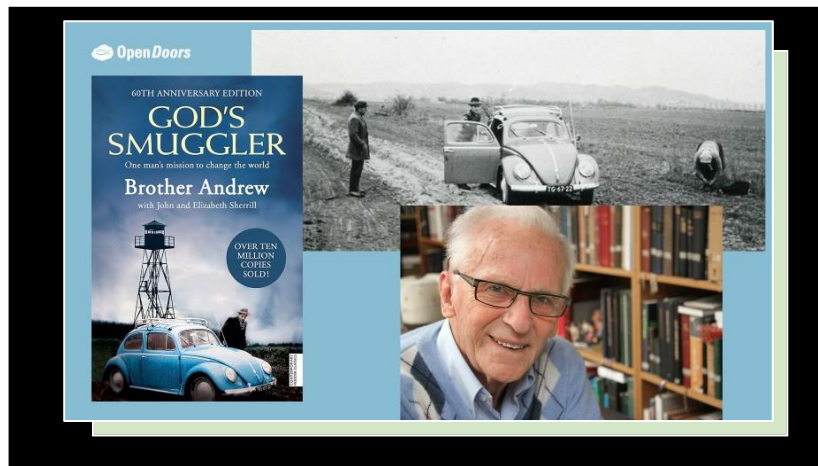


Open Doors



Open Doors originated in 1955, when a young Dutchman who became known as Brother Andrew started smuggling Bibles to the persecuted church in Communist Europe. His work has led to almost six decades of support for the persecuted church. This vision soon pushed the ministry beyond the Soviet Union and Open Doors grew in the 1970s due to the international travel of Andrew, who met and recruited others to work among persecuted Christians in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

In particular, the Love China conference in 1975 brought the issue of Christian persecution in China to a much larger audience. And it was in China where one of Open Doors most ambitious projects took place – Project Pearl, where a staggering one million Bibles were delivered in a single night in June 1981.

Into the Muslim World

In 1982, Open Doors launched a seven-year campaign of prayer for the Communist Bloc. Seven years later, in 1989, the Berlin Wall fell and the world changed. Nevertheless, there were still Christians suffering in other Communist lands, such as China, Vietnam, North Korea, and several African states.

Meanwhile, Open Doors had long been aware of growing persecution of Christians in the Muslim world. Brother Andrew visited Saudi Arabia in 1973 and started warning of the need to make the church under Islam a greater priority. Increasingly, Open Doors turned towards supporting the church in the Muslim world.

Our work today - more than Bibles

Supporting the church means more than delivering Bibles. In 1978, the first training manual for leaders on how to resist persecution was produced for Christians in Asia. In the 1990s a training institute was established for pastors in sub-Saharan Africa. Open Doors also developed a global training programme for persecuted church pastors. This became Standing Strong Through The Storm (SSTS), first published in 2001 and still in use around the world today.

At the same time, Open Doors' Socio-Economic Development (SED) programmes helped persecuted Christians in other ways. Literacy projects were launched to help Christians read and study the Bible. In 1998 Open Doors launched its first major relief project – 'Operation Daily Bread' – to fly in food and supplies to remote areas of war-torn southern Sudan. Today Open Doors provides relief aid, livelihood support and community development projects for hundreds of thousands of Christians around the world.

Our advocacy work - amplifying the voices of the unheard

One of the big challenges in the post-cold war world was the rise of religious nationalism. Hindu extremists came from nowhere to form an elected government in India in 1996. Sri Lankan Buddhists began persecuting rural Christians, and guerrilla groups expanded their violence in places like Colombia. religious nationalism continues to be a major factor in persecution.

In the late 1990s, Open Doors also began developing more targeted advocacy work. Since then speaking to the powerful on behalf of the powerless has become a core part of our work, from speaking to the UK Prime Minister to equipping the local church to know its legal rights. Perhaps the peak of this so far has been the Hope for The Middle East campaign, where a petition of 800,000 signatures was delivered to the UN and to governments around the world, calling for Christians in Iraq and Syria to have the right to equal citizenship, dignified living conditions and a prominent role in reconciling and rebuilding society.

Today Open Doors serves millions of persecuted Christians in over 60 countries, working with churches and local partners to provide Bibles, Christian materials, training, livelihood skills and advocacy.

World Watch List

An important part of the Open Doors calendar is in the third week of January every year when the latest World Watch List is published. This annual report, which began in 1993, is a ranking of the 50 countries where Christians face the most extreme persecution.



Jim Stewart

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