

Report from Russia

The following report comes from a Russian mission news bulletin:

“We need to be careful not to think that all decisions of Russian national leadership are welcomed by all Russian people. Russian believers sometimes feel disconnected from the world because of the political climate they are in. Things are much more difficult for them now than 30 years ago. There are new restrictions that make open evangelism difficult, if not impossible. Among these are restrictions on the pulpit about what we can and cannot say.

“Please pray that faithful Bible-teaching churches will stand tall amid mounting difficulties. Pray that they will be united in the single cause to know Christ and to make Him known among the nations.”

Mission Network News

From a pastor in Ethiopia

“Today, some Bible school teachers and leaders of a local church travelled about 80 km to receive sets of Bridgeway books and different Bibles and other reference books from me. I cannot describe in words the joy they felt. They told me to convey their sincere thanks to you. When I was there previously, I saw the poor condition of the library in the Bible school and no library at all in the church.”

Bridgeway

New life in Indonesian villages

In the quiet villages of Central Java, a remarkable movement is taking place. Farmers, labourers and small traders, many of them believers from Muslim backgrounds, are gathering twice a month to deepen their understanding of God’s Word. Despite their economic hardships and limited education, 191 believers across 15 discipleship groups in six regional areas have committed themselves to following Christ and sharing His love with others.

At the heart of this movement is a training program based on twelve discipleship books that aim to equip believers with knowledge of the Scriptures and lead them to a deeper relationship with God. What began with a few groups keeps growing, as members become confident in the Scriptures and in preaching the gospel.

Open Doors

Tajikistan’s Christians

The central Asian republic of Tajikistan is 98% Muslim. Constitutionally it is not an Islamic country, but the government carefully controls all religions, largely because it fears the rise of Islamic extremism and terrorism. The Christian population is very small, less than half a percent, and although churches are allowed to function, they face many restrictions.

The real persecution, however, comes from the local community, particularly from the families of believers who come from a Muslim background. Families who believe in Jesus are often driven from their land and villages. If Christian girls resist forced marriage to Muslim men, they might be severely beaten, locked up, lose their Bibles and phones, and forbidden to contact anyone outside the family. Christians in Tajikistan need our prayers, as they seek the wisdom and spiritual strengthening to be positive and outreaching.

Back to Jerusalem

Egyptian progress

The government of Egypt has approved the licensing of another 160 churches and church-affiliated buildings. This is the 29th batch of approvals since the licensing committee began work in 2017. The committee has now approved licences for 3,613 out of the 3,730 churches that applied. Previously it was extremely difficult for churches to obtain a licence, and many congregations had no option but to worship illegally in unregistered buildings and risk prosecution. Egypt is a mainly Muslim country, but it is promoting religious tolerance. This is improving conditions for Egyptian Christians, especially converts from Islam, who are at risk from extremist elements in their communities.

Barnabas Aid

Sudan: the struggle intensifies

After two years of civil war, Sudan is running out of food. There are millions of displaced people within the country and millions more have fled across borders. Health services within the country are almost useless, but Sudanese church-planters recently partnered with doctors and nurses from South Sudan to hold medical clinics in refugee camps. Believers shared the gospel in every clinic. Church workers follow-up interested people and walk with them and their families through deep trauma. In the midst of despair, believers are sharing the hope of Christ.

MNN

Developments in Colombia

From a tiny minority in 1960 (0.6% of the population), evangelicals and charismatics now number about 28% of the population. Such growth is particularly remarkable considering that Christians have often been targets of drug cartels, guerrillas, paramilitaries and other unfriendly groups. Much of the growth has been within indigenous communities.

These indigenous churches, however, face particular problems. In 1991, Amerindian groups, who had been victims of oppression and discrimination, received wide-ranging support from government legislation. But some people used this religious freedom to try to force Amerindian Christians to revert to traditional religious beliefs. The persecution that resulted caused believers from different tribal groups to band together in mutual support.

These believers are mostly poor, under-educated and vulnerable to community violence and ecological exploitation. The challenge is for strong, well-led churches that are culturally rooted and able to cope with drug traffickers and modernization.

Operation World

Nepal's Christian growth

The continued growth of the church in Nepal increases the hostility of the majority Hindu population, including the government, whose anti-conversion laws have been unable to stifle the church. Christians may be the victims of discrimination in their communities and opposition from extremists, but they remain strong in the Lord.

Self-help programs in Togo

Sixteen national missionary couples in the north of Togo, West Africa, have been struggling to function because of the impoverishment of the region and the opposition of militant Islamists. They and their families received a boost recently through training in disciple-making and practical help towards sustainable living. Each couple received four goats, maize seeds and fertiliser to help them become more self-sufficient.

Brutality of Eritrea's government

There is no sign that the brutal leaders of Eritrea are easing their irrational opposition to any Christians who do not fit into their inflexible 'structure' for the country. Believers are arrested, tortured, imprisoned and forced to survive in the most inhumane conditions, usually without knowing why they were arrested or how long they will be imprisoned. Christians outside try to give them support, thought at great risk to themselves.

Barnabas Aid

Translating God's Word

Bible translation recently reached a historic milestone when the number of people having access to the Bible in their heart language passed 6 billion. The United Bible Societies (UBS), which has been largely responsible for this growth, is a global network of about 150 Bible Societies. Last year it completed Scripture translations in 105 languages, benefitting more than 580 million people.

Sower

Jordan: camp ministry

One local ministry in Jordan had 900 people in their camps during the last summer season, the highest number ever. Some of these camps were for youth, some for families. They were run by over 200 volunteer workers, who witnessed lives transformed and commitments made to follow Jesus. Some camps were designed around evangelism, addressing pressing issues facing this generation, such as addictive and destructive habits. Many of the volunteers were frontline workers who ministered directly to campers from diverse backgrounds.

Manara



From an evangelist in India:

"We are praying with our prayer groups and in our family prayers and God is working mightily in these regions with Bridgeway books and Bibles you help us buy. We are reaching and training people in churches and in home fellowships in these interior villages and idolatry regions of India.

"It is a blessing to reach far corners and we are collecting any good Christian books we can. We want to reach more villages using our mobile library. Please pray for our safety from anti-Christian groups in India."

Bridgeway