

World Mission News

Compiled by
Samuel G. Y. Ling

Saudi Arabia: A recent agreement between USA and Saudi Arabia gives cautious hope for Christians in the latter nation. The Saudi government promised that worship services will be allowed in private homes; religious police will not conduct surveillance, invade homes, confiscate private religious materials, or detain/punish suspects; the disparaging remarks on non-Muslims in official school textbooks will be removed; teachers/imans will be retrained to preach tolerance not extremism; and the Human Rights Commission will educate the public about human rights and aid abused victims. Christians are worried that the agreement specifies no accountability system to see that it is implemented while the Saudis have promised textbooks reforms before.

<Christianity Today, October/06>

Bible: Of 2,400 language groups with portions of the Bible, 1,115 have the New Testament. Only 426 have the full Bible. Missionaries see groups formerly of animism or polytheism with only NT having deficient understandings of God and sin. The OT provides a framework of salvation history and connects well with groups that share ancient tribal lifestyle of agriculturalism, patriarchy, and sacrifices. They also resonate powerfully with Muslims who know Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph. 500 of the 1,700 translations are full Bible project today. The role of national workers (90% of all translators) is increasing. But only 10% have biblical language skills with slow growth.

<Christianity Today, September/06>

Unevangelized: In 1900, 56% of 1.6 billion world population were unevangelized. There were some 15,000 cross-cultural missionaries working among these 879 million people. In 2000, the numbers were 26% of 6 billion people, and only 10,000 missionaries working among 1.6 billion people.

<LCWE Mission Report, www.lcwe.org, September/06>

USA: A recent US survey shows 92% of people have a faith in God and less than 11% 'have no religious tie at all'. There are different views about God: 31.4% believe in an 'authoritarian' God (highly involved in daily lives and quite angry, more in the South), 24.4% in a 'distant' God (not active and unconcerned about our lives, more in the West), 23% in a 'benevolent' God (very active but mainly a positive force, more in the Midwest), and 16% in a 'critical' God (not active but critical of the world, more in the East). 5.2% are atheistic.

<Dallas Morning News, 9/19/06>

Lebanon: 1 million of nearly 4 million people of Lebanon were displaced by the war between Israel and the Hezbollah. 90% of them are Muslims as they fled north where Christians and international agencies have been housing and feeding them. This display of love of Christ has opened a way for the gospel to these formerly unreached

souls. It shatters some of their previous conception about Christians, to the extent that some are inviting the missionaries to continue the relationship and help them after they return home in the south.

<Mission Network News, www.mnn.gospelcom.net, 9/11/06>

Missionary Game: In Spring 2005, the largest secular TV station in Norway, aired a prime time show on Norwegian missionaries in Mali. It's positive response prompted Christian websites for children to create The Missionary Game about the every day life of a missionary. They had tried internet games to pique children's interest with not much success. The interactive and adventurous game lets one travel from village to village sharing the gospel; planting churches; distributing Bibles as well as the needed food, water, medicine, etc. It involves problem solving and praying for help from God. English version is available through www.themissionarygame.com.

<LCWE Mission Report, www.lcwe.org, August/06>

Africa Bible Commentary: After 5 years of work, the Africa Bible Commentary was published last July. This English volume is produced by over 70 evangelical African theologians. It gives section-by-section interpretation providing a contextual, readable, and useful guide to the entire Bible. There are also 72 articles on pertinent African issues such as HIV/AIDS, angels/demons/powers, funeral and burial rites, widows and orphans, and persecution. Many Christian world leaders acknowledge the significance of it.

<LCWE Mission Report, www.lcwe.org, August/06>

China: With Marxism no longer the guiding ideology and the moral vacuum being filled by Christian sects and extreme forms of nationalism, the Chinese government is promoting the revival of Confucianism that it tried to eradicate earlier. While this helps them in pacifying the increasing rural unrest, it poses also challenges such as peaceful resolution on the Taiwan issue and meritocracy in picking leaders by examinations rather than party loyalty.

<International Herald Tribune, 9/14/06>

Nomad interns: The Book of Hope mission is looking to fulfill the vision of shaping the next generation of mission leaders with their Nomad interns. They recruit college students and send them out from 5 weeks up to 2 years to show Christian films, distribute gospel materials, and visit schools, churches and villages. This year they have 75 interns in Honduras and all across Africa. With no permanent home they move around according to the harvest and seasons in fulfilling the Great Commission within the well-defined God-given age-level territory of world's children and youths.

<Mission Network News, www.mnn.gospelcom.net, 10/6/06>