

Muslim converts in Ethiopia

From an email to Bridgeway:

"We are groups from Jimma Zone of Ethiopia who came from Muslim religion to believe in Jesus Christ. We are in total 103 people and we are working in rural and urban areas to bring other people to know Jesus as Saviour. Please if you raise your hands to help us, we have a vision in this activity and most of us have started to study the Bible to know theology beliefs. We have started a small library and we want different spiritual books for reading. Can you please help us with all Bridgeway books, plus books on theology, NIV Study Bible and other things that you consider important."

Fulani advance in Nigeria

An estimated 1.3 million Nigerian Christians are now refugees within their own country. Although the atrocities of Boko Haram in Northern Nigeria have received some coverage in international news media, little has been reported of the advance of the Fulani, another jihadist group, through the volatile Middle Belt. There is a town-by-town ethnic 'cleansing' of Christians as the cattle-herding Fulani migrate into Christian regions, with evident support from sections of the Nigerian army and government. Thousands of Christians have lost their homes and farmlands to the Fulani invaders.

Religious Liberty

World record movie

The *Jesus* film, made in 1979, has now been translated into 1,500 languages. It has been shown 7.5 billion times and is the most watched film in history.

Assist News



Buddhist anti-Christian tactics in Sri Lanka

In the last two years, the pattern of anti-Christian incidents in Sri Lanka has changed. Attacks by Buddhist extremists have declined, but incidents initiated by police or local government officials have increased and so have legal restrictions. Evangelical Christians are particularly targeted. A requirement of the Christian Affairs Department that new Christian places of worship get official approval is being misused in an attempt to force pre-existing evangelical churches to be registered. There is evidence that these government moves are being instigated by Buddhist monks. In almost every Buddhist village there is at least one church.

In spite of all this, Buddhists in Sri Lanka are turning to Christ, some of them former monks, though Christians are falsely accused of converting them with offers of money, jobs, or other incentives. Christians have even been arrested for performing Christian street drama and accused of trying to convert people by unethical means. Christian converts face persecution, ejection from their families and accusations of abandoning their Sinhalese heritage.

Barnabas Fund

Divided Cyprus

When Cyprus, a Christian stronghold for centuries, was invaded by Turkey in 1974, the island was divided – between the self-styled Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and what remained of the former Republic of Cyprus in the south. Northern Cyprus has been thoroughly Islamised since 1974, with 77 church buildings converted into mosques and others into military depots. Most Christians have fled to the Christian-majority Greek-Cypriot south.

The remaining Orthodox churches in the north have to obtain special permission from the Turkish authorities to hold one church service per year – either Christmas or Easter, or another date of their choice. Christians in the Muslim north need much wisdom and strength, while those in the Orthodox south need a revitalising of their professed Christianity.

Barnabas Fund

The Caribbean: Trinidad and Tobago

Christianity is professed by nearly two-thirds of the people of Trinidad and Tobago, but true disciples of Jesus Christ are not so common. Many people are only nominal Christians and others are polluted by witchcraft, Afro-spiritist beliefs and Hindu-coloured worldviews. Family life and morals within the Christian sphere often do not demonstrate the lordship of Christ. Mainline denominations are in decline, while newer independent groups need better spiritual goals and more enlightened teaching and outreach.

In spite of the widespread apathy to committed Christianity, good work is being done among students. The nation has a high proportion of children and youth, who, if disciplined for Jesus Christ, can help build a better future.

Operation World

The gospel in Albania

After half a century of being resolutely closed to the gospel, Albania had a heartening response after the collapse of Communist rule. The church had to start from a baseline of almost zero, but the Albanian church is maturing from the infancy stages of the 1990s into a wide-ranging community of believers with nationwide organizational structures and a more holistic vision for discipleship and evangelism. All these have been achieved in a climate of political and economic instability accompanied by antipathy toward non-traditional religious expressions of faith.

Statistically, the main religions are Muslim, Orthodox and Catholic, but many within these groups are there more through cultural affiliation than religious conviction. Albanians are largely pragmatic ('if it works, use it') and this can be a problem in newly established churches. But the same practical approach means that Albania has been sending out missionaries. The nation's historical legacy of Islam and Communism has equipped many Albanians to reach the unevangelised world. There is also a need to evangelise the Albanian diaspora. Over half of all Albanians live outside the country, and know less of the gospel than people within Albania itself.

Operation World

Australia's aborigines

A newly appointed indigenous officer of a large aboriginal church aid program said, "The church can spend a lot of time on social justice issues and addressing the physical aspect and make-up of humans, but it tends to do so at the peril of the gospel. A lot of these things are a band-aid treatment – a temporary treatment for what is an endemic sin problem. . . . Sin results in a whole range of lifestyles and then people make lifestyle choices that can be detrimental to their living."

Eternity

Zimbabwe's government

The people of Zimbabwe suffer increasing economic and social difficulty under the Mugabe regime. A number of Christians are in prison because of their courageous challenges to the injustice and corruption of the government. The church in Zimbabwe needs support and prayer.

Indonesian church growth continues

People who identify as Christians constitute 15% of Indonesia's population. However, some regions that were previously majority Christian are gradually being Islamised, as large numbers of Muslims are 'transmigrated' by the government to those areas. Despite an increasing threat from Islamist extremism, the church in Indonesia continues to grow.

BF

Laos literacy program

In Laos, a poor and under-developed country with a fiercely anti-Christian Communist government, the Bible Society has initiated a literacy program similar to that which has been very successful in neighbouring Cambodia and Vietnam. In a country where a quarter of the population is illiterate, there are currently 30-50 Bible-based literacy classes teaching people to read. Christians and non-Christians are for the first time becoming able to read the Bible in their heart language.

Sower

From Kenya:

"I cannot quantify the extent to which your ministry has blessed me and the people in our church. We have been lifted spiritually, but we do not have our own books. So we meet every Saturday just to read your books which we have borrowed from friends. It would be good to have our own library. We also want to start a small library in the slum estates where people come from, and are very grateful for any books you can send us."

Bridgeway

The power of Saudi money

In Saudi Arabia there is no separation between state and religion. The judicial system is based on a strict interpretation of *sharia* (Islamic law), including punishments such as flogging and amputation. The *mutawaah* (religious police) enforce a rigid code of public conduct, and ordinary citizens may also act as anti-Christian vigilantes. Any perceived 'blasphemy' against Islam carries the death penalty, and school textbooks still include directives to socially exclude 'infidels' (non-Muslims).

Saudi oil money is used to fund *dawa* (worldwide Islamisation) and Saudi-style Islam is taught in Saudi-funded religious schools around the globe. Saudi Arabia also provides clandestine financial and logistical support to Islamic State and other radical Sunni groups. Yet little international criticism is heard, no doubt because of the financial interest that Western governments and influential people have in Saudi Arabia.

Persecuted Christians