

*More than half of the globe's
seven billion human beings
now live in cities.*

REACHING THE CITY (EMS 20)

Reflections on Urban Mission
for the Twenty-first Century

Gary Fujino, Timothy R. Sisk, Tereso C. Cason, editors

Rapid urbanization and globalization processes worldwide have changed the landscape of our times. In Asia and Africa the number of urban dwellers increases by an average of one million per week, according to the United Nations. More than half of the globe's seven billion human beings now live in cities. These realities have far reaching implications for mission in urban contexts at the start of the third millennium. *Reaching the City: Reflections on Urban Mission for the Twenty-first Century* seeks to address the missiological challenges associated with this new world order.

Each author in this collection respectfully builds upon the significant contributions of seminal writers such as Ray Bakke, Jacques Ellul, Basil of Caesarea and others, while making new and creative proposals for urban mission in our world today. Beginning with the bigger picture of the global challenges of urbanization, and moving through theological, historical, and educational perspectives, this volume concludes with a rich bevy of case studies engaging these new realities of both North American and international cities to encourage a missional thrust to reach these communities.

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The Birth Place of Christ, But Few Will Celebrate His Birth

4—North Africa: Where the Berber and Arab Worlds Blend

7—The Fall of a Dictator Spells a Rise of Violence

22—Urdus: A People Group that is Not a People Group

23—You Can Take the Bedouin Out of the Desert, but ...



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Dear Praying Friends,

Merry Christmas!

This month we will pray for the large, highly unreached Frontier People Groups (FPGs) in the Middle East. They will be celebrating Christmas in Bethlehem, and a few other places where Arabs live, but most will treat December 25 like any other day. It seems ironic that in the land of Christ's birth, his birth is only celebrated by a few.

Almost all the others are Sunni Muslim, but that is only a part of the story. Kurds and Berbers are trying to maintain their identity among the dominant Arabs, while Bedouin tribes live their lives much like Abraham did thousands of years ago. Who will take Christ to these people? Few if any have tried it to this day. All of these major groups identify as Sunni Muslims, not knowing that they can find hope and joy in the Savior if they would put their identity in him instead.

In Christ,

Keith Carey

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Pray For *A Disciple-Making Movement Among Every Frontier People Group in the Middle East*



How Did Islam Spread So Rapidly in the Arab World?

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It took Mohammed only 10 years to spread his religion across Arabia, which at that time only referred to the Arabian Peninsula. At the time of his death in 632, only a handful of tribes in Arabia practiced the teachings of Mohammed. Mohammed hadn't picked a successor and things could have

fallen apart at this point. Some of these tribes had only made a personal alliance with Mohammed and they were ready to go back to worshipping their old gods now that Mohammed was dead.

However, there were a group of tribes that felt a stronger connection with the teachings of Mohammed. The leaders of these tribes got together and chose Abu Bakir to be their new leader. Bakir took the title of Caliph, which means "successor" in Arabic. Bakir turned out to be a strong leader. During the Ridda Wars he led Muslim armies in attacking the tribes that wanted to go back to worshipping the old gods. It took Bakir two years to win this war. By 634 AD Bakir had sent a clear message to all of the Arab tribes. Once you embrace Islam there is no turning back.

Bakir died in 634 AD and Umar Ibn Al-Kattab became the new Caliph. Umar led Muslim Arab armies in attacking the Byzantine and Sassnaid empires. Those two empires had been weakened by decades of war. In 636 AD Umar led the Arab armies in winning the Battle of Yarmuk. That victory forced the Byzantines to cede Syria, Palestine and Lebanon to the Arabs.

In 637 AD Umar led the Arab armies in winning the Battle of Qadasiya. That forced the Sassnaids to cede what is now Iraq to the Arabs. This defeat was the beginning of the end for the Sassnaid Empire. The Arab armies would win several more battles over the next few years. Those Arab victories effectively ended the Sassnaid Empire.

Islamic Armies Conquer North Africa

The destruction of the Sassnaid Empire and the defeat of the Byzantine Empire opened the door for the Arab armies to move west through North Africa; no other empire stood in their way. Umar took advantage of the situation. His armies were now unstoppable.

One of the major Christian sects in North Africa were the Monophysites. This sect was considered heretical and had been persecuted by the Byzantine Empire. The Monophysites welcomed the Arab armies as liberators. This collaboration helped make possible the rapid conquest of North Africa. Umar's armies then crossed into Spain.

It's one thing to conquer an empire. It's another thing to consolidate it. The early Muslim caliphs were moderates, not radicals. They allowed Christians and Jews to continue worshipping God as they saw fit, as long as they didn't seek to make converts. By contrast idol worshippers were forced to convert to Islam or die. New converts were allowed to worship their own gods as long as they also worshipped Allah. Over the centuries economic pressure led many living under the rule of the caliphs to convert to Islam. Non-Muslims were forced to pay special taxes. The easiest way to get out from under these taxes was to convert to Islam.

Umar's successors came to be known as the Umayyads and they ruled the Arab world until 750. Most of the early expansion of the caliphate ended by 650. After that only Somalia was added to the Muslim sphere of influence.

—by Wesley
Kawato

The next dynasty of the Caliphate called themselves the Abbasids. They ruled the Arab world 750 to 1258. These rulers emphasized the peaceful expansion of Islam. The Abbasids sent Muslim missionaries to Central Asia. They also made a concerted effort to convert the religious minorities within their own realm.

After that came the Seljuk/Ottoman Era. This era began with the migration of Turkic Muslim tribes into Europe. It was during this era that the Balkans were temporarily conquered for the cause of Islam and Spain was fully controlled by Arab and Berber forces.

The Turkish based Ottoman Empire began in 1299; by 1450 they were the dominant power in the Muslim world. The Ottoman Era lasted from 1450 to 1924. This was a period of stagnation and decline for the cause of Islam. The Ottomans lost North Africa and the Balkans to European powers and various independence movements. By 1924 the Islamic sphere of influence had reached maximum size. Today Allah is worshipped from Bosnia to Nigeria and from Morocco to Indonesia.

Islam In Today's Arab World

Today the various nations of the Middle East and North Africa have used their influence to shape the form Islam takes within their borders. These governments do this to protect themselves. Most governments in the Arab world are secular; they fear out of control Islamic revolutions.

One way governments control Islam is by offering money. Muslim sects that tow the government line receive funding. Those that don't are denied funding. Arab governments will often fund several sects and play them against each other in a variation of the divide and conquer strategy. But governments can control Muslim sects only up to a point. Egypt tried to have all mosques preach the same government-authorized sermon each Friday. That plan was scrapped because it created a unified resistance. No Muslim sect is going to accept government funding if that is the price. The governments of the Arab world have found that controlling Islam within their borders is a fine-tuned balancing act. They can't get too heavy handed with Muslim sects without facing resistance.

Arab governments also control Islam by granting or denying access to the media. Sects that do as they are told by the government are allowed to air radio and television programs. Those that don't aren't allowed such privileges.

A third form of government control is access to education. Sects that are in good standing with the government are allowed to run schools and colleges. Those that don't have their schools and colleges shut down.



For many years persecution and government restrictions had made Christian outreach difficult in the Arab world. That started to change in the 21st century. The cellphone and the internet have made long range outreach possible. In these countries 74 percent of the people own a cellphone and 20 percent have access to the internet. Outreach through these methods have the advantage of privacy. Privacy has allowed the people of this region to explore taboo subjects such as the role of Jesus Christ.

Let's Pray!

- Pray for thousands of Muslims from the people groups we are praying for this month to take advantage of these opportunities to find the Savior.
- Ask God to help those who are reaching Muslims be wise as serpents but harmless as doves.
- Pray that Muslim background believers (MBBs) would stand firm in the face of persecution and allow the Holy Spirit in them to show others what Jesus can do for the faithful.
- Pray that the Muslim people of this region would come to see Jesus Christ as the only source of salvation.

JN 15:15, NKJV

No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from my father I have made known to you.

Pray that soon that many from the Imazighen Berbers will become friends and family members in God's economy.

IMAZIGHEN BERBERS IN MOROCCO

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Morocco by region

Are they the oldest and most mysterious people on earth? Some think so. The Imazighen people live primarily in the beautiful

wooded High Atlas Mountains of Central Morocco. They also inhabit the Middle Atlas Mountains along the border of Algeria. Central Imazighen are semi-nomadic shepherds, and they maintain permanent villages with fortified, community granaries and surrounding farmlands. Their villages are never left unattended.

Imazighen are almost all Sunni Muslim; their societies are organized around two main systems: Islam and the tribe. However, there are many differences between urban and rural societies. In urban areas, orthodox Islam prevails; in rural societies, ancient beliefs and customs are intermingled with their Muslim religion.

In the eighth century, invading Arabs forced the Berbers to accept Islam. Prior to that time, many of them were Christians. Today, there are believers in Morocco, despite the fact that it is illegal for Moroccan Muslims to leave Islam. There are audio, visual, and written resources in Tamazight and the Central Atlas languages.

Pray that the Muslim Imazighen Berbers return to the God of their forefathers. Pray they will understand and experience Christ, and spread his word from family to family.—KH

RIF BERBERS IN MOROCCO

Northern Shilha of Morocco, known as the "Rif Berbers," are 19 tribes of tough and hardened people eking out an existence on

the harsh, uninviting slopes of the Rif Mountains. The land, located in the northwestern portion of Africa, is a combination of deserts, mountains, and rolling fields. It is bordered by two rivers and 145 miles of coastline.

Despite the rugged environment, these people remain bound by strong family traditions. They raise livestock and farm mostly by hand, usually only harvesting a meager crop. Influenced by a Mediterranean climate, the winters are mild and the summers hot and dry, and humid along the coast. Incomes are supplemented by one-third of the men working in major cities of Europe most of the year, a situation that impacts their family life.

Northern Shilha are nearly all Muslim; however, their religious practices are based more on traditions and the decisions of the community judges than on the Qur'an. Their societies are organized around Islam and the tribe. Like most Muslim peoples, those in rural areas practice a less orthodox form of Islam than their urban counterparts.

Ask the Lord to raise a strong local church among the Northern Shilha that will spread the fame of Jesus Christ throughout North Africa.—KH



Berber musicians in Morocco

iStock/Martin Silva Cosentino

JN 16:8, NKJV

And when he has come, he will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.

Pray that the Rif Berbers will be convicted of sin, with full knowledge that without the saving power of Jesus Christ, they can never enter God's Kingdom.

TEKNA BERBERS IN MOROCCO

JN 16:13, NLT

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future.

Pray that the Tekna Berbers will allow the Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth.

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Berber women at a wedding

Choosing to follow Christ means risking everything for a Tekna Berber. Losing one's place in family and society is a huge loss

and may also be physical danger. Tekna Berbers in Morocco are almost completely Islamic in their beliefs and customs.

Berber is a generic name given to numerous ethnic groups who share similar cultural, political and economic practices. The Arabization of the Berber people happened in three stages, the third stage taking place between the 15th and 17th centuries.

The main vocation of the Tekna Berbers is settled in agriculture, not nomadic wanderings. While many characteristics of Berber society have survived, they have been dramatically modified by the economic and political changes of the 20th century. These affect both urban and rural Tekna Berber communities.

Like most unreached people groups, Tekna Berbers in Morocco have few opportunities to be influenced by the truth, but because of 21st century technical advances, they can access the JESUS Film and gospel recordings on their cell phones ... if they dare.

Pray for spiritually hungry hearts that aren't satisfied with old answers. Pray for access to gospel radio broadcasts and online sources for Tekna Berbers in remote areas. Pray for them to form their own family based fellowships that will spread far and wide.—KH

JEBALA PEOPLE IN MOROCCO

Are the Jebala people Arabs or Berbers? In Morocco, there is a thin line between the two. The Jebala people originated with the original Arabs from the Arabian Desert. Their ancestors migrated into northern Africa, remaining a distinct group, yet being influenced by local Berbers.



In the villages, Jebala women do housework and child care, while men work fields, herd animals, and provide protection. Women also milk cows and make butter. Jebala people marry within their small social circle. Inheritance and decision making power is male dominated. Jebala life is family centered, and many view the increasing Western "Christian" influence as a threat to their families and way of life.

Virtually all Jebala Arabs are Muslims. Very few have heard a clear presentation of the gospel. Evangelization among them will be challenging due to the nature of their lifestyle and belief system. How do they understand that Jesus offers much better answers than they see in Western culture? Prayer remains the key to seeing them give Jesus a chance to change their families.

Ask the Lord to soften the hearts of Jebala leaders towards the gospel message. Pray for the Holy Spirit to raise up Jebala "persons of peace" who will welcome gospel messengers and help to spread the fame of Christ from family to family.—KH

JN 18:6, NLT

As Jesus said "I AM he," they all drew back and fell to the ground!

Pray that the Jebala people will have a revelation of who Jesus actually is, and be astounded, and ready to change their lives.

JN 14:26, NKJV

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

Pray for the Holy Spirit to move among the Tajakant Bedouins until they become part of the family of God.

TAJAKANT BEDOUINS OF ALGERIA

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Bedouin man

What image does the word “Bedouin” bring to your mind? In the Middle East it is practically synonymous with “nomad.” For

thousands of years migrating nomads have crossed the deserts of North Africa, herding their livestock in search of grazing lands and water. Their traditional home is a tent which becomes the center of their lives – not only as a place to sleep and eat, but also as the gathering place for their social exchanges, storytelling, and business discussions. Traditionally, the tent is divided into three parts – one for cooking, one for the center of activity for the women and children, and one for the men. The Tajakant of Algeria are a typical Bedouin tribe.

Modernization, with both its advantages and drawbacks, is intruding on traditional Bedouin life. The younger people are seeking work opportunities in settled cities or towns. It is not at all unusual to see a younger family living in a modest home in the city with a tent pitched in the back yard where the parents live.

Few if any Tajakants are known to follow Christ. God’s people need to pray for a people movement to develop among the Tajakant Bedouins.

Pray for the Lord to direct a team of Holy Spirit filled missionaries to take Christ to these Bedouins. Pray for them to have an unstoppable movement to Christ during the 2020s.—JS

SHAWIYA BERBERS

One generally thinks of the people of North Africa as Arabs, and, yes, Arabs are the majority of the population, but originally the main people group of North Africa were the Berbers, who refer to themselves as Imazighen, or “free and noble men.” The Shawiya Berbers of northeastern Algeria retreated into the Atlas Mountains in order to resist the advances of the Romans, Vandals, Byzantines, and last of all, the Arabs. To this very day the Shawiya have resisted all attempts of the Algerian government to absorb them into the Arab identity. In the Atlas Mountains, they have been able to sustain and preserve their own language, culture, customs, and social organizations. They are mainly shepherds and farmers.

Although the Shawiya are nominally Sunni Muslims, they have little knowledge of the Qur’an and its practices. There is little opportunity to hear the gospel message except through internet sources, or ideally, through divine intervention. Let’s pray that Christ will make himself known to them!

Pray for God to reveal himself to Shawiya Berbers and raise up many of them to begin Christ-centered fellowships. Pray for them to use the JESUS Film and other gospel materials to learn how to follow the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.—JS



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JN 15:19, NKJV

If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

Pray that the Shawiya Berbers will not be content to do things the way the rest of the world does. Pray that many will become counter-cultural, and follow the Heavenly King!

IS 43:25, NLT

I—yes, I alone—will blot out your sins for my own sake and will never think of them again.

Pray that the Cyrenaican Arabs would turn to the true God of the Bible and have their sins blotted out by him.

CYRENAICAN ARABS IN LIBYA

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Libyan

When is the fall and removal of a dictator a mixed blessing? Since the people of Libya removed strong man Muammar Gaddafi, they have experienced civil war, violence, and chaos. The eastern

part of Libya known as Cyrenaica is home to the Cyrenaican Arabs. This part of Libya is currently ruled by National Transitional Council and is separate from west Libya, which is dominated by another political group. Unfortunately, fighting between the two Libyan factions continues.

Before the Muslim Conquest in 643, the area of east Libya was “Christian” under the control of the Byzantine Empire. The vast majority of the native Berber population became Muslim during and after 643. Only a tiny number of believers exist today among Cyrenaican Arabs.

The coastal area near the Mediterranean Sea has sufficient rainfall for growing wheat, barley, olives, vegetables, and fruit. Bedouins use the land south of the coastal strip for raising cattle, sheep, and goats.

Pray for peace in Libya. Pray that the Cyrenaican Arabs find spiritual peace in Christ. Pray that their search for freedom and autonomy will lead them to seek and find the Savior who can offer them freedom from sin and death. Pray that many Cyrenaican Arabs will be trained in the ways of Jesus Christ and that they will train others.—DK

LIBYAN ARABS IN LIBYA

Yesterday we prayed for the Cyrenaican Arab people in eastern Libya, so today we will pray for the Libyan Arabs in the western part of the country. There



iStock/simona flamigni

are basically two countries now. Various factions and warlords rule over large areas of Libya making it nearly impossible for the weak central government to control the entire nation. Libyan Arabs have a Berber background, and they converted to Sunni Islam when the land was conquered by Muslim armies in 643.

The discovery of oil in the 1950s changed the pastoral lifestyle of the Libyan Bedouins. Most Libyans settled in cities and regions near the Mediterranean Sea; in the process they became more Arabized. The violence and chaotic conditions of the last eight years have disrupted the production of oil which accounts for 97 percent of Libya’s exports. Many foreign experts necessary for the oil economy have fled the country.

Evangelism is forbidden in Libya so the gospel will have to come to Libyan Arabs through the internet, radio, literature, and friendships. Small house churches exist in the cities for foreign workers, but attendance by Libyan citizens is strictly illegal.

Pray for the warring peoples of Libya to surrender to the Prince of Peace, who offers much more than they can ever imagine. Pray for a Holy Spirit driven movement to Christ among the Libyan Arabs in the 2020s.—DK

2 COR 5:16, NLT

He (Christ) died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them.

Pray that the Libyan Arabs would begin to live for Christ not for themselves.

SANUSI BEDOUNS IN LIBYA

1 JN 2:12, NLT

I am writing to you who are God's children because your sins have been forgiven through Jesus.

Pray that soon many Sanusi would find the joy that only forgiveness of their sins can bring.

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A Bedouin boy in Libya

How would you and your family survive in one of the driest, hottest deserts in the world? The Sanusi Bedouins of west central Libya manage to survive in such a place—the harsh North African desert. They travel with their tents from oasis to oasis searching for water and grass for their herds. The Sanusi's diet consists primarily of dairy products, rice and bread. Some Sanusi have settled down and become farmers at these oases. They grow dates, wheat, barley, and vegetables using water from underground springs.

The Sanusi Bedouins are Sunni Muslims. Getting the gospel to the Sanusi will be challenging due to their nomadic lifestyle. The Sanusi Bedouin's basic identity is tied up in being a Muslim. When a Sanusi comes to Christ, there may be serious repercussions from their family.

Pray that the Sanusi come to see Jesus Christ as the living water, the one who can meet all their needs, both physical and spiritual. Pray that the Lord does signs and miracles to show this people group that Jesus Christ is the only one worthy of their devotion. Pray that as the Sanusi come together with friends and family, they will be able and willing to tell stories of Jesus, and that these stories will lead to a disciple making movement.—DK

ARABIC SPEAKING ALGERIANS IN EGYPT

Have you ever seen a color wheel change from yellow to orange to red? It is a gradual process as more red is added to the yellow. There is a direct analogy between this and what happened centuries ago and is still happening with the Berbers and Arabs in North African countries like Algeria. Before the Arab invasion of the 7th century, Berbers had their own language and culture. They were Christianized by the Byzantine Empire, but only at a superficial level. When the Arabs invaded North Africa, including Egypt and Algeria, Berbers ultimately joined the Arabs in become Sunni Muslims. They joined the Arab armies in invading Spain in 711.



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Today, not only is there a thin line between Berbers and Arabs in Algeria, but the situation has been complicated by these Algerian "Arabs" who have migrated to Egypt. They speak a form of Arabic that is not as orthodox as the standard modern Arabic spoken in Egypt, since there are many Berber words blended in. Unlike the Egyptian Arabs who have the ancient Coptic Church, the Algerians are solidly Sunni Muslim.

Pray for a softening of hearts so that the Algerians in Egypt might hear and receive Christ. Pray for a strong local church planting movement to be raised up, and for Algerian missionaries to be called and equipped to reach others.—BK/KC

JN 14:26, NLT

But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you.

Pray for Algerians in Egypt to understand and embrace the work of the Holy Spirit in their families.

JN 16:8, NLT

And when he comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God's righteousness, and of the coming judgment.

Pray for Moroccans in Egypt to yield to the Holy Spirit and allow him to speak to their hearts about their need to repent before a righteous God.

iStock/Marvot



Moroccan food vendor

somewhat intermingled with the Berbers of the region, they have remained culturally distinct. In Morocco, the Arabs have split into two social groups: urban and rural, with the rural Arabs splitting further into various castes of landowners and tenant farmers. Moroccan Arabs make up less than half of Morocco's population.

Some have migrated away from Morocco in search of jobs. Most have headed to Europe, though many have turned east to Egypt. The population of Moroccan Arabs in Egypt is significant, and they have brought with them the traditions, celebrations, and culture of home. Egyptian Arabic is different from Moroccan Arabic, though the Moroccans are familiar with the former, thanks to Egyptian TV broadcasts back home. In order to preserve their people, Moroccan Arabs in Egypt only marry within their own community.

Pray for spiritual awakening, and for eyes to be opened. Pray for Moroccan Arabs in Egypt to step into God's kingdom by droves. Pray for extreme boldness and love in the hearts of Arab believers, and for powerful encounters with the Holy Spirit. Pray for signs, wonders, and miracles to break out and cause widespread wonder, which will lead many Moroccan Arabs to follow Christ no matter what the cost.—BK

MOROCCAN ARABS IN EGYPT

Originating in the Arabian Desert, the ancestors of the Moroccan Arabs gradually migrated into northwestern Africa. Though they have become

EASTERN BEDAWI (BEDOUINS) IN EGYPT

In the Arabic language, “badawiyin” means “desert dweller.” In ages past, most people would settle near rivers or



An Eastern Bedawi in Egypt

sources of water, but the Bedouin people preferred the open desert. They are animal herders, migrating to the desert in the rainy season and back to cultivated land during the dry months. Their traditional home is in the Arabian Desert, though some would migrate to the Negev Desert. Over time, the Bedouin people split into two social classes: the “true” Bedouin, who live as nomadic shepherds, and the fellahin, who are farmers. The Bedouin have spread beyond their traditional home in the Arabian Peninsula, stretching across the nations of North Africa including Egypt.

The Eastern Bedawi are settled in Egypt. Today, they retain their traditional lifestyles, though some have accepted manual labor jobs which they always considered degrading. They are Sunni Muslim which makes them very difficult to reach for Christ; turning from the Islamic religious system can cost a Muslim their life.

Pray for waves of dreams and encounters with Jesus, and for a great Bedouin spiritual awakening in the 2020s. Pray for many Eastern Bedawi to have the spiritual hunger and courage to follow Christ and show others the way to the cross.—BK

MATT 2:14-15, NLT

That night Joseph left for Egypt with the child and Mary, his mother and they stayed there until Herod's death. This fulfilled what the Lord had spoken through the prophet: “I called my Son out of Egypt.”

Pray that the Eastern Bedawi people will be drawn to the Savior who was called out of Egypt!

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GEN 6:10, 10:6, NIV

Noah was the father of three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. . . . The descendants of Ham were Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan.

The Bedawi Beja people descended from Cush, a son of Ham. Ask for the Lord to send the Bedawi Bejas dreams, visions, and effective witnesses to help lead them into glorious identity as God's eternal sons through Christ.

BEDAWI BEJAS IN EGYPT



For more than 4000 years, the Beja peoples have inhabited one of the world's most difficult environments. Traditionally nomadic shepherds, Bejas are spread across desert regions of Sudan, Egypt, and Eritrea. Many scholars believe that the Beja descended from early Egyptians. Today, over one million Bedawi Bejas reside in southeastern Egypt. The Beja live a simple, outdoor lifestyle characterized by oral culture and well-defined roles for males and females. They love dancing and music. Annually, they migrate with herds of camels, goats, sheep, and cattle. Some farm to produce sorghum or commercial crops such as cotton and grains. Strong tribal ties of family and clan have provided Beja solidarity in hard times.

However, this unity is breaking down as families move to urban areas. Though considered 100 percent Muslim, the Beja follow a folk version of Islam which includes the belief in evil spirits. The Bedawiyet language of the Bedawi Bejas contains audio Bible recordings, the JESUS Film, and Scripture portions. Few follow Christ.

Ask God to stir intercession for the Bedawi Bejas of Egypt. Pray their hearts be softened to Christ. Ask for evangelistic tools to reach Bedawi Beja families and clans. Pray for vibrant believing fellowships to spread among Egypt's Bedawi Bejas, bringing great blessing upon their communities.—CR

ARABIZED NUBIANS IN EGYPT

“If a man has 100 sheep and one of them wanders away, what will he do? Won't he leave the 99 others on the hills and go out to search for the one that is lost? And if he finds it, I tell you the truth, he will rejoice over it more than over the 99 that didn't wander away! In the same way, it is not my heavenly Father's will that even one of these little ones should perish.” Matt 18:12-14, NLT



This verse applies to the Nubian people of southern Egypt. At one time they followed Christ, but with the Arab invasions in the seventh and eleventh centuries, they became “Arabized” joining the religion of Islam. By 1963 this group was moved out of southern Egypt by the construction of the Aswan High Dam. These Arabized Nubians now live east of the dam in a low-lying fertile plain that is irrigated by the Nile River.

Today they are entirely Muslim and they speak an Arab dialect called Masri. While this people group has the JESUS Film and Christian literature in Masri, they have almost no believers.

Pray that Lord would raise up intercessors and workers to bring them the way of salvation. Pray that the 2020s will be a decade of spiritual breakthroughs leading to a church planting movement.—JY

MATT 2:23, NLT

So the family went and lived in a town called Nazareth. This fulfilled what the prophets had said: “He will be called a Nazarene.”

Pray that many of the Arabized Nubians will be able to embrace the savior from Nazareth.

CENTRAL KURDS IN IRAQ

MATT 2:9B-11, NLT

And the star they had seen in the east guided them to Bethlehem. It went ahead of them and stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were filled with joy! They entered the house and saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Pray that the Central Kurds will gain the wisdom of the wise men and worship the Savior.

iStock/yayuzariyidi



A Kurdish man

(This story illustrates truths about this group.)

The end of a long day finally arrived, and the Kurdish farmer watched the stars appear. His distant ancestors were experts at reading the stars, watching the heavens for signs that might be from God. The Kurdish Zoroastrian priests were most likely the magi who brought gifts to the newborn King of the Universe! The farmer's more recent ancestors had lost that expertise.

Today, approximately 4.5 million Central Kurds are left in Iraq. Most are farmers, having given up the semi-nomadic lifestyle of their ancestors. During Saddam Hussein's genocide, many Kurds fled to the "safe zone" along the northern border with Iran. Many remain today in the diseased refugee camps. As one of the world's largest stateless people, Iraqi Kurds have voted in favor of declaring independence from Iraq. In September 2017, 92 percent of the voting Kurds said yes to independence.

Roughly 99.5 percent of Central Kurds nominally practice Islam, although many still feel a connection with the ancient Zoroastrian faith of their distant ancestors. A full Bible translation was completed in 2017.

Ask God to make the Scriptures become available and alive to Iraqi's Central Kurds. Pray that a strong Spirit-filled church will thrive and spread throughout Kurdish communities in Iraq.—LR

KURMANJI KURDS IN IRAQ

(This story illustrates truths about this group.)

The little girl's stomach twisted with nervous excitement. Wearing a bright yellow shirt, her family was finally leaving the "safe zone" where she had been born and raised. She had dreamed about what life would be like outside the refugee camp, hoping that she would not watch anyone else in her family die from the camp's diseases, dehydration or murders.



Kurdish refugee children

iStock/yayuzariyidi

Along the northeastern border of Iraq that touches Iran, the Kurmanji-speaking Northern Kurds live—3,326,000 of them. The "safe zone," which was established after the Gulf War in 1991 was built to protect them from the murderous regime of Saddam Hussein. However, the Kurmanji Kurds are hardly safe today. The Iraqi secret police often poison their Kurdish opponents. Even other Kurdish groups sometimes treat them with contempt.

Despite nearly all Kurds being Sunni Muslims, there are deep rifts amongst Kurds regarding religion. "Many of the dispossessed Kurdish minorities have become associated with the secret and unorthodox sects of Islam—the most fervently rebellious people in Kurdish society," one source said.

Ask God to send Christian medical teams and humanitarian aid workers who will treat the Kurmanji Kurds' physical and spiritual needs. Pray that soon they will find refuge in the loving arms of Jesus, and begin a Kurdish movement to Christ.—LR

PS 32:7, NLT

For you are my hiding place; you protect me from trouble. You surround me with songs of victory.

Pray that the Kurmanji-speaking Kurds will allow the Lord to be their refuge in these dangerous times.

NAJIDI BEDOUNS

LK 2:15, NLT

When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem! Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

Pray that the Najidi Bedouins, most of whom herd sheep, will have the same fascination about the Christ child as these shepherds in Bethlehem.

iStock/SurkovDimitr



(This story illustrates truths about this people group.)

As the Najdi Bedouin men moved through the desert, they told each other stories about their

childhoods living in caves during the winter. "My brother and I were cold, and our parents were out, so we made a fire in our cave. The smoke drove us out, and then the rug my mother made burned!"

To nomads, borders are not boundaries. Even though the Najd homeland is in one of two major Saudi provinces, nomadic shepherds and their families travel easily across the porous Saudi-Iraqi border. The Najd tribe was known for raiding caravans that crossed their desert pathways. The Saudi government discouraged their nomadic lifestyle years ago, and most are now settled in cities. Today nearly 1,700,000 Najdis live in Iraq. But some have returned to Saudi Arabia to fight for various extremist factions while others do their fighting in Iraq.

We know of no Christ followers among them. As a culture, Bedouins share a pan-Islamic solidarity which draws them to battle. They value martyrdom and the heaven that they believe awaits them.

Ask the Lord for the Najdi Bedouins to hear the story of Jesus' ultimate martyrdom. There are Arabic videos that tell the story in the Najidi dialect, but who will take the videos? Pray that story tellers and Christ's ambassadors will take them these videos.—LR

BEDOIN ARABS IN JORDAN

When you go on a long drive or plane ride, you probably listen to music to pass the time. The Jordanian



Bedouin equivalent of that is chanting poetry on long camel rides across the desert. They recite or improvise short poems and toss them back and forth between two groups of riders. If you are the poet in your tribe, you are highly regarded. Because many Bedouins cannot read, oral poetry and music are key ways for them to communicate with one another from the heart. People chant and sing at campfires, weddings, tribal festivities, camel races, and during collective work. Bedouins cherish the social bonding during the oral exchange of verses.

Islam is an even more important cornerstone of Bedouin culture. Being Bedouin is synonymous with being Muslim, although there are a few known followers of Christ. When they are out in the desert, Bedouins stop to face Mecca to pray.

Ask God that when Jordanian Bedouins pray, Christ will reveal himself to them. Pray that God will raise up believers who will write songs and poems about the life of Jesus that they will share with one another. Pray that Jordanian Bedouins will teach and disciple others through poetry and music. Pray that Bedouins will learn to love Jesus Christ with all their hearts.—CMW

JN 4:21, NASB

... an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father.

Pray that Bedouins will joyfully commune with God no matter where they are.

ALAWITES IN SYRIA

LK 1:30-33, NLT

“Don’t be afraid, Mary,” the angel told her, “for you have found favor with God! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!”

Pray that the Alawites will be eager to enter Christ’s Kingdom, and not look back.



An Alawite man

You’re right and everybody else is wrong. You have the answer, but nobody wants to hear it. You know the truth, but for that, you are considered a fool. Instead, you are denounced for merely expressing your opinions. Does this sound familiar?

The Alawites are a closed religious group that has survived in the mountain ranges of northwestern Syria. For generations, they have been persecuted and despised because they adhere to their own unusual form of Shi’ite Islam. They believe that they are God’s chosen people, yet Sunni Muslims consider them pagans and heretics. Because they are a small minority and are surrounded by Sunni Muslims, some Alawites have to pretend they are Sunnis in order to escape death.

During the Syrian Civil War (2011-present), a large number of Alawites have been killed because of their support for the Hafez al-Assad government. Estimates vary, but sources report that anywhere from 40,000-150,000 Alawites have died in the military and sectarian conflict. This poses a threat to the survival of this community.

Pray for God to send courageous, loving messengers of Christ to the Alawites. Pray that God’s people of peace will bring blessing and truth to both sides of the Syrian Civil War. Pray for Alawite families to find their way to the cross and teach others to seek Christ.—CMW

NAJIDI SAUDI ARABS IN SYRIA

Have you ever gone back-packing? Do you remember how hard you had to work to narrow your belongings to

the bare minimum? The Najidi Arabs understand well what it is to live a portable, minimalistic lifestyle. They are nomadic shepherds in the Arabian Desert. Everything they own travels with them. Consequently, they do not own much more than their tent and a couple of essential material possessions. They travel by camel. In a bygone era, this beast was known as the “ship of the desert,” but now we would equate the camel with a four-wheel drive or a jeep. The Najidi Arabs look down upon paid employment, but of late, they have had to accept wage-paying jobs in order to afford health care and better living conditions.

In Mark 10, Christ told a rich young ruler to sell all that he had, and then to follow Jesus. The man was not willing to give up his many possessions and went away grieving. Though not deterred by an overabundance of material goods, the Najidi Arabs, need hearts that are willing to drop spiritual non-essentials and turn to Jesus.

Pray that God would remove the obstacles that prevent Najidi Arabs from entering his kingdom. Pray for their families to enjoy the blessings of the Lord.—CMW



iStock/gustavofraza

LK 1:38, NLT

Mary responded, “I am the Lord’s servant. May everything you have said about me come true.” And then the angel left her.

Pray that there will soon be servants of God among the Najidi Arabs will be as obedient as Mary.

SOUTHERN BALOCH IN OMAN

LK 2:14, NLT

At the sound of Mary's greeting, Elizabeth's child leaped within her, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Pray that this coming year, many Baloch households will be filled with the joy of the Holy Spirit when they hear of the only Savior.

Credit: iStock/ArdekProcy



(This story illustrates truths about this people group.)

The children sat in a semi-circle, watching and

listening as the elderly man and his wife told a story through a song. The man was playing a *suroz*, a traditional instrument of the Baluch people, running a bow across the four strings. The lyrics told of a way of living that honored the traditions of the Baloch. It spoke of hospitality, mercy, and honesty. The simple tune was well known by the children, and they began to sing along.

Since migrating from their historic homeland in Balochistan (Pakistan) to the Middle East, the Southern Baloch people have been determined to maintain their identity. They continue to use songs and poems to teach their children about their history, heritage, and Balochmayer – the Baloch way of living.

They also continue to teach their children to be Muslims. To be Baloch, they believe, is not only to value and practice hospitality, mercy, and honesty, but to follow Islam.

Pray for a great move of the Holy Spirit among the Southern Baloch people in Oman. Ask God to prepare their hearts to receive those sent to them and the message of salvation in Christ. Pray for many to take Christ back to their people in Balochistan, and that many Baloch families will enjoy the blessings God intends for them to enjoy.—CL

URDU SPEAKERS IN SAUDI ARABIA

If you're up for a challenge, start praying for a move of God among the Urdu speakers in Saudi Arabia!

The primary difficulty in reaching them isn't location, though Saudi Arabia is definitely an isolated stronghold of Islam. Neither is the obstacle the fact that this group is almost entirely Sunni Muslim and there are no known followers of Christ among them. The challenge in seeing a major movement to Christ among this people group is that they are not exactly a people group! Unlike other unreached people groups, Urdu can refer to a number of ethnic groups. However, Urdu provides a commonality for those who live in foreign lands like Saudi Arabia.

Originally from Pakistan (Urdu is the national language of Pakistan) and northern India, the vast majority of Urdu speakers are Sunni Muslim. Those who have migrated to Saudi Arabia tend to feel a kinship with one another as they face economic and social discrimination.

Pray for Christ's light to shine brightly in Saudi Arabia and cause thousands to give Jesus Christ their full allegiance. Ask the Lord to capture their hearts and ignite a movement of his Spirit that will lead to their families being blessed in Saudi Arabia and South Asia.—CL

iStock/Mr. Khan



LK 2:45, NLT

You are blessed because you believed that the Lord would do what he said.

Pray for the peoples of Saudi Arabia to have the gift of faith that will lead them to joy in the Holy Spirit.

GULF BEDOUINS IN THE UAE

LK 2:46-47, NLT

Mary responded, "Oh, how my soul praises the Lord. How my spirit rejoices in God my Savior!

Pray for many Bedouin women to praise the Lord for what he has done to bring us a Savior!

iStock/licky39



The lure of Dubai!

You can take the Bedouin out of the desert, but you can't take the desert out of the Bedouin! So goes a saying about this tenacious, ancient people. The word Bedouin means "desert-dweller." While many modern Bedouins have migrated to the cities along with other people groups, they are inexorably tied to the desert and a migratory lifestyle in Arabian Peninsula countries, including the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Whether herding livestock across the desert or settling down in urban centers, Bedouins are also tied to Islam and a belief in spirits (jinn). These are part of their tradition, as are the values of generosity and honor. Bedouins are strongly knit together in clans and tribes and they are quick to band together against common enemies.

Thus far, Bedouins in the UAE have not been penetrated by the gospel. Is it because the gospel seems foreign to people who dwell in the desert, much like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? Or could it be that believers are not willing to live in the scorching desert to reach them?

Ask God to put his mark upon Bedouins in the UAE and elsewhere. Pray for a few to respond to his invitation, share their newfound salvation with their families, clans, and tribes, and for a great movement to break out, sweeping through Bedouin communities everywhere.—CL

BOSNIAKS IN BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

It's easy to confuse the words Bosnians and Bosniaks. All citizens of Bosnia are called Bosnians. Bosniaks are one of three main ethnic groups in Bosnia, together with Serbs and Croats. These groups were involved in years of bitter ethnic-related fighting that ended in 1995.



A Bosniak boy

iStock/Kanifa Boskovi

Most Bosniaks were nominal Christians when the Muslim Ottomans conquered Bosnia in 1463. Bosnians converted to the Islamic faith in increasing numbers until today 95 percent are Muslim. Some conversions were forced. For others, conversion was a matter of convenience. Merchants found that Muslims had greater freedom of movement and state protection for their goods. The prime reason behind the spread of Islam was the weak presence of the Orthodox Church in Bosnia.

Many Bosniaks consider religion a combination of traditions and superstitions. Their Islamic identity has more to do with cultural roots than with spirituality. Converting to Christianity is equated with leaving their culture and community. The Bible has been translated into their Bosnian language, and there are audio and video Christian resources available on the Internet.

Pray for Bosniaks to hear these resources with open hearts. The Bosniaks changed their religion once before; pray for a new movement of spiritual change that will lead their families to embrace and obey the Savior. Pray for their families to be blessed by the presence of the Holy Spirit within.—AHS

LK 2:16-17, NLT

They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child.

Pray that the Bosniaks will treasure the baby born in Bethlehem and accept him as the only way to have reconciliation with God.

ARABIZED BLACKS (AKHDAM) IN YEMEN

LK 2:7, NLT

She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them.

Pray that on this Christmas Day, the Akhdam people in Yemen will understand and accept that their savior came from humble means like their own, and they can be in good standings with God if they are willing to do it on his terms.

iStock/Rawpixel



“Clean your plate if it is touched by a dog,” states a traditional Yemeni proverb. “But break it if it’s touched by a

Khadem.” Khadem is the singular form of Akhdam, and means “servant.” They’re also called, “the marginalized ones.” The color of their skin distinguishes these Arabic-speaking Muslims. Akhdams are socially segregated and assigned to menial, low paid tasks at the bottom of Yemen’s social system. Many are forced to beg and can’t intermarry with conventional Yemeni. Most live in makeshift huts without electricity or running water.

The average Yemini response to their plight is, “It is the will of Allah.” They are called lazy, scroungers, unfit for respectable work. An Akhdam woman complained, “If an organization gives us aid, the government takes it from us. We believe in Allah to save us from this life. The future is dark. We have no hope. We expect only death.”

Bible portions have been translated into their Arabic dialect, but most cannot read. Audio and video Christian resources are also available, but most can’t afford computers or cellphones. There are no known followers of Christ among the Akhdam.

Pray for Christ’s ambassadors to go to the Akhdam and help them begin a disciple making movement. Pray that they will know they can become children of God and be taken from death to life.—AHS

SOUTHERN YEMENI ARABS IN YEMEN

What do Southern Yemeni Arabs and communists have in common? Even though 92 percent of South Yemen’s population are Arabs, the only political party in South Yemen allowed until 1990 was the Yemeni Socialist Party, modeled on the Soviet Union. After bitter fighting, the two Yemens were united without communism.

The unity between north and south has been frail ever since. In 2016 New Delhi TV reported, “Al Qaeda and ISIS are cementing their presence in southern Yemen in the absence of state authority and little opposition from coalition forces.” Recently, Southern Yemeni separatists who claim they have been marginalized by the north, seized control of Aden and other cities.

Yemeni Arabs struggle with war, poverty, hunger, political unrest, and thousands of refugees. Terrorist organizations promise food and care but deliver misery and death.

Portions of the Bible have been translated into the Taizzi-Aden dialect of Arabic, spoken in southern Yemen. The JESUS Film is also available. Global Recordings Network (GRN) has audio recordings in five different dialects.

Pray for Southern Yemenis to access these resources. Ask God to raise up a spokesperson for Jesus Christ among the war-torn peoples of Yemen. May the message of peace and forgiveness sweep through Yemen resulting in thousands following the only savior.—AHS



iStock/jamilobernal

LK 2:28-32, NLT

Simeon was there. He took the child in his arms and praised God, saying, “Sovereign Lord, now let your servant die in peace, as you have promised. I have seen your salvation, which you have prepared for all people. He is a light to reveal God to the nations, and he is the glory of your people Israel!”

Pray for many from the Southern Yemenis to recognize that Jesus Christ came to save sinners from every nation, including their own.

GEN 27:40, NLT

You will live by your sword, and you will serve your brother. But when you decide to break free, you will shake his yoke from your neck.

Pray for the Hadrami people to escape the snare of the sword and strife to live under the protective wings of the Lord Almighty!

HADRAMIS IN YEMEN

iStock/indigomx



A Hadrami shop owner

As I write this, the U.S. government has withdrawn support for Saudi Arabia's war in Yemen between Sunni and Shi'ite Muslim factions. If it were not for that war, it is likely you would not have heard of Yemen, unless of course, your neighbor was Yemeni, as many of them live abroad. And it is even less likely you have heard of the Hadhramaut, the agricultural region of east central Yemen, home to the Hadrami peoples. But you have most likely heard of Osama bin Laden, a Hadrami from Saudi Arabia.

Division and conflict is a way of life for the Hadrami. According to *Wikipedia*, some 1,300 distinct types of Arabs live in the Hadhramaut. They are stratified, and people in various towns are often hostile to those in another. There are conflicts between nomads and townsmen. It's no wonder that since the 1700s, many Hadramis have emigrated to Indonesia, East Africa, South Asia, and Saudi Arabia. This eases population strain and conflict, and results in money going back to Yemen.

Pray for peace in Yemen. Pray that mission agencies will produce a Hadrami Arabic Bible. Pray that many from each Hadrami town will be disciplined to truly follow him. Pray that those living abroad will believe in the Savior and communicate their faith to loved ones back in Yemen.—TP

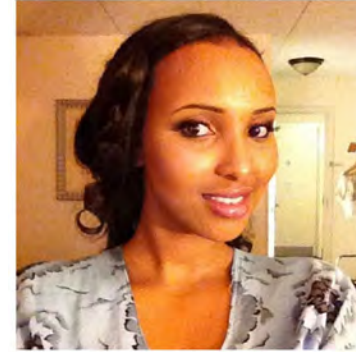
SOMALIS IN YEMEN

Which people living in Yemen are of the same faith, DNA, and language, yet divided? Which of them "goes out of the frying pan and into the fire?" The Somalis! They speak their own language, Somali, a language that was unwritten until 1972. Indeed, they are not Arabs like the Yemeni majority. They are divided by clans, which are less relevant to other peoples in Yemen.

Some are fleeing the fire of civil warfare in Yemen to return to Somalia, a nation that is also in turmoil. There seems to be no safe place for Somalis to hide! Among their population, some 500,000 to 1.1 million Somalis live in Yemen, and less than one in 500 follows Christ.

Some have been in Yemen 15 to 20 years. They have become entrepreneurs. All that hard work will have to be abandoned if they return to Somalia. They will need safety in travel. They will need jobs. They need Jesus.

May believers in Jesus lend Somalis a hand, both in Yemen and in Somalia. Pray for their safety. Pray that the process of adjustment will produce in them a willingness to trust him for salvation and for all their physical needs. Pray for a powerful disciple making movement among Somalis, both in Yemen and in Somalia.—TP



A Somali woman

GEN 28:14, NLT

Your descendants will be as numerous as the dust of the earth! They will spread out in all directions—to the west and the east, to the north and the south. And all the families of the earth will be blessed through you and your descendants.

Pray that those from the seed of Abraham will be willing to extend God's blessing to the Somali people in Yemen.

SABRAS IN ISRAEL

REV 7:4, NLT

And I heard how many were marked with the seal of God—144,000 were sealed from all the tribes of Israel. . .

Pray for the 2020s to be the decade when the Lord begins to raise up these ambassadors from within the people of Israel!



iStock/barsikMAN

The Sabras are the native-born Israelis. This is a paraphrase of the testimony of one who found the Messiah.

“The word Sabra is the name for the prickly pear cactus. Unlike the sweet, soft interior of the pear I was more like its thorny hard exterior. As a boy I loved the tradition of my Jewish family. When I was 13 I asked God to let me see him, but when this did not happen I rejected him. I lived a rebellious life, served in the army and later I became a security guard. I still searched for a spiritual meaning through mystics and fortune tellers. I even went back to the synagogue. All was hopeless until a young woman spoke to me about Yeshua and showed me prophecies in the Bible. I strongly rejected the scriptures; however, the more I learned the more I came to see that Yeshua was the Messiah. He removed the thorns from my life and replaced them with a kindness for people and a peace that only he could give. Some of my family are now listening to me.”

Almost all the estimated 4,750,000 Sabras of Israel are either Jewish or identify as agnostics.

Pray that the Sabra families and communities will open their hearts to Yeshua and be ready to join him in eternity and spread his fame to all nations!—PD

MAGHREBI ARABS IN SPAIN

(This story illustrates truths about this people group.)

Mohammad and Ajmal ran to greet their brothers outside

of a detention center in Archidona, Spain. Both boys, ages 10 and 12, had almost died as they took the treacherous boat ride across the Mediterranean from Morocco to Spain. The brothers told their story.

“There were 200 of us kids in a small rubber boat and the boy in charge was 16 years old. When we were almost to the shore there was a leak. Finally, the boat landed, and we were brought here by the Spanish police.”

The Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) is an economic and political organization formed by five North African (Maghrebi) countries which include Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, and Mauritania. On the economic level, Spain has had strong ties with the Maghreb through trade. War, crime, unemployment, poverty, trafficking, and terrorism have caused Maghrebi Arabs to seek to live in Spain, even though fleeing their countries could result in death. Those who make the trip may face deportation or a long period of detention.

Pray that many believers in Spain will befriend the Muslim Maghrebis and show them the way to the cross, teaching them to disciple others. Pray that the 2020s will be a decade of spiritual breakthrough among the Maghrebi Arabs.—PD



Notice where Morocco almost meets Spain

iStock/radiokukka

IS 43:7, NLT

Bring all who claim me as their God, for I have made them for my glory. It was I who created them.

Pray that soon the Maghrebi Arabs will be brought into the family of God, and they will in turn lead other Arabs to Christ as well.

MACEDONIAN ALBANIANS IN MACEDONIA

IS 43:18-19, NLT

But forget all that—it is nothing compared to what I am going to do. For I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it?

Pray for us to look and see the new things God will do in the 2020s as we enter a new decade tomorrow!



An Albanian teenaged boy

(This story illustrates truths about this people group.)

“Arian, this Great Mosque is going to be magnificent!” Troian, an Albanian teenager, was amazed as he viewed the mosque being built in Tirana, Macedonia. His friend replied, “When they finish it, this will be the largest mosque in the Balkans. And the Turkish government gave it to us as

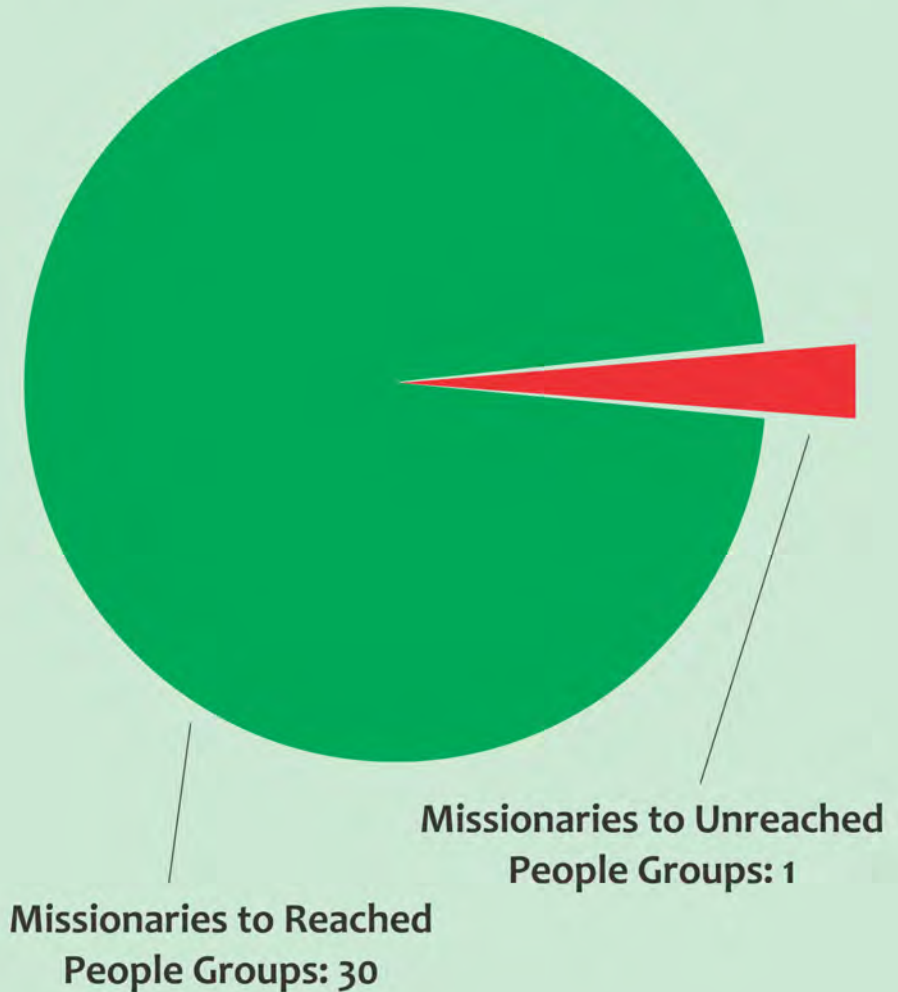
a gift! For years we had no central place to pray, so we prayed in the streets. Just think, this mosque can hold over 4,500 of us at one time! It will have conference and exhibition halls, a library and a museum.”

There are around 522,000 Albanian Muslims in northern Macedonia. Feeling discriminated against, they struggle with issues such as unemployment, low representation in public offices, limited educational opportunities, and poverty. During the communist years all Macedonians were denied religious rights, and many became atheists. The collapse of communism in 1991 brought rapid changes including the return of religious rights. Muslims, especially the Turks, have sent Muslim missionaries to direct Albanians back to their Islamic ways. They have paid for new mosques to be built.

Pray for their zeal for a religious system to be re-directed to a zeal for Jesus Christ, who alone can offer salvation for this life and the life to come. Pray for a powerful disciple making movement among Albanian Muslims in the coming years.—PD

The Great Imbalance

For every 30 missionaries to reached people groups there is only 1 to unreached people groups.



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