

OPEN DOORS

IMPACT: Open Doors is a nonprofit organization that calls attention to Christian persecution around the world while furthering stereotypes and claims about “Islamic oppression” and violence.

- Open Doors is a nonprofit organization founded in the midst of the Cold War in 1955 by Andrew van der Bijl. Open Doors describes itself as **“the world’s largest outreach to persecuted Christians in the most high-risk places.”** The threat to Christians at that time was perceived to be Communism.
- Open Doors maintains two dozen affiliate organizations around the world. Its U.S. affiliate, Open Doors USA, is located in Santa Ana, California.
- **The founder of Open Doors is Andrew Van der Bijl, known by English-speakers as “Brother Andrew.”** Van der Bijl is the author of over a half dozen books, including God’s Smuggler, which chronicles his time spent smuggling Bibles into Eastern Europe during the Cold War.
- The **current president and CEO of Open Doors USA is David Curry.** Curry is the former CEO of The Rescue Mission, an organization that seeks to feed and help individuals experiencing homelessness. Curry also previously served as president of the Foundation for Grace, an organization that, according to Open Doors, “provided leadership and management training to non-profit groups in South America.”
- In an Open Doors USA webcast in 2014, David Curry asked Brother Andrew, **“How is it that [the places where Open Doors is helping has] morphed from the Soviet Union to China and to the Islamic World?”** Brother Andrew responded that **“outreach began when he “perceived in [his] spirit that Communism was dying...and the only power that can overcome a bad power is a worse power and [he] saw that already then as the Islam.”** Van der Bijl also stated that he believes we are in the **“Battle of the Books...their book [the Qur’an], our book [the Bible].”**
- In July 2014, Open Doors USA posted an article commissioned by the World Watch Research, which is described as a “unit of Open Doors International.” The article states: “It is important for Western governments to understand that **Islam has a radical part - called ‘political Islam’ - that is not homogeneous but has violent as well as non-violent faces; and that in fact it’s the NON-violent faces of political Islam that are the most dangerous for their societies.**” The article also stated: **“The culture of ‘appeasement’ makes [Western governments’] citizens and societies vulnerable to manipulation by Islamists for the sake of furthering their Islamic supremacy in the West.”**
- In November 2014, Open Doors USA posted an article on its website originally commissioned by the World Watch research unit and published by WorldWatch Monitor, an organization that “reports the story of Christians around the world under pressure for their faith.” The article stated: **“There is no such a thing as a clear distinction between moderate and terrorist Islamist organizations, nor such a thing as a clear distinction between mainstream Islamic organizations and Islamist (or Islamic political) organizations.”**
- The organization’s 2018 World Watch List, a report that ranks the top 50 countries in which Christians are most persecuted, states that **“Islamic oppression is one of the most widely recognized sources of persecution for Christians in the world today—and it continues to spread—aiming to bring many parts of the world under Sharia law.”** According to Open Doors methodology, there are eight categories of “persecution engine” in the World Watch List. The first category listed is **“Islamic oppression,” which is defined as “the persecution situation where countries, communities and households are being forced under Islamic control.”** This category is differentiated from the second listed category, “religious nationalism,” which is described as “the persecution situation where countries, communities or households are being forced under the control of one particular religion (other than Islam).”

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- In a February 2014 article in *FrontPage Magazine*, an online publication of the anti-Muslim David Horowitz Freedom Center, Ryan Mauro relied on a figure by Open Doors, stating that “100 million Christians around the world live in a state of persecution.” Mauro also claimed that, of “the top 10 countries most hostile to Christianity,” again citing Open Doors, the **“most common denominator is Islam and, specifically, the commandments of Sharia.”**
- In January 2018, anti-Muslim blogger Pamela Geller cited research by Open Doors that nine of the top ten countries in the World Watch List are predominantly Muslim. Geller described the top ten countries as **“oppressive, totalitarian, savage countries.”**

Bridge Initiative Factsheet