

50  
YEARS  
1968-2018

# Embrace

Newsletter of Release Women  
Summer 2018



## Join hands with our North Korean sisters

**A Release Women team recently visited Release's partner in South Korea and had the privilege of meeting some North Korean defectors. Here, one of the team, Jackie, shares Mrs G's story.**

Mrs G, a sprightly 80-year-old North Korean, welcomed us to her home in Seoul. As a child Mrs G grew up in a Christian family in the capital of North Korea, Pyongyang, and she remembers going to church with her mother. Later Mrs G married and had two children. Her brother was a passionate believer and his outspokenness about his Christian faith resulted in some of the family having to move to a rural area. For Mrs G this meant leaving behind her husband and children – she never saw them again. Mrs G felt totally hopeless, as though she had died.

Life continued to be hard. Mrs G lived with her parents and worked incredibly long hours in a coal mine. Eventually, at the insistence of her parents, she married again. Her new husband already had eight children. During this difficult time, as the children grew up and got married,

Mrs G listened to a radio and learned what she could about life outside North Korea.

After being reported by a neighbour to the authorities for doing extra work to support her large family and not declaring the income, Mrs G had to move again and this time settled near the border. Here she met God in a personal way when she heard him speak the words of John 3:16 directly to her. She was eager to learn more about this God from her childhood. This, coupled with her desire for a better life, led her to enter China illegally. Her son paid for her passage by ship but as she boarded the vessel guards shot at people. Mrs G didn't feel any fear; whether she lived or died she knew she was in God's hands.

Mrs G eventually arrived in South Korea and she spent 10 years living and working there. Finally, she met Release's partner, VOM Korea, and she embarked on their discipleship programme. You may expect life to have been plain sailing after the hardships she had endured in North Korea, but she was about to enter what she describes as the hardest time of her life.

Following a misdemeanour when Mrs G broke one of the rules of the course by receiving too much money from South Korean churches, she was excluded from the discipleship programme for



*Mrs G with Ruth and Jackie*

six months. Initially she was very angry about this. She felt that her hopes had been dashed and her dreams broken. But after 15 days she did the only thing any of us can do in these situations: she prayed. As she spent time in confession and repentance the Lord ministered to her in His grace and mercy. After six months she re-joined the discipleship programme and now she looks forward to graduating in December. She learnt in those six months about how suffering is necessary and can even be essential to our growth as disciples of Jesus.

On page 3 you can read more about the discipleship programme and how you can support plea 5 of our 50th Anniversary campaign and join hands with Christians like Mrs G in equipping them to be disciples of Jesus Christ.

RELEASE INTERNATIONAL  
**voice** 50  
of Persecuted Christians | 1968-2018  
YEARS

# Thank you for giving us the tools we need!

**‘Give us the tools we need’ is another of our 50th Anniversary campaign pleas. You may not realise it but you are providing the tools your persecuted sisters in Egypt and Pakistan need through your prayers and support of the Strength to Stand (S2S) groups there.**

On a recent visit to Egypt, Emóke, one of the Release Women team, heard first-hand of the challenges the Christian women face and the difference you are making to their lives.

‘A land of mystery, pharaohs and pyramids, Egypt has a long Christian heritage. But Christians living there today face many challenges, especially the young women and girls. Many of them “disappear” and those who do return have usually been converted to Islam and married to Muslim men. During our visit we heard of eight such cases which had occurred in recent weeks. But the women we met through the Strength to Stand groups you support show remarkable character and perseverance.

‘Together in their groups, they do indeed learn how to have the “strength to stand” in the face of opposition and oppression, by learning about who they are in Christ. As they learn more about Jesus and how to live as His disciples they start to reflect His love and radiance in their homes and communities. Relationships improve, children’s behaviour becomes less violent. They learn practical skills and start small businesses or learn to save together and make small loans to each other to help start new ventures.

‘One of the Egyptian sisters proudly showed me a crocheted tunic she had made and sold to another group member. I couldn’t decide whose smile was more radiant, the one who created the beautiful garment or the one who was proudly wearing it!

‘While we were with the facilitators of the groups we were able to tell them about other sisters around the world who also face persecution and hardships. The many pairs of lovely eyes which hide hardships, grief or fear, suddenly

filled with tears of compassion when they heard of others going through the same challenges or worse. Voices that have never prayed out loud in public before spontaneously burst into prayer and lifted up to our Father in heaven the wider suffering family of believers. You don’t need to understand the language to have your spirit resonate with the prayer of an Egyptian sister and together with that of the Holy Spirit of God Himself, as they trust in God alone.’

We hear similar stories from the S2S groups in Pakistan. Our partner there shares these testimonies to say thank you and to encourage you to keep giving them the tools they need. Many of the S2S groups have lovely names such as ‘Shining Stars’ and ‘Super’!

Rubina attends the ‘Shining Stars’ group and was in a difficult relationship with her husband as they fought daily. The children did not go to school and Rubina felt broken and saddened by her situation. The other members of the group encouraged Rubina and gave her new hope. She started to read the Bible and she learnt about the importance of respecting her husband. The group also talked to her husband and helped him to understand the importance of his wife in their relationship. Now the children go to school and Rubina and her husband



*A typical S2S group in Pakistan*



*Sisters in Christ*

no longer have daily fights. Rubina gives thanks for the changes in her life.

Sawera, like the women in Egypt, has learnt how to pray out loud. Before she was almost too shy to attend the S2S group meetings, but now she has developed the confidence and courage in God not just to pray publicly but to speak out in the group meetings too.

Dhania has been able to improve her economic situation by using a loan from her S2S group to start a small shop which earns a small income to supplement her husband’s meagre wages as a labourer. She too is learning about God and about her identity in Christ. She has renewed confidence in herself and how she can use her gifts and abilities. She is growing as a leader within the group.

Another who is learning about her identity in Christ is Sajida. She used to consider herself useless but now she says: ‘I know that God created me in His own image. I am precious to Him and He loves me so much.’

What encouraging testimonies to inspire each of us in our own daily walk with Jesus! Use the prayer points on the back page to pray for these sisters and many others like them. Why not consider holding an Esther Experience or Sabina Supper to help you to continue giving them the tools they need? See details on the next page.

# Will you host a 'Sabina Supper' to support your suffering sisters?

Many of you have organised, or attended, an 'Esther Experience' event over the past few years and we are hugely grateful for this: they have raised well over £6,000 to date – thank you! It is still possible to host an Esther Experience and we'd encourage you to do so.

Some of you though are now ready to do something new. We'd love to invite you to host a 'Sabina Supper' to raise funds for the Strength to Stand groups in Egypt

and Pakistan, featured on page 2.

It's simple to take part: just put on a supper or tea party in your home or church (or a picnic outdoors in the sun) and invite members of your church, your friends and your family. You could either charge for tickets to your supper or ask for donations. During the meal, take the opportunity to share Sabina Wurmbrand's powerful story (she and her husband Richard inspired the founding of Release in 1968).



Thank you to May Prescott and Sandiway Gospel Church who held a Sabina Supper film night with pizza, garlic bread and salad, ice-creams in the film interval, and tea and cakes afterwards! What a great evening and just 14 of them raised £100 – thank you.

You can download a Sabina Supper leaflet and the Esther Experience pack from [www.releaseinternational.org](http://www.releaseinternational.org) or call 01689 823491.



## How to join hands with your North Korean sisters



**'Join hands with members of the underground church... they must have the funds to carry out their fruitful secret ministry.'**

We read on page 1 of how Mrs G, a North Korean defector, is part of a discipleship programme in Seoul, run by Release's partners there. The programme teaches defectors the basics of the Christian faith. This not only strengthens them as individual believers, as we saw with Mrs G, but it also enables some of them to become involved in evangelism and to share the Gospel with other North Koreans. You are 'joining hands' with them by supporting the discipleship programme and by upholding them in prayer.

## 'Christians can help by protesting publicly.'



**You can protest publicly by signing Release's petition to Chinese President Xi Jinping on behalf of Christians in China.**

The petition urges the president 'to rethink and repeal its new religious ordinance' introduced in February 2018 which is part of 'the growing and sustained campaign of repression being waged by government officials against the Christian church'. This ordinance 'targets citizens who want nothing more than to live out their faith in peace, and lawyers who desire only to uphold the rule of law.'

The petition form can be downloaded from our website.

Pray especially for the wives of Christian pastors imprisoned in China, such as Wang Hongwu whose husband Pastor Yang Hua has recently been released, having been imprisoned since 2016. You can read his prisoner profile on our website at [www.releaseinternational.org/prisoners](http://www.releaseinternational.org/prisoners).

## SO LONG, FAREWELL, AUF WIEDERSEHEN, ADIEU...

In this edition we say farewell to Release Women Programme Manager Emma as she leaves Release to expand her ministry and study in the area of women and persecution. Emma has been instrumental in developing the S2S groups you have just read about, as well as contributing teaching to the discipleship programme run by VOM Korea. We will miss her enormously, not just for her skills and abilities but for the great joy she brings to the team! Please pray for Emma as she embarks on this new chapter of life, as she continues to pray for you:

*'As I step out into a wider sphere I pray you will continue to embrace our sisters in all the ways God gives to us. Share in their suffering. Rejoice when they rejoice. Mourn their losses. Remember them as though you were walking in their shoes. I look forward to the day we stand shoulder to shoulder in glory with people from all the nations we have prayed with and loved on earth!'*

**Farewell Emma!**

# Editorial

Dear sisters in Christ

I cannot believe that six months of the year has already passed. Summer is upon us and as I look out of the window I can see nature at its best, flowers and trees in full bloom and the fields ripe for harvest. The birds feeding their young, the lambs playfully leaping around with each other, aroma of BBQs floating through the open window, all seems well with our world.

Sadly, as we read through the latest issue of *Embrace* and take note of the media we realise that much is wrong within our world. Many women like Mrs G, as well as the young women and girls written about in this issue, would not be able to lead any kind of normal life if it wasn't for your help. These faithful women rely on God for their sustenance and believe He will meet all their needs, whatever they may be.

However, the Lord needs us to do our part and I know from experience that many of you already help in all kinds of ways. During this 50th Anniversary campaign we are looking at the eight pleas of Richard Wurmbrand. May I suggest that we all take a long prayerful look at those pleas and ask the Lord to reveal to us what He would have us do for our sisters. I feel certain we can all work together with the Lord's help to help make the lives of our sisters that much better. Whatever we decide to do, let's do it for His glory remembering what He's done for us and the abundance He's given us.

Blessings

Wendy

## Prayer Points



***'But thanks be to God, He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.'***

(1Cor 15:57)

### Please pray for Mrs G:

- As she finishes her discipleship programme; that her new-found knowledge will help her to encourage others to come to know the Lord.
- That the Lord will give her strength and sustain her; that she will know and experience His presence at all times.
- That God will meet all her needs both great and small as well as keeping her in good health.

### Please pray for the women in the S2S groups in Egypt and Pakistan:

- That the Lord will sustain and encourage Sawera and other women like her as they strive to be overcomers.
- That the Lord will be with Rubina, her husband and her children every step of the way.
- That the Lord will help and guide those who are now working in their own small businesses, that they may learn new skills quickly and become efficient.

### Please pray that Christians in the UK and Ireland will not abandon their brothers and sisters:

- That many will take the opportunity to give our sisters the tools they need in Egypt and Pakistan by hosting Sabina Suppers or Esther Experience events.
- That many will 'join hands' with their North Korean sisters by praying for the discipleship programme.
- That many will protest publicly by signing the petition to support Christians in China.

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**NOT  
ABANDONED!**

**Giving thanks  
for 50 years**

**Join Release International for a Service of Thanksgiving as we mark 50 years of ministry with persecuted Christians and prepare for all that God has planned for the future.**

**Thursday 4 October 2018**

Emmanuel Centre, 9-23 Marsham Street, LONDON, SW1P 3DW

Doors open at 7.00pm for refreshments, 7.30pm start

Guest speaker: George Verwer, founder of Operation Mobilisation

Entry by advance FREE ticket only: book online via Eventbrite or call 01689 823491

## Please give

Please make a gift if you can. It's the generosity of people like you that enables us to help people like those you've read about in this edition of *Embrace*. You can give by using the response card inside this letter or by contacting our Supporter Relations Team (contact details below).

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Release Women is part of Release International

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