The Christians of Qatar

Churches inside Qatar exist only under firm restrictions. The only public Christian worship permitted in Doha, the capital city, is in one government-owned complex. Even there the church premises cannot include any external religious symbols. Throughout Qatar, evangelism and leaving Islam are both punishable offences – though no punishments are known to have been carried out since 1971. As in many Muslim-majority contexts, converts from Islam are at high risk of reprisals from their family, neighbours or former friends. *Barnabas Aid*

Church of Scotland increases

According to new figures, the number of people joining the Church of Scotland has nearly doubled since the Covid pandemic of a few years ago. More than a quarter of all congregations welcomed new members last year. Church leaders suggest that in uncertain times the deep spiritual hunger becomes more evident. There were 3,292 recorded professions of faith between 2021 and 2025 across 841 Church of Scotland congregations. The growth figures come as new programs aim at making new disciples and encouraging growth, especially in districts close to universities, where there is a growing spiritual interest among young people. *Premier Christian News*

Ethiopia: from an enthusiastic distributor of books and Bibles

"I have distributed the carton of Bridgeway books you posted earlier this year, giving these to pastors and evangelists, and many tracts and booklets in different languages. I also bought four cartons of Bibles with the money, some in Oromo language and some in Amharic language. Most Christians do not have money to buy Bibles, but now they own a Bible.

"Also I bought many thousands of tracts in Ethiopian languages, which I am distributing, and some others I gave to Christian ministers doing Muslim evangelism in neighbouring Djibouti, which is dominated by Islamic religion. I gave some books to three church libraries in northern Ethiopia and two churches libraries in southern part. I also put books in the hands of Christian youth leaders and university student groups, and gave many gospel tracts to university students so they know the truth of the gospel." *Bridgeway*

Indian initiatives

Delhi Bible Institute has conducted Summer Camps for more than 1200 children in northern India and given Bible training to more than 500 men and women. Many of these lived in remote places where they were unable to attend regional Bibe schools. A further 136 people completed the six-month sewing-training course and another 100 completed six months in computer training. Another program, for feeding the poor and hungry, provided more than 45,000 hot-cooked meals in 13 locations from January to June. These ministries reached many who would otherwise not hear the gospel and at the same time built up believers to be more like Christ and better servants to fellow citizens. *DBI*

Eswatini – a pastor teaching pastors

"The church in Eswatini [formerly Swaziland] is growing and 15 pastors who were 'unofficial' (that is, had not graduated from a Bible college or seminary) were invited to join the pastors community association. Having no formal training is no barrier to serving God faithfully. But some of these in the pastoral and evangelistic ministry are now doing training to increase their effectiveness. I am affiliated with a Bible college in South Africa that supplies us with modules to supplement your Bridgeway books. This work is being a great success and I am seeing my dream come true. What you first planted in me twenty years ago helped me grow and mature and is still bearing fruit." *Bridgeway*

Earthquake crisis in Venezuela

A month after twin earthquakes devastated northern Venezuela, the death toll crossed 6,000, but the work of recovering other victims continues. The massive provision of food and water for survivors and rescuers is only the beginning of what will be a long-term aid exercise.

The local Trans World Radio team, besides joining with other Christian organisations and frontline relief workers, risks working in its damaged building to keep recording special programs. In the midst of chaos, suffering, despair and physical exhaustion, people are seeking God. There is an unusually high demand for Bibles. Among the many stories of remarkable survival are those of Christian salvation amid despair. *MNN*

Life in Bhutan

The government of Bhutan promotes the country as the world's happiest, but for Christians it is a country where restrictions surround them on every side. Access to Bibles is both difficult and limited, and the 'hidden' churches often struggle because leaders and individual church members alike are lacking in Bible knowledge. Efforts are underway to provide a variety of study Bibles that are tailored to the needs of pastors, youth and children. *New Life*

Today's Tunisia

Despite Tunisia's predominantly Muslim population, its Christian history still has some influence on its spiritual identity. The country, on Africa's Mediterranean coast, was a strong Christian base in the early centuries of church history, but all that changed when Islam spread across the region.

Today, there are about 30,000 Christians in Tunisia, 80 percent of whom are foreigners. Since the 'Arab Spring' uprising 14 years ago, the Tunisian government has embraced more democratic values and recognises freedom of religion. *CBN Christian World News*

Myanmar's ongoing strife

No end is in sight for Myanmar's internal strife, and Christians suffer more than most. Statistically the country is 6.2% Christian, but the majority of these are of hill tribe origins, in particular the Kachin, Chin, Shan and Karen ethnic groups. Myanmar's military government consists mainly of people from the majority Burman ethnic group, who are mostly Buddhist.

Churches and Christians, especially in the northern hill regions, are the victims of government-directed discrimination and brutality, but refuse to be deterred in their outreach and church growth activities. Bible colleges range from small independent schools to large theological institutions, and all are full.

Suffering Church

Clean water

Around 1,000 children die every day from unsafe sanitation, poor hygiene and lack of access to clean water. It is estimated that worldwide more than two billion people do not have safe drinking water or adequate sanitation close to home. Most of the daily collection of water is done by women and girls, adding to the injustices they already suffer through diminished education and occupational prospects. Churches and associated organisations are increasingly trying to address these challenges. *Tear Fund*

From a School teacher in New Zealand

"I just wanted to send a quick note to thank you for the downloadable resources on the Bridgeway website. I am currently writing a 5-year teaching curriculum for a kids ministry here in New Zealand, and I have found your Commentary and Dictionary helpful as I try to understand, explain and write things in 'everyday' language. Making things simple is hard! Your materials are very helpful to me. Grace to you in Christian ministry." *Bridgeway*