

# Prayer Ministry

News

July 2007



## Southern Philippines

### God doesn't take no for an answer – from fishing pirate to pastor

Doldani Jahuran wanted nothing to do with the Gospel. When a visiting preacher came to his village amongst the Sama peoples he rejected it immediately. What did he need it for? He was enjoying life and making a good living with his relatives as a 'dynamite' fisherman.

### "It was really God who helped me overcome"

Doldani knew that blasting fish from the water would rapidly deplete vital fish stocks in his area. He didn't care. He was making good money, and he always managed to evade the local patrolling military when he went on his fishing expeditions – until the day he was apprehended. Suddenly, he was looking at life through prison bars.

Conditions were harsh, Doldani and his relatives were roughly treated and severely tortured for 10 days. Doldani began to call on the God that he had rejected. "God if you are real, free us from this suffering and I will seek you with all my heart and serve you to the end of my days." It was the turning point of his life.

Doldani was true to his word. Upon his release he went straight back to his community and spoke about Jesus. Others came to know about salvation and Doldani's lifestyle changed from

lawlessness to a life of compassion, sharing the Gospel wherever he could.

### A time of testing

Doldani's Christian life has not been without trials. Corrective surgery has been needed to correct partial blindness in one eye. Open Doors stepped in to cover the cost of the surgery. A new-born daughter died due to illness. But the greatest test of all was when his wife left him, yielding to pressures from non-Christian relatives who disapproved of his new lifestyle.

"It was really God who helped me overcome by trial in life" he told an Open Doors co-worker. "I have enrolled in the Lay Leaders Training Institute run by Open Doors. The training helps me to put my trust in God alone. I have learned that all the trials I encounter in this world are just temporary."

Many Christians want to flee from conflict areas, leaving their region with a diminished Christian presence. Open Doors conducts Standing Strong Through the Storm seminars in the Southern Philippines and many other countries to help believers like Doldani to stand firm in the face of persecution.

### Please pray:

- » For Doldani's ministry. Pray that the Lord will use him mightily to bring more Sama people to His Kingdom.
- » For Doldani's livelihood; a fish enterprise, which Open Doors has loaned him the money for.
- » For believers like Doldani who participate in training provided by Open Doors such as the Lay Leaders Training, *Standing Strong Through the Storm* seminars and learning to read and write through the Timothy Training programme.



Doldani talking to people from his community

Source: Open Doors



## China

### “I taught him Chinese and he taught me the Gospel”

Sam (pseudonym) knew what it meant to be isolated. He came from a minority Christian tribe and often felt socially excluded at university. It had taken a lot of determination to earn the right to study at a prodigious national academy.

Sam was a good student and studied hard. He was determined to learn English, the language of commerce, so that he would succeed in the business world. He liked his teacher, Kingsley and as his English improved he began to help Kingsley improve his grasp of Chinese. Two years later Kingsley was fluent.

Just before Sam's graduation he was invited to Kingsley's apartment. He

accepted and took along a friend to meet his teacher. All that morning Kingsley shared from the Bible, but his two guests

### Open Doors trains evangelists to take the Gospel to areas where minority tribal groups live

did not share his enthusiasm and even dozed off once or twice. After that, Kingsley's invitations were avoided at all costs. But the men met again at Sam's graduation where his former teacher presented him with three books, including a Bible. Sam threw it under his pillow without opening it once.

### A message from the heart

Sam began his career in a Singapore bank. He considered that there was nothing in the world to live for, except making money. Always in the back of his mind he pondered the meaning of life. Why was he alive? One day as he went to the restroom to smoke a cigar, a voice deep in his heart told him, 'Don't give up your life'. He called Kingsley.

Soon they met up again. This time Sam's heart was receptive to the Gospel message and he decided to follow Jesus. That was back in December 1999.

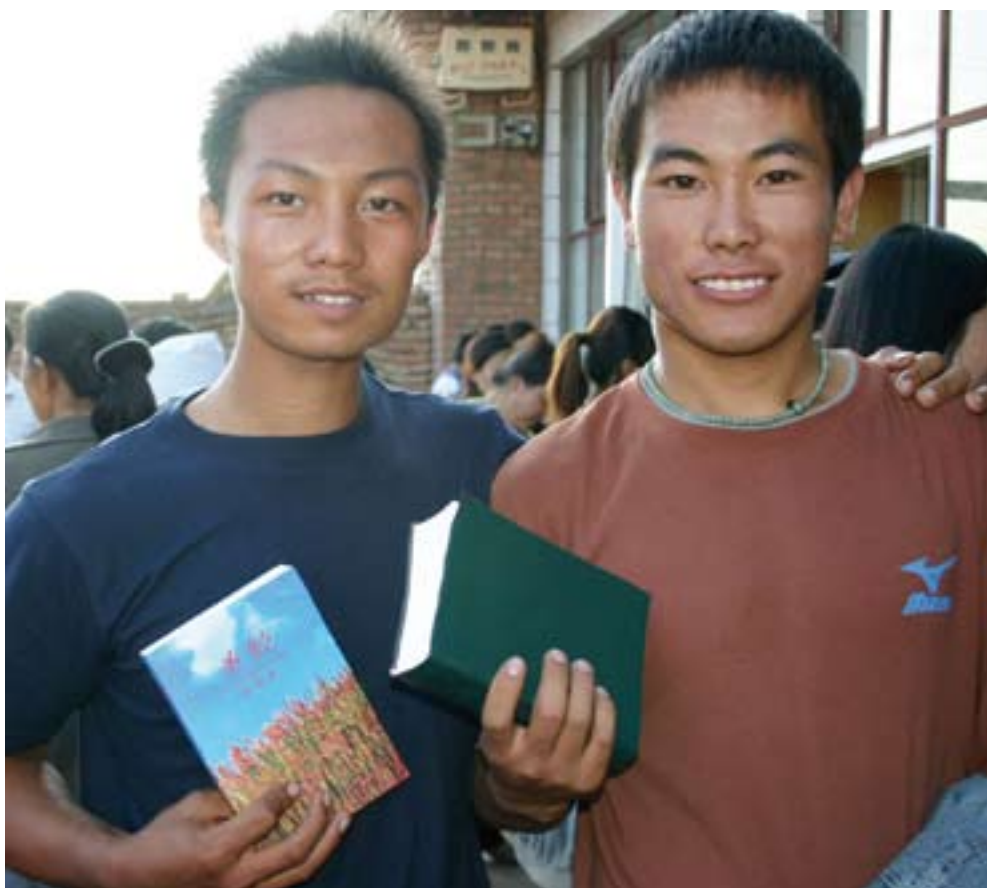
Soon afterwards Sam returned to his people and he is now a church leader. He has never regretted his decision, despite persecution. His underground training school has been raided and he has been arrested on three occasions, but he remains strong in his faith.

He is currently sharing the Gospel amongst China's minority groups – and his former teacher is helping in every way he can.

Open Doors holds special training courses to help evangelists take the Gospel to areas where minority tribal groups live. Teacher training materials for minority groups are also a high priority.

### Please pray:

- » For Sam as he ministers God's love to the minority peoples of China.
- » For underground training schools sponsored by Open Doors. Pray that accurate Bible truths will be taught without detection.
- » For the safe printing and distribution of Bibles and training materials.



**Bibles and training materials are sought after in China**

Source: Open Doors



## India

### A Hindu mob beats strips and parades pastor through his village

Pastor Laxmi Gowda pondered his humiliation from his hospital bed. Since becoming a Christian 15 years ago, he had often been the target of abuse. His former Hindu friends and colleagues in the fundamentalist group Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh had never accepted his decision to follow Jesus and now they had taken their revenge.

### An unwelcome intrusion

A mob of extremists had forced entry into Laxmi's house, near Bangalore and vandalised furniture and equipment. Not content with damaging Laxmi's property, they threatened him with violence unless he left not only his home but the entire area.

Before long, a larger mob of about 100 fundamentalists, led by the Bajrang Dal, the youth wing of a fundamentalist Hindu group, forced their way into Laxmi's house. This time they assaulted him in front of his family.

### A kerosene shower and a pile of burning Bibles

One of his assailants doused him with kerosene. Others started to burn Bibles that belonged to his fellowship. Within no time at all, at least 250 copies of the Bible were burning inside Laxmi's home causing an inferno. One of the fundamentalists picked up a burning Bible and threw it at the pastor, but miraculously he did not catch fire.

### Stripped and paraded

The attackers then stripped Laxmi naked and hung a board around his neck that read "I am the one who was converting

people," and paraded him through the area. By this time, the mob had swollen to around 1,000 as others joined in to humiliate the pastor.

Local police arrived an hour after the incident and have not registered a case against the attackers. Extremists in the area have become emboldened by police complicity when attacks against Christians occur and this has become a worrying trend. Police have even been known to encourage anti-social elements to harass Christians.

Now as Laxmi contemplated the recent events and felt the pain of his injuries, he knew that nothing would shake his faith in Jesus. But would this happen again? Should he go or should he stay and be a 'light in the darkness' in his region? Laxmi feared for the safety of himself and his wife and two small children. He faced an agonising decision. Now lying in a hospital bed he had plenty of time to contemplate his future.

Open Doors has expanded its ministry in India as Christians face increasing opposition from Hindu fundamentalists. This includes conducting Standing Strong Through the Storm seminars to help believers as they face persecution and violence in their daily Christian walk.

### Please pray:

- » For Laxmi as he makes decisions over his and his family's future.
- » For a healing of Laxmi's body and painful memories.
- » For other evangelists who work in the Bangalore area and participants in the Standing Strong Through the Storm seminars.

Open Doors letter-writing guide contains details of many Christians, including a number of pastors in India who would value your prayers and cards of encouragement.

To obtain your free Letter-writing Guide, contact **01993 885400** or visit **[www.opendoorsuk.org/write](http://www.opendoorsuk.org/write)**



**Pastor Laxmi Gowda recovering in hospital**

Source: Compass Direct



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# Central Asia

**“In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” John 16:33**

Aziz is no stranger to challenges. Although he is now in his late twenties and responsible for several cell groups in his area, the challenges he encountered when he decided to follow Jesus are still very vivid in his memory.

At just 15 years of age, Aziz became a believer. Other students at school noticed and began to ask questions. Aziz shared the Gospel with them. He shared it with anyone who would listen! His heart burned for evangelism and he openly shared about Jesus at any opportunity.

Naively, Aziz thought that he could continue to share his new-found faith without opposition. Six months later he realised he was wrong! His mother was not happy with his new Christian faith, she repeatedly told him to stop going to church.

## **An ultimatum**

One day, when he returned home from a church meeting, his mother and two sisters were waiting for him. Aziz was given an ultimatum, “Your Jesus or your home!” A hard decision for a 15-year-old boy. Again they asked him, “Are you ready to give up your faith?” Aziz began to doubt. What was he to do? Submit to them just to keep the peace in the house? Then he remembered

a verse from Matthew 10:36 ‘Well-meaning family members can be your worst enemies’ (The Message) and told them of his decision to continue following Jesus.

## **Life as an outcast**

Aziz was kicked and beaten by his mother. Soon his sisters also joined in. The Christian Church became his family and Aziz was cared for. His relationship with his family has slowly improved, but now he faces pressure from the authorities.

Open Doors helps new believers in Central Asia, like Aziz, to grow in their faith. Training and literacy programmes help them to remain strong in the face of considerable opposition.

## **Please pray:**

- » For Aziz as he pastors the house-churches under his care and for Aziz’s family; that they will also come to know Christ.
- » For young believers at school in countries in Central Asia. They face discrimination and pressure to renounce their faith on a daily basis.
- » For protection for pastors of the new church in Central Asia and for their families.

For further prayer news and events please visit the Open Doors website:

[www.opendoorsuk.org](http://www.opendoorsuk.org)



**Young believers in Central Asia**

Source: Open Doors