



# THE Voice OF THE Martyrs

May 2021



**GOD'S WORD**  
ON THE WORLD'S  
MOST DANGEROUS  
MISSION FIELDS



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

“Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them.” Heb 13:3



Colombia

Front-Line Workers in Colombia cautiously transport Bibles to remote areas under the watchful eyes of violent armed groups.

# God's in Guerrilla Territory

**D**istributing Bibles in Colombia's guerrilla territory requires the mind of a chess master. Every move must be analysed and the opponent's countermoves anticipated.

Although Bible distribution is legal in Colombia, armed rebel groups roam the country's rural areas as a law unto themselves. Paramilitaries and guerrilla groups like the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) resent Christians because they refuse to participate in the drug trade or fight for their causes. The rebel groups also view anyone travelling through their territory, where they often grow and smuggle narcotics, as

a threat.

Recently, a ministry team travelled deep into the jungles of Putumayo department, along the border with Ecuador and Peru, to distribute full-colour Action Bibles and minister to church workers. The Bibles, which feature colourful illustrations in the style of a graphic novel, appeal not only to children but also to adults who may have trouble reading a traditional Bible.

After travelling many hours by car, the team transferred their supplies to motorcycles and rode for 20 minutes before reaching a river. They then loaded the motorcycles, Bibles and supplies onto a river ferry for a two-hour

trip upriver. After leaving the ferry, they rode their packed motorcycles as far as they could before again transferring their loads to mules.

The objective of their travel through the rugged terrain of Colombia was a simple wooden church with a thatched roof. "These communities are surrounded by armed rebel groups," a VOM worker said. "They are the ones who have the authority in the region. A few meters from the church is a former coca cultivation area. The brothers from the church tell us that in the deepest part of the region there are still coca crops that sustain the rebel groups."

The simple church, which had no

electricity, served as a retreat centre for 30 pastors who had gathered from throughout the region. Many had walked for hours to reach the site, and all of them serve in lonely, remote locations under highly stressful conditions.

The host church had improvised bathing “facilities” in a nearby stream and strung hammocks between the church rafters for beds. At the end of each evening’s two-hour church service, the generator was shut off and “an infinite blackness fell,” the VOM worker said.

Over the course of three days, the pastors participated in leadership training and enjoyed fellowship with one another. “It was moving to see the faith of each of these pastors,” the VOM worker said. “They were motivated by the need to be in communion with other brothers in the faith.”

At the end of the retreat, the pastors each received a box of Bibles to share with their local church. While they knew it might be months or



Thirty pastors who gathered at a small church in a Colombian “red zone” were grateful for their makeshift accommodations. During a three-day retreat, they enjoyed training and fellowship before receiving Bibles to distribute in their home villages.

years before they gathered again, they also knew they were now better equipped to serve their communities. “It is because of the people that we can say that the faith in this entire region has been strengthened despite the difficulties, the scourges of war,” the VOM worker said. “They continue to persevere in Christ.”

With physical loads lightened and hearts lifted by the courage and faith of their Christian brothers and sisters, the ministry team made its way back home by mule, motorcycle, ferry and car. Soon, they would begin analysing tactics for their next move on the Colombian chessboard.





Sierra Leone

Members of a Bible distribution team were among the first to reach Kanatortor on a new road.

# Carrying to New Believers

**A** logging company that built a new road in Sierra Leone has unwittingly provided a way of getting Bibles to communities that were previously reachable only by foot. Last spring, a Front-Line Worker named Francis drove a load of Bibles to a remote area where he has been working for several years. Before the road's construction, Francis had to hike to each village, spending nine hours to cover what now takes two hours by vehicle.

Sierra Leone is predominantly Muslim, and small communities sprinkled throughout the north are home to some of the least-reached people groups in the country. In this region, where folk Islam dominates, individuals who become followers of Christ are often persecuted by their family and neighbours. Christians, including entire villages that have

left Islam to follow Jesus, have little opportunity for fellowship with other Believers, so a visit from other Christians is a huge encouragement.

## Day 1 — Kabuita

When the Bible distribution team arrived in Kabuita, villagers were eagerly waiting by a river, where Francis soon baptized 30 Believers who had come to know Christ in the previous year. Since Francis' previous visit, the community had doubled the size of its grass church and made plans for a more permanent church made of mud bricks.

The entire community celebrated the baptisms with a four-hour service at which Francis preached and another worker spoke on John 14:6 ("I am the way, and the truth, and the life ..."). "They are so eager to learn and so innocent of basic truths," the worker

said. "The preacher preached simple truths."

The Bible distribution team gave audio Bibles to those who could not read, saving the print Bibles for those who could. They also presented the village chief with an audio Bible. "He was so grateful, and told me that since they have become Christians in the village, God has been helping them so much," the worker said.

That evening, Francis took a 35-minute motorcycle ride to a neighbouring village, where they showed the *JESUS* film before returning to Kabuita. "They have no school, no clean water source and no church or other religious structure," he said. "But they are very open to the Gospel."

Shortly after the roosters began crowing the next morning, at about 5am, most of the village gathered in the grass church, as they do every

morning, to thank God for His protection through the night and ask for His help that day.

### Day 2 — Kamatou

After devotions, the team headed farther down the logging road to Kamatou, where they were greeted by villagers dancing and singing. The village pastor, who cannot read or write, preaches from an audio Bible he received four years ago, and there are no other Bibles in the village.

Front-Line Workers gave print Bibles to those who could read and solar-powered audio Bible players to others so they can share God's Word with groups of people. "They were so excited to receive such a gift," the worker said.

When Francis asked how many people had heard of Paul, the village chief said, "We are still in much darkness concerning the Bible. Please tell us about Paul." Francis then preached on Paul's dramatic conversion, and afterward everyone shared a meal of

Many of the recently baptized Christians had never owned a Bible before.



## The Message He'd Been Waiting For

At age 6, Saidu was sent to Quranic school where he spent 10 years studying the Quran. But at age 13, when he saw the *JESUS* film, he began to study all he could about Jesus, wondering why He was able to perform more miracles than any other prophet and how He could raise the dead.

Last year, Saidu was in a neighbouring village when Francis, a Front-Line Worker, arrived on a medical mission. As the medical team treated villagers, they played an audio Bible over a speaker. Saidu was so excited to hear more about Jesus that he asked Francis if he could "have those words." Francis gave him a memory card with a recording of the Bible in his native language, and Saidu now listens to that Bible at his house every day. He has a much better understanding of who Jesus is.

Before receiving the memory card, he had never read or heard the Bible before. "This is the message that I have been wanting since I was 13 years old," he said.

Pray for Front-Line Workers like Francis and seekers like Saidu. Ask the Lord to direct Front-Line Workers to seekers who are ready to place their trust in Christ. And pray that seekers are willing to pay the price for making such a decision.



## Saved from Human Sacrifice Through

## *Christ's Sacrifice*

Pastor Momodu grew up in Kanatortor (see “Day 3”), which was once known as a headquarters for witchcraft. Among other gods, villagers worshiped the python, the gods in the trees and a human “god” who lived in a hut surrounded by demons. Every year, the gods required six human sacrifices.

When Momodu was a teenager, he was selected to be a human sacrifice. Although his father was one of the witchcraft leaders, he did not want to lose his son, so they fled to another village. It was there that Momodu heard the Gospel and became a Christian.

When they returned home about a year later, Momodu began telling others about Jesus. Villagers were interested because they were afraid of the gods they had been serving and no longer wanted to sacrifice their children. They soon decided to give up witchcraft and follow Jesus, and they appointed Momodu as their preacher. Every Sunday, he shares what he has learned from listening to the audio Bible.

Thirty new Believers were waiting in Kabuita to be baptized. They received Bibles to help them grow in faith.

porcupine and rice. Before the team left, villagers presented them with a gift of two chickens and a goat, and said they hoped the team would return to visit soon.

### Day 3 — Kanatortor

Two hours farther down the road, the team visited the village of Kanatortor, where the welcoming villagers said the team’s vehicle was one of the first to come to their village.

After the greetings, workers distributed print Bibles to the four villagers who could read as well as 16 audio Bibles, including one to the village pastor, Momodu. “Now I am the happiest man in the world,” he said. Momodu had been preaching from memory since his audio Bible stopped working two years ago.

After 5am prayers and devotions, everyone gathered at a small creek. Francis and Momodu then baptized 36 new Believers to the accompaniment of villagers singing “I Have Decided to Follow Jesus.”

The Believers in these villages along the logging road are the fruit of years of work by the Front-Line Worker. He has planted the seed of the Gospel in their hearts, and he prays that their faith will grow now that they have access to God’s Word.

Watch out for our Special Edition Newsletter on Christian Persecution in Mozambique  
— “The Devil on our Doorstep”

# Prayer Diary

May/June 2021

## MAY 2021

S 16	KENYA	Pray for the protection of Christian minorities along the coast.
M 17	UGANDA	Pray for the strength of Christian converts from Islam who experience kidnapping and persecution.
T 18	SUDAN	Pray for the transitional government that replaced longtime Islamist dictator Omar al-Bashir.
W 19	ERITREA	Pray for the government and for those in authority, including Eritrea's longtime dictator, Isaias Afwerki.
T 20	LAOS	Pray for the development of godly, educated Christian leaders.
F 21	VIETNAM	Pray that Believers living in cities, which offer more freedom, will care for Christians in rural areas.
S 22	TAJIKISTAN	Pray for those working in child evangelism, which is punishable by large fines and prison time.
S 23	MALDIVES	Pray that God will strengthen every new Believer and establish a network of supportive Christians.
M 24	CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC	Pray for the family of Pastor Jean-Paul Sankagui who was martyred in 2017.
T 25	ALGERIA	Pray for opportunities to distribute Bibles throughout Algeria, especially in the south.
W 26	COLOMBIA	Pray that Bible distributors will reach the Christians most in need of God's Word.
T 27	SOMALIA	Pray that Somali Believers will be able to remain in and evangelize their country.
F 28	JORDAN	Pray that local ministries reaching out to Muslim refugees will continue to see fruit from their work.
S 29	UZBEKISTAN	Pray for revival in the country.
S 30	LIBYA	Pray for peace in Libya.
M 31	KYRGYZSTAN	Pray for healing of the sick and for the church's ministry to them.

## JUNE 2021

T 1	AFGHANISTAN	Pray for ongoing Bible translation work as well as radio, TV and social media ministries.
W 2	LAOS	Pray for the spiritual state of communist Laos, which treats Buddhism as an official religion.
T 3	IRAQ	Pray for Believers moving back to the Mosul area after being driven out by ISIS in 2014.
F 4	CAMEROON	Pray for evangelists who risk their lives to disciple Believers in villages attacked by Boko Haram.
S 5	SRI LANKA	Pray for Zion church as it continues to recover from an April 2019 bombing.
S 6	ETHIOPIA	Pray for the members of churches destroyed in attacks.
M 7	UGANDA	Pray that single mothers abandoned by their husbands will maintain a courageous Christian witness.
T 8	DJIBOUTI	Pray for Christian converts from Islam who face pressure and persecution from their communities.
W 9	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	Pray for missionaries seeking opportunities to reach Emiratis with the Gospel.
T 10	CHINA	Pray that Christians will remain faithful to Christ no matter the circumstances.
F 11	KENYA	Pray that churches in central Kenya will encourage and support ministry work in Muslim majority regions.
S 12	SOMALIA	Pray that the Lord will soften the hearts of government leaders toward Christians.

Subscribe to our FREE monthly Newsletter. Go to [www.persecutionsa.org](http://www.persecutionsa.org)

**TO DONATE to Christian Mission International, please use one of the following Banks details:**

**Nedbank**

Account no.: 1925-024946 (Cheque)

Branch Code: 192505 (Bedfordview)

**Standard Bank**

Account no.: 02-249-5592 (Cheque)

Branch Code: 018305 (Bedford Gardens)

**ABSA Bank**

Account no.: 909-861-7711 (Savings)

Branch Code: 632005 (Bedford Centre)

**Cheques are no longer accepted at any of our Banks listed above.**

CMI | P. O. Box 7157, Primrose Hill, 1417 South Africa | Tel: 011 873-2604/5 | Office Cell: 076-022-3336 (8am-2pm)  
Fax: 011-873-3859 | Email: [cmi@vomsa.org](mailto:cmi@vomsa.org) | Website: [www.persecutionsa.org](http://www.persecutionsa.org) | Facebook@cmivomsa | Instagram@cmi - vomsa

Executive Director: Mr Ashley Illman - Direct Cell: 083 457 4164

© Permission to reprint any portion of this newsletter must be obtained from Christian Mission International.

[www.persecutionsa.org/donate](http://www.persecutionsa.org/donate)