



# Christian Freedom<sup>®</sup> International

2018

# ANNUAL REPORT

*"Remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering." Hebrews 13:3*

# FROM THE PRESIDENT

Religious freedom is a universal human right. But it is not a right that is widely respected. Christians especially get the brunt of intolerant ideologies and religions.

The Pew Research Center reports that Christians are the most persecuted religious group worldwide. Christians are abused by governments and extremists in more countries than any other religious group.

Christians are present in nearly all parts of the world. There are more of us. Yet rather than strength in numbers, there are more to persecute.

Despite being a majority religion, Christians are widely discriminated against. By governments. By totalitarian dictators. By Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, atheist, and other extremists.

The number of Christians at risk has risen. In 2017, one in every 12 Christians was living in a place or culture where Christianity is illegal, forbidden or punished. In 2018, this increased to 1 in every 9 Christians. (Open Doors World Watch Report 2018)

At the same time, we live in an age where we can add to our prayers a variety of tangible ways to help our brothers and sisters who are persecuted for the faith.

Jesus said, “all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Christian Freedom International exists to provide ways for Christians – both those who suffer for identifying with Jesus Christ and those who care – to know and love one another.







## **2018 – A YEAR TO HIT “REFRESH”**

**In 2018, Christian Freedom International branched into new areas, beefed up our existing programs, and broadened our relationships internationally and in Washington, DC. We trimmed our overhead and more funding is going straight to people and ministries.**

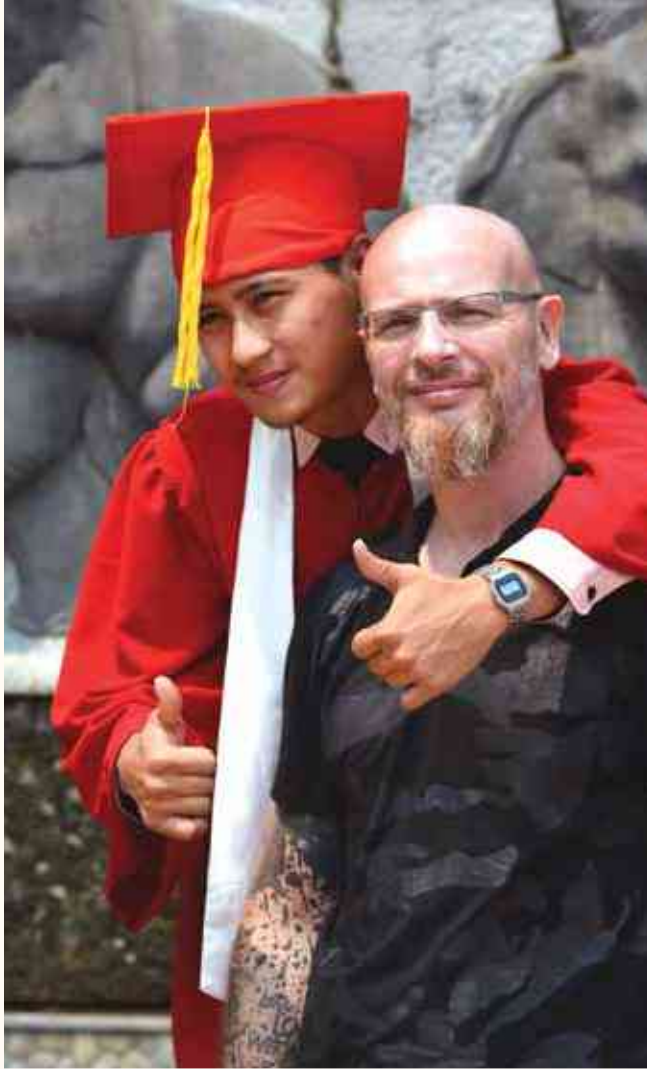
**In my first year as President of Christian Freedom International, I traveled to nearly all of Christian Freedom International’s overseas operations. We reinforced and expanded our current work, began new projects in risky areas, and partnered with effective ministries to leverage our assets and talents for a greater impact.**

**We worked one-on-one with persecuted Christians to help them rise above their circumstances. We initiated new approaches that take a long-view to reducing discrimination against Christians.**

**We launched a brand-new website and designed easy-to-read brochures.**

**We are honored that two highly talented and respected Christians joined our Board of Directors. Benjamin Bull brings to Christian Freedom International a life-long legal career of defending Christians from religious discrimination in the U.S. and internationally. Cathy Rozmiarek is a financial expert and missionary with her husband with Cadence Ministries.**

**Ann Buwalda, President of Jubilee Campaign-USA, an attorney known world-wide for her defense of religious freedom, joined our Board of Advisors.**



## OUR WORK: AID AND EQUIP

Our greatest assets are our network of co-workers and ministry leaders around the world. They are indispensable Christian servant-leaders dedicated to their persecuted brothers and sisters.

They build strong relationships and pivot quickly to solve serious challenges. Our supporters give our co-workers the means to do the ministry.

In addition to schools, food, Bibles, medicines, training, and much more, donations to Christian Freedom International covered items – essential to be present and effective in countries – such as security, visas, transportation, regulatory and legal fees.

## OUR WORK: ADVOCATE

More people are awakening to the widespread discrimination against religious people. That includes government officials at the highest levels.

In 2018, for the first time in history, the U.S. State Department held a “Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom”. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo invited the Foreign Ministries of more than 80 countries to highlight the global problem of religious persecution.

The Ministerial shone a spotlight on people imprisoned for their faith – like Pastor Andrew Brunson – and brought together the top advocates for religious freedom throughout the world.

This signaled that the U.S. now treats religious freedom as a top foreign policy priority. Other countries followed the United States’ lead and established efforts to defend religious freedom.

Christian Freedom International was pleased to be invited to this premier event with international leaders.

We regularly participate in a roundtable hosted by U.S. Ambassador for International Freedom Sam Brownback and connect with key people in the U.S. State Department to bring to their attention specific cases of persecution.



# CITIZEN ADVOCACY

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Our online Petitions in 2018 gave Christians a way to speak to governing officials on:

- **Nigeria** – Asking Nigeria’s president to end the injustice of a “pure genocide” against Christians.
- **Asia Bibi** – Asking the U.S. to give asylum to Asia Bibi, the Pakistani Christian mother sentenced to death then acquitted of false charges of blasphemy.
- **Scott Lloyd** – Supporting a U.S. official who was personally attacked for protecting teenage Christian refugees from exploitation and coerced abortions.





# PROGRAMS AND PARTNERSHIPS

## Bangladesh

Extremists pledging allegiance to terror groups like Al-Qaeda and Islamic State have murdered about 50 people, including religious minorities, in Bangladesh since 2013.

Converts to Christianity are particularly vulnerable. When Muslims convert to another religion it offends the sentiments of other Muslims. In 2018, two Islamist militants were arrested for conspiring to kill Christian converts.

These violent threats did not stop Christian Freedom International's partners, a network of converted Christians.

We held Bible trainings for pastors, house churches for converts, and Sunday School classes for village children. CFI's Center for the Blind and Disabled got a fresh start with new equipment and training for disabled Christians to make a living.

White canes, food and audio Bibles were given to over 150 blind people. More Christian children are being sponsored and supplied their basic needs. Motorcycles and bikes were given to pastors to minister in rural areas. Christian Freedom International celebrated Christmas with special programs and dinners in house churches for converted Christians.



- **Pastors Seminar:** Over 110 pastors, Sunday School teachers, and theology students from around Bangladesh attended Christian Freedom International's Bible training seminar. Many were Muslim converts.

CFI Board member Dr. Mike Forrester taught how to study the Bible, and a Biblical perspective on trials and tribulations. Ten years ago, Dr. Mike had baptized Habel, a Muslim convert. Habel returned for this seminar – on one leg. Fanatical Muslims had stabbed him for converting. Doctors could not save his leg. Habel now works in a tiny shop and tells the Gospel to all who come in.

- **White Cane Safety Day:** One hundred packs with rice, lentils, a white cane, dark glasses and an audio Bible on MP3 were prepared for 2018 White Cane Safety Day. Nearly 200 people showed up! Our co-workers improvised and redistributed the contents so that all could get a "Love for the Blind" gift.

"They are so excited and happy. They send their gratitude, thankfulness to Christian Freedom International." CFI Director in Bangladesh come in.





- **Bikes and Motorbikes for Pastors:**

“I work in five villages. I have to walk on foot to preach the Gospel. I have got old and it is very hard for me to walk on foot to work in five villages. This motorbike will help me to get more time to preach the Gospel to extend the Lord’s kingdom. Please pray for me to reach many, many people with Gospel who are not saved yet. I thank him who had felt my pain of walking on foot and gave me this motorbike.” Pastor Anthony

“I thank God that a faithful servant of God sent me a motorbike as a gift. This motorbike will help me to visit the house Churches in far distances, to make disciples and to minister to them. Sometimes it gets evening or night to complete my visiting to those house Churches and there is no rickshaw or scooters on my return to home. It is risky for my life. I pray to God for those brothers and sisters in Christ who helped me to get this motorbike to work for the Kingdom and Righteousness of God. I pray God to bless them abundantly to help more pastors to get motorbikes to fulfill the great commandment/great commission of Jesus Christ.” Pastor Harun



- **Sewing Machines and Candle-making Tools:** Christians with disabilities need skills to provide an income. CFI’s Center for the Blind and Disabled was given sewing machines and candle-making tools, and hired a trainer. One of their first orders was to design and produce bookmarks to offer on Christian Freedom International’s webstore.

- **Churches**

Converts to Jesus Christ are usually not welcome in traditional churches, who fear retribution from Muslim and Hindu extremists. Instead, they meet in house churches – until they outgrow the small rooms. This year Christian Freedom International built three houses to use as churches in rural areas for the flourishing communities of Christian converts.





## Burma/Myanmar

Placed in a rural Thai village near the border of Burma, Victory Bible Academy reaches the Karen and other persecuted Christians. For decades, Burma's brutal attacks on Christian minorities has flooded Thailand with refugees. Whether growing up in a dreadful refugee camp or in villages under constant threat of attack, the Karen youth despair for a future and a hope.

Christian Freedom International's Victory Bible Academy, a boarding school, provides Karen young adults with practical Bible and vocational training – with a focus on guiding the Karen to serve their people and other minorities with the love of Christ. They are persecuted Christians learning to serve persecuted Christians.

In 2018, while the world's attention was fixed on Burma's horrific violence against the Rohingyas, Burma's military renewed their attacks on Christian villages. Victory Bible Academy's students brought relief to the forgotten Christians in Burma in daring trips to places where governments warned people not to go. It was the first time our student mission trips required a security detail.

Growing up in refugee camps or as a persecuted Christian minority in Burma, the students usually do not have government identification. Without a government ID, they cannot get a job and risk arrest any time they travel. (If they do get hired, they are paid far less due to their status.) Many have accepted this low status as their lot in life. At Victory, they are given a vision that matches their identity in Christ – and are working on getting passports and migrant cards.

While gardening is a hobby for western Christians, farming is essential for marginalized Karen Christians. Victory's gardening class delved into stewardship principles as they grew organic vegetables and fruits, developed compost and recycling areas – and added animal husbandry with the purchase of piglets. The students learn self-sufficiency and reduced Victory's food bill.

The Thai government arrested hundreds in an immigration crack-down. This raised the alert level for students and staff. Victory's excellent relationship with the local police helped avoid harassment.

When flooding ravaged the village, Victory's students provided clean drinking water, fresh food, sandbags, dry clothes and blankets for 40 families. They cooked and delivered hot meals daily for a week.

The tropical climate takes its toll. Monsoons flood the building and land, and dry season drains the last drops from wells. Each year the wells dry up before the school term ends. Thanks to a generous donor, Christian Freedom International bought two large rain-catcher tanks, built a roof from the school to the kitchen, fixed water damage and mold – and bought a portable A/V system and musical instruments for worship classes and outreaches.

Christian Freedom International's micro-enterprise program – making t-shirts and traditional Karen handbags – is incorporated into Victory's core studies for students to learn business and entrepreneurial skills and to earn an income. A new business class was added to the curriculum this year. Students researched, created, marketed, and sold products at a local market.





**Academic Subjects:** Bible training, worship and performing arts, public speaking, English, Thai, Karen history and current political situations in Myanmar/Burma, world religions, First Responder medic courses, discipleship, hospitality, gardening and stewardship round out their subjects. A new business course has students researching, creating, marketing and selling products at the local market.

**Maintenance:** Flooding, drought and tropical climate strain Victory's building and grounds. Because of your generous gifts, Christian Freedom International repaired and installed:

**New roof:** The area between the main building and the detached kitchen is prone to flooding. This damages the walkways, makes the area (where students and staff do their laundry and clean dishes) unusable, and is prone to slip-and-falls. Rainy season was especially harsh this year. A roof between the buildings is being installed, and a long over-hang on the back of the building which should help prevent water damage on the outside and mold inside the building.

**Plumbing:** Aging and poor filtration causes water damage to ceilings. Toilets and sinks need weekly repairs. Replacing the equipment is a construction/teaching opportunity for the students.

**Water Storage:** The dry season crept up earlier this year. Water ran out, requiring frequent trips into town to get water that was in short supply. Victory installed two additional massive water storage units.

# Pakistan



Pakistan Supreme Court's acquittal of Asia Bibi shone a spotlight on the tragedy of Christians falsely accused of blasphemy and sentenced to death. It also riled up radical Islamists, who shut down cities in protest.

Christian Freedom International installed security cameras at several churches. Our co-worker continues helping Christians enslaved in brickyards with food, supplies and Bible teachings – and was able to get to remote areas with a new motorcycle, thanks for Christian Freedom International's donors.

## Pakistani Christian Refugees in Bangkok



In Pakistan, false charges of blasphemy against Christians sparks extrajudicial killings, mobs burning villages, assassinations, and imprisonments. This adds to the daily discrimination in education, jobs, abductions and forced conversions, and forced marriages to Muslims. Thousands of Pakistani Christians have fled to Bangkok to seek asylum.

Christian Freedom International provides food, rent and aid to Pakistani Christians hiding in Bangkok as they hope for asylum to another country.

The children – who can go years without schooling – attend Christian Freedom International's Garrison School. To help families, Christian Freedom International provides the dignity of an income by making t-shirts through our micro-enterprise program.

Our director – also a Pakistani Christian – saw that his people needed a church in their Urdu language. He studied and was ordained, and rented a location near the families to hold church. He regularly visited Pakistani Christians in their homes to pray and comfort.

In 2018, Thailand's crack-down on immigrants caused refugee families to scatter, forcing a temporary closing of Christian Freedom International's school and church. Our directors tracked down the families to deliver food and supplies at night and teach children in their hiding places to keep up with their classes. They visited and brought food to Christians held in the detention center. A new and better location for the school was secured and fixed up.

Thai Caritas awarded a Certificate of Excellence to Christian Freedom International's school director Nehemiah Akhtar, a tremendous recognition of his work in circumstances that require constant flexibility and dedication.



# Iraq and Syria



Christian Freedom International shipped medical and health supplies for Christian refugees from Iraq and Syria. Wheelchairs, walkers, diabetic supplies, dental equipment, baby incubator and much more was distributed in refugee camps, Christian villages and hospitals.

Christmas dinners were given to families in a Christian village that had been liberated from ISIS.

# Egypt



Violence from Islamic militants added to the misery of daily discriminations for Christians in Egypt.

Christian Freedom International connected Christian children in Cairo's Garbage City to Christians in the U.S. These relationships blossom through prayers and letters. The children and their families received food and support each month.

Christian Freedom International also gave emergency aid for Christians needing medical surgeries.

# North Korea



The most dangerous place in the world to be a Christian is North Korea. Christianity is illegal. Those caught praying face torture, prison camps, and execution.

The totalitarian state, isolationism, and worship of the founder Kim Il-sung's family makes it extremely difficult to reach. Those who have the most creative ideas – and are most passionate about reaching North Koreans – are defectors.

Christian Freedom International began partnering with courageous Christian defectors on three projects:

- **Rice bottles:** Plastic bottles are filled with rice, Bibles (on USBs), and anti-parasite medicines. The ocean tides wash them onto North Korea's shores.
- **Balloon launches:** Balloons with short-wave radios are launched across the border into North Korea. The radios, which can receive Gospel broadcasts from South Korea, are disguised to look like cell phones.
- **Radio Broadcasts:** Free North Korea Radio, founded and staffed by defectors, broadcasts news, Bible readings and sermons. People in North Korea listen to the broadcasts and hand-write Bible verses.

The defectors said Christian Freedom International's partnership "breathed new life" into these ventures. All three had been suspended for lack of funding.

# Freedom Inn



Since 2008, an influx of Karen refugees were resettled in the U.S. They were sometimes located in rough neighborhoods. Christian Freedom International turned a motel into apartments – and it became a Karen village. The local community of Sault Ste Marie, Michigan, rallied to help them learn English, get jobs, and tutor the children. Nearly all of the Karen who have lived at Freedom Inn have become U.S. citizens.

A highlight for 2018 was when one of the children won a regional spelling bee.

## Tackling Discrimination

How are Christians persecuted? Usually it is at the hands of government agents. No matter how many UN treaties are signed or laws passed, if the agents on the ground despise Christians, then Christians will suffer without justice.

## Project Daniel:

The Thai Military and Police Christian Fellowship launched a new ministry to train young Christian men to enter the police force or military. The academic, physical and spiritual training will equip the young men to be a positive influence within the system with a strong understanding of justice and reduce corruption and discrimination.

Christian Freedom International provided a scholarship to help get this fledgling ministry off the ground.

## Wa Students:

Evangelicals in Wa State in Burma are persecuted by both Burma's Army and Wa leaders aligned with Burma's government. Wa Evangelicals who are educated stand a better chance of overturning the discrimination and persecution against them. Christian Freedom International gave scholarships for Wa students to be educated and become Christian leaders for their beleaguered community.

## CHRISTIAN FREEDOM INTERNATIONAL in the News:

WorldNet Daily: Are They Burning the Bible in China?

HSLDA Magazine: Leadership When No One is Looking

Toronto Sun: Western nations should embrace Pakistani Christian refugees

National Review: Burma Backslides Toward Ethnic and Religious Conflict

National Review: Pakistani Christians Persecuted

Truths That Transform TV (D. James Kennedy Ministries): A Fearful Master and Government Corruption

Orange County Register: Desperate Pakistani Christians Languish in Thailand

Church of the Messiah (Xenia, Ohio) guest speaker on "Who is My Brother?"



# LEADERSHIP:

## INDIGENOUS STAFF

Abroad there are many dedicated, courageous, competent staff members in countries where CFI work is ongoing who deliver medicine, educate children, deliver Bibles, and lift up the name of Jesus Christ under very dangerous and trying circumstances. We do not disclose their names for their own safety.

## US Staff

Wendy Wright, President / CEO

Lisa Jones, Vice-President / CFO

Kelly Davis, Graphic Artist & Visual Media Specialist

Jack Kinney, The Freedom Inn Director

## BOARD MEMBERS

Brent Meyers\*, Chairman

Wendy Wright, President

Cathy Rozmiarek\*, Secretary/ Treasurer

Michael G. Forrester, M.D. \*

Benjamin Bull \*

Kerstin Liebner, RN, MSN \*, Vice-Chair

\* Independent Voting Members

## ADVISORY BOARD

Dr. Michael Farris, Chairman of the Board Emeritus

Will Buehler, Board Member Emeritus

Ann Buwalda, Jubilee Campaign

U.S. Senator Don Nickles

# MISSION:

Christian Freedom International (CFI) aids, equips and advocates for Christians who are oppressed or persecuted for their faith.

CFI provides spiritual and physical help for suffering Christians to live in the dignity of God's love and rise above their circumstances.

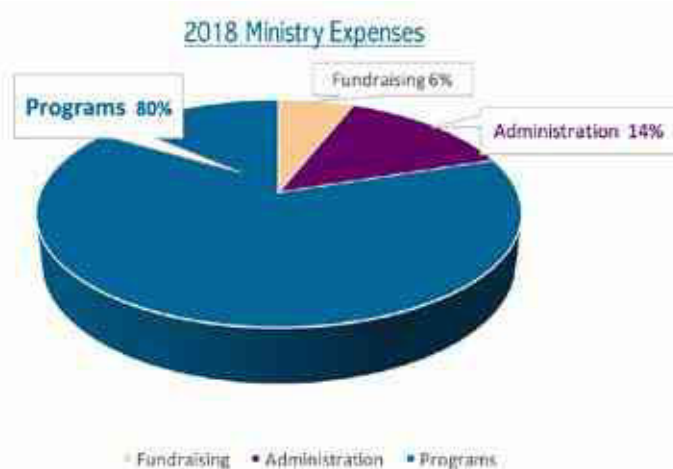
CFI offers ways for Christians to ease the burdens of persecuted Christians through prayer, action, and giving.

# FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY:

2018 Total Contributions: \$932,532

End of Year Net Assets: \$399,189

2018 Total Expenses: \$903,622



## CONTACT US!

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Financial accountability organizations have given Christian Freedom International their highest rating

