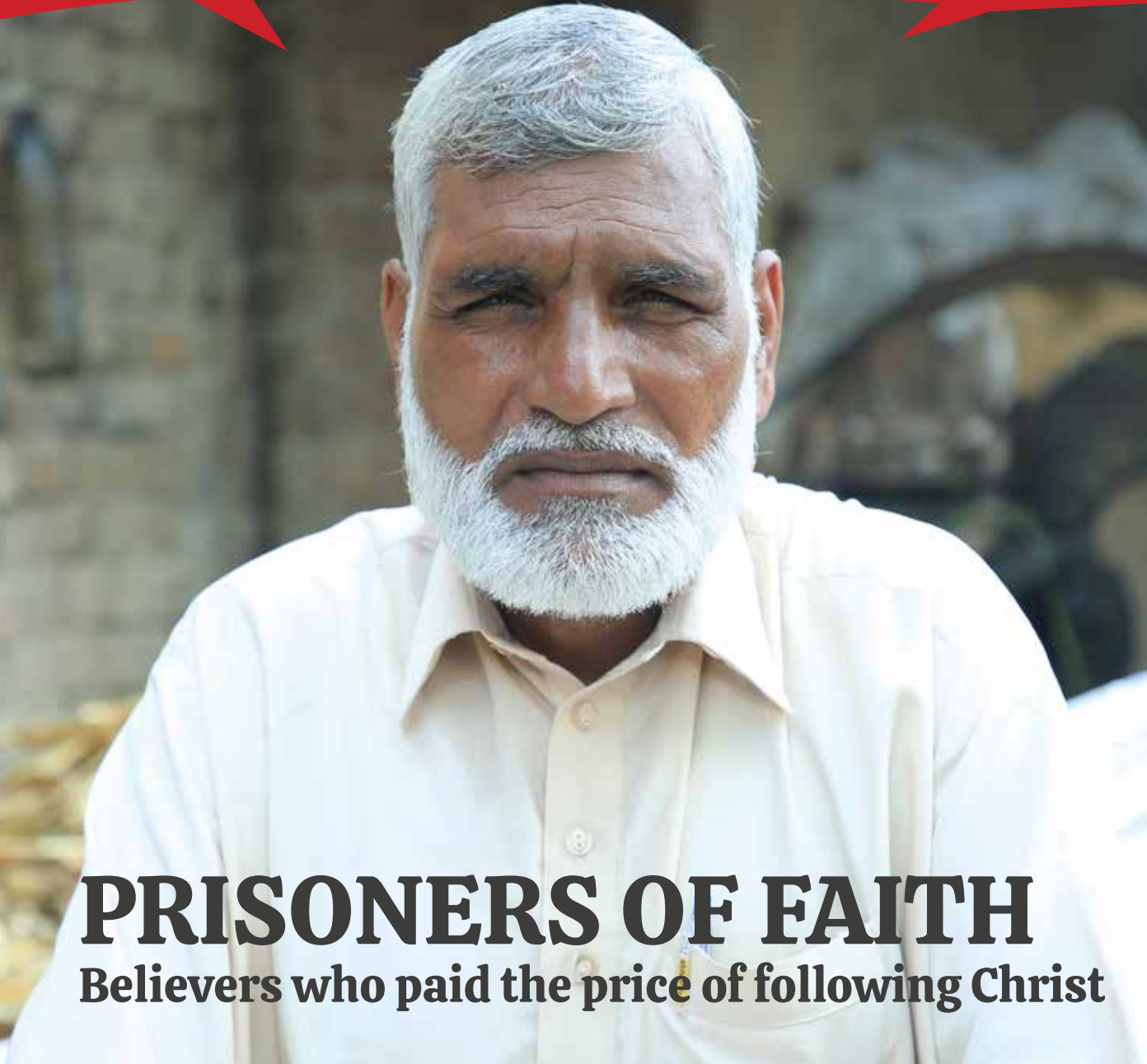


Goshen

INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES LTD
VOICE of Persecuted Christians

MAR-APR 2020



PRISONERS OF FAITH

Believers who paid the price of following Christ

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Restoring The Broken –
Sri Lanka Project Update

A bi-monthly publication by Goshen International Ministries Ltd


Goshen
Singapore, the Goshen of Asia
VOICE of Persecuted Christians

Word from Goshen International Ministries



Dear Valued Supporters,

Knowing God eclipses the value of everything we have and everything we may be called to give up in this world.

“Whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ” (Philippians 3:7-8).

In this issue, we run an article featuring two Pakistani believers who overcame hostility and victimization through their faith in Christ. Even though they were wrongfully accused, incarcerated, and suffered greatly, they remained faithful to God.

Because they know the Lamb who was slain is worthy to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing!” (Revelation 5:12).

We pray that the stories featured in this issue will deepen your love and commitment to our Lord Jesus Christ and encourage you to not give up labouring for the Kingdom of God.

1 Thessalonians 5:11

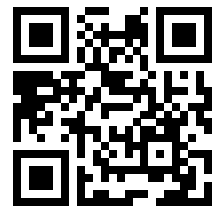
Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

Blessings!



We are able to conduct talks and hold booths and activities to help raise awareness of the plight of persecuted Christians.

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The Wisdom of Ants

Eeeewww, insects with 6 legs and 2 feelers, annoying pests that spread unwanted bacteria and damage wooden structures in our homes and troublesome to eradicate as they seem to be everywhere.

Ants are tiny insects that we can easily squash with one finger. However, tiny and weak as they seem to be, do you know that God built into them a wisdom that we can learn from?



Proverbs 30:24-28 (NIV)

“Four things on earth are small, yet they are extremely wise : Ants are creatures of little strength, yet they store up their food in the summer”.

Ants are active all year long in the tropics but when the climate turns cooler, they go into a state of dormancy known as hibernation where they remain inactive or in a state of reduced activity. In His wisdom God built into them a natural ability to discern the coming of winter. Prior to the onset of winter, they will actively find and store sufficient food in their nests for the whole colony to survive the winter.

One aspect of wisdom consists of the ability not only to DISCERN something but to also ACT upon that discernment.

As I reflect on the wisdom of ants, I asked the Lord, “What are the spiritual times and seasons that we, as believers, must discern and act upon, and what does God expect us to discern and what should we do about what we have discerned?”



How discerning are we as believers in this age? Let me draw your attention to the undiscerning.

Matthew 16:1-3 (ESV)

“And the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and to test him they asked him to show them a sign from heaven. He answered them, ‘When it is evening, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.’ And in the morning, ‘It will be stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening.’”

Jesus was actually mocking them in a way by simply saying, “Hey guys, you sure know how to interpret the coming weather correctly, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times.”

They know the law and all that is written in the law but they were not able to discern that Jesus, the prophesied Anointed One is standing right there in their midst.

Even the disciples were initially not able to discern who He really was as they were using their natural minds to interpret the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah. They thought Jesus was to be the next

King of the Roman Empire so much so that when Jesus spoke about His impending suffering and death, Peter took Him aside and rebuked Him, saying ***“Far be it from You, Lord! This shall never happen to You”***. Jesus then responded to Peter saying, ***“Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man”*** (Matthew 16:21-23)(ESV).

Sadly, although Peter had a relationship with Christ, he was not able to discern the spiritual significance of what the Lord was doing right in their midst.

Jesus was not interested in the physical kingdom - *“My kingdom is not of this world.”* (John 18:36).

Our Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled His call and mission 2,000 years ago. He paid the price for our sins by His death and resurrection on the cross and offered us, who put our faith in Him, a new life. Now that is not the end for us. As promised, He will return to reign with us.

Meanwhile, we are living in these ‘last days’ awaiting His return, but the god of this age, who is the biggest enemy of God, is working very hard to distract, deceive and prevent us from discerning correctly and accurately the will of God in our lives.

“The god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ” (2 Cor 4:4).

He does it by keeping us so busy working and slaving for the material things of this world to satisfy our desire for comfort and survival, and the promise of happiness and satisfaction. The demands and expectations of the world bind us tightly and robs us of the time we need to seek and commune with God. Without even realizing it, the satisfaction people gain from material things in life soon becomes more tangible than knowing God.

God has forewarned us that if we allow ourselves to be consumed by the desire for worldly things, our minds will become dulled and our spirits insensitive to the things of God. That is one of the main causes of failing to adequately prepare for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Are you currently swarmed with work and leisure activities that you do not have time for God?

Paul says God has set a race for each of us to run. Let’s run the race that God has set for us with a single-minded focus on fulfilling what He wants us to do lest we become disqualified.



What happens between the time when you are chosen by God till the time you complete your race?

This morning, the Lord reminded me about the story of Moses leading the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt, and the 40 years they spent in the wilderness before they reached the Promised Land.

During the journey, the Israelites witnessed and experienced the power and the glory of God when He appeared as a cloud in the day and fire in the night, and how God provided water and food in the form of manna and quail. Yet they sinned against God and kept complaining about the lack of comfort and amenities in the wilderness. They were like what a Chinese proverb would call someone who “bites the hand of the one who feeds them”.

A whole generation of people who started the journey in the wilderness did not make it into the Promised Land. They were disqualified because of their sin.

Many are CHOSEN but Few are CALLED.

Jesus' promise to return and reign with us is akin to the Promise Land we are looking forward to. Before He returns, we are all on a journey in the wilderness, like the Israelites. We have been invited by the Lord and have accepted His invitation to enjoy eternal life with Him.

Let us not grieve the Lord but be faithful to Him. Let us live godly lives so that we do not disqualify ourselves by entangling ourselves with the snares of this world.

If this message speaks to you, make a decision to turn away from sin and seek the Lord's forgiveness and grace.

Psalm 139:23-24 (NIV)

***Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.***



Serving God WHATEVER The Cost

Christians in Pakistan tell us of their struggles in the midst of having to cope with many challenges.

PASTOR ZAFAR BHATTI



Zafar, 51, has been in Rawalpindi's Adiala Central Jail since July 2012. He was charged and sentenced in May 2017 to life imprisonment for sending text messages that allegedly caused offence to some people

in the community – a charge which he vehemently denies. The mobile phone in question was not even registered to him.

Before his arrest, Pastor Zafar worked as a salesman selling medicines door-to-door where he will take the opportunity not only to do his sales presentation, but to also read the Bible and pray with families in the homes he visited. He founded and led a small Non-Government Organisation called Jesus World Mission to assist the poor.

In July 2012, a community leader filed a complaint saying he received messages from an unregistered number that he deemed to be insulting. He threatened that his followers would take matters into their own hands if an investigation against Zafar was not opened.

Zafar was subsequently arrested and tortured to try to extract a confession – but he insisted on his innocence.

When the courts eventually brought Zafar to trial in May 2017 – nearly 5 years after his arrest – they conducted proceedings inside the prison because of security threats. He was eventually sentenced to life imprisonment.

Zafar then appealed against his conviction.

At a court hearing in April this year, the judge said that there was no evidence against Zafar and ruled that he should be released. The prosecution lawyer and police then asked for more time to produce evidence in court.

On June 19, his appeal hearing was adjourned – for the 7th time. 'I have been in prison for the past 7 years,' Zafar said. 'I have experienced many hardships and difficult times. Once I was attacked by my own prison guard. He shot me 7 times because he thought that I have no right to live. Praise God that He saved me.'

PERVAIZ & ZAREENA MASIH



Another believer in Pakistan, Pervaiz, also suffered much after going through a spate of false accusations.

Pervaiz lives with his wife and 3 children in a small village in the Kasur district of Punjab province. He worked as a 4th generation day-labourer at a local brick-kiln factory. These forms of employment are common to many Pakistani Christians, the majority of whom are illiterate and poorly educated. Many of them are vulnerable to abuse.

In 2015, Pervaiz was involved in a dispute with someone over payment for a job he did. The other party trumped up a charge against Pervaiz by accusing him of being disrespectful toward the members of his community.

When the police were looking for Pervaiz to arrest him, they beat up both his wife, Zareena, and his brother-in-law. Zareena says, 'I was kicked very hard on my back and I jerked my neck. My back and neck were hurt. Now I am unable to stand properly and I cannot do my household work. I need medical treatment.'

After his arrest, Pervaiz was kept in solitary confinement. 'In prison I was very upset and kept crying out to God to release me. I felt in my bones that God was with me and that He would release me.'

Miraculously, Pervaiz was released on bail after just 20 days. However, shortly after he returned to work, the family suffered a further tragedy when their 3-year old daughter drowned in a water container at the brick kiln. Some believe that she was murdered by enemies of the family.

'On another occasion, my food was poisoned – but again God saved me. I spent 1 month in hospital to recover. After this I have had heart problems and diabetes.'

There were other attempts to kill Zafar in prison. He is not allowed to leave his cell, even for the Christmas and Easter prayer meetings held in the jail. His family are understandably very concerned for his safety.



Nawab, his wife, has struggled to make ends meet since her husband's arrest. She has been forced to send her younger children to live with their

grandparents as she could not afford to look after them.

'My health is deteriorating day by day' she says, 'I take many medicines to survive. I receive some support from Release International, which has been a great help. I ask all Christian friends to pray for me and for the release of my husband.'

In January 2019, Pervaiz was acquitted of all charges because the prosecution could not adduce sufficient evidence in court.

In spite of his acquittal, Pervaiz and his family still live in fear of being harassed and attacked.

‘Now we face a lot of danger in the village. I cannot work or travel about. I have to watch my step. My family is suffering greatly.’ ‘I forgive those who accused me. I forgive them from my heart.’

Note of encouragement to readers: continue to pray for the safety of Christians in Pakistan. Pray that God will pour His grace on them so that they can find the strength to forgive those who do wrong to them. Pray that the Lord will impart His supernatural wisdom on them so that they will know how to manage tricky situations that may spring up on them from time to time.

PASTOR WARIS



Pakistani Pastor Waris told a Release partner how those opposed to his gospel ministry falsely accused him of raping a Christian girl. He believes that they did so in order to destroy his ministry.

‘I have served the Lord Jesus for the past 21 years. I am responsible for caring for believers in 5 villages and 10 brick-kiln factories around my village. Last year I raised funds to construct a church building – but local leaders tried to stop me. However, with the help of my congregation we continued the work.

One day police came and arrested me, telling me that a rape case had been filed against myself and my brother. Later we discovered that our accusers had actually raped the Christian girl themselves. I was so shocked because I have been living here a long time and have a very good reputation. I asked my family to call a trusted Release partner and pastors in the area for help.

I was jailed for 4 days. I had to sleep on the dirty floor. The place was so smelly and unhygienic that it put me off eating any food. I decided to sing Christian worship songs, prayed and spoke out the words of Psalm 23. On the 3rd day, one of the police officers told me that he had appreciated my times of praying and praising which he watched on CCTV.

On the 4th day, I was taken to the District Police Officer who would hear my case. When I arrived, I was amazed to find that 100 pastors and church leaders had come to support me, as well as some other local religious leaders who testified in my favour. Praise God!

Cleared of the charge against me, I was released the next day. However, my accusers are still trying to take legal action against me. They want to ruin my ministry and force me to leave the village – which I am not going to do.’

Please pray for me and my family as we serve the Lord God. Pray for my protection and that God will change the mind of those who are persecuting me.’

The majority of Christians in Pakistan are poor and illiterate and are vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. This is especially the case with women and young girls.

There have been cases of false allegations levelled against Christians by some malicious actors who exploit loosely-worded provisions in the law to settle personal scores.

In spite of these challenges, the Christian church remains strong in faith and hope. Continue to pray for Christians to be strong in the faith and to walk in the wisdom and love of the Lord. 🙏

(Article by Release International, adapted by Goshen)

(Photo Credits : Release International)

Restoring the Broken — Sri Lanka Project (Concluded)

Thank you to all who gave sacrificially and generously towards the restoration and re-building of Christian families in Sri Lanka who were victims of the Easter Sunday bombings in April 2019.

Your gift helped fund the Kids Camp 2019 held at Sanctuary House, Pamunugama from 2nd to 4th December for children aged 7 to 18 years.

As children of pastors enduring persecution, these young ones also have to deal with persecution in their own way. From young, they have had to face ostracism and ridicule in school. These experiences have a significant impact on their growth and development. It has tested their faith in Christ and they are forced to mature beyond their age. Many of them have even questioned whether God has a plan for their lives.

The purpose of the Kids Camp (named 'God Loves You') is to remind these precious children of God's love for them. The camp also equipped them with some knowledge of how they can identify God's specific purpose for their lives. It also gave them opportunities to make friends with other children of pastors who are also experiencing some form of persecution so that they do not feel all alone in their struggles.

The following are some of the children's testimonies (*names changed to protect the children's identities*) :

Jai, 18 years old

"I used to struggle with a particular fear and I felt stuck. What the camp volunteer shared about how I can move forward in life really helped."

Ranjit, 18 years old

"From childhood I had a passion to serve in ministry, but as I grew up, I kept going back on it. I was conflicted about what I should choose; ministry or get a job. Today I made a decision to do ministry. The friends I made on this camp ended up becoming my brothers, no longer friends but family to me."

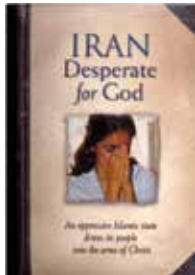
Aisha, 18 years old

"One of the stories that really struck me was the prodigal son. I gained a different perspective on it this time. Besides the fact that no matter what sin we commit we can still go back to God who is waiting for us, I learnt about how our parents are willing to receive us also."

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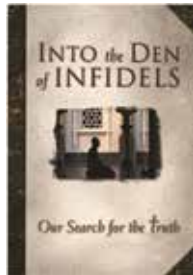


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IRAN : DESPERATE FOR GOD

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(Hardcover, 152 pages)



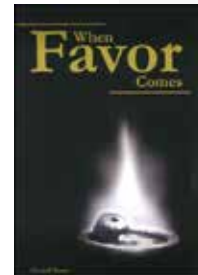
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INTO THE DEN OF INFIDELS

After years of railing against God, Khalil was caught by a love that wouldn't let him go. Unable to bear the struggle any longer, he cried out to God to know the truth. He gave his heart to the One who filled his inner being with joy.

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(Hardcover, 172 pages)



\$20

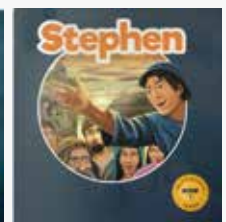
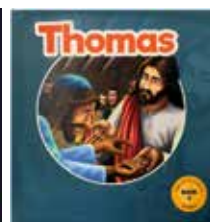
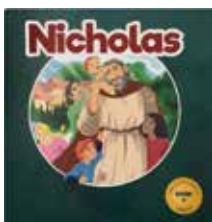
WHEN FAVOUR COMES

All of us yearn the favour of God. How will you respond when the favour of the Lord comes? Gerard Seow discusses how a response aligned with God's plan always yields a further revelation of one's destiny in Him.

From this book you will gain an insight of the favour that befell the men and women of God in the Bible and what it takes to be in the position of God's favour.

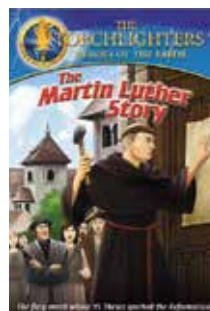
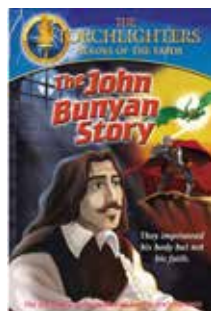
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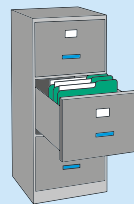
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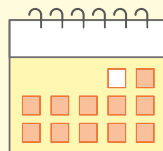
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Goshen International Ministries' Purposes

We aim to actively engage with our persecuted brothers and sisters in Christ in Asia and beyond : praying with them, standing with them, helping them and learning lessons of true discipleship with them.

Goshen Prayer Meetings in Mar/Apr 2020

Date/Day/Time	Venue	Event
Thursday 7.30pm - 10pm (10 th Mar & 14 th Apr)	170 Upper Bukit Timah Road 11 th Floor, Rhema Hall Bukit Timah Shopping Centre Singapore 588179	GOSHEN PRAYER MEETING for Persecuted Christians.



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This magazine is published bi-monthly and distributed free of charge by:

Goshen International Ministries Ltd
MCI (P) 014/08/2019
Reg No. 198204059M

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