

THE heartbeat

*I will give you a new heart
and put a new spirit in you;
I will remove from you
your heart of stone and
give you a heart of flesh.*

Ezekiel 36:26

SPEAKING HOPE TO WOMEN AROUND THE WORLD & ACROSS THE GENERATIONS / VOL 20 NO 2



prayer powers growth in Iran

Azar and Nasrin are pariahs in their own homeland. That's because the two women have committed their lives to Jesus Christ. • It's easy to see why this is the case. Iran's revolutionary leader called for apostates – people who leave the dominant religion and accept Christ as Savior, for example – to be executed, although he approved of women receiving the lighter penalty of life imprisonment with daily beatings. Many years later, an Iranian president reportedly vowed to stop Christianity in his country. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

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But the lives of believers like Azar and Nasrin (not their real names), along with the findings of multiple international institutions, indicate that such official hostility toward Christians is failing to stamp out the faith in Iran. In fact, multiple sources say Christianity is growing faster in this Middle Eastern powerhouse than anywhere else in the world.

“My husband and I are leading a house church,” Azar wrote to TWR Women of Hope. “We have about 28 attendees, but we have a lot of problems, such as lacking enough Bibles and the pressures from officials and radical [adherents to the dominant religion]. Recently, authorities raided about three churches here, and their leaders have been arrested and now are in jail. Please pray for their freedom and for the Lord’s protecting hands coming upon us.”

In Jesus’ name and for his sake, Azar and Nasrin practice their faith and reach out to others despite the risks. Both listen to *Women of Hope*, which began reaching Iran in the national Farsi language in 2012, and both worship in illegal house churches.

“In Iran we can’t attend church,” Nasrin wrote. “We have secret church in our house. [In each broadcast of *Women of Hope*], there is a section called lessons for your soul. We record that section each week and use them in our meetings as a blessed resource. We thank you for taking the trouble and reaching people like our congregation. Please pray for our growing in faith and for our protection.”

Informed sources cite two main reasons for what appears to be explosive growth among the Christian population in Iran: first, disillusionment with the dominant religion as a result of the violence that has been done in its name; and second, believers like Azar and Nasrin boldly sharing their faith in the face of persecution. A third factor, said a pastor who baptized hundreds of Iranian refugees in Germany, is the fact that millions inside Iran listen every day to Christian radio and TV broadcast from outside the country.

TWR president Lauren Libby said, “We don’t name all the options used by our teams, because as Human Rights Watch has noted, Iran is the type of country where people get put into prison for a Facebook post. TWR’s high-powered radio transmissions are more critical at this time, not less relevant. Governments can block web addresses or certain apps, but our signals reach across borders.”

The needs are great for Christ’s followers in Iran, where human-rights groups say women experience pervasive discrimination and are inadequately protected against domestic violence, forced marriage, marital rape and harassment based on compulsory veiling laws. Problems such as the scarcity of Bibles and discipling materials can partly be addressed through the gospel-based content of *Women of Hope*® and other TWR radio programs.

But believers everywhere can respond to Azar and Nasrin’s fervent, common refrain: *Please pray*.

In his name, for his sake

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen. – 2 PETER 3:18

How would you grow in your faith if you could not gather for church? What if you were not allowed to own a Bible, let alone meet with other believers to study it?

As we learn and become aware of what our persecuted sisters face across the Middle East and around the world, let us commit ourselves anew to pray for them and the TWR Women of Hope broadcasts that give them hope.



Pray, listen, learn, grow and give with us at TWR Women of Hope // twrwomenofhope.org

The ‘Source of Solutions’ in Pakistan

Female believers in Pakistan face double jeopardy: Their country sits near the top of worldwide lists for the negative treatment of both women and Christians. This dubious distinction highlights the critical importance of *Women of Hope* broadcasts in Pakistani Punjabi.

By far the largest of the country’s heart languages, Pakistani Punjabi was the obvious choice for the first *Women of Hope* broadcasts into this nation of over 200 million people. The once weekly broadcasts, divided into practical “life” and spiritual “soul” components, often address difficult issues facing women.

Although reports indicate that “female empowerment is coming” gradually to Pakistan, more than 1,000 honor killings of women and girls are estimated every year, and 90 percent of Pakistani women are said to suffer from domestic violence. Rape frequently isn’t reported for fear that the publicity will devastate the dignity of the victim and her family.

“The first time I listened to *Women of Hope*, I thought, ‘This is a source of solution for problems that women have to face day by day, and it’s also needed by our society,’” one listener wrote to the production team. “This program is also for those who beat their wives and don’t respect them. Presenters also discuss social problems that are facing both men and women. ... It really can be a hope for women.”

Christian women are doubly beleaguered in this society, where every year an estimated 1,000 Christian and Hindu women are forced to marry men belonging to the dominant religion and then to convert. In two other incidents,

Christian couples were accused of blasphemy against the dominant religion, with one couple being killed by a mob and the other sentenced to death.

A letter from a listener reveals how the radio program manages to touch lives despite the rigorous social and cultural barriers. Amal’s husband tried to introduce her to the gospel, but she was an atheist and, like her children, wasn’t interested. Then her husband brought home a radio because he heard that God worked through TWR’s programming.

“When I listened to *Women of Hope*, the conversation not only changed me but also motivated me to reach out to women who are living in darkness like me,” Amal wrote. “It is a source of solutions for the basic problems of women, whether they are young, old, literate or illiterate.”

Today, Amal (not her real name), calls herself “a little evangelist of God” as she witnesses alongside her husband and gathers neighborhood women to listen to *Women of Hope*®.

WHY JOIN TWR WOMEN OF HOPE? “One of the saddest situations in the world is the rampant abuse of girls and women. As the father of a daughter, I find it hard to comprehend how anyone could perpetrate this kind of behavior, which is why I wholeheartedly support this important program.” –JIM, NORTH CAROLINA, U.S.



Mentoring — Guides Along Life's Path

By Dr. Peggy Banks // Global Ministry Director, TWR Women of Hope

I am very passionate about mentoring leaders. It's a process, I believe, that should be self-perpetuating: Well-mentored leaders will go on to mentor new leaders. And it's a two-way process: Mentors lead and leaders mentor.

Unfortunately, too many of us are discouraged from mentoring others because of the common misperception that mentors must first have endless knowledge of the Bible or of wisdom gleaned from lots of life experiences. Instead, I see mentoring as looking more like guiding, supporting and serving as confidantes.

Guides are those who have walked on the path before us and learned things along the way. When we are investing in others and allowing others to invest in us, it is invaluable to have someone guide us through tough decisions by providing helpful information. It is invaluable to have someone you feel safe with to share your struggles and fears. It is invaluable to have someone who believes in you and believes that the Creator has great plans for you.

The goal of biblical mentor leadership is to build God's kingdom. This kingdom-building mentor leadership results in life transformation and a deeper understanding of biblical servant leadership. It's not about "having it all together"; it's about realizing that we need each other as we live honestly before one another.

In Titus 2:1-8, Paul helped that young pastor with guidance for the Church. Paul had evangelized and started small churches

on Crete and then left Titus with the responsibility of firmly establishing those young churches so they would grow.

However, there were serious problems on Crete. First, there were no godly role models to demonstrate what godly people were like, and second, we see in Titus 1 that false teaching was deceiving and confusing people.

Similarly, across cultures in our generation, women are coming to Christ who have not been raised in godly homes. These women don't know what a godly woman looks like or how she acts. They don't know what it looks like to be a godly wife, mother or friend. They don't know what it means to be godly in a non-Christian work environment. These women need mentors so God's kingdom will be built in their lives and the lives that they influence.

Globally, TWR Women of Hope teams are invaluable guides to women who have no other Christian models. *Women of Hope*® broadcasts provide guidance from Scripture as well as helpful information for everyday life situations. Those producing the programs share directly in the struggles of listeners who contact the teams for additional guidance.

Whoever we are, wherever we are, God enables us to invest in women around the world and right next door. We all need people in our lives from whom we are learning. As Christian women, we must find ways to pour our lives into others and guide them in finding biblical solutions for their life situations.



Connecting women's hearts to each other and to God, TWR Women of Hope has built a global prayer movement and media outreach that address unique physical, emotional and spiritual needs.

twrwomenofhope.org

VISION

To bring hope in Jesus to women around the world and across generations.

MISSION

To encourage, equip and engage women to pray, listen, learn, grow and give through media, small-group interaction and leadership development.

TWR

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