

Monday 29th July

Background to the Arab Gulf

Before the discovery of oil in the 1930s, the Arab Gulf region was largely empty and inhabited mostly by tent-dwelling Bedouins. Since then, with the exception of Yemen which has no natural oil and gas,



all of the countries have become fabulously wealthy, almost overnight. Qatar is the wealthiest, its GDP per head rivalling that of the USA. With a population of 86 million, the region is full of modern growing cities with sky scrapers, major roads, heavy traffic and growing air pollution.

In contrast to the local population, many foreign workers are very poor. They outnumber the locals by four to one in Kuwait, Qatar and the UAE, often living in very bad conditions and quite separately from locals.

With the Arabian Peninsula being the birthplace of Islam, this is the major religion, practised by approximately 65% of the population. The dominant form of Islam is the extremely conservative and puritan Wahhabi sect. This contrasts with the materialism that drives the cultures of the Peninsula. This leads to the paradox of an extremely modern society in its infrastructure and lifestyle that seeks to preserve what Westerners consider extreme values such as radical Islam and barbaric practices like public beheadings. There is virtually no freedom of religion and becoming a follower of Jesus is dangerous. Local women are restricted and controlled by men. Few have freedom of thought or religion.

Consequently there are very few national believers, but the numbers have been growing in recent years. Praise God that there are over one million expat Christians in the Gulf today, including Filipinos and Asians, who gather for worship every weekend. God is using humble Christian nurses and nannies to profoundly impact local Muslim families! In the eastern Gulf states, the rulers have adopted a policy of allowing foreign Christians to build a limited number of church buildings, which are often built on plots of land donated by the government. In Saudi, many are quietly responding to the gospel through the work of internet ministries. In Yemen, despite the devastation of war, God is at work raising up growing numbers of Yemeni believers in networks of small house churches.

Watch a very interesting video about the Arab Gulf by Prayercast [here](#).

- Pray for hearts to be softened, humbled and prepared to receive Jesus.
- Pray for kings, princes and people of influence to come to faith in Jesus Christ across this region.
- Pray for women in this region to come to know Jesus and to be set free from any shame.
- Pray for God to send more workers who are unafraid to live in these spiritually-restricted countries.

Source: <https://prayercast.com/arabian-peninsula.html>

Tuesday 30th July

Pray against Materialism

“Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God. When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, “Who then can be saved?” Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” Matthew 19:23-26.

The people of the oil-rich countries in the region are slaves to materialism and the high status that results from showing off what they have and what they do. They do not suffer like their fellow Arabs in Yemen where there is massive poverty, suffering and death due to a civil war which began in 2015. The wealth of the oil-rich countries in the Arab Gulf has helped children not to be in want. Unfortunately, it has also created a generation of children who struggle with health issues due to unhealthy ‘fast foods’ and a sedentary lifestyle. Childhood obesity and diabetes are on the rise at an alarming rate.

When they have money, possessions, family, religion, peace, food and strong traditions, why would they think that they need anything else, including the gospel? This is a challenge indeed, but nothing is impossible with God.

- Let’s pray for the Holy Spirit to shake up the Gulf nations!
- Pray against materialism which is destroying the soul of the Gulf nations. Let’s ask Jesus to release them from the idolatry of obtaining high status in their societies. Grant them repentance and faith so that they can seek the things above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. May they set their minds on heavenly things above, not on the things that are on the earth. Save them and hide them in Christ your Son so that when He appears again, they will also appear with Him in glory!
- We pray for children who are suffering because of the excesses in their lives. Pray that they will get the help that they need to be physically disciplined with exercise and healthy eating.

Source: <https://www.pray-ap.info/pguides.html>

Wednesday 31st July

Pray for believers and field workers

There are field workers who want to obey the Great Commission and who have left their homelands to serve in this difficult region of the world. They know there are so many who need to hear the gospel message. Some workers are blessed to work alongside local believers. Yemeni and Saudi believers have already composed worship songs in Arabic! They have also developed websites and apps that contain worship songs, poems and Bible teaching. Local worship is an incredible and beautiful creation that delights the heart of God.

Watch a music video of a Yemeni worship song:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KxU1jNF29-E>

The Gulf countries have opened their doors to foreigners from all over the world to come and work. Some have even given official permission for international churches to meet. These international churches are gathering in many languages, worshipping Jesus and shining his light in the region. The churches are full of engineers, teachers, maids, construction workers, embassy workers and other professionals who come from around the world. Each of these believers have unique opportunities to start relationships with local co-workers and neighbours.

However, since this region is the very heartland of Islam, persecution for locals becoming a follower of Jesus is a reality. The cost of turning away from Islam to Christ is enormous. Many have lost families, friends, communities, jobs, reputations and freedom. They have been imprisoned and killed in honour killings.

- Pray for believers to be filled with your Holy Spirit to speak your word with boldness (Acts 4:31). Empower them to make the most of every opportunity, speaking with wisdom to give answers to each person who asks about the hope that they have (Colossians 4:6).
- Pray for our dear brothers and sisters who are currently being persecuted because of their faith in Jesus, that they will be comforted in all of their afflictions and strengthened in their sufferings.
- Pray for field workers who are intentional about reaching the local Arabs. We pray specifically that God would open a door for the word so that they may declare the mystery of Christ. We ask for many divine appointments and that they are able to make the gospel message clear and understandable.

Source: <https://www.pray-ap.info/pguides.html>

Thursday 1st August

Baptised in the Arab Gulf

This is a true story from a Frontiers worker:

“It could have been a night like any other. The strong smell of salt hung in the warm breeze as we walked towards the water. Our group of six men sat down in the sand. One of the men spoke up. “Ali, why don’t you tell us how you made your decision to be baptised?”



Ali is from the Gulf region - a region with some of the hardest spiritual soil in the world.

One night, Ali had a dream about Jesus. That dream led to conversations with Ahmed, a Muslim-background believer (MBB). When Ahmed shared the gospel with Ali, it cut through his thoughts about religion. He found Jesus and his life was changed.

I listened to Ali share his whole story. I had just met

him that day. Earlier that morning, Ahmed and Ali had travelled from their nearby home country to meet with our team. Ali feared being baptised at home, where turning to Jesus is often rewarded with death.

Ali finished sharing his story and we all waded out into the warm, calm water. My teammates and I stood a few feet away and watched Ahmed and Ali wade further. Ahmed had only been baptised one week before. He nervously tried to figure out how best to baptise his friend. Suddenly, his fear gave way to excitement. He thrust Ali down with a splash and pulled him up again. Ali emerged from the water and could hardly contain his excitement. He had truly found Jesus.”

Stories like this encourage us. They show us that God is not silent. He is drawing Muslims to Jesus in the Gulf region.

- Praise God for Ali’s recent baptism and pray that as Ali and other new believers share their testimony, there will be many more coming to faith in Christ.
- Ask the Lord to continue to help Ali and all new MBBs to grow in faith and obedience to Jesus Christ.
- Ask God to draw even more Muslim men and women to Jesus in the Gulf region.

Friday 2nd August

The war in Yemen

Yemen desperately needs an end to its four-year civil war. Since its outbreak, more than 9,000



Yemenis have been killed, over 50,000 injured and 3 million have fled their homes. Millions of people face shortages of food and water and thousands of children under the age of five have died from acute malnutrition. Approximately 22 million people are still in need of humanitarian aid. Less than half the country’s healthcare facilities are functional.

Yemeni believers who are on the frontlines are providing spiritual and humanitarian aid among the Yemeni people.

We also know that in the midst of this tragedy, Yemenis want to know more about Jesus.

Watch this one-minute clip to inspire your prayers for Yemen:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5VifL7Y54H8>

- Let’s pray for the end of the war in Yemen, one of the worst humanitarian disasters in the world today. Pray for peace and stability to come to this troubled country.
- It is hard to see how this crisis can be ended. We ask you Lord to intervene, to change hearts and minds and for your kingdom and light to come in Yemen.
- We thank you Lord for Yemeni believers who are reaching out with aid and bringing hope. Provide for them and protect them so that they can continue to help their Muslim neighbours.

If you want to know more and pray further, you can watch a four-minute clip about the Yemen war: The boy who shocked the world – BBC News <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kn1iFDv9Viv>

Source of some material: <https://www.pray-ap.info/pguides.html>

Saturday 3rd August

Aroma of Christ

“But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing”. (2 Corinthians 2:14 - 15)

Perfume is a hallmark of Arab hospitality. Perhaps because their ancestors transported frankincense and oud across the desert, the strong scents of Arab culture permeate homes, shopping centres, weddings and funerals. If you go to a wedding or visit a home, the host will often bring out several bottles of rich perfume for you to layer onto your clothes and hair. When you leave, you are definitely carrying home the scent of your host!



Frankincense originates from the southern edge of the Arab Gulf in Oman. Harvested from the sap of the Boswellia tree and dried, it releases a distinct fragrance when burned. It has been prized for its aroma since ancient times. We know from God’s Word that frankincense was brought to Jesus at His birth (Matthew 2:11).

Incense and frankincense were also used as offerings in the temple. In the Old Testament, God’s people were instructed to bring incense before the Lord (Numbers 16:17, Leviticus 16:12).

“In every place incense will be offered to my name,” says Malachi 1:11. David cries out in Psalm 141:2, “Let my prayer be counted as incense before you.” Revelation 5:8 describes our prayers as incense that rises up to God.

- Pray that the peoples of the Arabian Gulf would sing to the Lord with fragrant praise and worship.
- Pray that believers and workers in the Gulf would bear “the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing” so that wherever they go, the fragrance of Christ spreads and is tangible (2 Corinthians 2:15-16).
- Ask the Lord of the Harvest to draw Arab Gulf Muslims and all unreached peoples living there to the free gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus and share it with others.

Source of some material: <https://www.arabworldmedia.org/prayer-guides/in-this-city-al-ain/>