

## New Christians in Morocco

Muslims in Morocco continue to come to Christ, despite the opposition and dangers they face. To avoid violence they must meet in secret. The government has introduced many political reforms, but so far these have not extended to open exercise of religious freedom.

## Pakistan proposals

The Provincial Assembly of Sindh, Pakistan, voted unanimously to approve a law to punish false conversions with up to life imprisonment. If this momentous decision is implemented, it will help protect Christian women and girls from being kidnapped by Muslims, forced to convert to Islam and then forcibly married to Muslim men, often the very ones who kidnapped them.

Another piece of legislation is proposed to repeal Pakistan's infamous blasphemy laws, often used by Muslims to settle personal grudges against Christians and other non-Muslims. But such proposals in the past have never met with success.

*Barnabas Fund*

## Christians caught in China's anti-terrorist drive

Beijing has launched a massive anti-terror drive in its volatile north-western Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, which borders Pakistan, Afghanistan and east Central Asia. It comes as the threat of Islamic terror escalates following threats from al-Qaeda and Islamic State that have threatened China with 'rivers of blood.' Caught up in the crackdown are Christian groups not linked to state-approved churches. More than 80 believers have been arrested and interrogated, some being detained for 15 days and fined. House church fellowships have either stopped meeting or been forced deeply underground. All over China the government's anti-Christian campaign intensifies.

*Religious Liberty*

## Slovakia's audio Bible

The first audio recording of the Slovak Old Testament was launched recently. This means that Slovak-speaking people, whether in Slovakia or in neighbouring countries such as Serbia, can now listen to the full audio Bible in their language.

*Sower*

## Resurgent Taliban in Afghanistan

Afghanistan is officially an Islamic republic and the country's constitution maintains that no law may be contrary to Islam. There are thought to be about a thousand Christians in Afghanistan, which is still blighted by conflict. All are converts from Islam and face grave danger if they openly declare their faith. The resurgent Taliban, which has openly targeted Christians and kidnapped foreign Christian workers, now controls more than 30% of the country and is most dominant in the south, where it brutally enforces sharia.



## The children of poverty

In some countries, Christian parents, trapped in poverty through anti-Christian discrimination, send their children out to work, forced to choose feeding the family over schooling. Christian children who attend non-Christian schools may suffer hostility, harassment, injustice or even violence in the classroom from classmates and teachers alike, and may be pressured to convert to the majority religion.

*Persecuted Christians*

## From a pastor in Burkina Faso, West Africa

*"I met Bridgeway books through a Nigerian missionary here. Surely these have increased my faith and Christian life to empower me and others in the ministry. Although many of us here can use English, we need them in French for the most people."*

*Bridgeway*

## From a pastor in Lesotho, southern Africa

*"Our teachings are very and totally improved and better than before since using these books. Please send us more, because we do not get such books here. We need them for church planting and home cells and we also need Bibles."*

*Bridgeway*

## **Mongolia radio**

*A daily Bible-based talkback show, The Love Project, is Mongolia's most popular radio program. The program is now to be supplemented by a Christian publishing enterprise. As Mongolia's church grows and matures, the need for locally produced biblical reference materials increases.*

*SnarkLit*

## **Secular Uruguay**

The South American country of Uruguay has a population of more than three million, mostly of Spanish or Italian descent, with few indigenous people. The country has a high standard of living for Latin America, including an extensive, but costly, welfare system. Half of Uruguay's people call themselves Catholics, but only about 1% of these attend Mass. Almost 40% of the people are atheists or agnostics. Various forms of Spiritism and New Age thinking rule the lives of many.

Occasional evangelistic rallies have brought some response, but overall there is apathy to the gospel. Bible correspondence courses, radio programs and youth camps provide a regular outreach that brings encouraging results.

*Operation World*

## **Syria's decimated church**

In recent years the population of Damascus has swelled from less than two million to well over four million as Syrians, including hundreds of thousands of Christians, have sought sanctuary within the capital's security cordon.

The Maronite Archbishop of Damascus has released a statement that describes 'an apocalyptic scene' and laments the shattering of families and children, the decimation of parishes and the struggle for survival. He notes that only the church can 'lead the way towards Christ resurrected' and he exhorts the faithful not to give up but to heed the words of Christ to be 'light of the world.' Jihadists are now threatening Damascus.

*Religious Liberty*

## **Eritrea: unending suffering**

Through the actions of Eritrea's fiercely anti-Christian government, hundreds of Christians are held in 'prisons' (many of them shipping containers) because of their faith. Thousands have fled to other countries, about 38,000 of them to Israel, where they are marginalised and harassed by the authorities. About 3,000 Eritrean men are in a harsh detention centre in Israel's Negev Desert. Thank the Lord for the compassion of many ordinary Israelis who donate food and clothes to help the Eritrean refugees, and pray for Christian ministries that seek to meet the needs of these refugees, women in particular.

## **Turkey becoming more anti-Christian**

*A European Commission report on Turkey last year states that 'hate speech and hate crimes against Christians and Jews continue to be repeatedly reported.' Typical incidents include Islamic anti-Christian posters and graffiti near church buildings, physical attacks and threats sent by text and email to church leaders. Children and teenagers are especially targeted by the President's program of nationwide Islamisation.*

## **Egyptian Muslims react**

The two thousand Christians of an Egyptian village erected a building to serve as a community centre, pre-school and elderly care home, but when they applied for legal approval to use the building as a church, a mob of Muslim extremists attacked the property. They also damaged ten Christian houses and a shop, set fire to a Christian-owned guesthouse and cut off the water and power supply of emergency services attending the fires. In spite of the government's promotion of religious tolerance, many Egyptian Muslims remain implacably opposed to Christian places of worship in their country.

*Barnabas Fund*

## **Ukraine's 'grey zone'**

*Christians in Ukraine's 'grey zone,' the area between the government-controlled western part and the separatist-controlled eastern part, are being helped with food and other supplies by Christian aid agencies. Most factories have closed and many people have no income to support themselves.*

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## **Awakening needed in Suriname**

This small country on the north coast of South America is largely a mixture of Afro-Caribbean (nominal Christian), Indian (Hindu) and Indonesian (Muslim). There has been little progress in evangelising those of non-Christian background, and Christians need a spiritual awakening. Arab Muslim missionaries are now active and a Muslim University is under construction.