

### China’s Hong Kong appointment

A hardliner known for his crusade against churches in mainland China has been appointed the new head of China’s office in Hong Kong. This man, a close ally of President Xi Jinping, became notorious for his systematic demolition of thousands of crosses on churches across China. His appointment is a sign that Beijing aims to tighten its control over Hong Kong. Observers believe this will happen not through a ‘sledgehammer blow’ but through a ‘bloodless strangulation.’ *New Life*

### Brazil’s Christians reach out

A Christian campaign in Brazil called *Send* aims at activating every Christian into a life of Christlike action. At a recent 12-hour event at three stadiums, more than 140,000 people attended and a further 1.7 million watched on the Portuguese livestream and 560,000 on the English one. Organisers say what is happening today in Brazil will impact all nations, as Christians commit to Jesus’ Great Commission to reach the world. The country’s President, who openly declares himself a believer in Jesus, stirred and challenged the rally with his claim that ‘Brazil belongs to God.’ *Christian headlines*

### Goals in Myanmar

*“It is 19 years since we started this church and we have now planted more than a dozen other churches. Our own Sunday attendance is about 120. But because of the way everything is growing, including the Bible school, the Lord has given us the vision to plant 300 churches over the next 30 years.”*

### Malawi’s schools

*“Many souls have been won to the Lord through your books, especially the Bible Commentary and Bible Dictionary at the secondary school where I put copies in the library. Those who became believers are teachers and students.”*

### A Zimbabwean ponders

“Every day I wonder what is happening to the Christian world. It is like confusion is piling daily on why exactly did Christ die. Was it to make us materially rich? Was it to be physically healthy? These types of messages are bombarding us from all angles, meaning that being materially poor or unhealthy is a sign of spiritual poverty. This is affecting spirituality, as many are now worshipping God in pursuit of the material world instead of working with fear and trembling through clean lives and hearty reverence toward God. We are under siege.” *Bridgeway*

### Leprosy, the ‘forgotten plague’

Headlines relating to the ‘forgotten plague’ of leprosy have called attention to one of the most feared diseases in history. Each year more than 200,000 new victims are infected by this dreadful disease (also known as Hansen’s disease). Christian ministries are still at the forefront of provided treatment and support – physical, emotional and spiritual – for victims. These days the disease can be cured, but if left untreated it can cause disfigurement and disability for life. *Christian Newswire*

### Quiet evangelism in Israel

*In a country where both Jews and Muslims consider it taboo to enter a Christian church, small Discovery Bible Study groups are being set up in private homes. Progress in spreading the gospel is slow and unspectacular, but with more than twenty of these study groups now operating, many people are being introduced to the Christian message.* *OM*

### Arabic Christian TV

Locally produced Christian programs are being broadcast by radio and TV in Arabic, Persian and Turkish languages. All around the world, speakers of these languages are finding these programs also in convenient formats on their hand-held electronic devices. *SAT-7*

### Egypt’s helpful leader

Before the current President came to power in Egypt, registration of new church buildings and repairs to old ones were almost impossible. Since the President introduced laws in 2016 to allow churches to be licensed, 1,171 of the 3,730 churches that applied have been licensed. The rate of registrations is slowing because of cumbersome procedures enforced by petty officials. Praise God that Egypt’s national government is trying to enable Christians to worship freely. Pray that this goodwill might filter down to the local officials. *Barnabas Fund*

## ***Not everyone has internet access***

*From Tanzania: “Do not worry about me when I am for some days out of communication, because all my contacts I do to you is via Kigoma internet cafes 120 kms away, as there is no internet cafe in my village. Sometimes I get a little chance in a mountains National Park office, as our village is nearby at about three hours walking or one and a half hours on bicycle. But it is not reliable, because when we get there sometimes senior staffs do not allow us to use their computer offices. Therefore I must wait for chance to email you one day again when I can go to Kigoma.”*

*From India: “I know your books are on the web but we do not have computers, and our gospel teams are poor and suffering. Even to get someone to download and print is too expensive, so that is why we need your help. We want to train more men and women in the coming days using your books. Our land is full of idolatry and only the Word of God can bring people to the light. Can you please come and teach us. We invite you with great love.”*

*Bridgeway*

## **The Christian youth of Turkey**

There are very few Christian youth in Turkey and many of them can feel discouraged and isolated. Some are even bullied because of their faith in Christ.

The ministry *Kids in Turkey* seeks to address this area of need by running youth camps twice a year where times of worship, teaching and practical activities aim to help youth in Turkey become spiritually equipped to remain faithful followers of Jesus Christ. Social events throughout the year connect Christian youths for friendship and encouragement.

*VOM*

## **Russia: the price of helping others**

Some years ago, Russian Christians from a church in Moscow started a ministry to help alcoholics and drug addicts and, by God's grace, hundreds of people were freed from addiction. Using their own money, these outreaching Christians rented apartments and lived with the addicts as a kind of community, teaching them the Word of God.

Then, in January 2017, four of the Christians were arrested on a charge of kidnapping addicts and holding them captive as ‘slaves.’ Two and a half years later they were found guilty in court and given sentences of five to eight years in a penal colony – a sentence that is more than some murderers get. Lawyers for the four have lodged an appeal, but humanly speaking it is not likely to succeed. The harsh sentences are intended to be a deterrent to others who seek to minister Christ to a broken society.

*Barnabas Fund*

## **Serbia and the gospel**

In a country where the government seems indifferent to entrenched ethnocentrism in mainline religious groups, the small evangelical community reaches out to all, regardless of ethnicity or religion. The Orthodox Church, seeking to maintain its influence in national affairs, resents the efforts of those who serve ethnic minorities.

In spite of this, increasing numbers of Romani (gypsies) are coming to Christ, and the large Hungarian and Slovak communities in the north provide strong gospel outreach. Christian radio ministries are very effective, with broadcasts for many hours each week in Serbian, Macedonian, Bosnian, Romani and other languages. Studios also provide literature and other follow-up for listeners.

*OW*

## **Iran's sham election**

Because of the purging of centrists and reformists, the recent elections in Iran delivered the expected result, so that traditionalists and hardliners now dominate Iran's parliament. In Tehran, a hotbed of dissent, only 25% of registered voters bothered to participate in the sham election; unsurprisingly, all 30 seats went to traditionalists. Nation-wide the turnout was only 42%, the lowest since the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

Hardline conservatives now occupy 221 out of 290 seats, while centrist and reformist representation has dropped from 121 to a mere 20 seats. The remaining seats are held by independents.

Persecution seems set to escalate, as Iranian authorities look for ways to neutralise the growth of the rapidly expanding church.

*Religious Liberty*

## **Sri Lanka's religious mix**

The majority-Buddhist country of Sri Lanka has sizeable minorities of Hindus, Christians and Muslims. In the Tamil areas of eastern Sri Lanka, aggressive Muslim activity is pressurising Hindus and Christians to convert to Islam. Some villages are now totally Muslim and been given Arabised names, while about fifty new Muslim villages have sprung up with Arab funding.

*Barnabas Fund*