



Christian Freedom[®] International



2019

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



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

Since the earliest days of the Church when Stephen became the first martyr, Christians have been persecuted. Yet in modern-days, many people are unaware that Christians are widely discriminated against, imprisoned, deprived of property and livelihoods, and suffer violence – even death – for their faith.

However, one event changed that in 2019. The coordinated bombings of three churches in the small nation of Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday rocked the world by the shocking cruelty and mass casualties driven by pure hatred against innocent Christians.

Christian Freedom International has aided and equipped persecuted Christians for over twenty years. In short order, we met with pastors and Christian leaders in Sri Lanka to assess how Christian brothers and sisters could help. We partnered with trustworthy Christians on-the-ground to assist the injured and prevent further attacks.

Paul told Timothy, “Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” (2 Timothy 3:12) He also wrote, “So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.” (Galatians 6:10)

In 2019, Christian Freedom International deepened our work to aid and equip persecuted Christians, and connect Christians to help one another.

Our co-workers and partners are passionately dedicated. Together our goal is for persecuted Christians to rise above their circumstances and be unshackled from the chains of persecution – to be free to serve God and others.

In 2019 the threat to Christians was crystal clear. Islamists, Buddhist nationalists, Hindu militants, and high-tech communists try to impose their ‘kingdoms’. **But “the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.”** (John 1:5)

For His kingdom,

Wendy Wright



BANGLADESH

A Muslim teen was caught reading a Bible. His parents beat him and burned the Bible. Now he studies in CFI's shelter for a safe place to read a Bible.

Christian converts from Islam, Buddhism, or Hinduism, are persecuted for believing in Jesus. Their homes and crops are burned, and property seized. They are beaten, cast out of villages, and threatened with death. Many are pressured to re-convert back with the loss of their livelihoods, property, and relationships – which are all vital for survival.

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom reported that in Bangladesh, “religious minorities still face challenges stemming from extremism and broader societal prejudices. In recent years, a number of local administrative and police officials have demonstrated a general apathy toward promoting religious tolerance, strengthening protections for religious minorities, properly investigating crimes, and ensuring accountability for attacks against religious minorities.”



IN 2019 OUR SHELTER FOR NEW CONVERTS OPENED IN DHAKA. This safe house provides refuge for individuals and families to stay until it is safe to leave.

OUR NEW CENTER FOR THE BLIND AND DISABLED OPENED. This multi-use center has sewing machines and equipment to make a living – and plenty of room for new believers to gather for Bible studies and discipleship.

SPONSORSHIPS connected Christian children and pastors with caring Christians whose monthly support provides food and basic necessities.

LEGAL AID AND ADVOCACY: One pastor who converted from Islam was threatened by an imam. The pastor refused to deny Christ. Weeks later, he was falsely accused and arrested for “defaming Islam”.

Christian Freedom International hired an attorney who announced to the police that he represented an international human rights organization. This rattled the police, who did not expect to have international attention on this case.

The charge was changed to ‘robbery,’ then ‘murder’. Finally, the charges were dropped and the pastor was released.

The pastor was shaken (a charge of blasphemy is akin to a death sentence) and grateful. He is alive and free because we stood together with him.

BURMA/MYANMAR



Burma's military continues to attack and kill Christians, and destroy their property and crops. Christian women in the north are trafficked and sold as brides in China.

"Buddhist only" communities deny water resources to Christian families, and rebel groups forcibly close churches. Decades-long armed fighting has driven hundreds of thousands into refugee camps.

VICTORY BIBLE ACADEMY equips Christian refugees from Burma in ministry and life skills, training the persecuted to serve their people. It is located near a massive refugee camp on the border of Thailand and Burma.

The two-year intensive program combines classroom study, discipleship, and hands-on leadership. Students lead Sunday School classes at local churches, and Friday night youth group at the school in four languages (English, Karen, Thai and Burmese).

The school year culminates in student-led mission trips inside Burma.

In March 2019, sixteen students graduated. The valedictorian was awarded a scholarship by Christian Freedom International to attend nursing school, and later returned to teach a health seminar. Another student received our "Entertaining Angels Award" to attend a hospitality school. Another student was hired to teach worship and English at Victory Bible Academy and was trained to do the bookkeeping.

The new school year began in July with 34 students attending. New classes included:

- Backpack Medic, CPR, Personal Health
- Work of the Holy Spirit, Power of Prayer
- International Cuisine, Safe Food Handling
- Ministry to Children and Youth
- Crochet and Advanced Weaving

A class on entrepreneurship led to opening a market stall run by second-year students to sell crafts and baked goods in the neighborhood. Students learned to use a professional sound studio to record worship songs.

A graduate from Victory leads the mission teams and silk-screening production for Christian Freedom International's micro-enterprise. This year he completed ministry training from Christian Leaders Institute (U.S.) and was ordained as a pastor.



"Thank you for coming to visit us. There are many people in the past who believed in Jesus, but with all the fighting among the Buddhists and Christians, they stopped sharing the Word of God. Villager's response to Victory Bible Academy students"



EGYPT

Christians in Egypt face daily threats of discrimination, kidnapping, and violence from the Muslim-majority. Islamist extremists violently attack Christians and churches.

A large community of Christians live in Garbage City, a slum on the outskirts of Cairo. Christian Freedom International matches caring Christians in the U.S. with children in Garbage City through our child sponsorship program.

Each month these sponsored children receive food and necessary items, delivered along with pastoral care, which benefit them and their families. Prayers and letters bond the children and their sponsors.

As special needs arose, sponsored children and widows in the community were given emergency items and medical care.

IRAQ

Christians from Iraq and Syria who are living in refugee camps and a center for people with disabilities benefited from a warehouse full of supplies sent from the U.S. to Kurdistan by Christian Freedom International.

Medical and dental equipment were distributed to hospitals. Health aid items were delivered to refugees and given to elderly Christians who are separated from their families.



NIGERIA

Boko Haram is a jihadist terrorist group that brutally attacks Christian villages. Men, women and children are slaughtered or kidnapped. Some Christians escape. Survivors of one village made their way to a safer area in Nigeria. They bought land to start a new village. Before building homes they will plant crops to sell and make a living.

Christian Freedom International provided seeds and farm tools for their new crops.

“Prepare your work outside; get everything ready for yourself in the field, and after that build your house.”
Proverbs 24:26



NORTH KOREA

Under the cultish dictatorship of Kim Jong Un, anyone caught praying, singing to Jesus, or reading a Bible are sent to prison camps, where they are tortured, starved and killed.

• **RICE AND BIBLES:** Twice a month, Christian Freedom International's co-workers in South Korea – many who escaped North Korea – filled plastic bottles with rice, medicines, radios, and Bibles. They throw thousands of rice bottles in a river where the currents sweep them onto the shores of North Korea.

“Rice is important. But Bibles are even more important,” one defector said.



• **BIBLE AND NEWS BROADCASTS:** The smuggled radios can tune into Free North Korea Radio, a radio station supported by Christian Freedom International. Founded and run by North Korean defectors, it broadcasts Christian programs, worship songs, the Bible, and news from the outside world.



Each day they tell listeners that the programs only happen with the support of Christians in the U.S., so listeners will know “American Christians are praying and supporting their fight to achieve freedom to worship God freely against the evil dictatorship.”

“We are getting more and more responses from North Korea,” the station president said. “We would like to give Christian Freedom International special thanks. Every day we pray to the LORD that His will be done through our lives.”

North Korean border fence spiked with poison to keep their people inside



• **SHELTERS:** Escaping from North Korea is a treacherous journey. Christian Freedom International established shelters with clothes, food, Bibles, and medicines, along the way for defectors to hide and recover from injuries during their escape.



PAKISTAN

- **BRICKYARDS:** Impoverished Christians, who are denied education and jobs, find themselves in debt bondage to brickyard owners. They must make a daily quota of bricks by hand. The debt and grueling work enslaves generations of families.



Sponsors partnered with Christian Freedom International to provide aid for up to 44 families in 2019. Each month, packages of food and supplies were delivered and served along with prayer and worship services. Children wrote letters to thank their sponsors.

“They learned how to pray, sing hymns and to worship God,” said our co-worker who delivers the food packages and leads worship. “People who didn’t go to Church or even know about it, have now started paying keen attention. These families pray and thank God for CFI’s supporters.”

The children enjoyed getting letters from their sponsors.

“They were extremely happy both from hearing what their donors wrote to them and from the gifts they received. They thanked God and thank CFI for being the source of happiness in their lives.”

- **SECURITY CAMERAS:** Churches in Pakistan are bombed and attacked by gunmen. Christian Freedom International installed security cameras in churches in 2019. Our co-worker reported:



“They worship comfortably now and their lives have become easier now. They used to be very afraid before, never knowing if someone would enter, and now since the cameras have been installed, their life has become safer and easier. They worship peacefully now.”



REFUGEES/ASYLUM:

Christians flee persecution in Pakistan in the hope of gaining asylum. Many families are stuck in Thailand under constant threat of being arrested and sent back.

Christian Freedom International equipped Pakistani Christian refugee families in Bangkok with aid each month, jobs, a school, and a church. Our co-workers also assist with social services and emergency medical care. They visited Christian refugees held in Immigration Detention Centers throughout Thailand.

These ministries help persecuted Christians spiritually and practically, and to thrive as productive members of society.



• **SCHOOL:** Garrison Bangkok Christ School educates Pakistani Christian refugee children. The curriculum, based on the Cambridge University Course, is enhanced with lessons on virtue, serving others, hard work, and deep studies in the Bible.

• **MONTHLY AID:** In 2019, sponsors provided aid for 36 Christian refugee families for rent and essential items – blessing 150 people total each month. Four families were resettled to Hungary and Canada in 2019. They still call and thank Christian Freedom International for the financial and spiritual support they received.



In 2019, 35 students attended Garrison’s primary, middle, and high school. Three teachers (all refugees) along with the director taught for six hours each weekday.

This year, Garrison began serving a hot meal each day to ensure the refugee students got a nutritious meal. The students showed more energy and attention than before.

In December, the students performed a Christmas tableau at two churches.

• **CHURCH:** Church of Glory was founded for Pakistani Christian refugees by Christian Freedom International’s co-worker. It serves 65 on an average Sunday, and 130 people on Easter and Christmas.



The church focuses on the foundations of the faith and how to live according to the Bible.

About twice a week CFI’s pastor visits refugees in their rooms or apartments to learn of their needs and pray for them. The church hosted a 3-day convention for Thai and Pakistani pastors in Bangkok.

One family said that CFI’s co-worker “visits us at our homes and provides us spiritual diet. We have learned a lot from him and it encourages us to stay firm in the tough times.”

• **JOBS:** Our sewing center provides jobs for Pakistani refugees. Their hand-made t-shirts are sold individually (on CFI’s webstore) and through the Freedom Fighter Club, which is a “t-shirt-of-the-month” club.

“I never knew I could sew t-shirts. And I had no work and means to make money for my kids. But Uncle Akhtar encouraged me to learn this skill and now I am able to make T-shirts and am able to earn for my children. Also thanks to CFI for arranging the orders for us. Please arrange more orders. Thank you and God bless.” Pakistani Christian refugee

“Where many refugee people get exploited, are underpaid and treated like second-class citizens (CFI’s director) always listens to us. He provides us home-cooked meals, offers flexible hours of work. And pays a fair price per t-shirt. Also, I want to thank everyone who buys the T-Shirts as it supports our families.” Pakistani Christian refugee

SRI LANKA

In one of the worst terrorist attacks in 2019, three churches filled with families on Easter Sunday were bombed by ISIS-inspired terrorists. Hundreds of Christians were killed or injured.

Grieving families were visited, given packages of food and prayed for by Christian Freedom International's co-workers.

- **A CHRISTIAN MOTHER WITH SEVERE BRAIN INJURIES** who spent the longest time in the hospital of all the injured – four months – was blessed to have her final hospital bill fully paid through the generosity of Christian Freedom International's donors.



- **SECURITY CAMERAS:** While this was the first attack by Islamists in Sri Lanka, Evangelical churches have been persecuted for years by Buddhist monks and Hindu radicals. Pastors and Christians were beaten and churches destroyed when they met to worship. In most cases, the police and local authorities would not respond.

Christian Freedom International installed security cameras in ten churches.

“In December, a group of people and Buddhist monks attacked my church. After putting in these cameras, nobody has come against our church. Before, every night people would come to our garden and listen to what we talk and see what we are doing. And throw stones on our roof. Daytime, also, people come to see what we are doing. Now we are having our services peacefully. Nobody comes to search what we are doing.” Pastor S. D.



Zion Church in Sri Lanka before and after the Easter bombing in 2019

MONTHLY SPONSORSHIPS



PAKISTANI REFUGEE FAMILIES IN BANGKOK

39 Christian Families Sponsored

PAKISTAN

37 Christians Sponsored

BANGLADESH

37 Christians Sponsored

EGYPT

25 Christians Sponsored

Numbers as of May 2020

SCHOOLS

Persecution can result in a lack of education, and thus a livelihood. Christian Freedom International founded and runs two schools for Christian refugees:

- **GARRISON CHRIST BANGKOK SCHOOL:**

For Pakistani Christian children whose families fled persecution. This school focuses on core subjects with a strong Biblical foundation.



- **VICTORY BIBLE ACADEMY:** For Christian refugees from Burma. This college for young adults trains persecuted Christians in the Bible and practical ways to make a living. The goal is to raise up self-sustaining missionaries.

REFUGEES

When Christians must flee persecution, the family of Christ can come alongside to help them succeed.

- **FREEDOM INN:** Thousands of Karen refugees from Burma began resettling in the U.S. in 2008. Christian Freedom International remodeled a motel in Michigan into apartments and Karen refugees transformed it into a community. Local residents helped the refugees with jobs, schooling, English and life skills. Nearly all of the refugees are now U.S. citizens.



- **BANGKOK:** Pakistani Christians fleeing persecution are living in Bangkok, under the radar, in the hopes of getting asylum in another country. They are restricted in work, unable to attend schools, and at risk of being sent back to Pakistan.

Christian Freedom International provides jobs, a school, a church, and monthly aid from caring Christians who sponsor refugee families.



MICRO-ENTERPRISE

Christian Freedom International provides jobs, training, and an income for refugees through micro-enterprise. Their products are sold on our online store.

- **T-SHIRTS ARE SEWN BY PAKISTANI CHRISTIAN** refugees in Bangkok, and silk-screened with Bible messages by Karen refugees at Victory Bible Academy.



- **KAREN REFUGEE STUDENTS ARE TAUGHT** traditional long-weaving at Victory Bible Academy. Their tunics, hand-bags, scarves and assorted items are sold at a local Thai market and on CFI's webstore.



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

Carol Hoopes,
Accounts Manager/
Data Specialist

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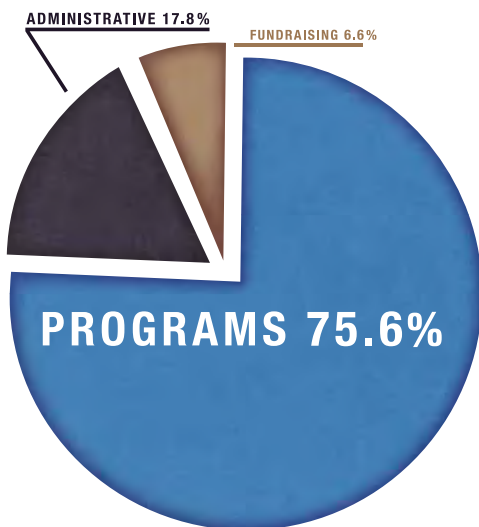
Ann Buwalda, Jubilee Campaign

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

2019 Total Contributions: \$907,110

End of Year Net Assets: \$397,880

2019 Total Expenses: \$908,419

Financial accountability organizations have given Christian Freedom International their highest rating



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