

**Monday 22nd February**

### **The Power of Prayer to Save a Life**

When Habsa heard how much it would cost to remove the cancer in her abdomen, she thought the news was a death sentence. As an unmarried woman in a Muslim North African country, she didn't have health insurance and couldn't afford thousands of pounds in medical expenses.



When Habsa shared her news with the Muslim-background believers in her house church, she assured them she would be alright. She trusted God for her future.

The leader of the house church told his ministry partners on a Frontiers team about Habsa's situation and invited them to a time of prayer for her. During the gathering, several people sensed that this was a special opportunity for the young body of believers to come together to help meet Habsa's financial need.

Then the pandemic started. Unable to meet in person, they started virtual gatherings to pray for Habsa. Frontiers workers also began calling Muslim-background followers of Christ in other cities to tell them about Habsa's operation. Some believers had just lost jobs because of the lockdown in the pandemic, but many gave what they could. Within months, enough money had been given to cover Habsa's surgery, and the operation was scheduled.

But the day before the procedure, the doctor performed a routine check-up on Habsa's heart. It showed that one of her arteries was blocked. The doctor ordered an analysis for the next day to determine the extent of the blockage, explaining that Habsa needed to have a stent surgically inserted before he could remove the cancer. Such surgery would cost thousands of pounds more. Facing another impossible hurdle, the local believers and Frontiers workers prayed for Habsa's artery to clear immediately.

The following day, Habsa went for her analysis. The doctor reviewed the results and was astonished to find that her artery was no longer blocked. "That's the power of prayer in Jesus' name," Habsa explained to the bewildered doctor. Now she could proceed with the cancer surgery.

The operation was a success, and Habsa spent a week recovering in the hospital. Her friend Zahra, a fellow Muslim-background believer, stayed by her side the whole time. Throughout the week, the two women shared the gospel with every nurse who came in to check on Habsa. Having never met fearless followers of Jesus, the nurses and hospital staff were all amazed to find two of them in their own city!

Several nurses kept coming into Habsa's room on the pretext of checking her, but in reality to hear about Christ. They would sit next to Habsa and listen to her and Zahra share from the Word. The day before Habsa was sent home, five Muslim nurses asked for a Bible. Zahra made sure that each went home that day with their own copy.

After Habsa was discharged, three nurses volunteered to visit her at home to help her recover. Even though Habsa has healed from the operation, the nurses are still coming to hear from the Word and learn more about Christ.

- Let's just take a moment to thank God for using the cancer that was meant to destroy life to open the hearts of North African Muslims to eternal life in Jesus Christ.
- Pray for protection and good health for Habsa.
- Pray that Muslim-background believers will be salt and light in their communities and share with boldness the hope that is within them.
- Ask the Lord to raise up new teams of gospel witnesses to go and share Christ with Muslims in Libya and Algeria and across the North Africa region.

## Tuesday 23rd February

### Tripoli, Benghazi and Misrata.

Last year we prayed for these 3 Libyan cities. They remain on the list this year. Let's press on in prayer for this to change. They are all found on Frontiers' Priority 100 list (most unreached places and peoples) as strategic gateway cities – centres of power and influence for the whole country.

Tripoli is in the far west of Libya and is the capital and seat of power for the official Libyan government. The majority of Libyans also live there for the economic opportunities it offers or because of conflict in their hometowns. There are periodic skirmishes and Islamic State attacks, because whoever controls this city controls the country's resources.



Tripoli is particularly important as a gateway city to the western plains of Libya and the Arab and Coastal Nafusa unreached people groups, the Nafusa Mountain people and east toward Misrata. There are very few churches in Tripoli. One of the few is a 19th century Anglican church attended by African and Indian believers who are praying for better days ahead for the people of this city.

Misrata in northwest Libya is a few hours to the east of Tripoli. It is Libya's third largest city and has a larger role to play in post-2011 Libya since many of its militias continue to play an ongoing role in shaping the security and the politics of the country. It is an important commercial centre through which many goods come. It has a lot of influence over politics and industry in the west and central part of Libya.

Benghazi is Libya's second largest city. This is a port in the east of Libya that was held by rebels against the will of the central government in Tripoli. It is strategic to the entire region of Cyrenia in eastern Libya, including the large conurbations of Tabruk and Derna.

- Pray for the key cities of Tripoli, Misrata and Benghazi. Let's join with those praying in the church in Tripoli that there will be better days ahead for this country and for all Libyan Arabs.
- Let's ask God's Spirit to move across these cities, going where workers cannot go at this time.
- Pray for Libyans living in these key cities to put their trust and find their identity in the true God of the Universe. Pray for many of them to become disciples of Christ.

### **Wednesday 24th February**

#### **Recent history of kingdom advance in Libya**

According to Open Doors, there are approximately 34,500 Christians in Libya – 0.5% of a population of 6.8 million. But the number of Libyan believers (rather than migrant workers from other countries) is very small – only about 150 believers. They face violent and intense pressure from their family and the wider community to renounce their faith. They are rarely able to meet together for fear of being discovered. Open Doors have ranked Libya fourth again this year on their World Watch List for persecution of believers.

This leaves Libyan Arabs as one of the most unreached people groups in the world. No form of evangelism or missions work is allowed in Libya.

Libya has been one of the least accessible countries in the world for field workers. Following the 2011 Arab Spring, Libya eased restrictions and workers were able to enter the country. However, they faced harassment, imprisonment, deportation, and some were even martyred.

The few Libyan believers living outside the country have created social media outreach and Christian resources including worship songs, The Jesus Film in Libyan Arabic and the first-ever Bible translations. Tomorrow we will read a testimony from a Muslim background believer in North Africa whose life was transformed when he heard the good news and The Jesus Film broadcast in his own language.

While we thank the Lord for the way he is working, we know that He wants more. He wants Libyan believers to have the joy of living in the body of Christ. He wants to see the good news spread from person to person and from family to family. May God bring a movement of many thousands of Libyans to Christ!

- Pray for the good news to spread among Libyans bringing a movement of many thousands to Christ.
- Ask God to show workers more creative ways to take Bibles and Christian literature into Libya.
- Let's join with the Libyan diaspora as they plead for the salvation of their homeland. Only God can open blind eyes and soften hard hearts.
- Pray for the tiny Libyan Church to be united and established despite intense persecution, that it will shine with the light and hope of Jesus.

Source of some content: <https://www.opendoorsuk.org/persecution/world-watch-list/libya/>

## Thursday 25th February

### Belka's testimony

*"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."* John 3:16

Yesterday we read about Libyan believers living outside the country who had created social media outreach resources including The Jesus Film in Libyan Arabic. Today as we read Belka's testimony of how he grew up in a Muslim family in North Africa, we see how his life was changed when he heard the gospel message through a radio programme and The Jesus Film in his own language.

Belka's inspiring testimony can be watched in full here: <https://prayercast.com/belka.html>

Belka was born into a Muslim family and, as he grew up he learnt about the Quran, how to pray and how to observe the Islamic religious feasts. But he began to question his faith and the meaning of life. He realised there were other religions in the world, and he began to explore them to see if Islam really was right.

One day he came across an advertisement for Christian radio and decided to listen to one of their programmes. He was amazed when he heard it broadcast in his own language. Gradually, through the radio broadcasts he began to learn about Jesus. When he heard an advertisement about The Jesus Film, he wrote in to ask for a copy. As he listened to it in his own language and learned about the life and character of Jesus he was deeply touched. He had grown up fearing death but hearing about Jesus as a person of peace and love, he began to change. He heard the truth that whoever believes in Jesus will never die but have eternal life.

This message gave him such peace and joy, the fear of death left him. He went to his room and prayed for forgiveness and to receive Jesus as his saviour. He was so happy he shared the good news with his family, but they were against his faith and his brother threatened to burn his books.

Belka left his country to study abroad. It was then that he was baptised and felt God call him into ministry.

- Let's thank God for equipping people to share the gospel in other languages! Pray that people will persevere until resources are available in the language of every Muslim.
- Pray that millions more Muslims would hear the gospel in their mother tongue.
- Pray for Belka in his life of ministry as he shares the good news with others and let's cry out for the salvation of his family and friends in his own country.

Source: <https://prayercast.com/belka.html>

**Friday 26th February**

## **Algiers and Algerian Arabs and Berbers**

Frontiers has designated Algiers as one of their 100 Priority Places for prayer, since the capital city, Algiers, is a gateway city for reaching the Arab and Berber peoples of Algeria.



One estimate puts the population of the wider metropolitan city at around 5.4 million. Nearly 13% of Algeria's population live there; 53% are from an Arabic-speaking background, 44% from a Berber-speaking background and 3% are foreign-born. Though most Algerians are ethnically Berber, after centuries of Arab influence, most see themselves as Arab.

Today 98% of the country's population are Muslim and Algerian Arabs are classified as unreached. Protestant ministry among Algerian Arabs began in the 19th century by amazing pioneers like Lilius Trotter. By the 1980s, a

number of Arab churches had been established. Since then, God has moved in a powerful way among the Kabyle Berbers, such that there are now tens of thousands of Kabyle Christians. Sadly, there has not been a similar response among the Arab majority. Since the end of the Algerian civil war (1991-2002), when all missionaries were forced to leave the country or be killed by Islamists, only a few western field workers have been able to return long-term. Encouragingly, Kabyle believers are catching the vision to reach out to Arabs. Most churches in Kabylia conduct their worship services in French, Kabyle and Arabic to make non-Kabyle visitors feel welcome.

Generally, there is freedom for Algerian believers to build churches and publicly declare their faith. There are many resources available in Standard Arabic online, but not many in the Algerian dialect. Outside the capital city, many have never heard the gospel message or met a follower of Jesus.

You may want to watch this Prayercast clip about Algerian Arabs for more information to inspire your prayers: <https://prayercast.com/algerian-arab.html>

- Let's pray for the strategic city of Algiers. As people of different backgrounds live together, pray it will be in a spirit of unity and peace.
- Pray that God would open doors for the preaching of the gospel in Algiers and send labourers to Algerian Arabs.
- Many Algerian Arabs have never heard the gospel message or met a follower of Jesus. Pray for all Algerian Arabs to have access to the Bible and gospel materials.

**Saturday 27th February**

### **Constantine - a gateway city**

*"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden."* Matt 5:14

Constantine is also on Frontiers' Priority 100 list (most unreached places and peoples). Lying in the far northeastern corner of Algeria is this extraordinary, modern city with a 3,000-year history. It is stunning and often referred to as the 'City of Bridges'; 8 picturesque bridges dramatically criss-cross a deep gorge, connecting the various hills, valleys and ravines that the city is built on and around.



As the third largest city in Algeria, daily life there in the coolness of the mountains feels free and calm, although there is an undercurrent of a heavily policed state. Prior to the coronavirus pandemic, tastefully dressed men and women would stop to greet each other as they shopped in the cobbled old town from the Ottoman era or passed afternoons chatting in beautiful parks. Adaptable and resourceful, people there are always rebuilding or recycling. The young are keen to learn and to shape their own future.

Constantine is a strategic city for outreach to the unengaged Shawiya Berber group, as well as other communities in the east of the country who currently remain inaccessible. There are a handful of Kabyle believers in this city who are gaining a heart for movement to Christ among other people groups.

Constantine featured on Frontiers Priority 100 prayer app on 31<sup>st</sup> December. The app can be found at:

iOS - <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/priority-100-prayer/id1506574492>

Android - <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.prayerforusapp.ppp100>

- Pray for the light of the gospel to illuminate the hearts of the people of Constantine and to radiate far and wide in the east of Algeria.
- Pray for God to go ahead of workers and to open the doors for them to have residency and favour with the authorities.
- Let's ask the Lord to help the Kabyle believers who live there to have a heart of wisdom and compassion for the Arabs and other Berbers who live there and to love them in ways that give His name glory and reveal His kindness.