

Christians arrested in Iran

Earlier this year, 69 Farsi-speaking Christian converts from Islam were arrested in house churches across five cities of Iran. Christian worship in Iran’s majority language Farsi [Persian] is forbidden, as is any Christian evangelism. Farsi-speaking Christians are typically charged with ‘acting against national security.’ Most of the arrested Christians were later released, but only after being forced to attend Islamic re-education classes and sign commitments not to engage in Christian activities. Ten of the Christians are still being held.

Barnabas Aid

Audio Bible for Bhutan

Bhutan, a small Himalayan country of fewer than 900,000 people sandwiched between India and China, is a Buddhist country where other religions cannot be legally propagated. Because the only translation of the Bible in the local language is neither easy to obtain nor easy to read, a new version has been produced in the form of an audio Bible. This is being discretely distributed and is reaching into remote regions.

Christians in Bhutan are few and mainly Nepalese (who overall constitute about a third of the population). There are, however, a few small congregations drawn from the majority Drukpa population. A leader of one underground church was recently arrested and sentenced to 13 years imprisonment.

New Life

The believers of North Korea

According to the World Watch list, North Korea is always the world’s most difficult country for Christians. Despite their daily hardships and constant risk to their lives, North Korean believers remain positive in spirit and are grateful to all who stand with them in prayer. Here are extracts from their communications:

“According to this Scripture, our Lord has poured grace upon grace on the North Korean underground church so that we can remain faithful. This is more precious than our life. We will move forward with responsibility and duty. Our future will be bright and abundant if we continue to be faithful and transfer our faith to the next generation.”

“We North Korean Christians must walk the narrow road. There are trials and other troubles, and some waiver. Only those who view themselves in the mirror of God’s Word and who train their heart can walk this way.”

“We run with strength to the beautiful future, which our Lord has promised us. He gave us the certainty of our salvation. We will get through the difficulties and help each other in unity. We are like a shining pearl buried in the ground, yet it will never lose its brightness.”

“Thank you that you are so concerned for us and that you love us. I am happy to report that we are doing well. All North Korean believers are re-dedicating themselves to support one another.”

Open Doors

Testimony from Malawi

“We were born in a community of Muslims. My mother was a Muslim and died a Muslim, but praise God for his love that he called me out of that religion. I am a very happy person to be a follower of Jesus Christ for 26 years now, and am an evangelist and pastor. God has helped me and my ministry to transform more Muslims and make them to be followers of Jesus Christ. Our growing local church includes a number of Muslim converts to Jesus. Praise His name!”

Bridgeway



Practical youth work in Fiji

Camp work has been a very fruitful field in Fiji, combining gospel outreach, Christian nurturing and practical works in the community. A recent 4-day camp, attended by 180 young adults, began by sending young people to designated locations to do community work such as washing floors, cleaning walls and picking up rubbish. There was also gospel outreach, sports activities and a talk by local police on such topics as drugs, cybercrime and pornography. Separate sessions were then held for males and females on the challenges they face in today’s world. All campers were challenged through Bible teaching designed to increase self-discipline and devotion to Christ.

AMT

Christianity in Ireland

The Roman Catholic Church, for centuries the preserver and defender of the Irish, has lost its former grip on the nation. Church attendance has dropped to around 40% though there is a charismatic renewal movement within the Catholic Church and unprecedented collaboration with other expressions of the Christian faith. Also, with most of Ireland's population growth coming from immigration, new religious expressions are evident everywhere, including those of dynamic evangelical Christians from Africa and South America. About one-third of all the newer congregations come from non-Irish ethnicities. But the percentage of evangelicals in Ireland is still the lowest of any English-speaking nation, and their growth rate less than that of Muslims.

Operation World

Bible colleges in Lebanon

As Hezbollah makes air strikes and missile attacks across the border into Israel, Lebanon's theological training centres continue to operate. With Lebanon having by far the largest nominal Christian population among Middle Eastern countries, it is a safe place for Christians throughout the region to have a formal theological education. But Lebanon's political situation is fragile, and its parliament has been closed for the past two years. Pray for its graduates to be evangelists, church-planters and peacemakers.

Mission Network News

From a pastor in Kenya

"I feel very blessed to have a wonderful ministry that enables me to encourage and mentor frontliners of the work of God in our nation. It is a big blessing touching lives through books, and Bridgeway's are the main ones I use. I also work with high school teachers who run Christian programs in schools."

Bridgeway

Sudan's ongoing trauma

About 2,000 Christians from a Muslim background escaped Sudan's war in recent months only to face persecution from Muslim refugees in displacement camps near Sudan's southern border. Services known as 'equipping centres,' run by a group that cannot be named for security reasons, offer Christian support, medical services and trauma healing. They need more access to needed resources if they are to maintain this work.

Mission Network News

Tajikistan and Turkmenistan

It is now 13 years since Christian children in Tajikistan were banned by law from going to church. As they reach the age of 18, some welcome the opportunity to join with their parents in church, but others have lost all interest. Christian families need wisdom and guidance in bringing up their families.

Conditions are also restrictive in nearby Turkmenistan, where Bible supply is controlled, church registration difficult, and state authorities must approve the appointment of all church leaders. In most former Soviet countries of central Asia, Christians face restrictions, especially in seeking to gather for worship. Yet they rejoice that in general there is peace in their countries and they are still able to spread the gospel discretely.

Mozambique's contrasts

The violent Muslim terrorist onslaught against Christians and moderate Muslims in northern Mozambique continues. In attacks on Christian villages earlier this year, ten people were killed, more than 130 houses destroyed, a church building burnt down and 100,000 people forced to flee south for safety. Yet elsewhere in Mozambique, Christianity is flourishing and churches are growing vigorously.

Barnabas Aid

Secular Uruguay

The South American country of Uruguay has a population of more than three million, mostly of Spanish or Italian descent, with few indigenous people. The country has a high standard of living for Latin America, including an extensive, but costly, welfare system. Half of Uruguay's people call themselves Catholics, but only about 1% of these attend Mass. Almost 40% of the people are atheists or agnostics. Various forms of Spiritism and New Age thinking rule the lives of many.

Occasional evangelistic rallies have brought some response, but overall there is apathy to the gospel. Bible correspondence courses, radio programs and youth camps provide a regular outreach and bring encouraging results.

Operation World