

### Christian activity in Nepal

In addition to the many outreach camps held over several days in various locations throughout the year, Scripture Union Nepal recently held a number of special one-day Bible study camps in selected strategic districts. The specially prepared book *Dainik Jyothi* proved to be of particular help in explaining the Bible in a Nepalese context to those not able to attend Bible college. Christians in Nepal continue to ‘grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.’ *SU Nepal*

#### Few Christians in Libya

*Libya is divided between rival Islamic factions and plagued by lawlessness, leaving the small number of Christians vulnerable to attacks, kidnappings and executions. At best, Libyan Christians face ostracism and harassment, while even foreign Christian aid workers risk maltreatment and detention. Libya’s ‘morality police’ enforce dress codes and limit internal travel, further marginalising non-Muslims. Despite these challenges, the few Christians in Libya continue to practise their faith by meeting discreetly and supporting one another in very difficult circumstances.*

#### Iran’s language discrimination

While Iran’s historic Assyrian and Armenian Christian minorities are allowed to worship in their own languages, which are not understood by the majority Muslim population, Christian worship in Farsi (Persian) is forbidden. The Farsi-speaking house churches are sought out in official crackdowns, and Christian converts from Islam may be punished by fines, prison terms, internal exile or bans on travelling abroad.

*The Suffering Church*

### From a Bible college in Sierra Leone

“We would kindly need your help for *Bridgeway Bible Commentary* and *Dictionary*. Concerning your commentary we had studied it from a person who had your books but did not belong to our Bible college. It was a single copy someone gave us. Imagine students studying in a Bible college to become pastors not even owning the necessary Christian literatures.

“The students are eager to learn and share the gospel but they have no way to own their own copy, and the school has none to give them. Some college libraries often have only one copy of a book that multiple students in the same class need to use. So they tell each student they can borrow the book for one hour and then must let someone else use it for one hour, and so on. How much can you even learn from a book in one hour?” *Bridgeway*

### Christians in North Macedonia

Although the number of evangelical churches in North Macedonia is increasing, their number is still small, reportedly about a hundred. They persevere in their outreach goals, which extend across ethnic and national boundaries. The North Macedonian Orthodox Church claims to



represent two-thirds of the population, but many of its churches have small congregations and, in keeping with official attitudes, often oppose the newer independent churches. Most North Macedonians are secular and unreligious in practice. *Operation World*

### Remarkable growth of an Indian ministry

The Delhi Bible Institute’s 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration was a momentous occasion that brought together 600 church leaders, pastors and ministry partners for three days of worship, fellowship and vision casting. The conference theme ‘The Wonders of Salvation’ comprised Bible readings, expositions from Luke’s Gospel, encouragement amid increasing persecution, pitfalls of pastoral ministry and other topics, all in a context of uplifting times of worship and praise. Participation embraced 13 languages representing the 13 locations where DBI’s ministry is established. The vision for the next 20 years includes a commitment to five million hours of prayer, an extension of support and renewal to those in need, enhancement of technological and digital innovations, strengthening of the Indian church nationwide, expansion of skill development programs and equipment of believers for spiritual maturity and outreach. *DBI*

## Violent chaos in Congo

DR Congo is in violent chaos as various rebel groups fight with local innocent citizens, with the government and with each other. Some of the forces are Islamic terrorists and others are political insurgents, but all create havoc for local civilian populations. Among the hundreds killed are many Christians, some of them targeted victims but others 'innocent bystanders' caught in conflicts over which they have no control. They and their fellow citizens need our prayers.

## Saudi Arabia's concession

In Saudi Arabia, where most Christians are foreign workers, any overt evangelism is punishable by imprisonment or deportation. To leave Islam is officially punishable by death, though no executions are known to have taken place in recent years. In this stronghold of Islam, one notable acknowledgement of religious diversity recently became evident when the authorities allowed worship services for Egyptian and Eritrean Christians. This has encouraged both Saudi and expatriate Christians to pray that official restrictions on expressions of faith may be eased.

## Penetrating Mauritania's darkness

Praise God for Mauritania's small Christian community, whose believers are courageous witnesses in a country of immense hardship for any non-Muslims. Forty years ago, Mauritania was thought to be the only country on Earth with no indigenous believers, but that is not so today. The exact number cannot be confirmed, but some estimates put it as high as 8,000. Christians from other African countries, whose evangelism helped initiate this growth, have a vital role in encouraging and teaching the locally grown church in what is still a hostile environment.

*Barnabas Aid*

## Outlying parts of Indonesia

While Indonesia's central government is often supportive of Christians in this Muslim-majority country, provincial and local authorities may often be hostile. This is certainly the case in Aceh, the only province governed by Islamic law. Christians have difficulty getting permission to build places of worship or in some cases even gather in private fellowships.

*The Suffering Church*

## Samoan challenges

*The Pacific Island nations of Samoa and American Samoa share a Polynesian cultural heritage and a long-established nominal Christianity. This has been affected by the large Mormon community, which has an influence on the economic and social climate of the islands. Mainline Protestant churches, while resenting the growth of Pentecostal and charismatic churches, have been challenged to look afresh at the difference between traditional practice and spiritual vitality.*

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## Israeli Christians

Christians in southern Israel are clinging to gospel hope while grappling with the reality of war that surrounds them. The pastor of a church in Ashdod says the only hope for Israel is Jesus, but most of the nation doesn't want him. Pray that lost Israelis will come to Christ.

*Mission Network News*

## From a pastor in Tanzania

*"All the books are very good and a wonderful help to servants of God and upcoming preachers. Everyone comes together to say a big 'thank you' to you all. As well we want to humbly still beg for more books like this, and let you know we are suffering from lack of Bibles. Can you believe that converted Christians over here come to church and Bible class for more than three years but still with no Bibles? They have not enough money and the church can only help very little to buy some, because it too has not enough money."*

*Bridgeway*

## Strife-torn Lebanon

About one third of the people of Lebanon identify as Christians and they are suffering from an armed conflict they did not start and have no way of ending. Hundreds of thousands have been displaced, many of them seeking safety in refugee camps in north-western Lebanon. They have left behind homes, farmlands, church buildings and schools. Some, however, have chosen to stay behind, determined to protect properties that have been theirs for generations.

Christian initiatives are helping with daily necessities so that life can go on and troubled citizens can learn about the one true God in whom they can trust. One Christian said, 'These crises always represent open doors for spiritual impact. We do not miss any opportunity to share the gospel in a way they can understand and that shows genuine love.'

*MNM/BA*