

# Meet the Millions of Invisible Women Facing Heartache, Discrimination

More than seven years after the United Nations formally called attention to the plight of widows, millions of bereaved women still find themselves subjected to abuse, humiliation, ostracism and poverty, according to a major new report published by GFA (Gospel For Asia, ).

“Widowhood: The Worst That Can Happen” cites estimates of 285 million widows worldwide, with more than 115 million living in abject poverty. Cherie Blair, president of the UK-based Loomba Foundation, says 86 million have suffered physical abuse.

Blair calls their plight one of the most important, yet under-reported, human rights issues facing the world. “Much has been made, and rightly so, of gender inequality, but widows have truly been at the bottom of the pile—visible and invisible—for too long,” Blair commented in *The Guardian*.

Released to build on awareness of the issue raised by the recent International Widows Day, the in-depth GFA article is the latest in a series of special reports addressing key global issues, intended to encourage action. The Wills Point, Texas-based organization has been actively involved in raising funds for job training, education and other assistance for the millions of widows living in Asia for many years.

Partnering primarily with female missionaries, especially the specially-trained Sisters of Compassion, GFA has provided health care, education, job training and other assistance to women across the continent. This has helped break the cycle of poverty, low-paying jobs and societal and cultural discrimination that particularly affects widows. Too often, long-standing cultural traditions blame widows for their

husband's death, which precedes violence, abuse and often a loss of inheritance rights.

"For millions of widows in Asia, life is incredibly difficult," says Dr. K.P. Yohannan, founder of GFA. "Many are forced into begging or prostitution to survive. There are more than 46 million widows on the streets and in slums. There are stories of thousands of widows committing suicide because they have no hope."

It isn't just widows in Asia who suffer from hopelessness and discrimination. Stories from Afghanistan, Nigeria, Nepal and many other places appear in the report, even the U.S. There, a recent Social Security Administration audit found that the agency had underpaid nearly \$132 million to more than 9,200 widows age 70 or older because it failed to inform them of an option available to them when they filed for retirement benefits.

The Loomba Foundation says that while much of the research and analysis regarding widows is not new, many people remain unfamiliar with it. That's because the evidence hasn't moved beyond academic journals, obscure books and findings by international organizations, the foundation says in its latest Global Widows Report.

The deprivation faced by widows "extends its destructive influence deep into the rest of society, and can be seen at work across large parts of the world," the report says. "Widows' deprivation is therefore not simply about identifying one more category of people to be added to the poverty policy list."

Yohannan emphasizes that those who profess to follow Christ must reach out to provide practical assistance for widows and their children.

"God judged Israel because they did not care for the poor and suffering," he says. "The body of Christ is responsible to

care for them. We must do everything we can to alleviate their pain and suffering. The only hope is to let them know there is a God who loves them and sees their tears.”

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## **Did This Pastor Have a Prophetic Dream That Foreshadowed Columbine Shooting, 9/11?**

How should people cope with tragedy? That’s a question Pastor Bruce Porter has had to answer again and again as a preacher, chaplain—and a good Samaritan who was heavily involved in helping victims of both the Columbine High School shooting in Littleton, Colorado and the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City.

Read Also: [Bridging the Gap: A Columbine Dad Speaks Out on School Shooting](#)

Porter, the Colorado preacher who officiated Columbine victim Rachel Joy Scott’s funeral after the 1999 shooting, later found himself drawn to the scene of America’s most horrific terror attack, arriving at Ground Zero six days after the Sept. 11, 2001, assault to help minister to the afflicted. It was an experience that transformed his life.

“We all remember where we were and what we were doing [on 9/11] ... the circumstances of our day,” Porter recently told *Pure Talk*. “And I just sensed immediately that God was calling me with a sense of duty to respond to that, because I knew I had some skill sets that might be useful in New York.”

Watch Porter discuss the dream that he believes foreshadowed the events at Columbine and Ground Zero:

The pastor said he was a good fit to help volunteer his time, considering his background as a local firefighter, pastor and chaplain. Porter also had plenty of experience helping people in Littleton, Colorado, process grief after the Columbine massacre.

“I arrived on scene [in New York City] six days after the collapse of the Towers ... the next morning I was on the pile,” he said. “What I saw, of course, was off-scale terrible. The rubble itself was just overwhelming ... we were literally walking around in an open graveyard.”

Porter spent two weeks ministering to first responders who were forced to deal with the unthinkable—a deeply traumatic experience for all involved.

“It was really a mission of mercy, but I found myself really working more with the first responders ... in counseling them,” he said. “Doing what I could to help them process what they were dealing with ... the emotions were just overwhelming for people.”

Read Also: [9/11: A Time for Reflection and Prayer](#)

Porter stressed the importance of being a light to help show others the gospel, and said the experience at Ground Zero left him with some life-changing realizations.

“I think it reinforced in me the duty that every Christian bears to be responsive to the world around them, to be compassionate, to weep with those who weep, to rejoice with those who rejoice,” he said. “The good news and the love of Christ travels with least resistance over the golden wire of compassion.”

Porter also shared details of a dream that he had three months

to the day before the Columbine shooting—a dream he now believes was a foreshadowing of what was to come inside Columbine High School and at Ground Zero.

“I had a horrible dream one night. I woke up in a cold sweat, screaming,” he said, describing the strange scene in his dream sequence—one that included kids running in lines with their hands on their heads, explosions, children bleeding and other horrific scenes.

Porter said that the dream, which appeared to take place in a library, didn’t end there.

“A red light went on, and I heard bombs, explosions, gunshots, I wasn’t sure,” he said. “I kept hearing in the back of my mind the words ‘911, 911, 911’ over and over again, which I assumed was just the emergency number people call when they’re in trouble.”

The preacher was so shaken that his wife woke up and assumed he was having a heart attack. She later wrote about it in her journal. Then, Columbine unfolded three months later and the couple was totally shocked.

“I saw unfolding right before my eyes the things I had seen in that dream,” he said.

Read Also: [Rachel Joy Scott’s Journals Will Inspire You to Keep One](#)

Three years later, as Porter stood talking with a firefighter on the heap of what remained of the Twin Towers, he had another stunning realization about that dream.

“[The firefighter] looked over at me and he said, ‘Isn’t it wild that this happened on 9/11, the emergency number?’” Porter recalled, noting that the mention of 911 in his dream came rushing back and he suddenly saw a connection. “I got goosebumps.”

He continued, “[It] was a foreshadowing of what I was seeing ... and I knew that I was right where I was supposed to be, doing exactly what God wanted me to be doing and it was a tremendous comfort and encouragement to me at the time.” {eoa}

*This article was originally published on Pure Flix Insider. Visit Pure Flix for access to thousands of faith and family friendly movies and TV shows. You can get a free, one-month trial here.*

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## **Liberal Threats: Opponents Will Stop at Nothing to Keep Kavanaugh From SCOTUS**

With no clear path forward to derail Judge Brett Kavanaugh’s nomination to the Supreme Court, liberal activists in Maine have resorted to questionable tactics to urge moderate, pro-choice Republican Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, to vote against the nominee.

Both the Maine People’s Alliance and Mainers for Accountable Leadership joined forces and set up a crowdfunding site that has raised over \$1 million. According to the website, there are two scenarios:

- “Sen. Collins votes NO on Kavanaugh and you will not be charged, and no money will go to fund her future opponent.”
- “Sen. Collins votes YES on Kavanaugh and your pledge will go to her opponent’s campaign, once that opponent has been identified.”

The website goes on to threaten that if she votes in favor of his nomination, “We will get you out of office.”

“Your swing vote could decide whether a rubber stamp for Trump’s anti-healthcare, anti-woman, anti-labor agenda gets confirmed to the Supreme Court—costing millions of Americans their health care, their right to choose and their lives,” the website continues.

In a statement to Newsmax, Sen. Collins said their efforts “will not influence my vote at all. ... I consider this quid pro quo fundraising to be the equivalent of an attempt to bribe me to vote against Judge Kavanaugh. I think it demonstrates the new lows to which the judge’s opponents have stooped.”

Throughout the ongoing confirmation process, activists have sent over 3,000 wire hangers to the senator’s office. {eoa}

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## **Carter Conlon Exclusive: Why Your Prayers May Not Yield Results**

Prayer isn’t just another box to be checked off at the end of the day for Pastor Carter Conlon. It’s his entire ministry—and lifestyle.

His radio broadcast “It’s Time to Pray” reaches the nations with quick, 60-second devotionals, and if believers put his

words into practice, his upcoming book by the same name could shift the spiritual atmosphere.

Conlon is the pastor of Times Square Church on Broadway in the heart of New York City. David Wilkerson started TSC, and Carter became pastor in 1994.

“I believe just as Esther was prodded by Mordecai to approach the throne of the king for the sake of her people, I’m hoping that this book, *It’s Time to Pray*, is going to prod many people to go back to the throne of God to find, as the Scriptures say, grace and strength to help in this present time of need,” Conlon tells Charisma. “I believe that the lives of many people are now hanging in the balance, spiritually speaking, and if we will start to pray again, as the people of God, we can know a spiritual awakening again in America. It really is a very short window the Lord has set before us.”

His book, set to release on Nov. 6 with Charisma House, addresses the who, what, when, where, why and how about prayer.

[CLICK HERE TO PREORDER THE BOOK](#)

Where may Christians miss the mark, he says, isn’t that they don’t pray, but that their prayer is self-focused.

“Realistically, we’ve reached out as a nation for the Holy Spirit for all the wrong reasons,” Conlon says.

“The spirit of the Lord was upon him for those reasons. There was a clear reason why God’s Spirit was upon the physical man Jesus Christ. Then he said to us, ‘As the father has sent me, now I send you.’ In other words, the calling on my life and yours is no different than His. Now obviously, we’re not the Savior. Don’t misunderstand me. But the calling is the same. The calling is to the oppressed, the addicted, the marginalized, the afflicted, the spiritually blind, the

hopeless, the captivated and certainly to God.”

He continues: “So the question that comes to mind is, are we willing to be the church again? Are we going to get back to our identity? Are we going to figure out what our purpose is? Are we going to have the guts to take a look at ourselves and say do we really look like the church in the book of Acts, or have we become something else? What are we as a people? What goes on in our conventions? What’s our focus when we need to worship together? Are we just into this constant goofiness, or are we really going to go with God and do the work he’s called us to do on the earth? You can understand I’m passionate about this because I’ve lived it, I’ve seen it, I’ve walked in it, I’ve tasted in it.”

For people who pray and don’t see results, Conlon says they may not understand the power behind their prayers.

He believes this is something the modern church has lost. In Acts 2, Conlon says the early church was prepared to die as soon as they stepped out of the upper room.

They refused to live in seclusion or self-preservation. Instead, they acted in power. Their prayers were not self-focused, like much of what Christians ask of the Lord in the modern church.

“Today, we look for the power, but if we don’t understand the purpose of the power of God, then we just end up seeking this sensory delusion, from one place to another to another,” Conlon says. “It’s not leading us to the work of God that he wants to do through us on earth. Then we just end up seeking another experience and another experience and another experience. My observations over the years are those experiences become more and more and more absurd as time goes on, because it’s not leading to the reason for why we’re seeking that power.”

In his personal life, Conlon says he is praying for the Lord

to open his eyes to the cry of his city and to give him the ability to respond.

“‘Would you help me, Lord, to put a trumpet to my lips and call your church back to prayer? Would you give me the grace, O God, to live the kind of a life that makes a difference for somebody else?’” Conlon will pray. ‘Deliver me from self-focus and from any pursuit of You that’s not really related to Your kingdom.’

“That is the cry of my heart every day, all day. It’s not just in the morning when I get alone with God, but it’s throughout the day I find myself praying again, ‘Lord, just have mercy on this generation and use my life somehow to make a difference for these people. There’s just so many who need help, and they need hope now.’”

Amen.

*This article was composed from an interview with Carter Conlon for the October edition of Charisma magazine. [Click here to SUBSCRIBE to Charisma.](#)*

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## **Is It OK to Smoke in Church?**

Christian comedian Jason Earls tells the story of when he visited a church that had designated smoking and non-smoking sections for guests. Earls saw worshippers praising the Lord while smoking a cigarette. He finds the comedy in it, but is smoking in church ever acceptable? Share your thoughts in the comments.

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# Conservative Leaders Converge to Spark Grassroots Transformation for America

Christian and conservative national leaders are heading to Des Moines, Iowa this weekend for a special event.

The 7th Annual Family Leadership Summit brings together leaders from all over to learn how they can help transform churches, families and culture for the greater kingdom of God.

Bob Vander Plaats from the Family Leader told CBN News that his group's approach to faith and government is unique because it focuses on finding ways to engage the church.

"We really need to be about calls for transformation, first and foremost," Vander Plaats said, "by leading with the gospel and engaging with the church and what the church's main mission is: the Great Commission."

He continued, "When you authentically engage the church and use what God has always worked through, we believe that then you can impact elections with real ministers of God and then implement policy that's according to His heart."

Vander Plaats said people who go to the summit consistently come back saying how encouraged they are to know they're not alone working toward a true revival in our nation.

"They're going to see states like Ohio, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Indiana, Pennsylvania, Florida, New Hampshire all being around us, saying, 'Wow, this really works,' and we're here together, standing as a remnant," Vander Plaats said.

One major focus of this year's summit is religious liberty.  
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## **How Satanists Are at War Against Trump and His Evangelical Supporters**

President Donald Trump is only a year and a half into his presidency, and he remains one of the most controversial political figures of the day. Despite this, evangelical Christians have expressed their faithful support for him and his conservative policies.

One group dedicated to challenging evangelicals and their positive relationship with the administration is The Satanic Temple (TST).

Founded in 2012, The Satanic Temple (not to be confused with the Church of Satan) is a non-theistic organization that has gained prominence since President Trump's election. The group reported it gained "thousands of new members" after Trump won the presidential race.

"The Satanic Temple attracted 'thousands' of new members in just the first 36 hours after the election of Donald Trump," the group reported. "The 4-year-old temple, which had a pre-Trump membership of around 50,000, has never before seen a spike in registration nearly this big."

“We’re definitely a resistance movement,” spokesperson and co-founder Lucien Greaves said after a speech outside the University of Colorado Boulder. “We stand in stark opposition to this idea that we must unify under a single religious banner.”

“We’re on the front lines of some of these battles against theocratic encroachment, especially with characters like Mike Pence holding such a high office,” he added.

Since the election, The Satanic Temple has launched multiple campaigns aimed at challenging Christian influence in the political sphere. One example is their After School Satan Clubs.

Ultimately, the group is about glorifying rebellion. In fact, they say they don’t even worship Satan or believe he is a personal being. Instead, they focus on rebelling against “tyrannical” authority, secularism and theism. {eoa}

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## **Real-Time Prayer App Lets You Intercede for Persecuted Christians**

The No. 1 request of persecuted Christians is prayer. Many testify to feeling the support of those prayers, which help them to sustain their faith. Now Open Doors USA is making it even easier to pray and let persecuted Christians know of the

multitude of prayers. The organization is launching the Pray for the Persecuted Church prayer app. Available now on Apple and Android devices, users can download the app at or through the Apple and Android stores.

The Pray for the Persecuted Church prayer app will provide notifications of specific prayers submitted from persecuted Christians who are living out their faith in the world's most difficult places to be a Christian.

Users can click "I prayed" to acknowledge they are partnering in prayer for a specific request. Users can also share the prayer requests on their own social media channels or via email and text, letting others know to pray for Christians whose struggles are often unknown to the rest of the world. The app was inspired in part by traditional church prayer chains in which church members pass prayer requests along to each other by a phone tree. Users are invited to download the app and leave a review.

"Open Doors USA's new app is a great way to see real-time updates and prayer needs from persecuted Christians and let them immediately know that other Christians are praying for them around the world," said David Curry, president and CEO of Open Doors USA. "I hope that everyone will make praying for the persecuted church a daily part of their lives. Our prayers and support are extremely important as persecution against Christians continues to rise."

One of out every 12 Christians around the world faces persecution, and Christians are oppressed in at least 60 countries.

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# 'God's Opened a Lot of Doors': Ministries Prep for Forecast Disaster

On top of all the state and federal disaster relief groups readying for Hurricane Florence as it barrels toward North and South Carolina are a group of expert helpers: the faith teams.

The biggest of these, North Carolina Baptists on Mission and the North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church, have made a name for themselves during previous hurricanes and other natural disasters, feeding people, clearing debris, gutting uninhabitable homes and rebuilding them from stud to kitchen cabinet.

On Wednesday (Sept. 12), they were back at it—not yet delivering help, but strategizing over how best to deploy their volunteer armies and equipment.

Florence is likely to produce catastrophic flooding in the eastern Carolinas when it makes landfall Friday. Damaging winds and near-certain flooding from the massive rainfall will worsen the misery.

"God's opened a lot of doors and given us a lot of opportunity," said Richard Brunson, executive director of North Carolina Baptists on Mission, a collective of emergency response teams in the state. "We're thankful for that. We want to glorify God if we have opportunities to, and we're looking for the best way to do that right now."

Baptists on Mission partners with the state, the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army to feed thousands. On Wednesday leaders pored over the latest storm tracking information to figure out where best to station its three mobile kitchen units. At full capacity, two of those units can provide 30,000

hot meals a day each; the third can provide 20,000 meals.

Some 15,000 North Carolina Baptists have been trained in disaster relief work and many more untrained Baptists volunteer as well.

At a disaster call center for the North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church, people were phoning in to offer volunteer labor and supplies on Wednesday. After the storm makes landfall, many more calls will be coming in for emergency help.

The United Methodists typically come in after the first responders give them the OK. They'll send in teams to hang tarps, remove debris, clear out soggy carpets and wet furniture and rip out subfloors as well as heating and air conditioning ducts.

Over the past three years, the conference, which covers the eastern half of the state, trained 767 people on how to respond to disasters.

But the training stresses listening first and foremost, said Ann Huffman, who directs the conference's disaster call center.

"We're taught to listen when survivors want to talk," Huffman said. "We teach that that's more important than the physical work."

Huffman is also president of North Carolina's chapter of Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, or VOAD, which comprises some 60 organizations, the majority of them faith-based, including Catholic Charities, the Salvation Army, the state's Jewish federations, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, Samaritan's Purse and many others.

Congregational teams of all faiths have gained a reputation in the area because they often remain months—and even years—

after the disaster has struck and poor or elderly residents have exhausted whatever state and federal resources are available for rebuilding. Several of the faith groups are still helping people repair homes from Hurricane Matthew, which struck North Carolina in October 2016.

Altogether they blanket the area with know-how and can-do spirit.

“We’re not big enough to take care of it,” said Sam Loy, United Methodist response team coordinator for the North Carolina Conference. “And Baptist Men are not big enough to take care of it, and Samaritan’s Purse isn’t. There will be places where one or the other will take the lead in those areas, so we’re not stepping on top of one another. This storm, if it’s going to be as bad as they’re saying, it’s going to take two or three weeks to get the rescue stage done.” {eoa}

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## **5779: A Year to Embrace New Wineskins and Reject False Wineskins**

5779 is a new year when the new wine will flow freely—but we must also embrace, and in some instances actually become, new wineskins.

In Matthew 9:17, Jesus said: “Neither do men put new wine into old wineskins. Or else the wineskins burst, the wine runs out, and the wineskins perish. But they put new wine into new

wineskins, and both are preserved.”

A wineskin is essentially a container or a vessel that stores liquid. Jesus said rivers of living water would flow from our belly (John 7:37-39). New wine will flow from our vessel if we embrace—and in some instances become—new wineskins.

This means a change in the way we move, live and have our being (see Acts 17:28). With the new wine will come new creativity and new methods. We must not expect to do business as usual or church as usual. Those who embrace the spirit of innovation will see an accelerated growth as the Holy Spirit breaths the wind of momentum over your work.

Those who don't embrace the new wineskin will not be able to hold the new wine God is pouring out in this season. Their wineskins will be like bags with holes (see Hag. 1:6). Times of refreshing will come to those willing to change the way they think and embrace the new wineskin (see Acts 3:20). But the enemy will bring weariness to those who won't embrace the Holy Spirit's leading to follow Him.

Noteworthy is the fact that wineskins in biblical times were made of either sheep or goat skin. Prophetically speaking, I believe the outpouring of new wine will begin to separate the sheep from the goats—the true from the false. You will know them by their fruit (see Matt. 7:15-20). New wine manifests with not just the gifts of the Spirit but the fruit of the Spirit.

Although the ultimate separation won't come until the judgment of the nations, Jesus describes in Matthew 25:31-46, we will see exposure this year of those who are abusing the new wine or who are not holding it in vessels of honor.

In 2 Timothy 2:20-23, Paul told his spiritual son: “In a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also those of wood and clay; some are for honor, and some for dishonor. One who cleanses himself from these things will be a

vessel for honor, sanctified, fit for the Master's use, and prepared for every good work. So flee youthful desires and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. But avoid foolish and unlearned debates, knowing that they create strife."

Only those who pursue righteousness will be able to hold the new wine. Those who abuse spiritual gifts, merchandise the saints, exert false charisma and the like will be exposed in the eyes of those who have clean hands and a pure heart.