

Words of Hope

Words of Hope is an international media ministry founded by supporting classes of the Reformed Church in America. Words of Hope's mission is to build the church in the hard places by equipping indigenous Christian churches and ministries to proclaim the gospel, especially through the use of media.

The areas where Words of Hope works are difficult to reach with the gospel, either because of poverty, geography, persecution, or social antagonism towards Christianity. Words of Hope partners with existing Christian organizations in these hard-to-reach countries and equips them to more effectively minister in their own language and context, among their own people.

Currently, Words of Hope's regions of ministry include Albania, Bhutan, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iran, Nepal, Niger, North America, South Sudan, Tibet, Turkey, and Uganda. Each ministry field requires its own unique media outreach approach. Depending on the variety of resources and preferences in a given region, an assortment of radio programs, CDs, DVDs, text messages, internet, Skype, Facebook, print materials, and satellite television is used to proclaim the gospel.

Some notable highlights from Words of Hope's ministry in the past year include continued development of discipleship resources for Iranian Christians, the launch of YouTube programming and other media initiatives in Bhutan, and a focus on regional follow up in Nepal.

The ministry model that RCA churches are supporting in Iran is both unique and comprehensive. Christian programming is now available 24/7 via online radio, allowing Persian speakers to listen to the Word of God at any hour of the day or night, no matter where they live. Words of Hope is also accessible to Persians on a variety of social media apps and via YouTube videos and online audiobooks.

Using social media and messaging apps, Iranians are able to reach out individually to the Words of Hope Persian team to request prayer, ask questions, and connect with other Christians. As many as 60 individuals contact the ministry daily! Over time, relationships are built and trust grows. Discipleship conferences are held at a safe location outside of Iran. Individuals who have been thoroughly vetted are invited to attend, and their travel expenses are covered in full through your generosity. For many, this is the first time they are able to worship freely with other Christians, experience communion, or receive baptism. After returning to Iran, conference participants are invited to stay connected to each other and the ministry through weekly online discipleship classes that take place through video conferencing. In all these ways, the church is growing inside the closed country of Iran!

Another largely closed country that Words of Hope works in is the small nation of Bhutan. It is illegal to build churches there, and evangelism carries the risk of torture and imprisonment. In some areas, social antagonism toward Christianity can also make it impossible for converts to find employment or housing.

Despite these hardships, the ministry team in Bhutan is working toward a shared vision of making it possible for every Bhutanese person to hear the gospel by the year 2035. Though it is risky, one Bhutanese producer is creating videos on YouTube showing his face. His courage is encouraging other Bhutanese Christians to stand up for their faith as well. Programs produced in different languages are teaching and discipling the underserved Christians in the area, helping to equip them to lead others to Christ and expand their influence.

The church of Nepal is also growing despite persecution. Though there are official bans on proselytism, churches continue to meet, and evangelism is carried out with caution. Through a close partnership with the Nepali Reformed Church, Words of Hope supporters are helping to plant church congregations throughout the country.

Gospel radio programming helps to support and provide training for new church leaders. The programs are also listened to in regional cell groups that eventually grow to be unique congregations. Words of Hope also assists with recordings of original Nepali worship music that are circulated to the congregations to teach a shared liturgy of praise in the Nepali language. To date, the Nepali Reformed Church has planted over 30 churches in the country. Our shared goal is to eventually see a church plant in each of the 75 districts of the country.

Words of Hope is deeply grateful for the support of RCA churches that continues to sustain this outreach ministry. In 2019, contributions from RCA congregations totaled \$473,157. We celebrate this generosity, knowing that these dollars are allowing people to be introduced to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Thank you for proclaiming hope to the refugee, the orphan, the oppressed, the impoverished, and the imprisoned. Thank you for sending the gospel out to the ends of the earth.