The churches of Ukraine

Russian authorities are continuing to raid religious worship services in the regions Russia occupies in Ukraine. They warn congregations that unregistered churches could face repeated disruption if they do not comply with Russian law. The raids create a climate of uncertainty in which worship continues under the constant threat of inspection, fines, or closure. Churches not officially registered are particularly in danger.

Meanwhile, Christian organisations continue to cover the country, supplying food, medicine and blankets. Often they find people want the Bible more than anything else. One Bible distribution program, which gives out hundreds of Bibles a day, has put God's Word in the hands of 1.6 million people. Evangelism, trauma healing and pastoral care remain accessible ministries across the country. *Christian Today/Bible Society*

From Zambia:

"I am in the evangelism ministry, reaching out to the public, but I am not a paid pastor. With a few friends we are a non-denominational ministry, and we feel we should not just proclaim to people who come to church but to everyone willing to receive the word of God.

"Frequently we meet as Christians from different churches for overnight prayers and fasting, and going on visitations to mountain areas, prisons, homes for orphans and places for the aged, to share the Word of God and what little we have. One problem in Zambia is that the majority of people are not computer literate. Most people don't have personal computers, often having to make long journeys on foot and then having to pay too much money at internet cafes." *`Bridgeway*

Christians in Afghanistan

It is well known that the Taliban's activities target Afghan Christians, but Christians returning to Afghanistan have a chance to share the gospel in this closed and largely unreached Islamic country. One Christian ministry has already trained and equipped 800 Afghan Christians who are secretly serving as missionaries inside Afghanistan. Another ministry, *Keys for Kids*, distributes solar-powered MP3s called *Storytellers* that contain an audio Bible. These were introduced to Afghanistan when a former member of the Taliban came to faith in Christ and started bringing *Storytellers* into the country. Christian groups have sprung up in a number of localities, thanks largely to this MP3 initiative. *Mission Network News*

The most generous givers

What nations are the most generous when it comes to individuals giving to others in need? The Charities Aid Foundation released their *World Giving Report*, where they compared the giving behaviour of 105 countries. Since these countries have vastly different incomes, they were compared by calculating how much people gave as a percentage of their income. The top ten countries on the list were 1. Nigeria; 2. Ghana; 3. Egypt; 4. Kenya; 5. India; 6. Uganda; 7. Pakistan; 8. Zambia; 9. Tanzania; 10. Zimbabwe. Countries of the affluent West were mostly in the lower half of the list.

One observation is that people in needy countries are the best givers and those in rich countries are the worst. Most people who are comfortable don't know what it is like to be in a needy person's shoes. Those in need are quicker to give because they know the difference their gift can make. *World Giving Report*

Nigerian rescue

Over 300 Christian women and children were recently rescued from Muslim captors in Nigeria. More than half these people were victims of a raid by terrorists on a community in Kwara State last February, a raid that killed an additional 160 people in the village. The victims said they had been captured as punishment for refusing to accept Islam. Often they went days without food and had to bury other captives who had died.

The world is largely silent on these Islamic attacks against Christians, even though Nigeria is Africa's most populous country and statistically Christians make up roughly 45% of its citizens. The attacks focus on churches, Christian villages and Christian 'holy days.' According to recent numbers, 72% of Christians killed for their faith worldwide are Nigerians . *New Life*

Iraq churches reopen

Two of the oldest church buildings in Mosul, Iraq, have been restored and reopened after having been extensively damaged by ISIS attacks many years ago. To local Christians this is a symbol of hope as they restore the church's public profile. Pray for continued encouragement to the believers that they may worship freely and rebuild their communities in peace. In a traumatised country, the church has a unique role in bringing healing, reconciliation and transformation.

Fortitude of Lebanon's Christians

In war-torn Lebanon more than a million people have been displaced, including many from the Christian areas in the south. But many Christians have chosen to stay to protect their homes, churches and historic lands. As one church leader put it, 'Leaving is not an option. We did not choose this war, nor do we want it. But we choose to stay.' This is a costly decision. Like other citizens, they risk Israeli airstrikes and suffer desperate shortages of fuel, medicine and other essentials, while Christian aid ministries do whatever they can to help.

Barnabas Aid

Colombian earthquake

The people of Colombia are rallying to respond to the recent earthquake in the country's west. Hundreds have died and thousands more are still missing. A report from Trans World Radio says their workers are shaken but safe and are developing new radio content to share hope with survivors. Like others, they are giving aid to those who need it most. Pray also for wise and sympathetic leadership from the government. *MNN*

Algeria still difficult

The Algerian government shows no sign of easing its opposition to Christianity. The estimated number of Christian in Algeria various from 50,000 to 380,000, but 58 churches have been closed in the past ten years, including all 47 of the registered Protestant association. *Suffering Church*

Reaching women in Uganda **(from a ministry leader)**

"Our women's ministry is focused on upholding livelihood and ministry service to women who are vulnerable in society. The income-generating activity of this work includes selling, growing or making things like bread, vegetables, second-hand clothes, fish, charcoal, food, pigs, goats, cows, ground nuts, etc, using groups of savings and loan associations.

"These activities bring people to Christ, improve living conditions and build unity in the body of Christ. We train them in groups – perhaps 15, 30, or 60, depending on the activity – and the training is usually three days to start with. We evangelise women through community meetings and teach them how to build healthy, successful and sustainable marriages. We hold women's conferences to activate the spiritual aspects.

"We estimate our women's program is benefiting more than 4,500 people. It has attracted people from different Protestant denominations and from Catholics and Moslems. Some have found Christ as Saviour, and some churches where the program has operated more successfully have even purchased keyboards, loud-speakers and generators for church use. Others have helped to pay school fees and meet basic family needs like kitchen utensils and bedding. The government is appreciating the initiative and has requested us to expand the program to more remote areas." *Bridgeway*