

Let My People Go!

Increased persecution, the election of a Muslim Brotherhood president, the death of the Coptic Orthodox Church pope and thousands fleeing their homeland in fear of an uncertain future. Egypt's Christians certainly faced major challenges in 2012. And their nation is ranked No. 15 on the Open Doors World Watch List of 50 countries that are the worst persecutors of believers. But there have been rays of the light of Jesus breaking through the gloom.

In October, 10,000 young Christians gathered from all across Egypt for three days to worship the Lord and to seek God's blessing for their country. The worshippers, mostly ranging from ages 13 to 30, gathered from 10 a.m. until 8 p.m. each day. Many traveled hundreds of miles to the worship site in the middle of the desert north of Cairo.

The three-day event, called "One Thing," was centered on a theme taken from Psalm 27:4: "One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple."

A local church leader who attended was moved by the spiritual ramifications of the event. "Imagine the empowering, heavenly force that those crowds of young people have taken back with them as they flooded back into their cities, towns and villages all across Egypt, assured that God the Holy Spirit is Himself living within them, determined to make them a blessing for the nation. God is at work in Egypt, no doubt!"

Jerry Dykstra, media relations director for Open Doors USA, was equally inspired by the gathering. "I am sure there was some danger involved regarding security issues for this huge event," Dykstra says. "We can learn so much from our fellow Christians who face persecution and an uncertain future. Pray

to the Lord that He will continue to strengthen Christians in Egypt and give them boldness and courage.”