

### Laos: prejudice against Christians

Two church leaders from southern Laos were reported missing after attending a church event. They had gone to a neighbouring church to visit new believers, where they preached during the service and officiated at the baptism of six new believers. On their way home, police officers stopped them, searched them and their phones and, upon finding pictures of the baptisms, arrested them. Local villagers are suspected of tipping off the police. The two church leaders are now in prison.

Laos, one of Asia's poorest nations, is under a Communist government that is stuck in the mentality of the Vietnam war era and lives in fear of neighbouring China.

*Open Doors*

### From an evangelist in Zambia:

*"Here there are rural areas where electricity and technology are not available and people do not know about emails. Education background is poor in many people, yet they have believed in Jesus and then memorized Bible verses. Only a few people have their own Bible. Thank you for the Bibles and Bridgeway books you send us, also for the Worldnews each month, which assists us to bring these people the news of Christians in other countries. You are a pillar to my ministry, which is mainly in these undeveloped rural areas. Right now I am visiting one newly established church, giving guidance and training to the church leaders."*

*Bridgeway*

### Abductions

Islamic terrorist groups kidnapped nearly 700 people in northern Nigeria in March, mostly women, girls and boys who identify as Christians. Gunmen from the Boko Haram terrorist group seized 400 victims from camps for IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) in Borno State. In a separate incident, an unidentified group kidnapped students and teachers in Kaduna State.

The crimes came just days before the 10th anniversary of the Chibok kidnapping of 276 schoolgirls, one hundred of whom are still in captivity. A Nigerian lawyer says that although the kidnappings are a form of Christian persecution, a few of the kidnapped are Muslims. Some kidnappings are for human trafficking and some for ransom.

*Vision Christian Media*

### Gambia: small country, big problems

A Christian pastor from the tiny West African country of Gambia reports a wave of anti-Christian persecution. In this impoverished and mainly Muslim country, imams use social media to incite violence against Christians. Three Christian converts from Islam are facing police cases against them, and the pastor's own family is being attacked by relatives. Yet Muslims continue to turn to Christ, including two imams.

*Barnabas Aid*

### Initiatives in North India

*Churches and Christian ministries in India are visionary and vigorous in seeking to reach the nation for Christ. One long-established ministry in Delhi has a particular concern for densely populated North India, where Hinduism is strong and the proportion of Christians less than in other parts of India.*

*The work is concerned with reaching the lost, making Christian disciples and strengthening churches.*

*Recent activities gave special attention to expository preaching of the Scriptures, discipling new believers, biblical counselling, equipping workers for remote regions, preparing people for medical services and training people for vocational opportunities from sewing to computer skills.*

*DBI*

### Czechia (formerly Czech Republic)

The shift from communism to a free market bought a better life for most people in Czechia, but placed stress on many of the vulnerable. The moral vacuum that emerged has resulted in hedonistic materialism and an increase in crime, sexual immorality, substance abuse, depression, suicide and atheism. While the Catholic Church has lost much of its influence and traditional Protestant denominations have shrunk, some newer, smaller and younger groups have shown real growth. House churches and cell groups are proving to be more effective in outreach than top-heavy ecclesiastical structures.

*Operation World*



## ***Christian vigour in Nepal***

*Christian ministries in Nepal continue to expand and see much fruit. The extensive work of Scripture Union, besides equipping thousands of Christians across the country with daily Bible reading materials, also runs many camps and conventions for children, youths and adults. These have varying emphases, such as evangelism, discipleship training and prayer. A tuition centre has been recently established to help disadvantaged children with schooling, while other ministries include feeding the hungry and catering for children at risk. Amid all this activity there is a great need to train and equip people for leadership and active involvement in church life.*

*Scripture Union*

## **Trinidad and Tobago**

Almost two-thirds of the people of Trinidad and Tobago identify as Christians, but as elsewhere in the Caribbean, true disciples of Jesus Christ are not so common. Many people are only nominal Christians and others have beliefs that are mixed with occult practices or Hindu worldviews. Family life and morals often do not reflect true Christianity. Mainline denominations are in decline, and while newer independent groups are livelier, they often need better biblical teaching and more enlightened outreach. The nation has a high proportion of children and youth, who, if disciplined for Jesus Christ, can help build a better future. Some good Christian work is being done in schools and universities.

*Operation World*

## **Bangladesh's hill tribe regions**

Religiously, the indigenous peoples of Bangladesh's hill tribes are mainly Buddhist or Christian and have more in common with their ethnic kin in northeast India than with the Bengali Muslims of Bangladesh's lowlands. Although the government of Bangladesh is Muslim, it fears that these remote hill regions may become a base for Islamic militants and has launched military offensives across the region. While this has had only limited success against Islamists, it has driven hundreds of Christians across the border into the north-eastern Indian state of Mizoram, which already is bulging with Christian refugees from Myanmar. While the Mizoram Christians are eager to assist their kin from neighbouring countries, India's national government in Delhi is not, and had ordered its Border Guard Forces to push the refugees back. Christians who once lived peaceably in Bangladesh's mountain regions can do so no longer and long for the day when they can occupy an independent region.

*Religious Liberty*

### **From a Bible college principal in Ghana:**

"I was lacking for words when I got the carton of your books. One of the pastors I gave the *Bible Commentary* and *Bible Dictionary* to could not hold his emotion when he knelt down and began to thank God for the materials. His words were like this, 'I once tried to have a Bible Commentary some years ago at our convention but I had no money. Now I have these wonderful gifts.' Another person said, 'In twenty years of ministry this is the first time I have had any kind of Bible Commentary or Dictionary. What a help they are. I struggled very much before.' You can see the appreciation of these servants of God on their faces."

*Bridgeway*

### **Life in Saudi Arabia**

The government of Saudi Arabia has for many years sponsored the propagation of Islam around the world. It also supports efforts to convert non-Muslims living and working within Saudi Arabia, and boasts of hundreds of thousands of converts.

However, the country's large population of expatriate workers also contains many thousands of Christians. This expatriate workforce has become a battleground between the wealthy promoters of Islam and the poorly paid Christians, who share the gospel at great peril to their lives.

*Barnabas Aid*

### **The Christians of Morocco**

One report says that every city in Morocco, and even many villages, have a Christian presence of some sort. Official attitudes towards Christianity have softened in recent years, and house church gatherings are usually tolerated. Nevertheless, Christians can still face opposition from extremists within the Muslim majority, especially those Christians who are converts from Islam.

*Barnabas Aid*