

Middle East: Christian TV bringing hope

Soaring audience engagement shows that Christian television is bringing hope to Middle East viewers. The Christian network SAT-7 says 2020 was a record year for interactions between its viewers and audience support teams. Since the Covid pandemic hit, there has been a 30% climb in audience engagements, with more than 300,000 audience engagements. The growth has been especially marked among Turkish viewers. Audience engagement for children's programs has climbed by 90%. The TV service has proved to be a trusted source of health advice, spiritual support and companionship.

ASSIST News

The villages of Laos

Several months ago the national government of Laos introduced a law giving churches the right to preach, conduct services and have contact with Christians in other countries, but the law is taking some time to be implemented by village authorities in some rural areas. Reports are still being received of Christians being evicted from their homes and villages because they refuse to renounce their Christian faith.

Barnabas Fund

Pakistan's vulnerable girls

Human rights groups in Pakistan estimate that up to 1000 religious-minority girls are victims of forced conversion and marriage every year. These are approximately 700 Christians and 300 Hindus. Not all are minors and not all are abducted. Some girls and their parents are groomed, until they are reluctantly convinced it is the only way to escape poverty and persecution. The girls are either lured or trafficked from their own community into the Muslim community where they are exploited, abused and forced to produce children who will be Muslim from birth.

Religious Liberty

Internet service in Peru

A national pastor in Peru, whose church seeks to help the disadvantaged, decided to instal its own internet antenna in order to educate children in remote regions. There are now 426 children receiving the church's educational services free. Not only are the children helped, but other people in the village can now access the church's online services.

Christian Today

School in Bethlehem

A Christian school in Bethlehem provides a good learning environment for 600 children from the minority Christian community. In a region where Christians in general are disadvantaged and often suffer harsh discrimination, Christian families are uplifted and their children given hope.

Barnabas Fund

Evangelistic teams in Zambia

An evangelist writes: "I attended many conferences to get our teams together for review and encouragement. Mwense south was attended by 7 teams out of 10 and Mwense north by 5 team out of 10. It was good to hear the reports on how they are winning souls for the Lord. In Nchelenge district, we were able to visit and encourage 16 teams out of 23. Some are asleep due to various reasons and some are active. We learnt that the combined forces of teams in Chienge district had planted 8 new churches and they are in need of Bibles. Chienge is 450km from where we live. We have more working areas further than that and we are finding it difficult to make follow-ups to encourage the teams and new churches. We use public transport and bicycles."

Rebuilding afflicted churches in South Sudan

An evangelist writes: "I went up by bus to my home village 150 miles from Juba using the damaged roads. While there we spent most of our times preaching words and praying for every sick people we met on our way, but sad to say all the Christian books you sent there some time back many were destroyed in the fighting. This makes Christians have less power. In some times a famine was declared and countless people faced starvation. When I visited places I have seen the results of spending years in refugee camps, but feeding programs with education programs are taken up by many local churches and charities. The challenges are enormous but our trust is in God. He is a powerful God, always ready to save the world in whatever way possible to him."

Bridgeway

Britain and Covid

In spite of the distress Covid-19 has brought to the UK, surveys reveal that the pandemic has had some good outcomes. One survey reveals that people in general are showing more kindness to each other, especially evident in reaching out to strangers and offering help to those in need. The poll, which surveyed 2,090 adults online, found that 27% were writing more notes to people they don't see often, and 25% are saying hello to strangers more than they did before. The poll also found that people have more compassion for what is going on overseas, with 41% of the public saying they worry more about what is happening in the world than they did previously. Those in the 18-24 age group showed the highest percentage of increased concern at 46%, compared with 37% in the 45-54 age group.

Premier News

Malawi: new churches in Muslim areas

From a local pastor: "I am pleased to tell you that God opened the doors of evangelism to two Islamic communities and the results were that I was able to open a church in each community. I was happy to see Muslims converted to Christ and I shared with them some of the Bibles and Bridgeway books. Really, we have made an impact to the country through personal evangelism and through your books. Also through these books my own understanding of the Bible has increased greatly."

Bridgeway

Uzbekistan

Fifteen years ago the Uzbek authorities cancelled the registration of a church in the city of Nukus, evidently hoping that if there was no registration, the church would cease to exist. But the church, which was mostly converts from Islam, continued to function underground and in fact grew, despite hundreds of arrests and frequent bullying, torture and fines. Then, a few months ago, the authorities granted the church's registration again. The prayers of God's people were answered and their faithful endurance rewarded.

Barnabas Fund

Cambodian growth

The church in Cambodia continues to grow. While publishing agencies in Phnom Penh continue to produce literature to help Christians, solar radios help those in remote areas who have limited access to electricity or who lack literacy skills.

FEBC

Iraq's indigenous Christians

In August 2014 ISIS 'ethnically cleansed' northern Iraq's Nineveh Plains of its indigenous Assyrian Christian inhabitants. About 70,000 Assyrians fled east to Erbil and 60,000 north to Dohuk, close to the Turkish border and historically an Assyrian region. Turkish jets recently bombed the area around Dohuk and anxious Christians are preparing to flee yet again. With no international voice speaking out for them, Iraq's indigenous Assyrian Christians feel betrayed, abandoned and gravely imperilled.

Religious Liberty

Life in Zimbabwe

"In our latest evangelism effort, two of us preachers with five other church members went house to house visiting. We visited 94 homes and reached 283 people including those we met on the road. On the next Sunday, twelve visitors came to church and later three were baptized. But we need our postal system to get back to normal. Life is getting more difficult in Zimbabwe. Right now food is unaffordable, we are living without electricity and to fetch firewood is a criminal offence because of trying to preserve trees. At times we live like slaves in our own country. We have decided to use gas but we don't have a gas cylinder or a gas stove."

Bridgeway

Somaliland a region of tension

A Christian couple in Somaliland were arrested when police, acting on a tip-off, found Christian materials in their home. The couple were accused of being 'apostates from Islam and spreading Christianity.' But after being held in custody for six weeks, they were unexpectedly released, enabling them to travel with their youngest child to a safe country and be reunited with their two older children.

The self-proclaimed Republic of Somaliland broke away from the rest of Somalia twenty years ago and is still not recognised internationally. Its tiny Christian community need our prayers as they seek to survive in a strictly Islamic society. The Al Shabaab terrorist group, based in Somalia, hunts down and kills Somali converts to Christianity, its stated aim being to establish a 'pure' Islamic caliphate across Somalia and north-eastern Kenya.

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