

VOICE OF THE MARTYRS AUSTRALIA PRESENTS

SHARPER THAN A DOUBLE- EDGED SWORD:

TESTIMONIES OF GOD'S WORD



Voice ^{of} the Martyrs

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EDGED SWORD: TESTIMONIES
OF GOD'S WORD

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VOICE OF THE MARTYRS

“I WOULD NOT BELIEVE IN A BIBLE IF IT WOULD NOT BE WORTH IT TO SMUGGLE IT IN EVERYWHERE EVEN AT THE GREATEST RISK AND IF IT WOULD NOT BE WORTH IT TO SIT TEN DAYS AND NIGHTS ALONE IN THE COLD IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO READ ITS WONDERFUL PAGES.”

- RICHARD WURMBRAND, FOUNDER OF VOICE OF THE MARTYRS

of Merari; Mahi, Libni his son,
za his son,
on, Haggiah his son, Amasai his
re they whom David set over the
he house of the Levites, after that
stered before the dwelling place
the congregation with singing
uilt the house of the Lord, so
hey waited on their offices ac-
f.
hey that waited with their in-
he Kohathites: Beman, a singer,
n of Shemuel,
nah, the son of Jeduthun, the
Toab,
the son of Elkannah, the son of
nassi,
nah, the son of Joel, the son of
phaniah,
h, the son of Asub, the son of
orah,
the son of Kishah, the son of
r Asaph, who stood in his
the son of Berechiah, the son

SHARPER THAN A DOUBLE-
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CHAPTER ONE

ON THE ROAD
WITH ROBBERS

VOICE OF THE MARTYRS



“GIVE US MORE!” THE ROBBERS DEMANDED.

IT WAS 9PM, AND FAISAL’S BIBLE DISTRIBUTION TEAM WAS EAGER TO BE HOME.

AFTER DELIVERING BIBLES TO ELEVEN PAKISTANI VILLAGES IN THREE DAYS, THEY HAD TAKEN A SHORTCUT TO ARRIVE HOME FASTER. HOWEVER, AS THE TEAM SLOWED THEIR OLD VAN TO NAVIGATE A BUMPY STRETCH OF ROAD, THEY FOUND THEMSELVES SURROUNDED BY A BAND OF ROBBERS NOTORIOUS IN THAT PART OF PAKISTAN.

CHAPTER ONE

Rajehs, one of the workers riding in the van, tried to reason with the six armed men as one of them pointed a gun at the driver and another held a gun against a passenger's leg.

“We've given you everything,” Rajehs told them. “Why do you want to kill us?” But even as they were rolling down their windows to hand over their valuables, he knew that the robbers would likely force them out of the van and shoot them one by one.

“We have Bibles,” offered 13-year-old Amber, the team's youngest member. “Please take a Bible.” “We don't need it!” a robber screamed, throwing the Bible down.

Two kilometres ahead of them on the road, Pastor Faisal and the rest of the team waited nervously in the first van. They could not see what was happening behind them, but they knew something was wrong.

Almost 20 tense minutes later, the team in the van came barrelling toward Pastor Faisal's group with its lights off. Everyone was shaken. The robbers had taken their money and phones, and Rajehs had a bruise on his neck where he had been hit with the butt of a rifle.

CHAPTER ONE

Before letting them go, the robbers had told the team, “Don’t look back. Do not stop. Don’t turn your lights on. Otherwise, we will shoot you from behind.”

Robberies like the one Faisal’s team experienced are just one of the many dangers Bible distributors encounter in hostile parts of the world.

Faisal’s team spends several weeks each year delivering free Bibles to believers across Pakistan who otherwise would not have access to one.

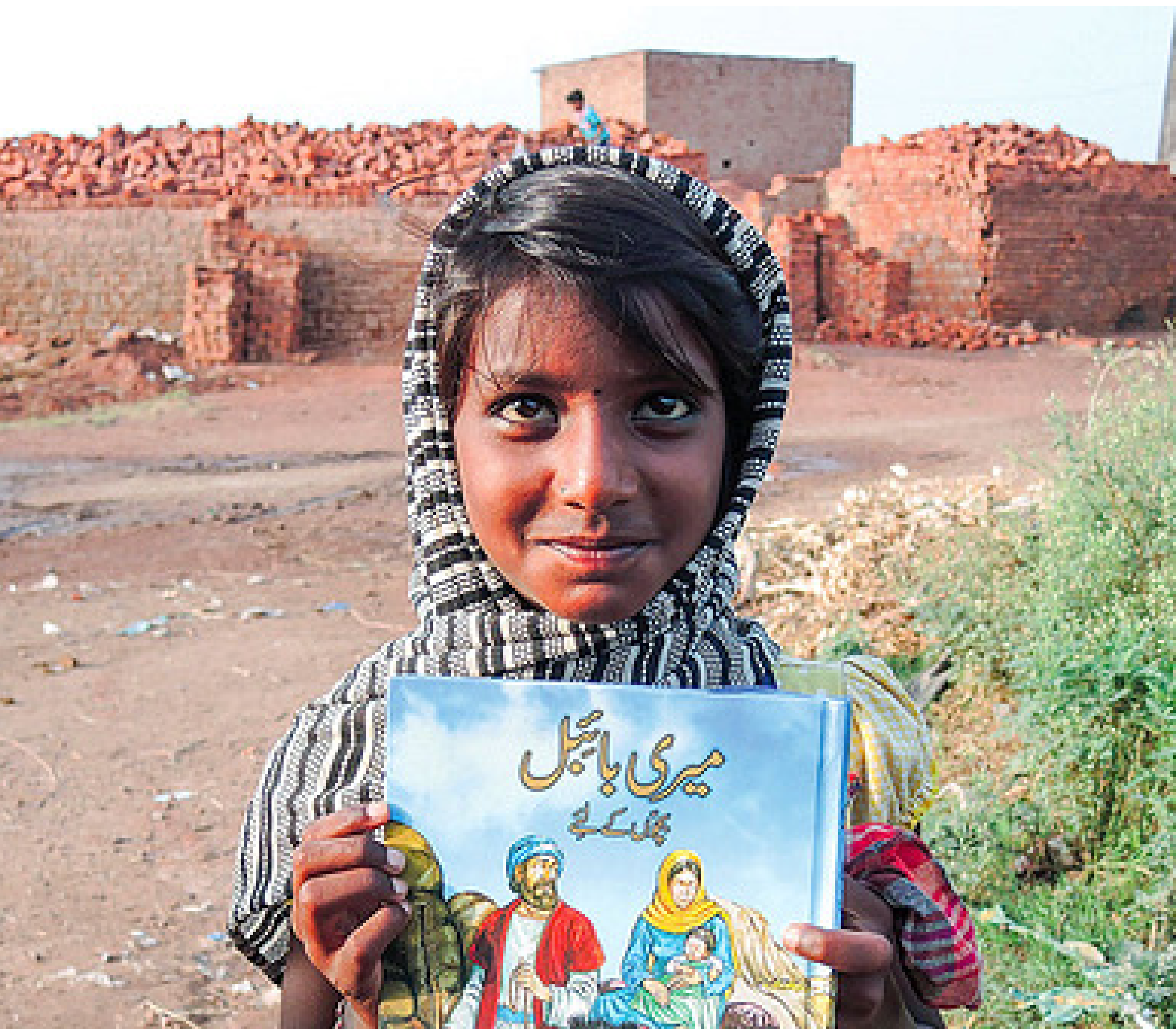
These workers seek out Christians who do not have a Bible, relying on local contacts to provide the names of those who need one. Most of those receiving Bibles are new to the faith.

Despite the dangerous, tiring journeys, Faisal and his team are committed to supplying Bibles to those who need them. “We will show up,” he told VOM workers. “We will do our commitment.”

With each trip, the team travels farther afield. Just before being robbed by the bandits, they had distributed more than 700 Bibles to believers among the Sikh people in the ancient Hindu city of Nankana Sahib.

CHAPTER ONE

Many of these believers are extremely thankful to finally have their own Bible. "Thank you," the believers in Nankana Sahib told the team. "You are water for a thirsty soul."

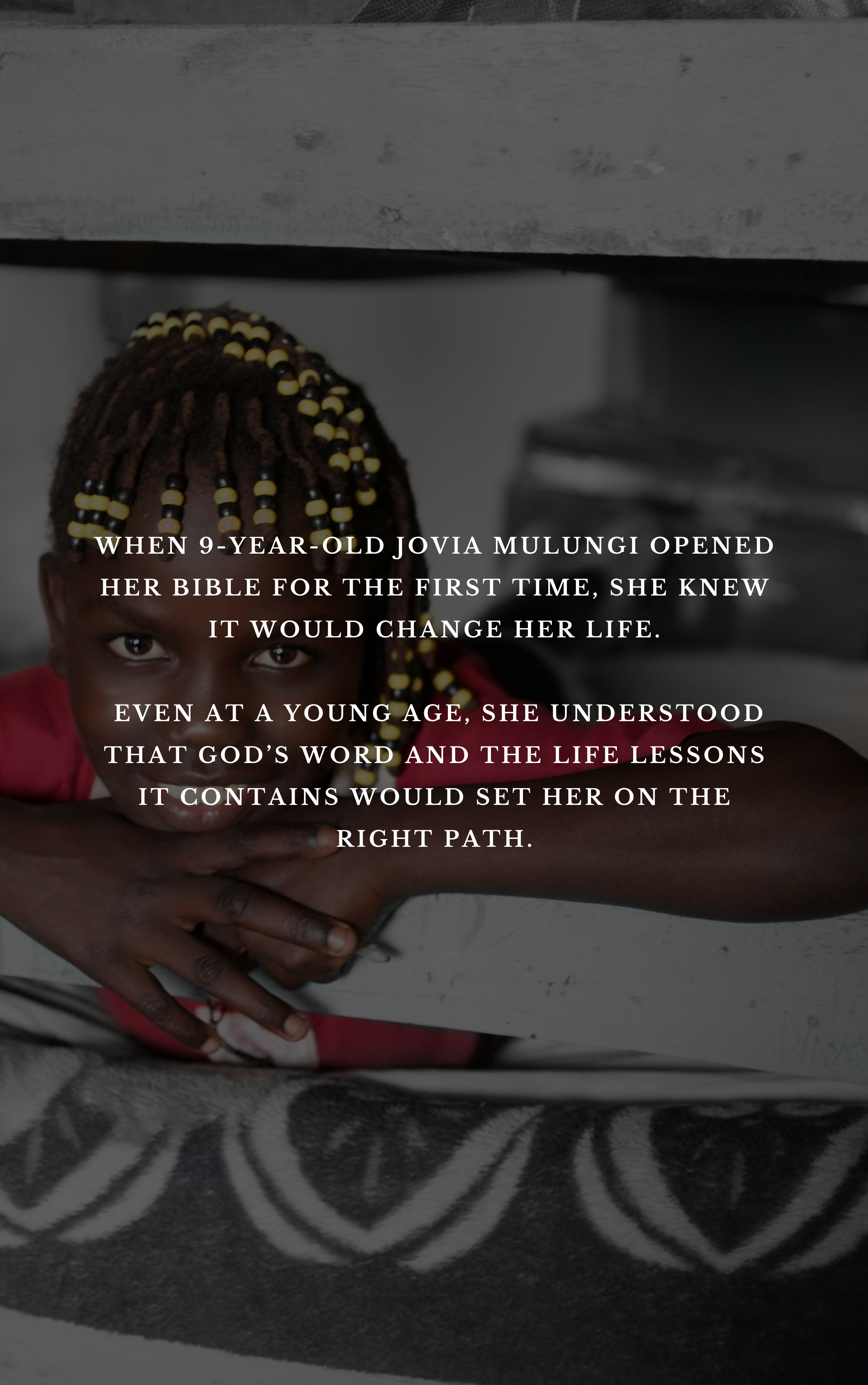


SHARPER THAN A DOUBLE-
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CHAPTER TWO

SAVING A
GENERATION IN
UGANDA

VOICE OF THE MARTYRS

A young girl with dark skin and braided hair adorned with yellow and black beads. She is resting her chin on her hands, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The image is overlaid with white text.

WHEN 9-YEAR-OLD JOVIA MULUNGI OPENED
HER BIBLE FOR THE FIRST TIME, SHE KNEW
IT WOULD CHANGE HER LIFE.

EVEN AT A YOUNG AGE, SHE UNDERSTOOD
THAT GOD'S WORD AND THE LIFE LESSONS
IT CONTAINS WOULD SET HER ON THE
RIGHT PATH.

CHAPTER TWO

“I want to learn about making choices because it’s good,” she said. “I do not want to lie. I do not want to beat my friends. I want to be obedient to my mother and father. Thank you for giving me this book to read about the choices people made. I want to become like Jesus. Pray for me also.”

VOM distributes children’s Bibles in rural parts of Uganda, where Islam is spreading rapidly and Bibles are rare even among adults. Parents there are thrilled when their children receive their own Bibles.

“I have read this book as if reading a novel, cover to cover, to find out if there is any fault in it before I can allow my children to use it,” said Bridget Muwanga, the parent of another child who received a Bible.

“I realised that I need it first before I can pass it on. It challenges me on the choices I have made. We are now going through it as a family, challenging one another. My husband just loves it.”

As the Bibles were distributed to a group of Christian children, some nearby Muslim children asked if they could have a copy, too. Members of the distribution team happily gave each a copy of their own.

CHAPTER TWO

“We thank God for this ministry and pray that we can touch so many children and families with the love of God through this material,” a member of the distribution team said. “Making the right choices is always a challenge, but when we nurture children through this material we are surely saving a whole generation.”



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CHAPTER THREE

THE FOUR-LEGGED
SMUGGLER

VOICE OF THE MARTYRS

AFTER SEVERAL BOXES PACKED WITH 200 BIBLES WERE STRAPPED TO ITS BACK, THE DONKEY AND ITS HANDLER HEADED FOR THE SYRIAN BORDER, HOPING TO MAKE IT THROUGH SECURITY AND INTO THE WAR-TORN COUNTRY.



CHAPTER THREE

They had previously used the same route to smuggle 50 Bibles to a group of Syrian believers, but more Bibles were needed thanks to the growing number of Muslims turning to Jesus.

When they arrived at the border checkpoint with their cargo of 200 Bibles, they were turned away by armed guards.

But instead of conceding defeat, the donkey's handler took a calculated risk: he led the donkey along the border until they were out of view of the guards and then quietly sent the donkey across the border by itself.

The donkey already knew the rugged mile-long path into Syria and had been rewarded with a treat on its last trip, so the handler was confident that it could make the trip without his help. And since donkeys transport all kinds of goods across the border, including contraband like drugs and weapons, the pack animal wouldn't look suspicious.

Shortly after the donkey crossed the border alone, the handler received a text message from his contacts in Syria - shipment received.

"It's the most unique Bible smuggling story I've heard," a VOM worker said. But as unusual as the story is, the truly amazing aspect is the growing demand for Bibles coming from former Muslims in Syria.

CHAPTER THREE

“To know the Bibles are going in is an indicator that there is growth among these believers,” another VOM worker said. “That is exciting.”



SHARPER THAN A DOUBLE-
EDGED SWORD: TESTIMONIES
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CHAPTER FOUR

WHAT'S A BIBLE
WORTH?

VOICE OF THE MARTYRS

“WILL YOU CONSIDER PRINTING
BIBLES IN IRAN?”



CHAPTER FOUR

Ahmed

Ahmed considered the question carefully. It had only been two years since he had turned his back on the emptiness of Islam and placed his faith in Jesus Christ. The Islamic government in Iran had made many promises but delivered only hopelessness and hate.

Within a year of coming to know Christ, Ahmed had begun sharing the Gospel and planting churches, an activity that he knew could land him in prison. Although printing Bibles carried an even greater risk, Ahmed agreed to do it.

After receiving the funds necessary to purchase the printing equipment, he began his first assignment of printing 100 New Testaments each week.

Ahmed distributed the Bibles wherever they were requested throughout his country, knowing that God's Word was the light Iranians so desperately needed.

Ahmed was arrested two years into his printing efforts, leaving the 14 churches he had planted without a shepherd.

CHAPTER FOUR

Palani

He had only been a Christian a few days before beginning the Bible distributions that led to his arrest. Now, shackled and chained, Palani sat in a prison cell where the heat sometimes exceeded 35 degrees. But for Palani, going to prison was worth it.

Being introduced to Jesus had transformed his life. Palani had once wandered the streets of his village, caring for little more than his next drink. But when his brother, a pastor in Laos, invited him for a visit and shared the Gospel with him, his life changed forever.

After placing his faith in Christ, Palani stopped drinking and began telling others what Jesus had done for him. He also started praying for the sick in Jesus' name. "I was astonished to see many people healed after I prayed for them," he said.

When Palani returned to his village, he met with a local pastor and asked him how he could serve in the church.

"Can you get Bibles from your brother?" the pastor asked. Palani did get the Bibles and immediately began giving them to fellow villagers. "This [Bible distribution and praying for the sick] was all new to me," he said, "so I was excited."

CHAPTER FOUR

A village leader, unhappy about Palani's new Christian faith and work, confronted him and told him he could no longer talk about God or distribute Bibles. "You're a fraud and a drunkard," he scolded, adding that Palani shouldn't be persuading people to follow "a foreign religion."

Palani didn't stop talking about the Good News, however, and three days later the police arrested him at his home.

In prison, police beat him and demanded to know where he got the Bibles. During the third interrogation, they offered to release him if he would deny his faith and tell them where all the Bibles were. He refused and was beaten more severely.

Palani saw three people die from starvation and poor medical care in the overcrowded prison. "Our legs would cross each other while sleeping at night," he said.

After two months in prison, he was released. Now Palani's prayer is to get more Bible training and to be used by God to advance His kingdom - even though he knows it could lead to another arrest.

CHAPTER FOUR

Swami

The evangelist stood on a crowded city street in India with his load of New Testaments. The smell of exhaust fumes, raw sewage and spices filled the air. One by one, Swami handed out the small New Testaments, praying that those who received them would come to know the Saviour revealed on their pages.

Swami's efforts came to an abrupt halt, however, when members of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) approached and began to question him. The RSS is a volunteer Hindu nationalist organisation associated with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the political party of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Soon the questioning turned into a physical attack, as the RSS members hit Swami repeatedly on the head and back. They then dragged him to the police station, where they filed a report against him. He was held for questioning until that evening when police allowed him to return home.

After arriving at his home, Swami fell unconscious and was rushed to the hospital, where he went into a coma. A few days later, he suffered a stroke that affected one side of his body.

CHAPTER FOUR

Whatever It Takes

For Ahmed, Palani and Swami, the Bible is worth prison and beatings. While some countries still ban the Bible, requiring us to smuggle God's Word in a variety of ways and in a variety of formats, other countries, such as India, Nigeria and China, allow in-country printing. Still, the in-country printing does not come close to meeting the growing need.

As we learn of our persecuted brothers and sisters like Ahmed, Palani and Swami, we are challenged to ask ourselves, "What's a Bible worth to me?"



SHARPER THAN A DOUBLE-
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CHAPTER FIVE

THE 'NEW' BIBLE
SMUGGLERS

VOICE OF THE MARTYRS



Wi-Fi
HOTSPOT

ARMITA CLUTCHED HER BAG AS SHE MADE
HER WAY TO A TABLE IN THE SMALL CAFÉ.

AFTER ORDERING TEA, SHE CAREFULLY
PLACED THE BAG ON THE FLOOR BETWEEN
HER FEET AND GLANCED AROUND THE
CROWDED ROOM.

CHAPTER FIVE

She smiled, knowing that what she had placed on the floor was about to change lives, but she also knew that members of her country's secret police could be among the crowd and arrest her. "Dear Jesus," she prayed silently, "please use this to draw people to You."

One by one, the café customers searched their phones for a Wi-Fi connection. When they found one that didn't require a password, they clicked on it. But instead of a page stating the Wi-Fi's terms and conditions, an offer for a free digital download of the New Testament, the Injil (Gospel in Arabic), appeared on their screens.

After Armita finished her tea and paid her bill, she picked up her bag and went home. She planned to do the same thing the next day in a local park.

Voice of the Martyrs continues to find creative ways of getting God's Word into restricted nations and hostile areas. We use everything from underground printing presses to modern technology, such as Wi-Fi hotspots like Armita uses and SD cards that can be shared among house-church members.

Standard printing presses are also sometimes used to print Bibles during the presses' off-hours. VOM smuggles Bibles into countries in large quantities; we smuggled 400,000 Bibles into one Asian country over a 12-year period.

CHAPTER FIVE

In highly restricted nations, faithful believers find creative ways to share the Gospel on a regular basis. Join us in praying for the Armitas, printers and other workers - the 'new' smugglers - who risk imprisonment and even death to carry out this essential Gospel work.



SHARPER THAN A DOUBLE-
EDGED SWORD: TESTIMONIES
OF GOD'S WORD

CHAPTER SIX

THE MIRACULOUS
GIFT OF GOD'S
WORD

VOICE OF THE MARTYRS

EVERY SUNDAY MORNING, THE PASTOR
OF A SMALL CHURCH IN A REMOTE PART
OF CUBA TOOK A PIECE OF CHALK AND
PURPOSEFULLY WROTE A PASSAGE OF
SCRIPTURE ON A BLACKBOARD.



CHAPTER SIX

Church members then carefully wrote the verses in their tattered notebooks, slowly adding to the only copy of Scripture they owned. They were committed to learning God's Word, even without an actual Bible.

Then, one Sunday morning, a man arrived at the church carrying two boxes packed with 100 Bibles – more than enough to ensure that each member received a copy.

“The people were happy to know that God is a God of surprises and endless blessings,” said the Christian worker who delivered the Bibles.

With tears in his eyes, the pastor thanked the man for the Bibles and praised God for the miracle that brought them to his small, secluded church.

“They arrived to make the heart of our church happy,” the pastor said. “It covers the greatest need of our church.”

Bibles have historically been hard to obtain in Cuba. Even if a believer found one on the black market, it could cost most of a month's wages.

In Cuba, owning a Bible provides not only immediate access to God's Word but also a new sense of freedom. This offer of freedom in Christ, along with an increase in evangelism and decrease in government restrictions on Bibles, has led to a growing demand for copies of God's Word.

CHAPTER SIX

“Communism controls everything you learn and read,” the Christian worker explained. “Having their own Bible means it’s ‘me and God’, it’s ‘me and His Word’. They get to determine how much they learn and how close they get to God. Not the government.”

After distributing the first 100 Bibles, the worker delivered Bibles to two more churches that were isolated by distance and rough terrain yet equally committed to knowing God’s Word. “These are locations the various denominations don’t get to,” a VOM worker said. “Bibles have never made it to these locations.”



SHARPER THAN A DOUBLE-
EDGED SWORD: TESTIMONIES
OF GOD'S WORD

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE COST OF
OWNING A BIBLE
IN INDIA

VOICE OF THE MARTYRS

An open Bible is shown from a top-down perspective, with the pages slightly curved. The text is overlaid in white, bold, uppercase letters. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green and white, suggesting a natural setting.

WHEN POONAM QUIETLY LEFT HINDUISM IN
2012, THE BIBLE SHE OBTAINED INSTANTLY
BECAME HER MOST PRIZED POSSESSION.

THE YOUNG INDIAN WIFE AND MOTHER OF
THREE SECRETLY READ GOD'S WORD IN HER
HOME EACH DAY, GROWING IN HER
UNDERSTANDING OF GOD'S LOVE FOR HER.

BUT SHE FEARED THAT HER HUSBAND
WOULD FIND OUT ABOUT HER NEW FAITH,
AND HE SOON DID.

CHAPTER SEVEN

After overhearing her praying a Christian prayer one day, he found her Bible and angrily tore it to pieces.

“From today on you stop reading the Bible, and as long as you live in this house you better not pray!” he scolded.

Poonam’s husband then beat her, eventually forcing her from the house and refusing to let her see their young sons and daughter. Her Christian faith cost her everything.

In India, where a rise in persecution of Christians has paralleled the rise in Hindu nationalism, Bibles are a precious resource that helps new believers continue to grow in faith amid persecution.

After losing her Bible and her family, Poonam stayed with relatives and prayed for the return of everything she had lost. A pastor and another believer who lived near her relatives visited Poonam regularly to pray with her. To her great joy, one day they gave her a new Bible provided by VOM. Poonam burst into tears as she received the Bible.

Over time, God answered Poonam’s prayers, restoring her marriage and family. Although her husband has not placed his faith in Christ, his heart has softened toward Poonam and toward the Christian faith. He has even attended church a few times to see how Christians worship.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Poonam reads and studies God's Word using her new Bible, but she can't give up the tattered and torn Bible that her husband had tried to destroy. It is, after all, how she first learned about Jesus.

She recently told a VOM worker that Isaiah 41:10 has special meaning for her: "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand."

"My Bible is everything to me," Poonam said. "It is the living word of God. Without it, I can't live."

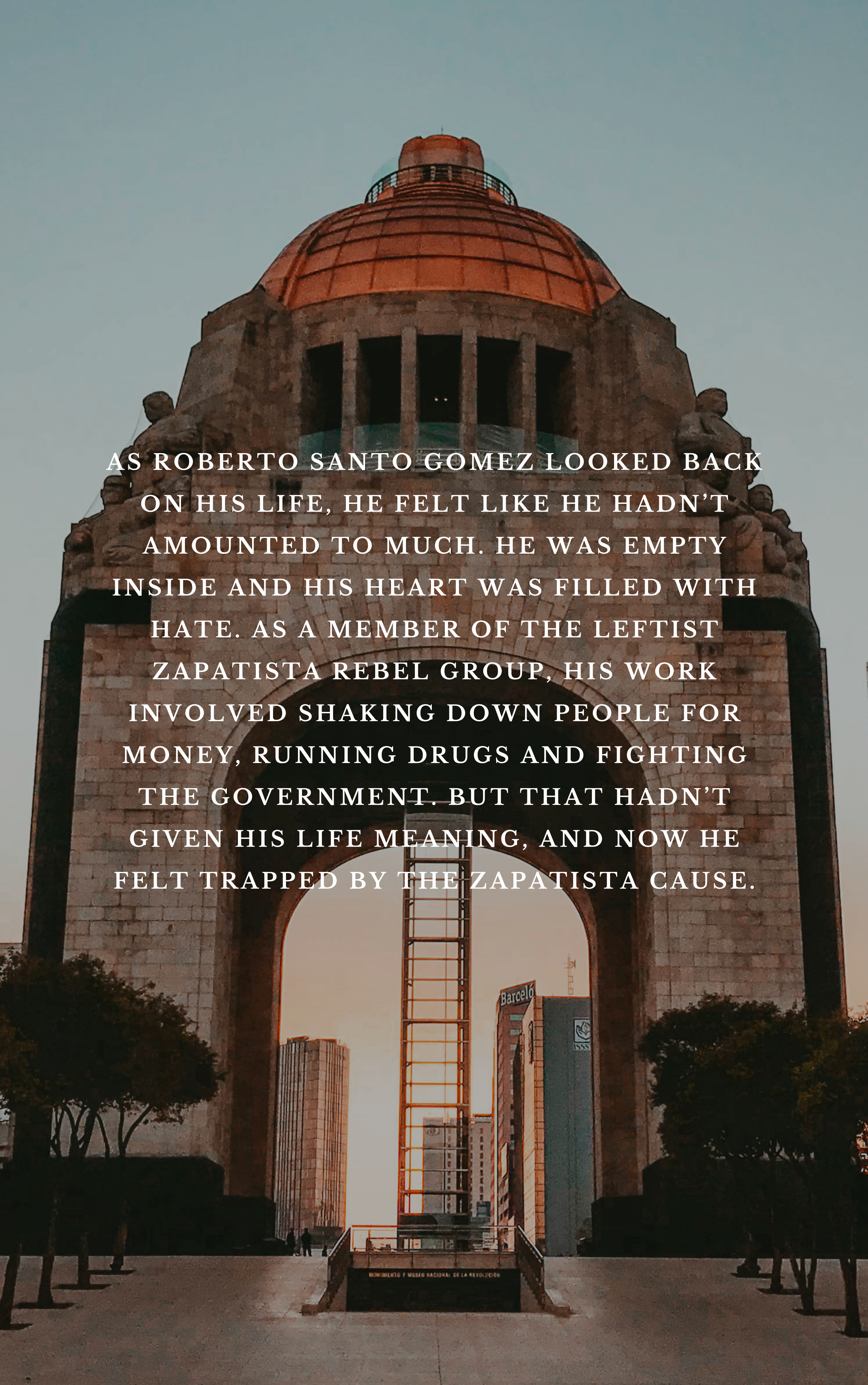


SHARPER THAN A DOUBLE-
EDGED SWORD: TESTIMONIES
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CHAPTER EIGHT

**A NEW BIBLE
FOR A NEW MAN**

VOICE OF THE MARTYRS

A photograph of the Monumento a la Revolución in Mexico City, featuring a large stone archway with a copper dome on top. The monument is set against a clear sky, and modern buildings are visible through the archway. The text is overlaid in white, all-caps font.

AS ROBERTO SANTO GOMEZ LOOKED BACK ON HIS LIFE, HE FELT LIKE HE HADN'T AMOUNTED TO MUCH. HE WAS EMPTY INSIDE AND HIS HEART WAS FILLED WITH HATE. AS A MEMBER OF THE LEFTIST ZAPATISTA REBEL GROUP, HIS WORK INVOLVED SHAKING DOWN PEOPLE FOR MONEY, RUNNING DRUGS AND FIGHTING THE GOVERNMENT. BUT THAT HADN'T GIVEN HIS LIFE MEANING, AND NOW HE FELT TRAPPED BY THE ZAPATISTA CAUSE.

CHAPTER EIGHT

After considering his options, Roberto decided he would go north to the United States and try to make some money. As many others had before him, Roberto hopped the train that runs from Chiapas in southern Mexico to the US border.

The trip didn't go as planned, however. Roberto fell from the train, severing his left arm and leaving him with multiple fractures. As he lay on the ground in agonising pain, he suddenly recalled the words of a street preacher he'd once heard in a park and his thoughts turned to God.

“God, if you exist, give me another opportunity,” he prayed. “Give me life, and I'll get up and I'll look for you and I'll speak about you.”

God answered Roberto's prayers. He survived the accident, returned to his home and, true to his word, became an itinerant preacher. Roberto is still poor by earthly standards, but he lives by faith and survives on the generosity of those he meets. “When I hear him preach, it touches my heart because he preaches with such passion,” a local VOM worker said.

The street preacher from Roberto's past had such an effect on him that he decided to do the same kind of work. He shares God's love in parks and on street corners with anyone who will listen. Though he is often rejected or ignored, he knows from personal experience that God's Word is planting seeds.

CHAPTER EIGHT

This year, VOM provided Roberto with thousands of Bibles to distribute to new believers. Christians in the area suffer under the same Zapatista rebel group of which he was once a member. The Christians are isolated, ostracised by their communities, and many have been subjected to a life of severe poverty.

After faithfully distributing the Bibles, Roberto met with a VOM worker to share his report. As he pulled the list of Bible recipients out of his Bible, the VOM worker noticed how tattered Roberto's own Bible was. "Roberto!" she exclaimed. "Why didn't you take one of the new Bibles for yourself?"

"Oh, sister," he replied, "even though my Bible is old, I have one. Those who I gave Bibles to had none."

"Well, God has a blessing for you, Roberto," the VOM worker said as she handed him a new study Bible.




SHARPER THAN A DOUBLE-
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CHAPTER NINE

SMUGGLING
BIBLES, ONE AT
A TIME

VOICE OF THE MARTYRS

A red flag with five yellow stars is flying on a black pole against a clear blue sky. The flag is the national flag of the People's Republic of China. The text is overlaid on the flag and sky.

AT A RECENT GATHERING OUTSIDE THE
COUNTRY, HUNDREDS OF HOUSE CHURCH
LEADERS FROM THROUGHOUT CHINA
RECEIVED TRAINING AND ENCOURAGEMENT
TO HELP THEM MINISTER MORE
EFFECTIVELY. AND BEFORE LEAVING THE
CONFERENCE, THEY WERE GIVEN
SOMETHING ILLEGAL TO TAKE HOME WITH
THEM.

THE PASTORS HAD REQUESTED TOOLS TO
HELP THEM GO DEEPER IN GOD'S WORD, SO
VOICE OF THE MARTYRS PROVIDED EACH OF
THEM WITH A HIGH-QUALITY STUDY BIBLE.
THEY WERE THRILLED WITH THEIR GIFT,
EVEN THOUGH THEY KNEW IT COULD CAUSE
THEM TROUBLE.

CHAPTER NINE

“People who joined the meeting are from all over the country,” said Pastor Ho.

“They are eager to have these Bibles. Because of [where they live] and the policy of the country, they cannot obtain this high-quality Bible. When they came to our meeting, we have invited some popular pastors from all over the world to teach them for four days. At this time, you offered these Bibles, and it has enriched the knowledge of what they were studying.”

Pastor Ho knows better than most the dangers of carrying such a Bible in some parts of the country. His church is located in Zhejiang Province, where the government has removed crosses from as many as 1,700 church buildings.

“The government does not know about these Bibles, and we will not let them know this,” he said. “We have to be very low profile because of the actions they have taken, like removing crosses. The brothers and sisters want the training of the Bible and we offer them an opportunity to study. Most of them are preachers. Some of them are living in the north, and they need to take a train for two or three days to join the meeting. They are not rich, like most preachers in China are not rich. We offer the Bibles to them and they are very thankful.”

CHAPTER NINE

While China's government-sponsored Bible printer, Amity Printing Company, boasts of printing Bibles in more than 90 languages and exporting them to more than 70 nations, the printer doesn't keep up with the demand for Bibles in China.

In addition, the Bibles it produces do not contain commentaries, footnotes or other study tools to help readers better understand the Scriptures. Such Bibles are outlawed.

China's communist government seeks to control not only Bible printing but also Bible distribution.

Anyone who prints or distributes Bibles without government permission could be sentenced to years in prison.

Pastor Ho supports the continued smuggling of Bibles into China, even though it is illegal, and said Chinese Christians are willing to pay the price for owning them.

CHAPTER NINE

“The greatest worth is the Bible to help the infrastructure of the Gospel in China a lot,” he said. “It is very important. The influence will spread more and more in the future. When we share the message with these preachers, they will spread out the seed, and more people will believe in Jesus because of this. More souls [will] be saved.”

*Names have been changed for security.



**BIBLES ON THE
FRONTLINES,
DIFFICULT.
DANGEROUS.
ILLEGAL.**

TAKE TIME RIGHT NOW TO PRAY FOR THE SAFE DISTRIBUTION OF BIBLES IN THE WORLD'S MOST DIFFICULT AND DANGEROUS MISSION FIELDS. BRAVE MEN AND WOMEN ARE RISKING ARREST, IMPRISONMENT, BEATINGS AND EVEN DEATH TO BRING GOD'S WORD TO THOSE WHO OTHERWISE MIGHT NEVER RECEIVE IT.

THANK YOU.

VOICE OF THE MARTYRS

THANK YOU FOR READING.

Voice of the Martyrs exists to help, love and encourage persecuted Christians by providing Bibles, ministry resources, medical aid and practical assistance.

Our ministry is inspired by Hebrews 13:3, “Remember the prisoners as if chained with them – those who are mistreated – since you yourselves are in the body also.”

We support Christians who are or have been persecuted for their faith and involvement in spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a hostile environment. We give their testimony a voice, informing and mobilising Christians in Australia to stand with their persecuted brothers and sisters in Christ.

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