

Christianity in Belarus

The church in Belarus is growing, even as the nation’s overall population declines. Although it became independent when the old USSR collapsed, Belarus remains, in political structures and everyday operations, a throwback to the era of Communist dictatorship. It is firmly under the domination of Russia.

State laws forbid meeting in homes for worship, forming congregations of fewer than 20 people, ministering outside the home city, opening religious schools and importing or distributing non-state-approved literature. Evangelicals suffer severely under this repression, yet their numbers keep increasing.

OWBF

Burkina Faso

A group of Jihadists is suspected of killing 15 Christians during a baptism service in Burkina Faso. Attacks on innocent civilians, especially Christians, are increasing across the northern regions of this West African country, resulting in many churches being left deserted as Christians flee the escalating violence. Thousands of people have been killed and more than one million are now displaced, largely at the hands of Al Qaeda and Islamic State. Once a tolerant Muslim country, Burkina Faso is now designated by the UN as harbouring ‘the world’s fastest-growing humanitarian crisis.’

New Life

North Indian outreach

A national ministry based in Delhi has an extensive ministry of evangelistic, teaching, training and humanitarian projects across heavily populated northern India – a region where the Christian presence is less and the Hindi dominance more than elsewhere in India. Hundreds are discipled in a variety of well established centres, while former students are active in helping the churches. Special ministries teach such things as literacy, sewing, trade skills and healthy living.

DBI

From a pastor in Cameroon

“Our problem here is that in every five or six Christians you can only see one who owns a Bible. In most cases those who can read go to church with pens and little papers and any quotation from the Bible they just write the verse on a piece of paper and during the week they move round and beg for a Bible and read from there. The good thing is that many have of late seen the way to God as the only right path.”

Bridgeway



Jordan’s active Christians

A Jordanian ministry continues its practical aid to the country’s thousands of refugees, most of whom come from Syria and Iraq. These energetic Jordanian Christians face constant challenges in providing enough food, clothing, education and employment opportunities.

Apart from aid to refugees, the ministry runs local camps for a variety of people, both Christians and non-Christians. The growing work has expanded into media, counselling and a variety of training programs, which are transforming the lives of men and women, young and old.

Manara

Food shortages

Across the world, an estimated 2.28 billion people face hunger and starvation because of a lack of reliable access to food. Among the causes are war, economic downturns, environmental disasters, famine and Covid-19.

Barnabas Fund

New Zealand today

As in most countries where Western culture dominates, the church in New Zealand is threatened as much by indifference as by other religions. The nation’s prosperity, stability and freedoms attract immigrants, especially from Samoa, Tonga, Cook Islands, Fiji and other places around the Pacific, but can create apathy in the majority populace.

Twenty percent of the people of New Zealand’s largest city, Auckland, are Polynesians, giving it the largest Polynesian population of any city in the world. Many of these are indigenous Maoris, but all peoples struggle with getting the right mix between past and present. Christians from New Zealand have always been among the leaders in international mission activity, and now many are rising to the challenges of secularism and immigration at home.

Operation World

Congo's freedoms under attack

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is about 92% Christian and less than 2% Muslim. However, fundamentalist Islam, which is pro-Sharia and pro-jihad, is gaining a foothold in the north-east. Alongside massacres and destruction, the Islamists are engaging in vigorous proselytising, some Christians being among those who have been abducted and forced to convert. Disgruntled ethnic groups are being lured with the promise that if they convert to Islam, then Islamic State will fight for them.

Congo, which has long been characterised by inept government, needs prayer. This was driven home when 24 villagers were killed by Islamist militants in the north-east province of Kivu. Congo soldiers in neighbouring Ituri province found another 17 bodies, also believed to be victims of Islamic State attackers. Both Ituri and North Kivu are under a state of emergency.

Religious Liberty/Barnabas Fund

Draft laws on religion floated in Vietnam

Vietnam's ruling Communist Party has published two draft decrees concerning the implementation of the Law on Belief and Religion and the punishment of those who break it. While unregistered churches would remain illegal and subject to severe criminal penalties, the new decrees would worsen the situation for registered churches by extending government regulation over all religious activities, including online meetings. Vietnam appears to be following China, which has in recent years passed numerous 'Regulations' and 'Measures' designed to regulate the church to the point of suffocation. Even some Vietnamese officials, shocked at the severity of these laws, have urged church leaders to object.

Religious Liberty

The Christians of Qatar

There are two kinds of Christian communities in Qatar, the larger consisting of migrant workers, the smaller of Qatari converts from Islam.

Although the migrants are forbidden to evangelise Muslims, they are sometimes allowed to hold large Christian events. A major problem for them is lack of church space, since only a select number of churches have been allowed to establish buildings in the designated religious complex outside the capital, Doha. Many migrant workers live and work in poor conditions and are vulnerable to discrimination.

The other Christian community, being of Qatari citizenship, face greater dangers. Some even seek refuge by living within an international community rather than among their own ethnic group. They still face discrimination in their employment and are unlikely ever to have their change of religion officially recognised. There are very few reports of Christians being killed, imprisoned or harmed, partly because the number of converts is low and many keep their faith secret.

Open Doors

The young people of Brazil

In spite of Brazil's spectacular church growth, there is still a shortfall of ministry directed toward children and young people. Although some churches have begun to take seriously the need for specially prepared ministries for school-aged children and youth, Brazil still has millions of children who are at risk of exploitation as child labourers or of involvement in drug abuse, prostitution, murder and gang violence.

Operation World

Philippines

Concerning the election of new president Ferdinand Marcos Jr (son of a former dictator), local Christians are not sure what this will mean for the country. But they have reaffirmed their goals "to meet the needs of 100 million-plus Filipinos, not just spiritually but through feeding and clothing the poor, caring for abandoned children, ministering in congested cities and training church planters to go into remote areas where people still haven't heard the gospel."

AMG

From a pastor in Malawi:

"I write to express my sincere thanks to you for the books you sent. One set will go to a pastor living on the border of Malawi and Mozambique and two others will go to new pastors just setting out in the work. We have many pastors who are in need of books because they don't have any, or hardly any. We pray Almighty God to bless those who pay for these books for us and enable them to continue so that servants of God here who have no Bible Commentary or Bible Dictionary one day might have one."

Bridgeway