

Somalis in Kenya

Al Shabaab, the Somali-based terrorist group, has increased its attacks on Christians in neighbouring Kenya. Through propaganda and lies, it incites Muslims across the region to take up arms against Kenya's 'infidels' and 'crusaders.' In the most recent attacks, dozens have been killed and many others kidnapped for propaganda or the sex trade. Human trafficking is an endemic problem in the Muslim areas of East Africa.

Religious Liberty

Present-day Albania

Christians in Albania are enjoying greater freedom today than in the past. One Christian congregation meets for worship in an old cinema and is allowed on special occasions to hold evangelistic meetings in the public square outside. Many new churches have been started in the last two decades. Christian leaders need wisdom to make best use of the outreach opportunities available and to make disciples of the new believers.

Adding to difficulties inherited from atheistic Communism is the growing presence of radical Islam. This is affecting Christians converted from the folk Islam found in small rural villages. Some are beaten by relatives and prevented from going to church.

Anti-Christian moves in Malaysia

One consequence of the growth of evangelicals in Malaysia is a proposal from a coalition of Islamic groups that the government ban evangelical Christianity, because it 'threatens religious harmony.' They propose anti-evangelical laws along the lines of those that became law in Russia last year. In June this year Malaysian authorities banned a prominent religious event in the mainland state of Malacca. Meanwhile, in the Borneo island state of Sabah, 20,000 Christians showed their refusal to be intimidated when they attended a series of revival rallies.

Barnabas Fund

Balloons take radios into North Korea

Radios that tune in to the gospel are smuggled into North Korea across the border from China or floated in by balloons from South Korea. Care packages that accompany the radios include healthy chocolate bars, small denominations of US cash (easily exchangeable without raising questions), medical items and MP3 players with special messages from the south. Over the past five years, the group in China has sent in over 2000 radios and the balloons have carried in over 900 radios. North Korea may look impenetrable, but Christian radio broadcasts have been reaching into the country for the past sixty years.

FEBC



Testing times for Nicaragua

Nicaragua has mineral wealth, fertile soil and a relatively low population (6 million), but two hundred years of dictatorships, civil wars and natural calamities have left it the poorest country in Central America. In a fractured society of family break-ups and material losses, large numbers of people have turned in desperation to God, with the result that one-fifth of the population is reckoned to be evangelical. But church resources are stretched to deal with social needs, and spiritual strength is diminished through internal divisions and conflicting theologies. Megachurches are becoming popular, but the need is for culturally appropriate churches that serve local needs and do not simply mimic foreign models.

Operation World

From a Nigerian missionary in Central African Republic

"The Bible and Discipleship Training program for children aged 6-18 that started in Central African Republic more than 15 years ago is witnessing second and third generation disciples among children, teens and young adults. Some now serve as teachers in the various children's schools and Bible Schools across the country, and some as praise and worship leaders in churches. Others are missionaries to children in unchurched villages.

"A vacation camp for children hosted in Bouar ended last month and we have another one next month. Please pray for the safety of children and for ministry team members, as we experience constant eruption of violence and hostilities because of civil war conflict."

Bridgeway

Egypt's Coptic Christians

The steel-like faith of Coptic Christians has helped them survive in the face of the horrendous terrorist attacks widely reported in the world press earlier this year. Not so widely reported were events that saw twenty thousand Coptic children attending a four-day event in Cairo called 'In His Image'. It was a Bible competition organised by 65 churches with 160 quiz participants and 3,000 talent show presentations. Many hundreds of complete Bibles and thousands of story Bibles and illustrated Bibles were distributed. A total of 1,300 teenagers did serious studies in the biblical books of Habakkuk and Mark. Christian were so uplifted in what is often a hostile environment that they plan to repeat such festivals.

Sower

The refugee migration

Reports have emerged that among the refugees arriving in Europe from Syria and Iraq, Christians are being deliberately disadvantaged by the dishonest activity of official translators.

These translators are invariably Muslim, and they have been caught distorting data so that Christians are shown in a bad light. The situation is not helped by government officials who have little knowledge of either Islam or Christianity.

At the same time, news has emerged of Christian groups in the European countries who are helping not only Christian refugees but also Muslims, some of whom have come to Christ.

Barnabas Fund

Hindu nationalism in India

The ideology of Hindutva (Hindu nationalism) is now used as a political tool to foster majority Hindu pride and use the majority Hindu vote to consolidate the political power and social privilege of the Hindu elites. The situation facing India's ancient and growing mission-focused Christian Church is exceedingly serious. Christians are slandered as anti-social people who instigate strife, threaten social cohesion and put national security at risk.

India's tribal peoples have long been the prime targets of Hindutva activists as they seek religious conversions for political gain. To their fury, they find themselves competing with Christian evangelists who are almost exclusively Indian nationals working locally or cross-culturally. Along with literacy, education, vocational training and healthcare, these Indian missionaries also introduce peace, love, dignity, grace and abundant life in Jesus Christ to people historically treated by the Hindu caste system as little more than rubbish. Like the high castes (who recoil at the notion of social equality), the Hindutva activists regard Christian missionaries as their chief enemies.

Further evidence of the rising tide of anti-Christian Hindu nationalism is that five more states have recently enacted anti-conversion laws. These will criminalise religious conversion, mandating prison terms and a fine for anyone found guilty of attempting to convert another person by fraud, force or allurement (all of which are undefined and therefore open to malicious abuse). Such laws inevitably foster hatred against minority communities and lead to persecution of Christians.

Religious Liberty

Bold move in Morocco

A number of converts from Islam have recently formed the National Coalition for Moroccan Christians, which has submitted a list of requests to Morocco's Human Rights Council. These include freedom of citizens to choose their religion, recognition of Moroccan churches and the right of Christians to give their children Christian names. Earlier this year the nation's High Religious Committee declared that if Muslims leave Islam they should not be punished.

BF

Israel's mixture

Christians in Israel face a lot of persecution. Among the eight million people living in Israel, there are many religions and beliefs, including Orthodox Jews in Jerusalem, Muslims in Bethlehem, secular Christians in Tel Aviv, and many other groups. The true followers of Jesus in Israel often face spiritual opposition and social ostracism.

OW

From a pastor in Lesotho

"I gave some of these books to a man who is teaching in the Catholic high school. He was very happy because he has much trouble deeply in his heart. Thank you for making it possible to help with such wonderful books. We are expanding to provide them to more Bible schools and leaders of Bible study groups. Please include any books you have on church planting or for home cell groups."

Bridgeway