

Sudan Christians imperilled

Christian schools and churches among ethnic Nuba and other southerners are coming under increased pressure from the government of Sudan. In Wad Madani, the capital of Al Jazirah state, a long-established Christian school of 1000 students aged from three to eighteen has been repeatedly raided by government troops. The principal, a dozen teachers and a pastor were arrested, questioned and bailed (at great expense), but in response to parent protests, the order to close the school has been cancelled. However, five churches in Khartoum have received notifications that their buildings will be demolished. This is all part of the government's campaign to rid Sudan of Christians.

Religious Liberty

Selfies in Sweden

A novel idea among younger Christians in Sweden is to take selfies that show a cross in the picture. They see this as a way of expressing solidarity with persecuted Christians in 'anti-cross' countries. Some church leaders support the move, but others call it 'unchristian' because it 'might offend Muslims.' *BF*

Bhutan's disadvantaged Christians

In Bhutan, a small Buddhist country between India and China, penalties for public Christian witness include withdrawal of education and health benefits, denial of promotion or training opportunities, termination of employment, cancellation of business licences, restriction of movement and even exile. A Christian leader was sentenced to three years in prison for screening films on Christianity (deemed 'unlicensed entertainment') and Christians in a house church were charged with 'collection of illegal funds' for taking up an offering. *BF*

All 'as usual' in Gabon

The president of Gabon, a small African country of 1.7 million people, was recently elected for another seven-year term. He and his father, both Muslims, have already ruled the country for 49 years between them, even though the country is 80% Christian. Public protests over alleged fraud seem unlikely to change the outcome. The church meanwhile continues to grow, though it has an ongoing battle with widespread syncretism and spiritism.

Barnabas Fund

Vanuatu moving ahead

The nation of Vanuatu, a group of Pacific islands, had a complex colonial past that left many problems, but the country sees steady progress in economic growth and the elimination of corruption. The church also is growing. Thousands are coming to Christ, but more effort is needed among a few superficially evangelised groups. Bible colleges help prepare evangelists, pastors and teachers to strengthen churches and reach out to the lost. *ow*



From Two Ethiopians

He loves reading: "I extend my appreciation to those people who sponsored the books you sent me. I honour them greatly, though we don't know each other. Over the past 5 years, the benefit I got from your books is exceedingly great. But beside that, it taught me about 'Giving'. How can one spend to sponsor books to someone he or she doesn't know? This thing really amazes me. I learned a great lesson! How good is it to study the Bible and know the purpose of God. Every time you send me books, I'm energized and greatly excited. I love reading books very much and you're really quenching my thirst."

A new church: "The books help the pastor and elders in our new church. We started this church with seven new believers nine months ago and now the numbers are increased to seventy. At first we rented a house but then it was too small, so now we have constructed a large temporary place that looks like a tent made from local materials like trees and grass."

Bridgeway

CHINA: Korean Missionaries Expelled

It has been confirmed that in January China expelled 32 South Korean Christian missionaries who had been working in China's north-eastern Yanji region, near the border of North Korea. Further to this, four more people were arrested by Chinese police in a Yanji hotel. An estimated one thousand Korean missionaries work in China, most along the border with North Korea where they rescue and minister to North Korean defectors fleeing persecution, repression and starvation.

Religious Liberty

Refugees in Europe

As Western European countries receive large numbers of refugees fleeing war zones, oppression, persecution and disasters, Christian organisations are among those bringing practical aid. They have also been able to send large quantities of Bibles and biblical materials to Christians in southern Italy working among refugees, most of whom are from North Africa.

Opal Trust

Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan

In Uzbekistan Christians are severely restricted and can be prosecuted just for having Christian literature and CDs in their homes. In Turkmenistan, restrictions are even harsher, though little news filters through to the outside world. This is largely because of a fanatical personality cult that the president, like his predecessor, has built up around himself.

BF

Cambodia's vibrant church

Few of Cambodia's Christians survived the genocide of the 1970s, and there were still only a few thousand in 1990. But since then the country has seen remarkable church growth. Evangelical Christians are now about 3.5% of the population. This growth began in the refugee camps, but subsequently it has come almost entirely through indigenous outreach. The great need today is for a mature leadership, especially for Bible teachers, Bible schools and Bible materials. The current outreach goal is to see a church in every village and people group by 2021.

This goal will not be achieved easily, as Cambodia is still a land of spiritual darkness. The national religion, Buddhism, opposes any religious rival, yet it has no effect on public morality. Corruption permeates every aspect of society, prostitution and child labour are boom industries, and farmers lose their land to corrupt officials and developers. Economic pragmatism overrides any ideology or sense of common justice. While vested interests prosper, most people suffer, leaving the nation one of the poorest in Asia.

Operation World

The unreached of Ghana

There are at least 18 unreached people groups in Ghana that local Christian enterprises are seeking to evangelise. About 100 people gathered recently for a conference aimed at taking the gospel to these groups. In addition, would-be church planters conducted on-the-ground surveys of towns in regions once receptive to the gospel but needing to be re-evangelised. Ghana has a large evangelical Christian population and although much fine work is done in educated urban areas, more remote regions will succumb to Islamic propaganda if the church fails to reach them with the gospel.

Adonai

God's Word in Peru

The value of systematic Bible teaching was demonstrated by the experience of a pastor in Peru who began helping a church that had fallen on hard times and was left with only 14 members. Christians were motivated through Bible studies within the group and by distance theological studies. Personal lives were changed and evangelistic outreach revitalised. Over the next nine years, the church grew to more than 200, a new building was paid off, and a quarter of the church members became involved in helping establish a number of smaller churches in surrounding districts. With new converts in these churches, the emphasis again is on introducing them from the outset to solid study of the Word of God.

SIM

Christian media in the Philippines

There is widespread use of Christian literature in the Philippines, with about 50 literature agencies that print, publish and distribute books and Bibles. Every Home for Christ has distributed 55 million gospel booklets and The Bible League has sent out over 9 million correspondence courses. Christians make widespread use of radio and TV, both within the country and through international broadcasting. The Philippines is also a prominent missionary-sending nation.

Operation World