

Former Muslim: Mullahs, Imams Coming to Christ in West Africa

Brother Daniel (last name withheld for security reasons), who spoke at last year's Lusanne III conference, said that the initiative he started has exposed over 10,000 Islamic scholars, clerics, and mullahs to the knowledge of salvation through Jesus Christ over the past 10 years. From that number, some 1,000 have come to Christ, with 500 of them having completed discipleship training. Currently, 58 former mullahs, imams, and scholars from the initiative are sharing their faith in Christ.

Daniel, who grew up in a Muslim setting in Africa, said Christians are not eager to share their faith with Muslims even though Jesus commanded them to spread the gospel. Christians are "disobedient and fearful" even though the Holy Spirit has worked on the hearts of Muslims and they are open and waiting to hear the Good News. Daniel recently led a *sharia* (Islamic law) court judge to Christ. After the conversion, the judge lost his job and has faced "unbelievable persecution." But despite the fierce obstacles, that former judge alone has led over 100 Muslims to Christ. "Even if he is going to be killed, he is thinking of more ways to reach out to the Muslims," Daniel said. "We are constantly threatened, persecuted, attacked, and ambushed. We get . . . calls . . . from Mecca, Medina, Iran, from the local Hezbollah group in our nations. Yes, we become afraid. We are fearful. We are not that hero. But you know what? We need to be obedient to the call of Christ and go."

This Month . . . Plan a Spiritually Rewarding Vacation *By Jim Kraus*

Summer is the time for vacations, and many destinations involve a family road trip. Here are a couple pointers to make the time spent in the car more meaningful:

- Before you go, establish some "no media" time. It's easy for kids to be isolated behind video games and digital music. If everyone knows that there will be time spent actually talking with one another, the likelihood of a battle in transit is lessened.

- Take some audiobooks with you. Listen to a few classics, like *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

My 13-year-old son loved that book, which we listened to between Chicago and South Carolina last summer. It also led us to some wonderful, and illuminating, discussions on the book's themes.

- If you do have video screens in the car, pick a movie that will spark discussion—perhaps one of the Narnia series, or even the Lord of the Rings (for older viewers). You have a captive audience after the movie ends.

- There are a lot of games that can be played on the drive. One of my favorites is Yahtzee—as the driver, someone rolls the dice for me, but I get to make the decisions.

- It's also a good time to sing along with your favorite music. Plan ahead, get some good praise music—and everyone can participate.



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CHURCH AROUND THE WORLD

NEWS OF SIGNIFICANCE TO CHRISTIANS

Some news that's encouraging—some disturbing. Please read with discernment. Watch and pray.

Focus on . . . *Bhutan*

Bhutan is a small, poor, mountainous kingdom in the eastern Himalaya Mountains and one of the world's least evangelized nations. There are only a handful of native believers. Buddhism is the state religion; other religions are barely tolerated and viewed as foreign intrusions. Proselytizing and incitement to convert are illegal. The nation was basically closed to all Christian witness until 1965. What followed was 25 years of slight relaxation—Indians and other expatriate NGOs were able to witness while they served. Since 1990, restrictions have been increased. The spread of Christian witness and the potentially "destabilizing" effect on society are the pretexts for harsh treatment of Christians. Church buildings are forbidden and most believers must meet in homes. Anyone who converts is automatically stripped of their citizenship—and some lose their rights to health care, education, employment, and even access to electricity and water.

Pray for

- the minority Nepali population of the country, who have suffered because of ethnic cleansing
- the growth and safety of the small indigenous church
- open doors for foreign aid workers and NGOs who can share the love of Jesus
- effective distribution of the Dzongha (the national language) translation of the New Testament

- media, such as radio and print, that often operate outside Bhutan but distribute their materials inside the country or broadcast into the country



Muslims Attack Christian Homes in Egypt and Burn Church

A mob of nearly 4,000 Muslims attacked Coptic homes in a village 20 miles from Cairo and burned the Church of St. Mina and St. George. The whereabouts of the pastor and several deacons remain unknown. At first, the mob prevented the fire brigade from entering the village. The army also initially refused to enter the village. When they finally sent three tanks, Muslim elders sent them away, saying that everything was "in order now." Witnesses said the mob chanted "*Allahu Akbar*" and vowed to conduct their morning prayers on the church plot after razing it.

We don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. — ROMANS 8:26

Spate of Attacks on Christians Erupts in Orissa, India

Hindu extremists have attacked Christians in villages in a remote area of Orissa state at least 15 times since last December. In the latest incident, about 60 assailants from a Hindu extremist group beat several believers. Christian women, some pregnant, as well as children were among those injured in the attacks on churches, reported Pastor Vijay Purusu of Bethel Church.

“Police action was delayed, so it resulted in more attacks against the Christians,” he said.

In another incident, 200 extremists barged into a Christmas Day celebration at a church, beat the worshipers, and destroyed furniture. About 10 houses belonging to Christians were destroyed, along with their crops. The Christians

filed a police complaint, but no action was taken. “Persecution against the Christians has become a daily occurrence in the area,” Pastor Purusu said.

There have also been raids on prayer meetings, resulting in some Christians fleeing their homes and going into hiding. At least four families have left their village and not returned. Hindu extremists have forced about 25 people to convert to Hinduism.

Church leaders said increased attacks on Christians are a symptom of fear and envy among Hindu extremists, who perceive that Christianity is spreading in many areas and mistake Christian social and educational ministries as illegally luring people to convert.

Murder of Pastor in Honduras Raises Security Questions

The murder of a prominent pastor in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, has focused attention on the country’s alarming murder rate and threats against Christian workers. Pastor Carlos Marroquín, 41, was shot to death by assailants as he walked his dogs in his neighborhood. The assailants might have been trying to steal the dogs, or the pastor’s cell phone, a common occurrence in the violence-prone area. Some think the high-profile pastor was targeted as a Christian leader, but such killings are common in Honduras for people of all religious beliefs, and although he had received death threats, those too are not unusual for Christian leaders in the country.

Marroquín founded the Pentecostal Church of God in the country’s second-largest city. He also founded the Christian Legal Fellowship and cofounded the Latin American Network of Christian Lawyers. President-elect of the Association of Evangelical Pastors in San Pedro Sula, he was a popular speaker on television and radio.

Marroquín was the second pastor to be murdered in Honduras this year. A longtime missionary in Honduras confirmed that Marroquín had received death threats. “Most of us . . . get calls from stolen cell phones threatening death if we don’t deposit money in a Guatemalan account. This kind of blackmail is not unusual.”

Evangelical Churches in Ethiopia Are Burned

Churches and homes used by evangelical Christians in southwestern Ethiopia were burned recently by Muslim extremists. Federal police in the Horn of Africa nation intervened after three churches and two houses were destroyed following an alleged burning of the Koran in Asendabo, a village 174 miles southwest of Addis Ababa.

Ethiopian communications minister

Bereket Simon said that only two houses used for worship were burned in the incident. “No one has died,” he said by phone from Addis Ababa. “It’s a very minor, isolated incident.”

Incidents of religious strife in Ethiopia are rare, although there have been sectarian clashes in the southwest in recent years. Ethiopia’s population is 34 percent Muslim and 63 percent Christian.

New German Minister: Islam Does Not Belong in Germany

Germany’s new interior minister has caused political turmoil after he said that Islam was not a key part of the German way of life. “Islam in Germany is not something supported by history at any point,” Hans-Peter Friedrich stated on his first day in office. His remarks were in response to the killing of two U.S. airmen at Frankfurt Airport, in which it is believed the 21-year-old Kosovan suspect, Arid Uka, was a lone operator motivated by radical Islamist beliefs. Friedrich’s comments were a play on words, turning on its head a remark made several months earlier by German president Christian Wulff, who said Islam now “belongs to Germany” because of the 4

million Muslims who live there.

Friedrich’s stance is in line with recent comments made by other European leaders. British prime minister David Cameron said in February that multiculturalism has failed in Britain and left young Muslims vulnerable to radicalization, arguing for a more active policy to heal divisions and promote Western values.

Germany is home to Western Europe’s second-biggest Islamic population, after France. In contrast to the situation in Britain or France, where simmering racial tensions sometimes explode into violence, German Muslims live relatively peacefully alongside mainstream society, but a lack of integration has long posed a problem.

U.K. High Court Upholds Bar on Christian Foster Parents over Homosexual Views

The ability of Christians to be foster parents has been thrown into doubt after the U.K. High Court ruled it would not intervene if local authorities stop Christians with orthodox views on sexuality from becoming foster parents. The case concerns whether a Christian couple, Eunice and Owen Johns, could continue to foster children. The Derby City Council blocked their application because the couple said they would not be willing to promote the practice of homosexuality to a young child.

Both parties wanted clarification on whether the couple should be excluded from consideration as foster parents under Britain’s equality laws because of their Christian beliefs. The landmark ruling suggested Christians with traditional views on sexual ethics would not make suitable foster parents.

The judges in the case stated that if children were placed with parents who have traditional Christian views, “there may well be a conflict with the local

authority’s duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of looked-after children.” They noted that there was tension between the equality provisions concerning religious discrimination and those concerning sexual orientation, but ruled that in regards to fostering, “the equality provisions concerning sexual orientation should take precedence.”

The judges argued that there had been no religious discrimination against the Johnses because they had been excluded from the fostering application process as a result of their moral views on sexual ethics rather than their Christian beliefs.

The ruling implicitly upheld the Equalities and Human Rights Commission, which stated that children risk being “infected” by Christian moral beliefs. There is now little chance that the Johnses, who have previously fostered 15 children, will be able to foster additional children unless the Derby City Council reverses its decision.