

From three regions in Zambia

1. "We help look after orphans in people's homes. Once we only looked after ten, then 20 last year, but now we look after 50 orphans here in the town and 75 in rural areas. Most in the town come here for breakfast and lunch every Saturday, and for school requisites from us such as uniforms, school fees, readers, text books and exercise books. These children wear their school uniform all week because they have no other clothes. We also need farming implements to work the 6 hectares of land, so that we can grow food for the many children who have serious problems in their homes."
2. "Many children must walk long distances to school and as a result many have stopped going. We are getting the church families to take orphans into their homes to look after them, but they have trouble getting enough money to feed them. Thank you for the sewing machines. We are teaching women to sew so they can earn some income."
3. "I came back from some rural churches where I was teaching on biblical leadership. Each church should have a proper board of elders and we would like them also to have a library so that elders and preachers can learn on different Bible books and subjects for the sake of Christ's kingdom."

Bridgeway

Bosnia needs the gospel

The devastating civil war of the 1990s segregated the three main people groups of Bosnia into Bosniaks (mostly Muslim), Croats (mostly Catholic) and Serbs (mostly Eastern Orthodox). This segregation has awakened deeply rooted nationalistic prejudices and made it difficult for Bosnians to hear and respond to the gospel. Pray for radio programs, Bible distribution and the personal witness of Christians to bring light and salvation to Bosnians.

30 Days of Prayer

For the children of Yemen

A children's Bible story ministry in war-torn Yemen provides an avenue of hope to families devastated by the conflict being carried out by other Arab countries of the region. These are all Muslim countries. In Yemen, as in the others, Christians are few in number and often the innocent victims of conflicts among neighbouring nations.

FEBC

Unreached group in Bangladesh

The Shaikh people of Bangladesh are among the world's largest unreached people groups. There are no known Christians among them, but the gospel is now reaching them through solar-powered audio Scriptures. Bangladesh is more open to Christian activity than most Muslim countries, but there are always Islamic pressures from Pakistan and other religious influences from immediate neighbours such as India (Hindu) and Myanmar (Buddhist).

Mission Network News

The Christians of Aceh, Indonesia

Aceh, which came to world prominence in the devastating tsunami of 2004/5, is the farthest west province of Indonesia and its most Islamic. The church there is growing, in spite of severe persecution. Church buildings that survived the tsunami destruction are being destroyed by Muslim mobs, who carry out their attacks with impunity. Applications to construct new church buildings must be supported by the community, which in a strictly Islamic region is almost impossible. Christians have for years been meeting in tents and even then are often forced to move from one location to another. Yet their numbers continue to increase.

Christians in Tunisia

Compared to other countries in the region, Tunisia (98% Muslim) is relatively open, and even the Islamists are considered more 'reasonable' than those of other North African countries. The constitution guarantees freedom of religion, though *sharia* has a significant place within family law. In civil matters, however, academics, trade unions, media, journalists and lawyers are all able to operate more openly.

Tunisia's Christian community is mainly expatriates, especially from Africa, though it includes some Tunisian converts from Islam and their children. Within the Ministry of Religion there is a Jewish section, headed by a rabbi, but no Christian section, even though the country has more Christians than Jews. Churches are not prevented from functioning but have no legal status and therefore cannot own property. Believers pray that they may be properly recognised and their freedom of religion affirmed in reality as well as in the constitution.

Barnabas Fund

Self-help in Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone, a Muslim-majority country but with religious freedom, is still recovering from the crippling civil war of the 1990s. Rural regions in particular continue to suffer severe economic hardship. Pastors and evangelists who struggle to survive are being given training in good farming practices, so that they can not only support themselves but also bring hope and encouragement to the rural communities where they live and work.

Barnabas Fund

North Koreans in China

A remarkable work of evangelism and discipling is carried on by Chinese Christians among North Koreans who have taken refuge across the border. Local Chinese Christians, knowing how to negotiate the country's extensive surveillance network, have become experts at keeping themselves off the radar. They know where the North Koreans are and how to speak with them without raising suspicion.

For the most part these Chinese are just ordinary citizens doing this ministry on top of their workaday jobs. They themselves receive teaching, encouragement and direction through other networks that penetrate China. The Korean converts in turn look for ways of taking their newfound faith back to North Korea.

VOM

Sri Lanka's zealots

Intolerance is escalating in Sri Lanka as Buddhist nationalist zealots grow in boldness. This is largely because of the implied backing of the recently elected Buddhist nationalist prime minister, who has given strong indications that he will pursue anti-conversion legislation. A special UN report noted that one of the main reasons that religious extremism and hate speech thrive in Sri Lanka is the culture of impunity for the perpetrators. The country is at risk of descending into ethno-religious conflict.

BF

Good news for Chad

Just over half of Chad's 8 million people are Muslim, but the Christian presence is vibrant and outreaching. A new Christian radio station, which broadcasts from rented rooms in a local TV studio, has had an extraordinary response from listeners, particularly during the coronavirus crisis. The daily gospel program, which receives more than a hundred responses each week, offers information, advice, prayer and guidance. On Sundays the programs go out in a variety of local languages, with the aim of making contact with as many people as possible in their heart language.

FEBC

Ups and downs of Covid-19 restrictions

Reports of the worldwide impact of coronavirus vary from one country to the next, bringing catastrophic consequences in most places but with encouraging outcomes in some. During lockdown in the largely-Muslim country of **Kyrgyzstan**, when Christians could not meet for worship, the authorities asked one pastor if his church could be used for quarantining the infected and the homeless. The pastor was delighted that the building would continue to serve people, so his church members got busy feeding those in quarantine. The authorities, seeing their enthusiasm, then gave them lists of isolated elderly people to feed, issuing them with travel passes to move around the city. Christians have proved themselves to be loving, caring and trustworthy.

But in many countries of **Africa, Asia and Latin America** the coronavirus restrictions have been devastating. Lockdowns have left most people with no means of income, many have been cut off from the farming plots they rely upon for food and money, hunger is everywhere, starvation and health problems have multiplied and pastors have lost income because their congregations can no longer support them. In many places violence and lawlessness have increased because the authorities have diverted security resources, ostensibly to combat the pandemic.

In many **Western countries** governments have been supportive of those who have lost work and income through the severe restrictions. Many citizens are apprehensive, others indifferent. In **Australia** one social research agency found that during lockdown restrictions, more than a third of those surveyed said they prayed more, more than 40% said they thought about God more and nearly half said they thought more about their mortality and the meaning of life. But during the same period, domestic violence and online gambling surged.

Some churches in the **USA** have responded to lockdowns by using their facilities to teach school children. Adherence to health protocols requires physical adjustments to their facilities but brings meaningful interaction with many troubled families.

Evangelical churches across **Russia and former Soviet countries** are a lifeline for thousands of people during the pandemic. Christians have provided more than 1.5 million free meals to families facing hunger. One church has handed out 500 food packages to medical workers caring for Covid-19 patients, with a Bible included in each package. In a region where little more than 1% of the people can be reckoned as evangelical Christians, believers are letting their light shine.

Christianity Today/ Christian Newswire/New Life/ Barnabas Fund