

## Boko Haram, North-Eastern Nigeria

The EYN Church, largest denomination in North-Eastern Nigeria, provides a part-picture of the damage done by Boko Haram to the church as a whole in that region. Of the 20,000 people killed by Boko Haram since 2009, more than 8,000 were EYN members. Of the 1.5 million people displaced from North Eastern Nigeria, 700,000 are EYN church members. Of the more than 200 girls kidnapped from the Government Secondary School in Chibok, 178 were EYN members.

In-addition, Boko Haram has destroyed four EYN Bible Schools, one Technical School, one Comprehensive College, 36 of the 50 District Church Councils, 278 of the 456 Local Church Councils, and 1390 of the 2280 Local Church branches. And all this has happened in just one denomination!

*Duwara*

## Kuwait

About 80 Christians in Kuwait attended a training session dealing with the authenticity of the Bible and how it can equip Christians to respond to Muslim accusations against the biblical text. Praise God that Christians in Kuwait have the freedom to explain their faith to Muslim friends and colleagues.

## Tanzania

Efforts to formally introduce Islamic courts in mainland Tanzania, which is mainly Christian, have stalled, though some Christians there still suffer violence. The country's island portion, Zanzibar, is 98% Muslim, and life there can be very difficult for Christians.

## Israel

Christians make up about 2% of Israel's population. Although Israel is home to historic churches, some ultra-orthodox Jews harass Christians and have at times vandalised church buildings. In the Palestinian territories the number of Christians is declining. Harsh economic conditions and discrimination from both the Muslim majority and the Israeli government have resulted in many emigrating.

*Barnabas Fund*

## Reaching Portugal's children

The Bible is largely a forgotten book in Portugal, a nominally Catholic country where only a quarter of school children attend religious education classes. The Bible Society, concerned that most children are going through school without ever hearing about Jesus, has set itself an ambitious goal to give one million of Portugal's 1.7 million children at least one opportunity to learn who Jesus is. Through the school system, it is distributing the 16-page *Action Bible*, a booklet telling the story of Jesus in a graphic style that can be understood by children in the 4-14 age bracket.

The initial aim is to reach 150,000 children through partnership with churches and other Christian organisations. With further support it hopes to reach another 850,000 over the next two years.

*Sower*

## Christians in North Korea

*Tens of thousands of Christians in North Korea are believed to be detained in unspeakably harsh conditions in prison labour camps, where they are abused and literally worked to death. Individuals and sometimes entire families may be despatched to the camps simply for possessing a Bible or being caught praying. Some have been publically executed.*

*North Korea is consistently ranked as the most dangerous country in the world to be a Christian. Believers must meet in secret and at great risk. Authorities have at times trapped Christians by organising fake prayer meetings and asking children in school if they have seen their parents praying or reading the Bible. When Christians refuse to acknowledge Juche – the ideology of enforced veneration for the despotic Kim dynasty – they are seen as a threat to the state.*

*Persecuted Christians*

## Holistic ministry for Togo

A team of Christian volunteers, evangelists, teachers and medical professionals from Nigeria recently conducted programs for outreach, discipleship and practical aid in the neighbouring West African country of Togo. The aim was to strengthen and encourage local believers and initiate outreach to regions still needing to hear the gospel. False religions have left people in spiritual darkness and physical desperation. National Christians and churches are being mobilised to reach the unreached.

*Adonai*

## ***Evangelism in Zambia and Cameroon***

From Zambia: "We distribute these Bridgeway books to pastors, preachers and elders, and we appreciate your support for God's work here. I teach people how to be soul-winners and challenge them to go into different other areas to preach the gospel to the lost souls, because that's what Jesus told us to do. You are partners with us and your materials benefit other people through us. We hold camp meetings and crusades and we are serious with prayers day and night. We also establish life-saving clinics manned by volunteers to help people in health. Our aim is for a solution to the complete person, spiritual and physical."

From Cameroon: "We had a retreat last month and 114 new believers were baptized in a small river near the church. I need more books and Bibles for these people, so if you can send any more we will be grateful. I love you all and hope the Lord is keeping you strong in helping people around the world with these books."

*Bridgeway*

## **Bolivian challenges**

Bolivia is the poorest country in South America, but during the past half-century a consistent response to the gospel has seen the number of evangelicals increase nominally to 10% of the population. There are more than 30 Protestant Bible colleges and a variety of distance-education and in-service training programs. Christian ministries on tertiary campuses battle against widespread secularism and apathy to Christianity. The once dominant Catholic Church has declined, but indigenous religious traditions receive encouragement from the government. Low literacy levels, urban violence and the easy availability of drugs are challenges to both church and state.

*Operation World*

## **Triumph and tragedy in South Sudan**

Six years after celebrating its new nationhood, South Sudan's hopes for the future have seemingly crashed and burned amid civil war, escalating tribalism, human rights abuses and a catastrophic food crisis. After Africa's longest war, between the Muslim Arabic-speaking north of Sudan and the indigenously African Christian-influenced south, independence in 2011 brought hopes of peace, freedom, democracy and nation building. But in December 2013, South Sudan sank into civil war, driven by a power struggle between the president and his former deputy. Since then, more than 3 million of the country's 13 million people have fled their homes, a third of them seeking refuge in neighbouring countries. Almost 6 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance. The government spends 44% of its budget on military and security, but just 11% on health, education and humanitarian affairs combined.

The church in this predominantly Christian nation seems to be the only entity capable of bringing reconciliation. It stood faithfully alongside those who suffered through the most brutal periods of the independence struggle, and its leaders see reconciliation of opposing forces as the only way to peace. Those deeply-divided forces will have to work with the church if there is to be hope. This is a defining moment in the life of the nation and South Sudan's Christian leaders.

*Eternity*

## **Pakistan**

It is estimated that every year in Pakistan about 700 Christian girls are kidnapped, forcibly converted to Islam and forced into marriages with Muslims. Violent attacks against Christians in general are becoming disturbingly frequent. BF

## **Radio 'church' in Yemen**

*Reality Church* is a project that records simulated house-church meetings where the 'congregation' is made up of people from the Arabian Peninsula who now live elsewhere. The program is broadcast to listeners in Yemen, where officially there are no local Christians because all Yemenis are Muslim by law.

Yet hundreds of local Yemeni people send responses to the broadcaster and many have come to Christ. Listeners can engage as if in a physical church. Prayer has become a key part of the programs. FEBC

