

EARLY 2014  
EDITION #2

# The Cost

WHAT IS FAITH **REALLY** WORTH?

THE MAG FROM  
**OPEN DOORS YOUTH**

**BLACKOUT**  
SPECIAL EDITION

INCLUDING:

WORLD WATCH LIST 2014

A TRUE FAST TAKES HEART

BLACKOUT LEGENDS

A WHOLE COUNTRY  
UNDER BLACKOUT



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**OpenDoors**  
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# BLACKOUT

28TH - 30TH MARCH 2014

MAKE

A

BIG

NOISE

BY  
KEEPING

QUIET

JOIN OUR  
21ST CENTURY FAST  
FOR PERSECUTED  
CHRISTIANS

THE CHURCH WAS NEVER MEANT TO BE QUIET. YET IN PLACES AROUND THE WORLD, FOLLOWERS OF JESUS ARE BEING HUSHED UP. BEATEN, TORTURED, ABUSED, HIDDEN, SILENCED, BLACKED OUT. **BUT SOMETIMES, SILENCE IS THE LOUDEST SCREAM.**

## THE BLACKOUT TOUR



Take part in Blackout and turn down the volume on your lifestyle to make a big noise about the reality of persecution. Raise money and spend time praying for those who know the true cost of following Jesus.

**BLACKOUT 2014: 28TH-30TH MARCH**

**SIGN UP AT**

[WWW.OPENDOORSYOUTH.ORG/BLACKOUT](http://WWW.OPENDOORSYOUTH.ORG/BLACKOUT)

Join us for some nights of stripped back worship, teaching and prayer to hear more about what you can do to stand with persecuted Christians.

**7th-9th Feb**

Regional Youth Event, Beverley, near Hull

**16th Feb**

Trinity Youth, Trinity Church, Cheltenham

**18th-20th Feb**

Onelife Conference (South), Chorleywood\*

**2nd March**

Christ Church Clifton, Bristol

**23rd March**

Ninth Hour, Newcastle

**OpenDoors**  
**YOUTH**

Find us on:



\*Events are being organised by these lovely local churches (or youth events), those with a \* will have an entrance fee, or need booking in advance.

## IT'S TIME

WAKE UP TO EXTREME PERSECUTION

**We don't know about you, but our lives are pretty noisy. We're surrounded by so much stuff, that silence can seem pretty weird. But, the reality is that sometimes silence can say more than all the words in the world.**

Jesus knew that – when questioned by the authorities about what he was up to or what he had said, he stayed silent. He knew what was coming, but he didn't dignify the accusations and lies about him with noise. Instead he was silent, leaving the words he eventually uttered to have more power and force – words which led to his death.

But Jesus also sought silence to grow closer to God. He knew stillness and quiet helped him connect with his Father. He sought that out before he was arrested, looking for strength for what was to come.

Silence can help us shout and make our point all the louder. It can help us get closer to God. It clears out all the distractions so we can hear Him afresh. But for us it's a choice. We can choose to be silent, but around the world, the church is forced to be quiet.

*"I was locked up in a shipping container that was dirty, dark, very cold at night and very hot during the day... One morning they came very early to question me. But I was so cold after enduring a night in the freezing cold of the container that I could not even speak".*

**Helen from Eritrea**

Helen's story goes on - she now lives in the West, passionately and vocally living out her faith. But as you can see in the latest World Watch List (over there) some pretty well-known countries are still determined to silence those who are trying to follow Jesus.

And that's why we want you to get silent with us. This March, we're hosting **BLACKOUT** – a 21st Century fast for the persecuted Church. We'll stay silent on our social media profiles, games consoles and even cut out speaking altogether to make a big noise for persecuted Christians. We'd really love you to get involved in whatever way you can – read on to be inspired and find out how to take part!

**Peace and grace**

**The Open Doors Youth Team!**

## THE WORLD WATCH LIST 2014...

**The latest World Watch List has just been announced. This shows the places in the world where following Jesus costs the most.**

**1.**

### **NORTH KOREA**

*One of the only Communist states left, North Korea is vehemently opposed to religion of any kind. Christians are classified as hostile and face arrest, detention, torture, even public execution.*

**2.**

### **SOMALIA**

*Islamic State in Africa where it's too dangerous for Christians to meet openly in public and militant terrorist groups forcibly try to convert people to Islam.*

**3.**

### **SYRIA**

*Since the civil war life for Christians in Syria has deteriorated. Caught between two sides, Christians are fleeing in the face of increasing persecution, poverty and life-threatening insecurity.*

You can read more about life in North Korea on P6-7, but check out **opendoorsyouth.org** for some country profiles to learn more and read some pointers to help guide your prayers.

# A TRUE FAST TAKES HEART

*“Is not this the kind of fasting have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?”*

Isaiah 58

**A fast is a choice. In the Old Testament, the prophet Isaiah gets pretty irate with God’s people when they make fasting a religious requirement. Look up the passage and see – it’s a pretty massive wake up call. Speaking through Isaiah, God says that he’ll ignore it when people try to please him with enforced rituals that are about going through the motions rather than a response of the heart.**

Whether it’s fasting, singing songs, going along to church – God doesn’t care – he wants our hearts to be transformed and our lives to clearly show of His love for others. True fasting is about doing justice, setting the oppressed

free and loving others. It’s not that the rest is bad, it’s just that those things are a response to a relationship with God, a reflection of our hope to know Him more. And if we really know Him, we know what really is on His heart.

This isn’t just an angry Old Testament prophet we can ignore. Jesus makes the same point. He publicly slated the religious elite for their ritual obedience to tithing herbs or cleaning dishes, but ignoring justice and service to the poor (Lk 11v39-40).

It’s there throughout the Bible. Don’t just go through the motions. Know God - truly know him. Learn what’s on his heart and then respond. This challenge was set by Isaiah, then a few

hundred years later by Jesus. 2000 years on, it’s likely this is still a problem for those of us trying to follow God.

So what is it for us? Do we know all the latest worship songs, get the t-shirts and follow the right celebrity Christians on Facebook? Great – but do we know and act on God’s heart?

If you’re not sure what is on God’s heart then try these: standing up for justice, serving the poor, being gracious, loving, kind and servant hearted.

### **Why fast?**

Well, a fast is a choice – a choice to limit some of the luxuries (usually food) that we enjoy all in the hope we can know God

**JOIN THE BLACKOUT - OUR 21ST CENTURY FAST FOR PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS:**

SIGN UP AND GET SPONSORED OVER 28-30TH MARCH 2014

more. It's about clearing space to allow God to speak. God comes first, and a fast helps us make that point to ourselves – we give up all else for a time so we can hear his voice better.

But it's not just those of us who have stuff to give up who fast. In North Korea, where Christianity is under a complete Blackout, secret Christians, most likely with very little in terms of possessions, will fast for up to 10 days before deciding whether they should start any evangelistic projects.

They really need to know what God wants before they start any public confession of their faith – as it could cost them their lives. This isn't about going through the motions, this is about desperately, passionately wanting to know God and act on what he says.

### **Blackout:** **Choose your fast**

This March we'd love you to join us, and thousands of others, on a fast. We know God cares about Christians who are persecuted for following him, and so we're going to choose to fast some of our luxuries to raise prayers, money and awareness.

We'll be Blacking Out or fasting from social networks, TV, the internet and a whole lot more because we want to give time to connect with His heart and be changed. This is a choice, and one that will bless Christians who really know the true cost of following him.

### **Are you with us?**

Choose your fast and let us know you're up for it at [www.opendoorsyouth.org/blackout](http://www.opendoorsyouth.org/blackout)

# I BLACKED OUT FOR A WHOLE WEEKEND!

### **Name**

*Annabel*

### **When did you do Blackout?**

*The best Blackout that I did was 2 years ago with a friend as a 'silent sleepover'.*

### **Why did you do it?**

*We decided to try the challenge of doing Blackout to be a voice for our persecuted brothers and sisters by being silent. We also wanted to make this an issue that even people outside of Christian circles were aware of so raised our voices loud and clear there about it too.*

### **What did you Blackout from?**

*We went for the full shebang and did our Blackout from pretty much everything; phones, iPods, radio, computers, the internet, TV, music etc... Oh, And speaking, of course!*

### **What did God teach you?**

*Because we did our Blackout from all forms of communication apart from writing short messages, reading our Bibles and charades. We were able to spend a lot of time praying for the persecuted church and had a sense of the lives they have to live. God took me through the Beatitudes in Matthew 5 where I really understood their full meaning for the first time.*

### **Has it changed your faith in anyway?**

*Doing Blackout increased my hunger to stand up for my God who is so good. It helped to change my faith from a 'me faith' to a 'Kingdom faith'; where my eyes are fixed on seeing His Kingdom come and His will be done.*

### **How much money did you raise?**

*I can't remember exactly how much we raised but it was roughly around the £150 mark.*

You can Blackout from whatever you like, the choice is yours. You can be hardcore like Annabel limiting your freedom for a whole weekend, or keep it short and join in for just a day or evening. Check out the free downloadable **BLACKOUT GUIDE** for more, and get Bible study, prayer and reflection ideas to do whilst you're doing your fast.



## BLACKOUT LEGEND

### Name:

Mark

### Why did you Blackout?

*To raise money and awareness at my church about the persecuted church and to replicate some of the difficulties they face.*

### What did you Blackout from?

*11 young people from our church fasted from all technology for 48 hours and I was locked into a cage, only having bread and water.*

### What did God teach you?

*On the Saturday night I could hear the fireworks outside. It reminded me of the soundtrack in Syria... I could really put myself into the shoes of our brothers and sisters there. God taught me about the fear they must be facing at this time and how hard it is for them to spread the good news.*

### Has it changed your faith in anyway?

*It has taught me to take every opportunity I have to worship God in whatever shape that comes in as our brothers and sisters don't have the same freedom to do so as we do.*

### How much did you raise?

*We raised around £350*

## NORTH KOREA A WHOLE COUNTRY UNDER

# BLACKOUT

**It's unbelievable that a country like North Korea can exist today. Unbelievable that an estimated 50% of North Koreans live in extreme poverty (source Korea Institute for National Unification). Unbelievable that they face a blackout on free thought. Unbelievable that all kinds of religion are outlawed and believers brutally punished. Unbelievable that even ownership of a Bible could land you a life sentence in a horrific labour camp.**

Unbelievable then that there's up to an estimated 400,000 Christians?

Life in North Korea, for everyone but the ruling elite, is by all accounts an unbelievable ordeal. The country has been ruled by the same family (the Kims) since the end of the Second World War and since then a communist ideology has given way to an unquestioning adoration of the country's all-powerful leadership. Each week everyone must attend state sanctioned meetings, whilst people must memorise materials that praise the morals and majesty of the leaders. TV and radio are fully controlled by the state, and with a failing economy, the people suffer.

The situation is worrying to say the least...

*"The standard of living has deteriorated to extreme levels of deprivation in which the right to food security, health and other minimum needs for human survival are denied,"*

Throw into the mix an almost complete blackout of Christianity (bar a few 'show church' buildings for tourists in the capital, Pyongyang) and the picture for Christians looks insanely bleak.

The police actively seek out Christians, believing faith in Jesus is a sign of western sympathy and disobedience. Churches meet in secret - whispering in caves and even the dirty toilets of prison camps. Faith has to be hidden, unseen and often unspoken.

Christian parents can't mention their faith to their children

**NEWS JUST IN!**

HAE WOO, A NORTH KOREAN WHO SET UP A CHURCH IN A NORTH KOREAN PRISON CAMP WILL BE AT OUR JARS OF CLAY EVENT ON 1ST MARCH. BOOK IN ONLINE!

just in case the children say something unknowingly at school - teachers and even other kids are trained to call the police at any signs of disloyalty to the state.

It truly is unbelievable. But that's not the end. Amidst the blackout, there is hope. In even the darkest situation, Jesus is there, and his followers are finding ways to bring light to the blackness.

*"God has warmly covered us with the Holy Spirit's love and grace whenever we tried to live according to His calling. And even though we are completely severed from the outside world, our faith will remain firmly on the Rock."*

**North Korean Christian**

*"God has looked over and preserved our North Korean underground church organization for the past decades and God has made our believers to realize and to repent in the past and removed all the impurities. Then God began to send His hands of blessings, love and*

*grace towards and made us to spiritually grow and be stronger in His word. We have seen countless miracles until this day and He is still continuing with His work now."*

**North Korean Christian**

*"If you asked me to choose one word to describe them, I would pick 'faithful'. Not all of them have God's Word, but thanks to their leaders, they really know God's Word and do God's Word. At the height of the famine a leader felt called to reintroduce the concept of 'holy rice', a practice whereby rice is set apart for use in God's Kingdom. Ever since, these Christians don't consume all the food they receive from us. They save some to give to people who are even worse off than them. This gives them an opportunity to build trust and later share the gospel with these people."*

**Open Doors worker who works with North Korean Refugees**

**MONEY RAISED DURING YOUR BLACKOUT WILL GO TOWARDS PROJECTS THAT HELP NORTH KOREAN CHRISTIANS.**



# SAVE SYRIA

CHURCH ON ITS KNEES

Last year we were pretty focused on how the church in Syria was being destroyed by civil war. On December 10th we handed in 309,195 signatures from 99 countries to the Russian, French, British, Chinese and American ambassadors to the UN in New York. We also took the petition to 10 Downing Street and various embassies across London. The petition called on world leaders to do what they could to protect the rights of all Syrians, including the vulnerable Christian community.

Thanks so much for your support... Please continue to pray especially as tension between rebel groups and militant Islamic militias spills over to the Christian community. We'll keep you updated with developments at [www.opendoorsyouth.org](http://www.opendoorsyouth.org)



## AWESOME NEW T-SHIRT

Grab one of our awesome new t-shirts by using the order form posted with this mag, or visit [www.opendoorsyouth.org/blackout](http://www.opendoorsyouth.org/blackout). They come in lads and ladies fits and are just £12.50. All money raised goes will support secret Christians in places like North Korea.



Just £12.50!

## COME & JOIN US JARS OF CLAY 2014

VOLUNTEER DAY / 1 MARCH  
CONNECT. INSPIRE. CELEBRATE  
BETHEL CONVENTION CENTRE BIRMINGHAM

Join us for a day full of challenge, inspiration and celebration as we hear **first-hand stories** from the persecuted church!

Discover how you can use **your skills and interests** to stand with our persecuted family worldwide.

More info online at [opendoorsyouth.org](http://opendoorsyouth.org)



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POWER IS FROM GOD  
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WHEN ONE MEMBER  
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STAND  
THROUGH