

ONE VOICE

Persecutors Encounter
the *Living Christ*



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VOMC
Voice of the Martyrs Canada

Paying the Price for Our Persecutors

“How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?”

Romans 10:14 ESV

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

It is a story Christians love to hear and never tire of – the classic “Saul to Paul” conversion testimony that thrills the heart and senses with God’s goodness and mercy towards the unlikelyst of people. As we rejoice over the testimonies of those who have experienced the profound life-changing freedom found in Christ, we cannot overlook the profound sacrifices that have led to their miraculous transformations.

Foremost, we reflect on Christ’s ultimate act of love and sacrifice on the cross, which offers hope and redemption to all who willingly accept His plan of salvation – the only means of rescue from the fallen state of humanity in this broken world. Additionally, we honour the diligent efforts of faithful Gospel advocates who courageously share the light and truth of Jesus, pointing those wandering in darkness and sin towards the pathway of salvation. In *Tortured for Christ*, Pastor Richard Wurmbrand shares a compelling example of mission, risk and redemption:

“We were an Underground Church but, like John the Baptist, we spoke openly to men and rulers about Christ. Once, on the steps of one of our government buildings, two Christian brethren pushed their way to our Prime Minister, Gheorghiu Dej. In the few moments they had,



they witnessed to him about Christ, urging him to turn from his sins and persecution. He had them thrown into prison for their daring witness.

Years later, when Prime Minister DeJ was very sick, the seed of the Gospel, which they had planted years ago – and for which they had suffered greatly – bore fruit. In his hour of need, the Prime Minister remembered the words that had been spoken to him. Those words were, as the Bible says, ‘...living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword’ (Hebrews 4:12). They cut through the hardness of his heart and he surrendered his life to Christ. He confessed his sins, accepted the Saviour, and began to serve Him in his sickness. Not long afterward he died, but went to his newfound Saviour all because two Christians were willing to pay the price. And they are typical of the courageous Christians in captive nations today.”¹

It seems that evangelism truly flourishes in places where the stakes are highest. When I refer to these risks, I think of the Christians who endure intense persecution today due to their passion for leading others to faith in Jesus. In such challenging environments, their unwavering commitment to Christ ignites a fervent spread of the Gospel. While the stakes may be high, it is a tremendous reward to witness the hearts of persecutors, once hardened by hatred, undergo radical transformation upon encountering Christ’s redemptive love.

“I love to tell the story; more wonderful it seems than all the golden fancies of all our golden dreams. I love to tell the story; it did so much for me, and that is just the reason I tell it now to thee.”²

As you read this issue of *One Voice*, I pray that you would be moved by the incredible testimonies of transformation contained within these pages and, as a result, become further emboldened to embrace the necessary risks and sacrifices that will point others to Christ.

Grace and peace,



Endnotes: ¹ Richard Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ: The 50th Anniversary Edition*, David C. Cook, Colorado Springs, CO, p. 45. ² Hymn, *I Love to Tell the Story*, by Kate Hankey.



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.

FOUNDERS

Klaas and Nellie Brobbel
with Pastor Richard Wurmbrand

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

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ACCREDITED MEMBER

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Sorrow in Jihad, Joy in Jesus

On a hot summer afternoon in July 2023, Wesley Saliboko stood at the front of a church in Kasese, Uganda, with his four daughters. As the small congregation watched expectantly, Wesley stepped towards a group of local ministers who prayerfully laid their hands on him just before he was baptized. With the water still flowing down his face as he ascended from the baptistry, Wesley raised his hands in worship, his smile reflecting a joy born of God's grace.

Just one month earlier, Wesley had been a militant Muslim. Often referred to as *el-Hadji*, an honorific title given to Muslims who complete a pilgrimage to Mecca, he had been an imam in two mosques and also actively

participated in jihad. "In [radical] Islam, they hate those who are not Muslim," Wesley says. "When we [killed] Christians, we [would] say we [were] killing paganists; and if we [killed] a pagan in the name of Allah, we [believed we were] going to heaven."

Over the years, however, Wesley became disillusioned with Islam. Though he had grown up in a Muslim family, one of his grandfathers had converted to Christianity. Wesley remembered his grandfather's stories about God's tremendous love for the world and how He sent His Son Jesus Christ who ministered with such compassion to so many suffering people. This differed greatly from the



violent version of Islam he knew. In his heart, he felt that killing others during jihad warfare was wrong. “My heart would remain with sorrow after making a jihad,” Wesley admits. “I did not want to live with this sorrow in my heart.”

As Wesley wrestled with his faith, tragedy struck his family. On June 16th, 2023, members of the Allied Democratic Forces, a terrorist group affiliated with the self-proclaimed Islamic State (ISIS), crossed into Uganda from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and raided the Lhubiriha Secondary School in Mpondwe, Kasese district.

During the attack, armed militants stormed the school, killing students with machetes before bombing one of the dormitories and setting fire to other buildings where children had taken shelter. The assailants killed 37 students, four community members and one security guard, while abducting six other students.

Among the students killed during the attack was Wesley’s 15-year-old niece, Amina. The teen and her mother had left Islam to follow Christ just a year earlier, and Wesley’s angered brother had chased them from their home. The local church had then provided for the needs of the ostracized mother and daughter, which included covering the costs of Amina’s education at the secondary school. After the attack, Amina’s body was discovered in the forest on the DRC side of the border.

Already questioning his Islamic faith, Wesley was struck by the contrast between Muslim and Christian responses to the school attack. He himself had always responded faithfully whenever mosque leaders needed his help; but now, no one from the local Muslim community offered their condolences to his family nor did they express any concern over the terrorists’ actions. Conversely, Wesley was deeply moved by the way in which the Christian community cared for his niece’s body and gave her a proper burial. “I was impressed by the love and support the Christians showed,” he adds.

When the minister boldly proclaimed the Gospel at Amina’s funeral, Wesley placed his faith in Christ. And within days of becoming a Christian, the former imam began to share his newfound faith with others of his family. He first led his wife and eight children to the Lord, and then Amina’s father called him on the phone to say that he too wanted to follow Jesus Christ.

Still, leaving Islam has not been easy for the new believer and his family. Because of his former status as an imam, Wesley has received death threats, forcing him and his family to go into hiding. Only four of his children attended his baptismal service because it was too dangerous for the whole family to be together in public.

Today, Wesley rejoices over his newfound spiritual freedom. “I have cast all of that [Islamic extremism] off to follow Jesus Christ,” he exclaims. With encouragement and practical help from the global body of Christ, Wesley and his family are steadfastly growing in their faith. He requests prayer for God’s protection as he shares the hope of the Gospel with militant Muslims, including two of his brothers who are currently in prison for their extremist activities: “I want God to lead me with safety so I can do [His] will.”

PERSECUTION RESPONSE

Wesley is one of the countless new Christians who have turned from Islamic extremism to faith in Jesus. We invite you to pray that this brother in Christ, and other Christian converts from Muslim backgrounds, will become well grounded in God’s Word so they can remain faithful witnesses regardless of the cost.

From *Persecutor* to *Partner* in Ministry



As early as age eight, Ayyub had a desire to know more about Allah. Although raised in Kashmir, a Muslim-majority region of northern India, his family belonged to a mystical sect of Islam known as Sufism. As Ayyub's parents taught him that all religions led to Allah, he soon became interested in exploring other faiths.

"I wanted to know [Allah] because Sufism is focussed on knowing [him]," says Ayyub, now 40 years old. Since Kashmir's population is over 97 percent Muslim, Ayyub initially examined other forms of Islam. He hopped from one Muslim sect to another, piecing together his own Islamic identity as a young adult.

In the process, Ayyub studied Arabic, the language of the Quran, to further his understanding of the book. He quickly gained a following as an Islamic scholar and teacher. It's estimated that he taught more than 400 students during this period. "There were people from all the districts [of Kashmir] wanting to know more," he states.

As Ayyub continued to study and teach what he had learned, he met a student named Farooq, whom he taught for a brief time. Farooq had grown up in a fundamentalist family that practised Sunni Islam, the majority branch of Islam in Kashmir. Like Ayyub, after years of study, he became an Islamic scholar and teacher. "Most of my time was in the mosques," says 32-year-old Farooq.

Ayyub and Farooq forged a strong friendship, but it was tested when their paths through Islam diverged. While Farooq remained devoted to Sunni Islam, Ayyub turned toward Wahhabism (also known as Salafism), an 18th-century reform movement within Sunni Islam that has spawned most of the violent Islamic groups in existence today. Farooq respected his friend, but considered Ayyub's shift towards Wahhabism too extreme. As a result, he abruptly stopped seeking Ayyub's guidance.

Over time, Ayyub began to doubt Wahhabism too. Then, while walking through town one day, he picked up a green book that he saw lying on the side of the road. It was a New Testament. Although he had been taught that the Bible was corrupt, he took the New Testament home and started reading through the pages.

"It was interesting because I never found [the Islamic prophet] Muhammad in the Bible.... It was totally about Jesus," Ayyub explains. "In the Quran, it is said, 'Another prophet will come...and his name will be Muhammad.' But when I found the New Testament, it was totally *not* about Muhammad."

After concluding in his late 20s that the Quran's account was false, Ayyub became an atheist. Yet, he still remained hungry for spiritual truth. During these years, he watched videos of atheists debating people of different faith groups, including Christians. Eventually, he found himself drawn back towards the possibility of God's existence. "God, if You really exist," Ayyub would earnestly pray, "please show me, because I don't have satisfaction inside."

*"God, if you really exist,
please show me, because I don't
have satisfaction inside."*

One night in 2012, Ayyub dreamed about the New Testament he had discovered by the side of the road. "God showed me in my dream that I should read this book again," he recounts: "I started reading it...and it changed me. The Holy Spirit touched me.... I started praying in the name of Jesus. Many things happened. God showed me spiritually that Jesus is real."

When Farooq discovered that his friend Ayyub had left Islam altogether, he became angry. "When I learned that

he had become a Christian," Farooq states, "I used to tell people to rise up against Ayyub." Soon, Muslim men began to physically assault Ayyub for his Christian beliefs. The beatings continued for about a year. "[The injuries] really

*"The God I was seeking
– the God who loves me –
I found in the Gospels."*

hurt sometimes," Ayyub acknowledges, "but the Word of God always encouraged me." Farooq, meanwhile, believed that each beating had pleased Allah.

For the next year and a half, Ayyub remained isolated as a new believer. During this time of isolation, he diligently read his Bible, spent times in prayer, and watched Christian videos online to help him grow in his faith. Then he met a

pastor who provided him with solid Biblical teaching. The pastor also encouraged Ayyub to attend gatherings with others of the local Christian community; and then, later on, to acknowledge his decision for Christ through water baptism. After being baptized in 2013, Ayyub made a firm decision: "I freely decided to commit to God that I would do full-time ministry."

One day in 2020, Farooq ran into Ayyub on the street and told him that he had become depressed since leaving Islam. Ayyub responded by urging Farooq to follow a new path. "You won't find [God] in the Quran," Ayyub explained. "You will find Him in the Bible." The transformed Christian convert then gave Farooq a copy of God's Word, which he took home and read with great interest. "I read the entire Bible," Farooq says, "and the God I was seeking – the God who loves me – I found in the Gospels. When I read John 3:16 – 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son' – that was the turning point."



Today, Ayyub still teaches Farooq four times a week “You can see the difference [in Farooq]. Before, he was very angry...” Ayyub states, attributing his former persecutor’s dramatic transformation as “a [work of the] Holy Spirit.” Farooq is now also teaching others about Jesus, and many of them are open to the Gospel. He is thankful for his friend’s faithfulness and, even more importantly, for God’s love. “I am filled with joy that I am doing [ministry] work like this, and that God is changing me,” Farooq attests. “I am seeing God’s glory!”

Ayyub, who now helps provide audio Bibles to pastors in Kashmir, has also produced recordings of himself reading through the New Testament, Psalms and Proverbs for a radio ministry. Additionally, he and Farooq often place Bibles in public places so spiritually seeking Muslims can discover God’s truth – just as he did when finding that New Testament years ago.

Ayyub requests prayer for their Gospel outreach to Muslims, adding that they are witnessing a growing interest in Christianity among Kashmiris. Due to the threat of arrest and other forms of opposition, many followers of Jesus in this region of India live in fear, and some pastors are afraid to share the Gospel.

As for Farooq, his fundamentalist Sunni family is still unaware of his Christian faith. Yet he is prepared for them to learn the truth soon. “They could either kick me out of the house or disown me,” he says. “The people I used to associate with... might even kill me. There is a danger, but there is no fear.”

“I am filled with joy that I am doing [ministry] work like this, and that God is changing me....”



HEART CHECK

Since you have also assumedly come to faith in Christ, you likewise don’t have to live in darkness and fear. Instead, you can courageously surrender your life to the Lord for the sake of accomplishing His great Kingdom purposes. Thanks to His mercy, miracle-working power and saving grace, you are now able to bask in the light of His Kingdom where Jesus triumphantly reigns. Remain committed to walking daily in His light of truth and love, prayerfully asking for opportunities to share the “Good News” of His salvation with others who are seeking spiritual truth and hope – trusting His Holy Spirit to give you the divine wisdom and guidance you need to effectively testify of His greatness.

VOM Global Reports



VIETNAM: FROM WITCH DOCTOR TO MOTORBIKE EVANGELIST

Tuan has been a bold evangelist among the Hmong tribal people for more than two decades. Born into a family of fortune tellers and witch doctors who oversaw spirit worship in their village, he began participating with them at the young age of 14. Living in spiritual darkness, Tuan became addicted to drugs and alcohol until he eventually surrendered his life to Christ. Soon after, he began to tell people about Jesus who gave him not just physical deliverance from the addictions but also spiritual freedom from the forces of darkness.

Tuan has been a prolific evangelist ever since, leading hundreds of people to Christ throughout Vietnam. Although he has been denied official government documents and a driver's licence because of his refusal to deny Christ, provincial police officers now rarely attempt to stop his ministry activities

because they are tired of arguing with him. Tuan received a motorbike last year and has already driven thousands of kilometres, travelling everywhere he can, to proclaim the "Good News" of the Gospel.

MIDDLE EAST: FORMER JIHADI NOW SERVES JESUS

Brother Yazan once served as a jihadi fighter with the al-Qaeda terrorist group in Syria. He later joined the al-Nusra Front, another militant Islamic group that fought against the Syrian government. At one point during this civil war, the self-proclaimed Islamic State (ISIS) began fighting against the al-Nusra Front, which greatly upset Yazan. "How could two Muslim groups want to kill each other?" he thought. As a result, he soon ceased to be a jihadi soldier.

Later, Yazan started watching Christian television programs and eventually became a follower of Jesus. However, after sharing his new faith with his wife, she asked for a divorce. She then told others about Yazan's conversion, which put his life in immediate danger and forced him to flee the country. Today, the new believer now resides in another Middle Eastern nation where he serves as an active member of his local church.

Unfortunately, Yazan had his motorcycle and all his tools stolen, making it difficult for him to continue earning a living as a construction worker. Please pray that the Lord would provide for this brother in Christ's spiritual, emotional and practical needs.

AUGUST 2025

"For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain." – 1 Corinthians 15:9-10 ESV

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
					1 TÜRKIYE Pray for the spread of the Gospel in Türkiye where less than one percent of the population is Christian.	2 KUWAIT Pray that many more will have access to Bibles, whether through printed editions or online sources.
3 KAZAKHSTAN Pray for Christian workers who are creatively reaching the next generation with the message of Jesus.	4 LEBANON Pray for the many displaced persecuted Christians from other nations who have found refuge in Lebanon.	5 TOGO Pray that Togolese Christians (about 42 percent of the population) will live boldly for Christ.	6 CUBA Pray that illegal house churches will be able to continue meeting without governmental interference.	7 DJIBOUTI Pray that God would lead many more Muslims in this East African nation to salvation in Christ.	8 MOROCCO Pray that despite governmental restrictions, followers of Jesus will find ways to meet for fellowship.	9 GUINEA Pray that the four percent of Guineans who identify as Christians will be effective witnesses.
10 NIGERIA Pray that members of Boko Haram and other terrorist groups will experience God's transforming love.	11 BHUTAN Using Isaiah 54:17 as a guide, pray that the government's efforts to halt Christianity will not succeed.	12 PHILIPPINES Pray that members of militant Islamic groups like Abu Sayyaf will personally encounter the Living Christ.	13 COLOMBIA Pray that Bible distributors will be able to minister in guerrilla-controlled territories without detection.	14 AZERBAIJAN Pray that underground churches will continue to meet for prayer and worship despite police interference.	15 MEXICO Pray that those who practise a syncretic blend of paganism and Catholicism will heed God's Word.	16 INDIA Pray that in-country ministry workers will have all the tools they need to advance the Gospel effectively.
17 UZBEKISTAN Pray that those who rejected the Gospel while living under Communist rule will find new life in Christ.	18 SRI LANKA Pray that Buddhists and Hindus who persecute Christians will discover God's wonderful plan of salvation.	19 MAURITANIA Pray that Christians who have suffered under slavery and servitude will rejoice over their freedom in Christ.	20 SOMALIA Pray that Somali Christians will plant more churches that are firmly grounded on God's Word.	21 DR CONGO Pray for an end to attacks by militant Islamic groups in the northeastern part of the country.	22 CHINA Pray that church leaders will have freedom to minister to those in their congregations.	23 MALAYSIA Pray that Christians will stand firm in their faith and boldly share the Gospel message with other Malays.
24 NORTH KOREA Pray for Hyun-Ok, a Christian in South Korea who is reaching North Korean defectors through Bible studies.	25 SUDAN Pray that Sudanese Christians will receive increased opportunities for fellowship and encouragement.	26 BRUNEI Pray that members of the government will realize their need for God's salvation, wisdom and guidance.	27 TURKMENISTAN Pray on behalf of Turkmen pastors who have been imprisoned for their ministry work.	28 SYRIA Pray that the Druze, an ethnic community that persecutes believers, will embrace the truth of the Gospel.	29 MOZAMBIQUE Pray for a change of heart to take place among the many young men who join militant Islamic groups.	30 MALI Pray that threats from militant Islamists will not hinder the witness of Malian Christians.
31 BENIN Pray that churches will reflect the light, love and grace of Christ throughout this African nation.						

SCAN TO ACCESS THE
DIGITAL CALENDAR!



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Resources

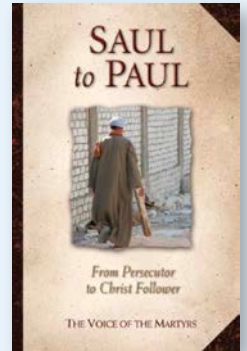
Shop online at store.vomcanada.org

***Saul to Paul: From Persecutor to Christ Follower* | \$10**

No conversion story in the Bible is more expansive than that of the Apostle Paul whom God had clearly chosen during the first century for a unique purpose. In fact, throughout the history of Christianity, the Lord radically transformed the lives of many other opposers of the Gospel – and then empowered them to serve as vibrant witnesses of His saving grace.

Contained within the pages of this digest-sized book are seven modern-day "Saul to Paul" transformation testimonies that illuminate the struggles of the persecuted church and reveal how our Sovereign God inclines even the most hardened of hearts towards His own.

Your prayer life for our persecuted family in Christ will also be transformed as you read about the miraculous spiritual journeys of individuals who, after spending years in darkness trying to destroy the bride of Christ, now live in the joyous light of Christ. Hardcover, 143 pages



Online Summer Edition!



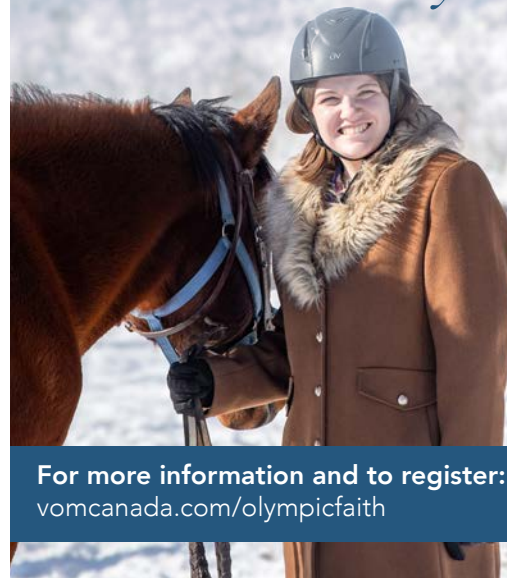
Through the *Looking for the Lies in Literature* activity, VOMC is preparing to engage youth to be Mission (Im)Possible Agents who can recognize the untruths portrayed within stories and movies from around the world. As participants collect clues through the assignments, they will be sleuthing towards entry to an "Underground Church Meeting" – a party they will have the opportunity to host. This party will be filled with fun obstacles (activities) which will be peppered with informative clues about what it means to be "Agents for Christ" in the field.

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