

Monday 21st December

The Displaced in the Middle East

Ongoing conflicts in the Middle East have displaced the largest number of people of any region in the world. It is impossible to accurately count the number of refugees and internally-displaced people – those who remain in their home country – let alone the hundreds of thousands who have died. It is reported that there are more than 35 million homeless men, women and children, most of whom still live in the region.



Source Wikimedia Commons

With the ravages of Covid-19, most Middle East governments haven't been extending help to refugee populations. In Turkey, Syrian refugees cannot receive financial or food assistance, or the facemasks that are given freely to Turkish citizens. Lockdown measures in Lebanon brought business to a standstill, so most refugees lost their jobs and only source of income. Jordan stands out as an exception to the norm, but its resources and capacity are stretched extremely thin.

Before the lockdowns in Jordan and Lebanon, foreign workers were free to work with the churches ministering to refugees. In Lebanon, evangelical churches and agencies were serving Syrian Muslim refugees in Beirut and among refugees in unofficial camps throughout the Beqaa valley. God has blessed this loving Christian action, and churches are

overflowing with believing refugees, most of whom are Kurds from Syria.

Likewise, churches and agencies in Jordan had been working among both Iraqi and Syrian refugees for years, and the response to the gospel had been encouraging. In Egypt, there were numerous ministries and churches serving Sudanese refugees. Some churches in Syria were boldly reaching out to needy refugees. Now disillusioned Muslims often outnumber the original church members!

Where workers have not been able to physically reach out, they have begun praying – and when they pray, God moves! He is at work in amazing ways among the displaced people in the Middle East. Unprecedented numbers of Muslims are coming to faith in Christ.

You can watch a compelling video clip about displaced people in the Middle East here:

<https://prayercast.com/displaced-people-in-middle-east.html>

- We thank God for the faithful prayers of so many for Muslim refugees and displaced people across the Middle East and other regions. We pray that God will bless them and their prayers will bear even more fruit.
- Pray for more believers to join those praying together, crying out to God to hear their pleas for salvation for their lost Muslim neighbours.
- Matthew 6:26 says, "Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?" Let's pray that every displaced person would know they are valuable to God.

Sources: <https://prayercast.com/displaced-people-in-middle-east.html>

Tuesday 22nd December

Nabil and the Man in White

The following story is from the Global Prayer Digest:

“Nabil (not his real name) and his family of Muslim refugees settled in a small apartment that happened to be near a believer named Greg. Nabil found a job as a common labourer, but one day suffered a debilitating ankle injury. He was no longer able to work. His new friend, Greg, stopped in as often as he could to help him recover, but Nabil’s ankle did not respond.

One day Nabil called Greg and almost pleaded with him to come over. “I need to see you immediately! Come over now and bring your Bible.”

When Greg arrived, Nabil excitedly said, “A man in white came to me in a vision and told me to get a Bible.”

Greg noticed that Nabil was no longer limping and asked what happened to his ankle. Nabil excitedly responded, “The man in white healed it!” He then recounted a dream he had had where this man led him into a beautiful garden, and at the entrance, he told Nabil that he must read the Bible and that it would lead him to life.”

As it is written in Acts 15:8: “God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us.”

- Just as Joseph had a dream to take his baby son Jesus to safety in Egypt, pray that there would be an increase among the refugee populations of dreams and visions about Jesus. Pray that these dreams will lead to hundreds of Muslim families devoting their lives to Jesus Christ and receiving His Holy Spirit.
- Let’s ask that each person would know that God has a plan and purpose for their lives, to give them abundant life and His heart is to bless and heal them, just as He did Nabil.
- Pray for emotional and spiritual healing from every trauma, as well as physical healing.

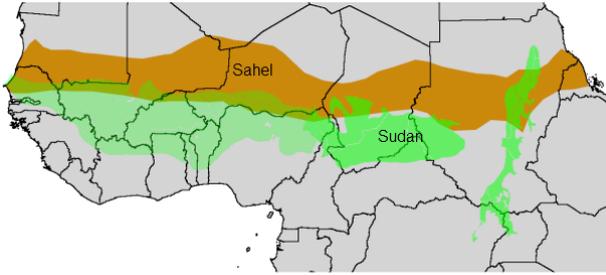
Source: <http://www.globalprayerdigest.org/issue/day/man-in-white/>

Wednesday 23rd December

The displaced in the Sahel region

“When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the Lord your God.” Lev 19: 33-34

The main reason for Muslims being displaced in this region is jihadi insurgencies in Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria, Cameroon, Central Africa Republic, Chad and Sudan.



Source Wikimedia Commons

Recent severe droughts and the locust infestation earlier this year that swept across East Africa ruined crops, cattle and lands, making survival the greatest challenge. The deforestation, desertification, and over-farming of the semi-arid land, isolated floods, and the decline in river and lake levels are visible everywhere.

To escape conflict and hunger, displaced people will try to flee to relatives. Most of the Christian compassion to internally-displaced people is shouldered by extended Christian families and/or churches with ministry programmes. If refugee workers are welcomed in camps, multiple ministries can be offered: meals, tents, mosquito nets, blankets, medicine, water, sanitation, as well as children's and women's ministries, education and training.

Specialised trauma care is given, as are Bibles in local languages. Through translators, Christians coordinate prayer meetings in camps, often linking them with local churches.

Sadly, even in refugee camps, Muslims seek to prevent fellow Muslims from the influence of Christian workers. But untold numbers of fleeing Muslims quietly come to Christ while being sheltered and cared for by Christian families or church communities.

I encourage you to watch this moving video clip from Prayercast: <https://prayercast.com/displaced-people-in-sahel.html>

- Pray for God's mercy, protection and provision for the deeply vulnerable.
- Pray for Christian aid to reach those in urgent spiritual and physical need.
- Pray for those who have suffered horrific trauma to experience the healing and hope of Christ.

Thursday 24th December

This is the account of a refugee from Sudan, as told to a Christian worker

"We lived near a big river on a border to another country. Each day we saw crowds of people walking, arriving from other villages to the east of us. Driven out by the Arab militia, they carried their children and a few meagre possessions with them in search of safety and provision. They never stayed long: they would cross the river with belongings on their heads, wading through the muddy waters. We wondered if we would eventually have to leave like them.

Then one morning the Arab militia came. We knew we had to leave. My grandmother refused and despite the danger my mother stayed. And I stayed with my mum. The rest of my family settled in a refugee camp, two days' walk north of us and we rarely saw them. They had joined the hundreds of

thousands of others who had left the land they loved and taken refuge in the desert land of the country next door.

My family then made me marry a man who took me to a village on the other side of the river, away from the fighting. He's an educated man and worked with the charities that were helping the refugees.

I heard that my brother had got married, but three days after the birth of his second child, he went out at dusk to collect water from a well and never came back. His wife waited up all night for him. At first light she ran to my father's house and told him his son was missing. They went searching for him and found him rolled over in the sand, covered in blood - tracks in the dirt led back to a nearby village. Water is scarce and the local villagers resent the thousands of refugees that now take water from their wells.

My brother was murdered while collecting water for his family. My father had tried so hard to protect him from the war, only for him to be killed anyway."

- Sadly, the refugee camps have experienced increasing violence. Everyone is desperate for the limited resources and the locals are fearful. Please pray that all would find a way of living together peacefully and sharing what they have.
- We yearn for all, locals and refugees alike, to have hope for the future. Join us in praying for them to find the One who is the God of all hope, who sent His one and only Son as Saviour for all.
- Pray for workers who live amongst refugees in this region; when it all seems overwhelming, that they would know how best to serve and pray for those around them.

Friday 25th December

Christmas Day

In 1739 Charles Wesley wrote a Christmas hymn that began 'Hark! How all the welkin rings, Glory to the King of Kings'. Today we know it as the carol, 'Hark! The Herald Angels Sing.'

You might like to listen and sing along to Hark the Herald Angels [here](#).

- Let the words of this Christmas hymn be our prayer today as we thank God for the precious gift of His only Son, who humbled Himself and left the glory of heaven and came to earth to reconcile us, Christians, Muslims and every race and nationality - that we may live in peace with God and with one another.
- Hail! the heaven-born Prince of peace! Hail the Son of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by, born that man no more may die:
Born to raise the son of earth, born to give them second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born King !"

How amazing if Muslims everywhere received and sang these words! Let's pray this will be a reality for many this Christmas Day.

Saturday 26th December

"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son and they shall call his name Emmanuel" Matt 1:23

Yesterday we prayed "Hail the heaven-born Prince of peace." As Christians we know that Jesus came to bring peace on earth. This is not what we see in the world today. As we celebrate Christmas, let's just spend a couple of minutes remembering the millions of Muslims who are living in conflict areas or who are displaced.

Let's lift them to God today in prayer:

- Father, we pray for Muslims caught up in conflicts, those who are displaced and living as refugees, those facing hatred and prejudice, that today they would know, Emmanuel, God with them.
- Let's pray for our workers who live in dangerous and difficult places, sometimes at great cost to themselves and their families, in order to bring the message of reconciliation with God and with one another. Let's ask for a special blessing upon them at this time.