



THE

# VOICE

OF THE MARTYRS

FEBRUARY 2025

## OUR NIGERIAN SISTERS OF Honour

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*They are willing  
to forgive their  
husbands' killers.  
What sin can we  
not forgive?*



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



“When I came here, I saw life in a new way and I learned how to forgive. When I understood more about the Bible, I started to understand love and forgiveness. I started to forgive.”

—Lydia



# YOUR SUPPORT MATTERS

Our organisation exists to aid Christians persecuted for their faith. There is a place for everyone to be part of our family, whether it's by simply following our stories, praying for one another or funding a project. Whichever way you choose to engage, we will value it dearly and honour your support with discipline, and integrity.

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# How Nigeria's Women of Honour Find Meaning in Suffering

Islamist attacks have widowed more than 10,000 of our Christian sisters in northern Nigeria in the past 20 years. At VOM, we strive to minister to both their tangible and spiritual needs. However, their critical, daily needs are many times greater than what we and other organizations working in the area can provide. Equally discouraging is that the problems Christians face there are out of control. There is no clear solution to northern Nigeria's security and resulting economic problems, and no realistic hope of significant improvement in the near future. ***How can Believers honour God in such circumstances?***

Praise God that His gracious gift of salvation through Christ Jesus our Lord assures us of eternal freedom from pain and loss. But He *has not* assured us that our difficulties and suffering will end while we are still *in this world*. We see in Scripture and in the lives of faithful saints throughout history up to today that God regularly calls His people to walk paths of great hardship as witnesses to His truth. We are all called to honour God by suffering well for His glory, and this month's magazine is devoted to some shining examples of this truth in Nigeria. We rightly refer to them as "women of honour."

For decades, popular but false Christian teachers have sold many on the idea that if we exhibit strong enough faith or make a big enough offering, God will respond by showering us with material blessings in this world. This false teaching undermines God's eternal purposes for us. It dishonours

God by making Him a "gift giver" from whom we can expect health, happiness and success in this fallen world.

Self-centred and worldly, this false teaching dishonours God and discourages His suffering followers. It suggests that faithful Christians like the women you will meet in this magazine suffer because they lack faith or don't perform enough good works. We minister to them by reminding them of the truth so evident in Scripture, church history and around the world today: God's most faithful servants, those who have taken up their crosses as witnesses to His saving grace in the world's most difficult and dangerous places, are worthy not only of our love and support but also of our esteem. They suffer well for God's glory. They are women of honour.

As these widows learn that they are not alone or forgotten, they find meaning in their suffering. They are encouraged to see the positive effect their presence and testimonies have on other widows in Nigeria. And they then learn that their stories strengthen others who, like them, are suffering at the hands of Islamists in many nations. Ultimately, they rejoice to learn that their faithfulness is an encouragement to Believers around the world — including you. As you read these stories and share them with others, the Lord is using *you* to give meaning to their suffering.

*Ashley*

**About the cover:** Martha and her family fled their village in 2013 during an attack by Boko Haram. Her husband died on the journey, leaving Martha to care for their six children. Her youngest child was 6 months old at the time.

**Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.**

**James 5:11**

**T**HEY ARRIVE WITH BROKEN HEARTS, AND THEN THE HEALING BEGINS. Every six months, 100 Christian widows from villages in northern Nigeria are invited to a secure region in southern Nigeria, where highly trained staff provide spiritual and emotional counselling to help them recover from the trauma of persecution. Most of the women lost their husbands in Islamist attacks.



**Regina's husband, Danbaki, was a Nigerian missionary who moved his family to a remote area in the northwestern part of the country to preach the Gospel.** On 14 June, 2022, Islamic militants attacked their village and murdered a dozen people. Regina and her family were captured as they tried to run away. When the militants questioned Danbaki, he told them that he was a missionary, even though he knew they might kill him for his Christian work. As he pleaded for mercy and committed himself to God, the Islamists murdered him in front of Regina. Then they beat her and her 2-year-old son, Joshua, whom she was carrying on her back. Although they survived, Regina has been grieving the loss of her husband ever since his murder. She has three children, the oldest of which is 10.

*"Anytime I remember, it is so painful," Regina said. "Even when you forgive, it is not easy to forget. God is still working on my heart."*

*"I could not stop crying."  
—Lydia*

**Lydia was selling tomatoes along the road when militant Fulani Muslims raided her village.** Hearing gunshots, she fled into the bush, leaving behind her youngest child in the confusion. A pastor later found Lydia's son and returned him safely to his mother. But when Lydia returned to her village the next day, she found her husband's mutilated, lifeless body and the rubble of her burned home. Lydia has five children, ranging in age from 3 to 15.



**SOME STRUGGLE TO SURVIVE, WONDERING IF GOD CARES.** With no formal education or employable skills, many Nigerian women struggle to feed their family after their husband dies. Although a deceased husband's family is culturally expected to care for their son's widow, the family sometimes refuses to care for Christian widows, especially those who left Islam to follow Christ. In their desperate state, widows become vulnerable to sexual exploitation, which causes great distress and lasting shame.



*"I want people to know that our God does not leave His children," Rebecca said. "He loves them."*



*“Life has not been easy for me. I could not hold up myself. I could not feed the children.”*

*—Chundung*

**Chundung’s husband, David, was killed on 7 September, 2001, in Jos, Nigeria.** While walking to the bank that day to collect his salary, he was caught up in fighting between Muslims and Christians, but Chundung doesn’t know specifically how he was killed. Twenty other people from their church also were killed that day. David’s body was never found, so the family never had the opportunity to hold a funeral for him. Chundung was left to raise their four children on her own.

*“Many widows are forced into prostitution.”*

*—Rebecca*

**Rebecca’s husband was shot and killed by Boko Haram militants as he walked to church one day in 2014.** At the time, Rebecca was pregnant with their fifth child. The militants destroyed Rebecca’s entire village in the attack, and she didn’t know what had happened to her husband until three days later, when she discovered his body in a morgue. Rebecca said her faith has wavered since her husband’s murder, as she has struggled to provide for her children. But now, after receiving months of instruction from God’s Word and after processing her pain with other Christians, her faith has been restored.





*"I never thought I would ever forgive Boko Haram, but I did. I have not only forgiven them, but I love them."  
—Ruth*

**A**S THE NIGERIAN WIDOWS RECEIVE ENCOURAGEMENT AND SUPPORT THROUGH GOD'S WORD AND THE BODY OF CHRIST, THEY FIND HOPE AND LEARN TO FORGIVE. For three months, our Nigerian sisters study God's Word to learn more about His character and how much He loves them. They spend time reflecting on biblical truth and whether they are living according to that truth. Through this careful study of Scripture, the Holy Spirit brings transformational change to their lives, including the ability to forgive their persecutors.



**Boko Haram attacked Ruth's village, Gowza, in 2013, killing several hundred people and burning many homes and buildings, including her church.**

She said the militants were angry because Muslims in Gowza had been turning to faith in Christ. Ruth's family — including six children ranging in age from 2 to 16 — survived the attack and then walked for 17 days to reach safety in Cameroon. But her husband, Luka, was never the same after the ordeal, and Ruth believes lingering effects of the attack ultimately led to his death in 2021. As Ruth has learned biblical approaches to forgiveness and seen the change in other women in the programme, she has been able to let go of her own pain.



**Asabe was raised in a Muslim family, but after placing her faith in Christ, she married a Christian named Yakuba.** In 2020, Boko Haram bombed their village, and Yakuba was killed in the attack. After Yakuba's death, his Muslim brother threw Asabe and her child out of their home.

*"I learned forgiveness toward everyone who has hurt me," Asabe said.*

*"When I first came, I did not talk. I was always afraid."*

*—Asabe*





**O**VERCOMING GRIEF AND FEAR, THE WIDOWS BEGIN TO TELL OTHERS THE GOOD NEWS THAT HAS CHANGED THEIR LIVES. After receiving biblical training as well as emotional and spiritual counselling from full-time staff, these courageous women go out in groups to tell others about their renewed hope and the source of their joy. Some return to their home villages with new skills and even tools, such as sewing machines, to help them provide for their children and serve as evangelists in their communities.





*"I want people to know that God is a merciful God," Gwom said. "He knows us and our destiny. He does things in a way that man cannot understand unless you give your life to Him."*

**Gwom's husband, a pastor, was killed on 3 May, 2015, after he and several other men travelled to a neighbouring village to help victims of an attack by militant Fulani Muslims.** The men traveling with Gwom's husband as well as 17 men from the village also were murdered, presumably by the militants. Gwom doesn't know how her husband died or where he is buried, but today she wants others to know the God who has restored her soul.



*Oh, Lord,*

*Our hearts cry out for the thousands of widows in Nigeria who have lost their husbands in Islamist attacks and continue to suffer the effects of those atrocious acts.*

*Lord, comfort them, we pray. Defend the cause of the fatherless and widows. Provide for their needs. Make them whole. Bring peace to their land.*

*We thank you, Lord Jesus, that You came to heal the broken-hearted and that many Nigerian widows are beginning to receive Christian care to heal their inner wounds and mend their grieving souls.*

*Help us to know our part. Help us to care for orphans and widows in their affliction. Help us to love and to be more like You.*

*In Jesus' name,  
Amen.*

**JAMES 1:27 - PURE RELIGION AND UNDEFILED BEFORE GOD AND THE FATHER IS THIS, TO VISIT THE FATHERLESS AND WIDOWS IN THEIR AFFLICTION, AND TO KEEP HIMSELF UNSPOTTED FROM THE WORLD.**

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PRAY FOR  
*Nigeria*



# Prayer Diary

February 2025

S	1	BURKINA FASO	Pray that God will provide every need of Christian widows, who have few ways of supporting themselves.
S	2	PAKISTAN	Pray for survivors of the September 2013 church bombing that killed 81 people and injured many more.
M	3	TANZANIA	Pray for Generosa, who sometimes sees the men believed to be her husband's killers.
T	4	YEMEN	Pray for Yemeni Christians who face food shortages and economic hardships amid the region's political unrest.
W	5	INDONESIA	Pray that Christians will boldly share the Gospel, even though it is illegal.
T	6	CAR*	Pray for a Christian who cares for orphans and has been targeted with threats.
F	7	SAUDI ARABIA	Pray for increased access to God's Word through creative means.
S	8	VIETNAM	Pray that the families of imprisoned Christians will be protected and cared for by the body of Christ.
S	9	OMAN	Pray for a vibrant Christian witness in the country, as nearly all Omanis are Muslims.
M	10	EGYPT	Praise the Lord that many in Egypt are turning to faith in Christ and churches are growing despite persecution.
T	11	CAMEROON	Pray for the comfort and healing of families who have lost loved ones in attacks by Boko Haram.
W	12	KENYA	Pray that Christians in Lamu whose property was destroyed by terrorists will experience God's provision.
T	13	MALAYSIA	Pray that the truth about Pastor Raymond Koh's abduction will be revealed as the investigation continues.
F	14	QATAR	Praise God for Qatari Christians who faithfully share the Gospel with Muslim neighbours.
S	15	ISRAEL	Pray that Christians in Israel will be witnesses to God's love in a region dominated by hatred and extremism.
S	16	VENEZUELA	Pray that first generation Christians will have opportunities to grow through biblical discipleship.
M	17	LIBYA	Pray that the instability of daily life will awaken a desire among Libyans to know the Prince of Peace.
T	18	TUNISIA	Praise God for the establishment of new churches as a result of increased religious freedom.
W	19	BAHRAIN	Praise God for a season of openness and some response to the Gospel among those indigenous to Bahrain.
T	20	ETHIOPIA	Pray that Christians whose churches were destroyed by Islamists will experience God's love and provision.
F	21	UAE**	Pray for the few Emiratis known to have left Islam to follow Christ.
S	22	IRAQ	Pray for the roughly 300,000 Christians who have remained in the country despite years of war and instability.
S	23	BANGLADESH	Pray for Juhel, who was beaten in the street after telling others about his faith in Christ.
M	24	KYRGYZSTAN	More than 90% of Kyrgyz are Sunni Muslims. Pray that more Kyrgyz will place their faith in Christ.
T	25	LAOS	Pray for Phomme, who uses a handheld radio to share the Gospel as she sells vegetables in nearby villages.
W	26	TAJIKISTAN	Pray for Christian converts who suffer persecution from family members or the secret police.
T	27	COMOROS	Comorians have no religious freedom, and leaving Islam is illegal. Pray for a new openness and access to the Gospel.
F	28	MALDIVES	Pray for Maldivian Christians, who face imprisonment or expulsion if their faith is discovered.

\*CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

\*\*UNITED ARAB EMIRATES



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