

Republic of Niger

Jihadists are asserting their dominance in villages of Niger near its border with Burkina Faso. Their practice is to summon people to the marketplace and announce that all males 15 years and older who refuse to convert to Islam are required to pay them *jizya*, a tax levied against non-Muslim inhabitants within Muslim-ruled states. Should they pay, they are allowed to remain in the village but will live as slaves with their families. All their property will automatically become the jihadists'. Those who do not want to convert to Islam or pay *jizya* can leave the village but are not allowed to take anything with them except the clothes they are wearing. Currently about 350 Christian families have left their villages and are camping under trees in towns up to 200 kms away.

Barnabas Aid

Russia's active Christians

During Russia's election season there was a crackdown on freedom of speech and an increase in government surveillance of church activity. But churches pursued their activities discreetly and continue to send out missionary pastors to proclaim the gospel. There is special concern for regions where the gospel has not yet fully penetrated, such as the Arctic Circle and the Far East. One Russian church leader said, "Russian Christians are a resourceful people and will find a way to continue to obey the Lord, share the love of Christ and keep the gospel going on."

Mission Network News

From Ethiopia . . .

"We put your books in our Book Club where we make people members, and all the books are declaring about Jesus Christ the Savior of the world. Whatever comes, we will never be quiet to preach about the power of the gospel."

. . . and from Benin

"These books are not only serving our Bible college students but are equipping our missionaries as they go out to evangelise. They are also instruments of research for theologians and missiologues."

Bridgeway

Bibles for Myanmar

For more than sixty years the military rulers of Myanmar have used military power, violence and oppression in a vicious war against the largely Christian hill tribe peoples. Thousands of Christians in the Chin, Kachin and Karen ethnic groups have seen their villages and churches destroyed and been driven out to seek safety in the jungle or refugee camps. But Christian aid from outside helps provide Christians not only with food and shelter, but also with Bibles, books and hymnals. One current project is in the process of delivering 50,000 Bibles to Christians in the impoverished hill regions of Myanmar, with the ultimate number of Bibles to reach 200,000.

Barnabas Aid



China's underground churches

For the last four years, the church in China has in many places gone deeper underground to escape government monitoring. Attacks on unregistered churches forced many fellowships to meet in smaller numbers and on irregular weekdays to evade government monitoring. But underground meetings have grown to an extent where groups that once numbered in the tens now number in the hundreds. As one church leader put it, "We couldn't stop the people from coming. Many would rather be arrested than stop meeting in larger fellowships."

In one city a largely attended meeting was held in a hotel where Christians hired the entire floor. Because of China's economic slump, many international hotels are half empty and will rent space to any who will pay for it. Outside the city, a church of migrant workers meets in a construction site building, with no attempt to hide itself. Many of the attendees are young people. Despite all attempts by the government to stifle Christianity, the church in China keeps growing.

New Life

Ethic cleansing in Azerbaijan

The government of Azerbaijan, after forcing occupants of the Christian enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh to flee to neighbouring Armenia, is now systematically destroying buildings and other signs of Christianity – all this despite a prohibition from the International Court of Justice. The Muslim leadership of Azerbaijan is ethnically cleansing not only the land but also the historical record, as if it is trying to persuade the world that Armenians, who became the first ‘Christian nation’ in AD 301, never existed. Pray that Azerbaijan will cease this destruction.

Barnabas Aid

Training conference, Gabon

In April, over 400 pastors, evangelists and church leaders gathered in Libreville, Gabon, for a 4-day conference that focused on making evangelism a local church priority. Gabon is a resource-rich former French colony with a population of about 2.5 million. Christianity in its various forms is Gabon's dominant religion statistically (majority Roman Catholic), though there are large numbers of adherents to Islam and traditional religions.

Conference participants came from all nine provinces of Gabon, and trainers came from a number of countries, both African and overseas. The participants were taught together and in discussion groups using the manual provided. On the final day they divided into provincial groups to begin planning immediate evangelistic outreaches in their regions.

Kruse



Pakistan's disadvantaged Christians

Christians in Pakistan are often treated as second-class citizens, pushed to the margins of society where the authorities reserve for them work that is considered dirty and degrading. They are also targets for accusations under the nation's unjust blasphemy laws – roughly 25% of all blasphemy accusations are against Christians, even though Christians account for less than 2% of the population. The government readily favours Muslims and rarely intervenes to help Christians. Christian girls are often abducted, abused, and forcibly converted to Islam.

In one region last year, 24 churches and several dozen smaller chapels were set on fire, and the homes of more than 100 believers burned, looted, or vandalised. Give thanks for the many Christians who have remained faithful to the Lord in the face of persecution and injustice.

Open Doors

France's South American territory

The small country of French Guiana on South America's Caribbean coast is governed as an Overseas Department of France. Because of the high subsidies it enjoys from France and the EU, it has shown little desire to be independent. Its people have a higher standard of living than those in neighbouring countries, though with this has come secularism and low moral standards.

Three quarters of French Guiana's people are nominally Catholic, and the Protestant minority is weakened by nominalism. But there is some church growth, most of it taking place among minority ethnic groups.

Operation World

Aid from Nigerian Christians

“At the last count we have 133 widows in our church, out of an average adult attendance of 800. That is not too good, but the number keeps rising because of the killings by Islamist terrorists such as Boko Haram and Fulani invaders. The needs of the widows can be enormous – food, shelter, clothing, school fees for their children, medicine, etc.

“We take collections for them in church and though it looks insignificant compared to their many needs, we must care for the poor in the bleak economic outlook in this country. More than 150,000 Christians have been displaced from their homes and are sheltering in makeshift camps, where nearby churches and spirited individuals reach out to them with the love of Christ in gospel-inspired aid.”

Bridgeway