

Indonesia’s varied regions

Although Indonesia is the world’s largest Muslim country, the church in many places is growing strongly and even sending out international missionaries. This is particularly so on the main island of Java. But in other places, such as Aceh on the island of Sumatra, anti-Christian activity is vigorous, meaning that Christians are cautious in sharing their faith openly.

Barnabas Aid

Plight of the Sudanese

More than 5% of Sudan’s 50 million people identify as Christians. As a result of the civil war, Christians share in the suffering that has afflicted all people. Both warring armies, the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces, have targeted Christians, more than 165 churches having been forced to close since the conflict began. Christians have endured decades of severe persecution under the Islamist government; now they need special sustenance in their increased sufferings.

Barnabas Aid

From a pastor in Sierra Leone

“These Bridgeway Bible Dictionaries and Bible Commentaries will go a long way to transform hundreds of souls to Christ and it will also be of a great blessing to me and my ministry at large. I appreciate your noble donors for donating these valuable materials to equip the ministry which I hope will continue.”

From a bookseller in Eswatini [Swaziland]

“One elder came to me and said he has come to understand the Bible through the Bridgeway books he bought from our small shop. Praise God. I gave him also the Worldnews which encourages us to pray for our brothers and sisters everywhere in obeying the great commission to go out with the Good News and make disciples for Jesus.”

Bridgeway

Spiritual awakening needed in Slovenia

The most prosperous of the former Yugoslav republics, Slovenia made good use of its educated workforce and its proximity to Western Europe to profit from integration into the European Community. Spiritually, however, it is poor. Its three main Christian groups (Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran) lack vitality and are becoming irrelevant. At the same time, New Age and Eastern religious beliefs are increasing.

With fewer than 30 evangelical churches in the nation’s 210 municipalities, Slovenia cries out for evangelism. Very few Christian books have been capably translated into this difficult language. The Bible Society is working on better translations, but people need to engage afresh with the Bible.

Operation World

An Iraqi in Lebanon

In 1999, an Iraqi man who had come to Christ in Iraq and completed Bible college training in Jordan, moved with his wife to Lebanon, where he pastored a church while doing further theological studies. Four years later they moved back to Iraq, settled into a local community and established a church.

Islamic militants in the community soon showed their hostility through drive-by shootings, church bombings and kidnapping of Christians. In one of these attacks the man was shot in the back and hospitalised, but even there his enemies kept trying to kill him. Though now disabled, he was smuggled out of the country and into Lebanon, where, after six months of hospital treatment, it became clear he would spend the rest of his life in a wheelchair. Undeterred, he continued his Christian ministry and now pastors a growing congregation in Lebanon.

Voice of the Martyrs



North African neighbours

Algeria’s increasingly anti-Christian government has now sealed the buildings of more than 40 churches, mostly without any credible reason. As in its neighbour Tunisia, the proportion of Christians is only one-quarter of one percent. While Tunisia’s government is not so stridently anti-Christian, the followers of Jesus are limited in how much they can make their faith known publicly.

Barnabas Aid

Kazakhstan's identity movement

As Kazakhstan develops a growing consciousness of national identity – and Islam is part of the Kazakh identity – there is increasing hostility towards Christians. This affects not only Kazakh converts from Islam but also ethnically Russian Christians who have never been Muslims. Another problem for the Russian Christians is that people in Kazakhstan are becoming increasingly anti-Russian. In the 2021 census, 17% of the population declared themselves Christian (down from 26% in 2009) and these are mainly Russians.

One church is running special activities to strengthen its members in the face of this Kazakh identity movement. Most of the congregation are first generation Christians, a mixture of converts from Islam and former atheists.

Eritrea's ongoing brutality

In Eritrea, a country of 7 million people bordering Sudan, Ethiopia and the Red Sea, three pastors have been imprisoned without trial for 20 years. They have neither been charged nor told when or if they will be released. Many other Christians are also imprisoned without charge, often locked in shipping containers. Eritrea's rulers are among the world's most brutal and irrational.

Barnabas Aid

Hindu nationalism in India

India's Hindu nationalist government continues to pursue its mission to turn India into a purely Hindu country. Twelve of India's 28 states now have anti-conversion laws, designed to eliminate non-Hindu activity, especially Christian and Muslim. While specifics vary from state to state, these laws have some aspects in common, such as prohibition against the conversion of Hindus, requirements to notify the government before changing religions, and an automatic presumption of guilt.

Radicalised Hindus are highly coordinated, with devotees who communicate by social media to rally large mobs whenever they see an opportunity to attack Christians and churches. Wildly fictitious reports incite violence and have landed many Christians in jail. Yet Christians keep spreading the gospel and across India the church continues to grow.

VOM

Teaching literacy in Cambodia

Kut is a volunteer literacy teacher in a village of Cambodia. She was the first in her family to become a Christian, and when her parents became believers she began literacy classes in her home – 'a dozen students crowd around a blackboard.' She adds, 'We still don't have a Bible in our native language but my brother and sister and I can read the Bible in Khmer. The older ones think they are too old to learn to read, but they are learning the Bible stories we tell them. My parents are illiterate but our family has produced three literacy teachers.'

Sparklit

Freedom at risk in Nicaragua

In just one day in August, the government of Nicaragua cancelled the legal status of 1,500 nonprofit organisations — whether Protestant, Catholic or secular groups — in a continued authoritarian effort to quash people and institutions who are not aligned with the government. More than 5,000 nonprofit organisations have now been shut down since 2018. Any who speak out against human rights abuses are targeted and properties of perceived opponents are confiscated. An autocratic regime seeks to control all institutions, including legislative bodies, courts and elections. Freedom of speech and freedom of religion are under attack.

Open Doors

Wallis and Futuna Islands

The Wallis and Futuna Islands, in the South Pacific, are an overseas collectivity of France with their own statutory laws. The Catholic Church is so interwoven with the Polynesian culture and social structures that adherence to Christianity is often more outward than through a living, personal faith.

Most people in these islands go to church. The number of born-again believers is increasing, partly through the efforts of missionaries from New Caledonia – Pacific Islanders reaching cross-culturally to other Pacific Islanders. Biblical resources are scarce, though the Bible has been completed in one local language and portions are available in others.

Operation World

A global view

The world today is arguably less peaceful than at any time in the last 80 years. Experts report that 92 countries are currently involved in conflicts beyond their borders, the highest number since World War II. Civil wars and terrorist attacks are also claiming tens of thousands of lives, a disproportionately high number of whom are Christians.