

ousted former authoritarian president Omar al-Bashir. The State Department praised the new government for its efforts “to address the previous regime’s systematic, ongoing, and egregious violations of religious freedom.”

Sudan cheered the move as the latest sign of warming ties with the US as it seeks to persuade American officials to remove Sudan from a far more serious blacklist: state sponsors of terrorism. The designation subjects Sudan to sanctions, hindering the new government’s attempts to relieve its debt crisis and attract foreign investment during its fragile transition to democracy.

Christian Evangelist Murdered in Southeast Turkey (6)

A Korean evangelist has been murdered in southeast Turkey, sparking fears of persecution among the Christian community, the International Christian Concern reported in a statement.

Jinwook Kim, 41, was stabbed and later died of his injuries in the hospital. Kim, who had been a resident of Turkey for five years, was living in Diyarbakir, having moved there earlier this year with his family to pastor a small Christian community.

Turkish authorities have arrested a 16-year-old in conjunction with the murder, which they say was motivated by robbery. However, the local Christian population is adamant that Kim was targeted due to his faith and are calling his death a martyrdom.

A Turkish evangelist said that he had

received threats the day after the murder. “This wasn’t just a robbery; they came to kill him,” he said. “We always get threats. They know that I am trying to spread the gospel, so they may target me, too. This may be a sign.”

Over 1,000 Nigerian Christians Estimated Killed in 2019 (7)

A nonprofit recently released a report estimating that over 1,000 Nigerian Christians were killed in 2019 in attacks led by Fulani extremists.

“Islamist Fulani militia continue to engage in an aggressive and strategic land grabbing policy,” reported HART, a UK-based nonprofit that tracks persecutions. “They attack rural villages, force villagers off their lands, and settle in their place—a strategy that is epitomized by the phrase: ‘Your land or your blood.’”

Though the death toll is currently unknown, Christians have become a target for Fulani herdsmen. HART estimates that over 6,000 Christians have been killed since 2015 while 12,000 have been displaced. These numbers are based on Kaduna state government reports, media reports, and news from community leaders in Plateau state. Though Fulani herdsmen seem to be the major perpetrators, the terrorist group Boko Haram has also killed several Christians.

significant news for christians

Some news that’s encouraging—some disturbing. Read with discernment. Watch and pray.

THE Church Around the WORLD

April 2020



Country in Focus: French Polynesia (1)

French Polynesia is a nation of 3,500 square miles made up of 5 island archipelagos and 118 islands, including Tahiti, which has the largest population. The majority of people speak one of the 10 distinct Polynesian languages. The country is heavily dependent on French aid and military spending, while tourism, pearls, and agriculture make up the rest of the economy. An overseas territory of France, the nation has its own president and a high degree of autonomy.

Yet French Polynesia is a paradise lost. Formerly a strong Christian nation that sent missionaries all over the Pacific, French Polynesia is now being debased by increasing vice and immorality as well as serious challenges to traditional values and ways of life. The evangelical witness on the islands is very small, and many ministries have left the island chain. Citizens with a strong personal faith are rare. There has been a reversion to the bondage of pagan occultism and foreign sects.

Prayer concerns:

- Pray for a clear gospel witness in the midst of darkness.
- Pray for a spiritual revolution to take place among the many nominal Christians.
- Pray for the national Christian church to recover from decline and splits suffered over the last few decades.

Ethiopian Church Confirms Tradition of Faith in Africa (2)

In the dusty highlands of northern Ethiopia, a team of archaeologists recently uncovered the oldest known Christian church in sub-Saharan Africa, a find that sheds new light on one of the Old World’s most enigmatic

kingdoms—and its surprisingly early conversion to Christianity.

Scientists discovered the church 30 miles northeast of Aksum, the capital of the Aksumite kingdom, a trading empire that emerged in the first century AD. Through radiocarbon dating of artifacts uncovered at the church, the researchers concluded that the structure was built in the fourth century AD, about the

May God, who gives this patience and encouragement, help you live in complete harmony with each other, as is fitting for followers of Christ Jesus. Then all of you can join together with one voice, giving praise and glory to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

ROMANS 15:5-6



same time as Roman Emperor Constantine I legalized Christianity and then converted on his deathbed. The discovery of the church and its contents confirms Ethiopian tradition that Christianity arrived at an early date in an area nearly 3,000 miles from Rome. The find suggests that the new religion spread quickly through long-distance trading networks that linked the Mediterranean via the Red Sea with Africa and South Asia, shedding fresh light



This month you can . . . Help the International Persecuted Church

Persecution of Christians is a reality worldwide, while Christian missionaries also risk their lives to bring Christ's true hope to those who have none. They put their lives in danger so that individuals who are oppressed and afraid can be empowered by the truth of the gospel. Here are five ways you can help the persecuted church.

1. **Learn** where the church is being persecuted, what they are facing, and how you can help.
2. **Pray** for the persecuted church. There are ministry websites that focus on key prayer points.
3. **Write** letters of encouragement to members of the persecuted church.
4. **Donate** financial resources, food, and ministry material to members of the persecuted church.
5. **Advocate** by raising awareness of the reality of Christian persecution and

sharing with government, human rights, and religious freedom organizations.

Countries to Pray For:

- North Korea: In this totalitarian communist state, it is difficult to live as a believer or nonbeliever. Christians are arrested, imprisoned, tortured, and killed.
- Somalia: Christians in this Islamic country—in particular, those who are converts from Islam—face violent hostility as well as persecution from Islamic militants.
- Afghanistan: Christian converts from Islam are persecuted, deprived of their possessions, sent to mental hospitals, and murdered.
- Pakistan: This is another Islamic country where Christians are the targets of bombings, murder, abductions, and other acts of extreme violence. Christian converts from Islam face even more hardships.
- Sudan: This country is struggling to establish de-

mocracy after ousting authoritarian ruler Al-Bashir. It faces debt crisis and allegations of state-sponsored terrorism.

- Syria: Large areas of Syria are held by Islamic militants, including ISIS. Christians are vulnerable targets in the midst of the war.
- Iraq: Christians are persecuted in Iraq, particularly those who come from an Islamic background. Radical Islamist groups exist in Iraq, including ISIS.
- Iran: Though Christians are said to be protected by the law in Iran, many are treated as second-class citizens and persecuted.
- Yemen: Christians in Yemen face threats from Islamic extremist groups. They face risks of persecution and ostracism.
- Eritrea: In Eritrea, Christian prisoners are treated inhumanely. Christians have been imprisoned in shipping containers and left to die.

on a significant era about which historians know little.

Burma Rebels Allow 51 Churches to Reopen (3)

Ethnic rebels who closed more than 100 churches in eastern Burma (Myanmar) in 2018 have allowed 51 Baptist churches to reopen in northern Shan state after investigating the congregations and their activities for 14 months. At least 10 church buildings were destroyed when the rebels closed the churches in September 2018 and detained more than 200 Christians, who were later released after investigation. The review process is still underway for the remaining churches, but denomination officials were happy that 51 churches were reopened.

This specific group of rebels is Burma's largest ethnic armed group, with an estimated 30,000 soldiers. Its leaders have communist views, a reflection of their long-time proximity to the Chinese border. Burma is ranked 18th on Christian support organization Open Doors' 2019 World Watch List of the countries where it is most difficult to be a Christian.

Kenyan Militants Kill Christians (4)

Militants are believed to have killed a group of Christians in Kenya.

The group was traveling in a passenger bus when militants stopped the bus and separated the passengers into locals and nonlocals. The nine passengers who could not recite the Shahada, the Muslim profession of faith, were taken off the bus and shot at point-blank range. Two passengers are missing.

The attack isn't the first of its kind in Kenya. In 2018, two men were shot dead after they refused to recite the Islamic creed. In 2015, gunmen freed Muslim students but shot and killed nearly 150 other students at Garissa University. In 2014, about 28 teachers were heading to Nairobi for Christmas when they were shot dead after not being able to recite the Shahada.

US Drops Sudan from Religious Freedom Blacklist (5)

The United States dropped Sudan from its list of nations that severely violate religious freedoms, signaling increased support for Sudan's newly created transitional government. In a statement, the US State Department said it had upgraded Sudan to a special watch list for religious freedom, citing "significant steps taken by the civilian-led transitional government."

Sudan's joint military-civilian body was established in August after a popular uprising