

Bhutan – openings in a closed country

Officially, the Himalayan Buddhist country of Bhutan is closed to the gospel. It has no recognised churches but has many house churches where Christians meet in small groups. Much of the training of Bhutanese Christians is done across the border in India. Teams of workers consisting of Christians from Bhutan, Nepal and India teach and evangelise through conferences, short-term and long-term Bible schools, correspondence courses, children's work and youth outreach. New churches continue to take root in the border regions.

AAA

Conflict in Cameroon

The far north of Cameroon is very different from the rest of this mainly Christian country. Muslims are about 60% of the population in the north and are dominant in economics, politics, business and the courts. Boko Haram is exploiting conditions to burn churches, destroy Christian homes, plunder possessions and steal livestock. Christians need courage and patience, as well as the support of prayerful believers elsewhere.

Barnabas Fund

Ghana's Kasem-speaking region

A few years ago in northern Ghana the Kasem-language New Testament became available. It is now widely circulated in printed form, also downloaded onto cell phones and mp3 players. Through these media, along with the enthusiastic outreach of local evangelists, the Word of God is reviving, saving and transforming people in every region of the Kasem-speaking people.

Macnet

Communist states

China and Vietnam are Communist Party-ruled totalitarian states that have opened up economically in pursuit of prosperity. But both are exerting greater control over their citizens by cracking down on speech, religion and association.

In China, it is no longer possible to purchase Bibles on-line as the authorities move to take control not only of availability and distribution, but of the text itself. In Vietnam, as in China, human rights and religious liberty advocacy is undertaken at great personal risk. Two Christian religious liberty advocates received 12-15 year prison terms for alleged 'subversion.'

Religious Liberty

From a pastor in Serbia

“As 19 men stood in front of the church, sang and talked about Amazing Grace, their hearts and the hearts of all who listened were touched. Who can change a drug addict, who can give new life and hope, who can open the eyes of the blind? Jesus only! We thank God for each one.

*“Lazar came into the center a year ago like a walking skeleton. He was skin and bones with eyes that revealed his soul – total darkness and despair. Artist, actor by profession – lost his way only to find **The Way**. Now he writes songs that express what Christ did for him: ‘I was dead for years, and Jesus called out my name and He raised me from the dead!’ Each one of these men, who have been with us over this last 10 years, has a story. And God is rewriting those stories as they put their trust in Him.”*

Kuranji



Iran's minority groups

To ensure that non-Muslims can never enact laws that affect Muslims, the Iranian parliament has announced plans to legislate that, in state elections, people can vote only for candidates of their own religion. The only religions recognised are the state religion Islam and the minority religions Judaism, Zoroastrianism and Christianity. The new law will ensure that only Muslims get elected. Candidates from other religious groups will have no chance.

Barnabas Fund

Opportunity in Bangladesh

Bangladesh's constitution gives religious minorities the right to practise and share their faith, but Islam is the state religion. Christians from Muslim backgrounds face discrimination and sometimes violence, especially in rural areas. Although opportunities to spread the gospel abound, attacks on religious minorities by Islamist extremist groups, including Islamic State, are increasing.

Persecuted Church

Muslims finding Christ

In Uganda:

"I am a former Muslim and for some time I have been getting your books from a friend here. These have helped me to reach many other Muslims and as a result I have led many to the Lord, including some who were Muslim sheikhs like me. I have also started a school solely for Muslim converts, and I am humbly requesting more books for this ministry.

"The reason Uganda is being targeted by radical Muslims is because of Idi Amin, who in 1973 registered this country as an Islamic state. It is actually a Christian country, but Muslims say it was given to them and they want to reclaim it. Many people are converting from Islam to Christ but they lack the Word of God, and I am humbly appealing for 450 Bibles."

In Malawi

"I send Christian books for use in our churches, schools, libraries and houses. As I hear from people all over the nation, I am amazed to witness wonderful changes and see people coming to me asking for more books. They testify to me they now understand more about God's kingdom. I am happy to see more Muslims joined with us after reading some of your books. Kindly pray too for the orphans we care for."

Bridgeway

Brazil's young people

Although the church in Brazil has seen spectacular growth, there is a shortfall in ministry directed toward children and young people. An estimated 8 million children in Brazil are at risk of involvement in drug abuse, prostitution, murder and gang violence. Another 7 million are child labourers and 600,000 are girl prostitutes. *ow*

The Greeks of Melbourne

Melbourne, Australia, is well known as having the world's largest Greek-speaking community outside Greece and Cyprus. The percentage of evangelicals among the Greek-speaking diaspora around the world is two or three times higher than that of Greece – a reminder that Greece needs re-evangelising. Melbourne's Greek Evangelical Alliance links Greek-speaking congregations with each other and with churches in Greece, and transmits a weekly TV program with English-subtitles. Free English or Greek Testaments are always offered to viewers. Monthly inspirational rallies are also held. *New Life*

Central Asia's Silk Road

A new AM transmitter has been installed to reach the unevangelised people groups along Central Asia's fabled Silk Road. This opens doors to expanded radio broadcasting of God's Word to 60 million people across ten countries of deserts, mountains, steppes and oases where much of the population is still unreached with the gospel and often hostile to Christians. *TWR*

Christians in North Korea

A plea has been made to the US President to speak with the North Korean President on behalf of the heavily-persecuted North Korean Christians. Imprisoned Christians live in appalling labour camps, and millions of others are forced to meet in secret. Estimates vary, but there are thought to be 50,000 Christians in government labour camps. *Assist News Service*

Ethiopia and Eritrea

Ethiopia's new Prime Minister, a Protestant Christian convert from Islam, has initiated wide-sweeping changes that have brought a new spirit of hope to the country. Internal armed conflict has all but ceased and prospects for peace with its breakaway neighbour, Eritrea, are looking good. Meetings are taking place between top-ranking Ethiopian and Eritrean officials to end a war that has run on for twenty years.

The move, however, is meeting with some resistance, for powerful people on both sides of the border profit from the 'no war/no peace' status quo. Chief among these people is Eritrea's President, who has long used the 'Ethiopian threat' as a pretext to justify his dictatorship and prolonged suppression of dissent. The long-suffering Christians of Eritrea have been among the most brutally persecuted in the world, but news is now coming through that Christian prisoners are being released. *Religious Liberty*

Sierra Leone, West Africa

Sierra Leone, a diamond-rich nation, was at one time so racked by government corruption and successive civil wars that it was regarded as just about the world's poorest nation. It still has great economic and social needs, but it also has a lively church that is outreaching and multiplying. Churches are mushrooming across the country, and missionaries from the country carry the gospel internationally, even to Europe. *New Life*