly pleaded with us to return again, desiring more visitations, teaching, prayer and discipleship."

Through tools like the *iBIBLE*, pastors can effectively evangelize in places where the Gospel has rarely been heard. As these Christian leaders continue to minister, village by village, they carry both the Word of God and the hope of Christ into communities hungry for spiritual truth. Please pray for Pastor Alpha and others like him, who are being empowered and equipped to raise up new testimonies to God's saving grace across Sierra Leone. If you would like to contribute to this project, you may do so through VOMC's Bible Fund at vomcanada.com/donate.



OCTOBER 2026

“Dear brothers and sisters, honour those who are your leaders in the Lord’s work. They work hard among you and give you spiritual guidance.”

— 1 Thessalonians 5:12 NLT

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1 COMOROS Pray that Christians will not recant their faith despite potential arrest or familial pressure.	2 BANGLADESH Pray for servants of Christ who minister to those living in the poorest slums of Dhaka.	3 HONDURAS Pray for the comfort of Honduran believers who are grieving the murder of a local evangelist.
4 WESTERN SAHARA Pray for ministry workers who share the Gospel despite the risk of imprisonment.	5 MEXICO Pray that more Bibles will be translated into indigenous languages and made available in rural areas.	6 UNITED ARAB EMIRATES Pray that God will help those who are rejected and mistreated by their families for following Christ.	7 MAURITANIA Only a few hundred believers live in Mauritania. Pray that they will grow in both faith and boldness.	8 ERITREA Pray for imprisoned Christians – including Kiflu Gebremeskel, who has been detained for over 20 years.	9 DR CONGO Pray that Islamist groups like the Allied Democratic Forces will stop persecuting Christians.	10 MOROCCO Ask the Lord to strengthen and disciple His present-day followers, including those who meet in secret.
11 QATAR Sharing the Gospel with Muslims is strictly forbidden. Pray for those who do so at great risk.	12 NIGERIA Thank God for His provision of food, shelter and Bibles to thousands who are displaced by terrorism.	13 MADAGASCAR Pray for Christians in northwestern Madagascar, where radical Islam is gaining influence.	14 TANZANIA Pray for adherents of Christianity who encounter significant opposition in Muslim-majority areas.	15 CUBA Using 1 John 4:4 as a guide, pray that Cuban Christians will be overcomers in the face of Communism.	16 LIBYA Pray for imprisoned Christians who have been sentenced to death for practising their faith.	17 TUNISIA Pray for church leaders who are encountering harassment and restrictions due to their ministry work.
18 LEBANON Pray for ministry workers who are proclaiming the Gospel in dangerous, conflict-ridden environments.	19 KAZAKHSTAN Pray for Samal's Muslim brother, who became receptive to the Gospel after receiving her love and forgiveness.	20 GUINEA Pray that churches will serve as beacons of hope and unity amid tribal violence.	21 BENIN Pray for the safety and effective media outreach of Amadi, a Christian broadcaster.	22 KENYA Pray that those who have lost family members in Islamist attacks will be comforted by the Holy Spirit.	23 BRUNEI Bibles in Malay, Brunei's official language, are illegal. Pray that Bruneians will have access to God's Word.	24 UNITED ARAB EMIRATES Pray that Emirati Christians will receive opportunities for fellowship, worship and spiritual growth.
25 CUBA Pray that more Bibles will reach Cubans, and many Scripture discovery groups will be established as a result.	26 IRAQ Pray for the protection of Christian converts from Islam whose lives are at risk due to opposition.	27 CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC Pray for pastors being trained to provide spiritual care to believers who have suffered brutal attacks.	28 MALAWI Ask the Lord to remind Yao Christians of the hope, inheritance and power they have in Christ (Ephesians 1:17-18).	29 MALAYSIA May churches in Malaysia continue to spread the Gospel despite governmental restrictions.	30 MAURITANIA Pray that missionaries from other parts of Africa will be commissioned to serve in Mauritania.	31 KUWAIT Pray for the encouragement of Kuwaitis who have been rejected and/or beaten for following Jesus.



International Day of *Prayer* for the *Persecuted Church*

2026 THEME

"Do You Know Our Suffering?"

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1ST

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