

Libya’s handful of Christians

The Christian presence in Libya is very small – a handful of national Christians and a number of migrant workers. The country also is a passage for refugees from various backgrounds fleeing places such as Eritrea and Yemen in a bid to reach Europe. Islamists target Christians and refugees for killing, kidnap, forced conversion or sale on slave markets. The country has been in a state of chaos and civil war since the overthrow of Gaddafi in 2011.

Persecuted Church

Radio in Russia

In the past year, one radio ministry to Russia has received half a million written responses and 1,500 direct phone calls, distributed 4,000 radios and run many online workshops and information sessions for new Christians. In spite of government obstructions to gospel activity, God is working in the lives of thousands of Russians.

FEBC

Iranians making a difference

With more than 9,000 coronavirus deaths in a population of 81 million, Iran is the epicentre of the pandemic in the Middle East. But local Christians are risking their lives to help fellow citizens with food and hygiene parcels.

Because of Iran’s Islamic extremist regime, the church has been driven underground and operates through hidden networks. Remarkably, the Iranian church has been able to mobilize online networks into offline outreach. This overt Christian response to a national crisis has seen the underground church effectively coming above ground in what is a very high-risk environment.

Meanwhile, around the world Iranians continue to come to Christ in huge numbers. A news source in Sweden reports that a converted Muslim woman has been the means of a thousand Iranians finding salvation in Jesus Christ and forming two new churches. These churches are now training other churches in how to reach out to Muslim and disciple new believers.

New Life

Uzbekistan breakthrough

Churches in Uzbekistan can only register in this Muslim-majority country if they have at least 100 members. Many small congregations therefore have met in private homes, making them vulnerable to police raids and heavy fines. But the construction of a new, officially registered church – the first permitted in 20 years – allows hundreds more Christians to meet for worship without breaking the law.

This development is even more remarkable because the host church, which owns the premises, is a congregation of Uzbek-speaking converts. The new building seats 400 people, allowing a further six congregations to meet there for worship, while six other congregations continue to use the smaller old building.

Barnabas Fund



Bible students in Zambia

“We distribute the books to pastors, mostly those who are beginning new churches, to help them get equipped so that they don't mislead their followers. We distribute also to theological students who are studying by distance learning because they cannot afford Bible college. But the challenge they are facing is research material, and last year only seven of the fourteen students managed to graduate. Those who had the books all performed very well, so now we want to get these books to everyone who is studying. This will also help them when they have to teach new converts and start new churches.”

Bridgeway

The island of Lesbos, Greece

A small but much loved church building on the Greek island of Lesbos was again vandalized recently. Tensions have been high on the island, where clashes occur frequently between police and asylum-seekers protesting about overcrowding in their camp. The asylum-seekers, mainly Muslims from Afghanistan and Syria who arrived by boat from nearby Turkey, take out their frustration on Christian targets. Yet amid the unrest, a number of the refugees have come to know the Lord Jesus. Consequently, they suffer persecution and discrimination within the camp. They ask for our prayers.

Barnabas Fund

Training India's preachers

Through the initiative of a local Indian ministry, the standard of preaching in churches is being helped by a one-year residential course that concentrates on expository Bible teaching. The training is linked with local churches and ministries. The student preachers as well as their listening congregations have commented on the difference it makes when the Bible is preached within its own context, allowing the Scripture itself to enlighten and convict. Teenagers in particular are responding to being shown a better way and even non-believers are being reached in a way that enlightens their understanding of Christianity. DBI

Canada's challenges

With Canada's increase in pluralism and secularism, the influence of Christianity has declined. Non-religious people grow in number, as do non-Christian religions, especially among immigrants. Yet many churches, instead of giving up in despair, have been re-energised to reach out to the lost and plant new churches. This is so not just among mainline denominations and conservative Protestant groups, but also among Catholic churches, where a significant minority have experienced charismatic renewal. Operation World

Opposition in Israel

A broadcasting licence issued to a Hebrew-language Christian TV channel has been revoked for 'illegally seeking to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ in Israel.' The network is appealing the decision. Premier News

China: government interference

New government regulations aim to control all activity of churches in China, from the formation of management bodies to the content of services and communications. Religious leaders will be required to follow the guidelines set out by the Communist Party that spread its values and policies. The comments of one church leader were that this sounds like 'messing with the message of the gospel' and could be more dangerous than the physical crackdowns.

These new regulations come just weeks after a pastor who spoke out for religious freedom was sentenced for 'inciting subversion of state power.' In spite of this heavy-handed interference, the church in China is reportedly growing faster than ever – about 1.2 million converts a year, bringing the estimated number of Christians to 150 million. Open Doors

The Christians of Turkey

It is almost a century since modern Turkey was established as a secular state, but the current President makes no secret of his desire to re-establish it as a Muslim state as in the Ottoman Empire, under which Christians and other non-Muslims suffered. He now has court approval to change the ancient Christian landmark Hagia Sophia from a museum to a mosque. This bodes ill for Turkey's remnant Greek, Assyrian and Armenian Christians (the descendants of genocide survivors), as well as for Turkey's growing number of Christian converts from Islam. Religious Liberty

Towards self-sufficiency in Malawi

"With our church support group we are caring for 20 chronically ill patients in six villages. Among the care and support we wash their clothes, sweep inside and outside their house, give them flour, soap, sugar, salt and share the Word of God. We also give shoes to children who have none.

"I have land and plant crops to feed the poor, feed ourselves and sell in the market. I grow things like maize and cassava and groundnuts. I started a small shop to sell these products and this generates income, because the small amount from the church cannot be enough to support us. I am also constructing another small house so that I can rent it out when we are old. I have put down the foundation and will go a little at a time." Bridgeway

Republic of Niger

The Republic of Niger lies largely within the Sahara Desert, with most of its 22 million people living in the south. The nation is almost entirely Muslim, but the official policy of religious tolerance is appreciated by the country's tiny Christian minority.

When an evangelist re-visited some village churches planted three months earlier, instead of finding the handful of people he had left behind, he was greeted in each place by about thirty, most of them new believers.

In a largely oral culture, people had been responsive to the telling of Bible stories, though it was clear they could not be disciplined through storytelling alone. Audio Bibles were left behind and these are now being used, along with more frequent visits by the evangelist, to help believers 'grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.' OM