

Brazil: preaching and practice

More and more people, particularly the poor, are being drawn to active and outreaching churches, partly because these people receive the kind of practical help that the government is not giving them. No doubt many attach themselves to churches for the wrong reasons, but these churches are providing a Christian service in reaching out to the slums with services in education, healthcare, sanitation and economic development. Many people are coming to genuine faith in Christ as they see the church demonstrating Christ's love in tackling social needs.

Gospel Herald

Kenya: one kind of Bible School

A local Christian writes: "I cannot think to start a proper Bible School, but with books like these I have started more classes to train these pastors and elders so that they can teach the members. God has given them a burden to teach, but we have nothing much to help them. We put on the roof only with a post and tree branches to stop the sun and rain. We now have 36 students and 9 of them are Muslims. I sometimes think to close because of lack of food. Two Muslim brothers who came from our Bible school before have opened a new church that now has 23 members, all Muslims. They meet under a tree."

Bridgeway

From a Nigerian missionary in Central African Republic

"The evangelism and church planting partnership between churches is continuing with much blessing as we keep planting new churches. At the same time many churches and several villages have been burnt or destroyed as a result of civil conflict, also some pastors. The women's work established by my late wife bears much fruit and those carrying on the work have arranged an international conference across the border in Congo. The Bible Training Centre in Kpetene has organised an evangelistic campaign in their community and we are praying for spiritual, social, and economic revival."

Adonai

Social media in Laos

In the poor and under-developed country of Laos, social media are having an unlikely part in advancing God's kingdom. Because radio and TV news bulletins are tightly controlled, social media are valued as a source of information.

A national-based Christian initiative says response to the Facebook page it began last year has been overwhelming. More than 55,000 people, mostly young people and many of them from a Buddhist or animist background, are following them regularly on Facebook. Last year more than 1,500 people across 12 provinces professed faith in Christ, resulting in the planting of 17 house churches.

Christian Aid Mission

Concern for Albanian society

Christians in Albania are concerned about the social deterioration of their country. With political instability, opposition protests, growing unemployment and a worsening economic situation, many people have lost hope. There is a call for prayer that God will work in the nation's affairs and help the Albanian church to be strong, prayerful and outreaching with the Gospel.

Getting work in Kyrgyzstan

The employment situation in Kyrgyzstan is so bad that increasing numbers of people are leaving the country in search of a better life elsewhere. Unfortunately, this includes some of the Christian minority whom the church can ill afford to lose. As Islamists become increasingly hostile, Christians are often pressured to deny Christ if they want to get a job.

The Uighur Christians of China

Christians of the Uighur ethnic group in north-west China are almost all converts from Islam. They face hostility from the Chinese authorities because they are Uighurs and from the rest of the Uighur community because they are Christians. Parts of the Bible have been translated and published in the Uighur language, but believers find it hard to get hold of a copy. Some are resorting to making hand-written copies and others have accessed the Scriptures online. All need the Scriptures if they are to grow and mature spiritually.

Barnabas Fund

India's Dalits

The Dalits of India, once called the untouchables, live all their lives with pain, insult and humiliation, but among them are large numbers of people who have found new life in Christ. Some of them who traditionally moved around from place to place looking for work are now settling down and starting churches.

In one church, more than 1,000 who come together to worship the Lord each week have now bought land on which to build a worship centre. As one leader put it, "We are tired of traveling and have finally found rest, joy, peace and freedom in the Lord. We can't wait to see our own place of worship built." Their aim is to reach the Dalits of their own generation with the life-giving message of the gospel.

World Outreach

Religious freedom violations

The International Society for Human Rights, a secular organisation, reports that 80% of all religious freedom violations in the world today are directed against Christians. Each year more than 100,000 Christians are murdered because of their faith. About 245 million people who identify as Christians live in countries with high levels of persecution, half of them facing threats of discrimination, interrogation, arrest, imprisonment, torture or death. Every five minutes a Christian is put to death somewhere in the world.

New Life/Open Doors

Northern Iraq

Hope has come to the Kurdistan region of northern Iraq through the rebuilding of the Armenian Orthodox Church in Erbil with government support. The opening of this church brings the prospect of peaceful coexistence of ethnic and religious groups in a region that only recently was a hotbed of ISIS activity and violence. Some Christians are beginning to return to their homes, many of which had been destroyed, badly damaged or taken over by Muslim settlers.

International Christian Concern



NZ troops receive the Word

Bible Society New Zealand has given 5,000 specially designed Bibles to the chaplaincy service of the New Zealand Defence Force. For the first time, the Bibles have been designed for members of the armed forces, with relevant prayers included. Most of the Bibles are given to new recruits who, if they choose to attest on the Bible at their swearing-in ceremony, are invited to keep the Bible for themselves. Bible Society New Zealand has provided Bibles to Defence Force chaplains since World War One.

Christian Today

Burundi's children

From a local church worker: "We had an outreach for children where more than 800 children gathered each day. We keep investing in children. This is the church of tomorrow. We need more materials for teaching them as well as their needs at home, because many of them are in great need. Yes, the salvation is free, but it cost much to our Lord, apostles, missionaries and many Christians in many places and in different times. To preach to all groups we can reach, this is our mission."

Bridgeway

Benin's changing scene

Since shedding its Marxist-Leninist government in 1989, the small West African country of Benin has gradually become one of Africa's most stable democracies. Christianity is nominally the largest religion, with Islam second, but Voodoo (Vodun) is strong and often in conflict with Christians. The government, which is committed to religious liberty, is supposed to protect people from being forced to undergo the terrifying Voodoo initiation rites, but it seems either unable or unwilling to uphold its own laws.

Barnabas Fund

Christian camping in Jordan

"The run-up to the annual camps is under way. Through teaching and activities, the focus is on Jesus and messages of God's love. Camp Gilead receives 700 campers annually, who are catered for in five different camps. Camps are currently geared towards nominal Christians and thankfully over the years many have come to know Christ. A lot of our current church leaders came to know Christ through these camps and are now leading their own church camps. We need 120 counsellors for the coming camps."

Manara