

Monday 26th August

Introducing India **Pop: 1.34 billion**

“For there is a wide-open door for a great work here, although many oppose me.” 1 Corinthians 16:9

India is a country that captivates and overwhelms the senses of all who visit; with its vibrant colours, rural villages, crowded cities, beaches and jungles and overpowering smells. It is rich economically through its valuable resources of fertile land and populous labour and in its long history.



One fifth of the world’s population lives in India, making it the second most populous country in the world behind China. Almost half of India’s population is made up of children under the age of 18.

The population is made up of more than 2,500 different people groups, who speak over 456 languages. No other country in the world has such a diverse and complex society. Of these groups, almost 2,000 remain unreached. That means a staggering 90% of all the people of India have not met a follower of Jesus.

There is wide diversity in beliefs as three major religious groups, Hindus, making up 74% of India’s population, Muslims 14% and Christians 5% try to live in peace with one another. Nevertheless, tensions and conflicts often arise.

Although the proportion of Muslims living there may seem small, India is the third largest Muslim nation in the world, its population estimated to be between 190-200 million.

Let’s pray and worship and cry out for India and its people. [Here](#) is a link to Flood The Earth by Jesus Culture.

- Please pray that the people of India will see how precious and valuable each one is to Christ.
- We pray for a shift throughout India, such that Jesus’ name would be lifted high and honoured in this land and there would be a great work for His kingdom there.
- Pray for God’s glory and power to flood through India, breaking down barriers between different people and religions.

Did you know? If you want to describe someone as a very close friend in Urdu/Hindi you would use the term “Jigary Dost” or Liver Friend!!

Tuesday 27th August

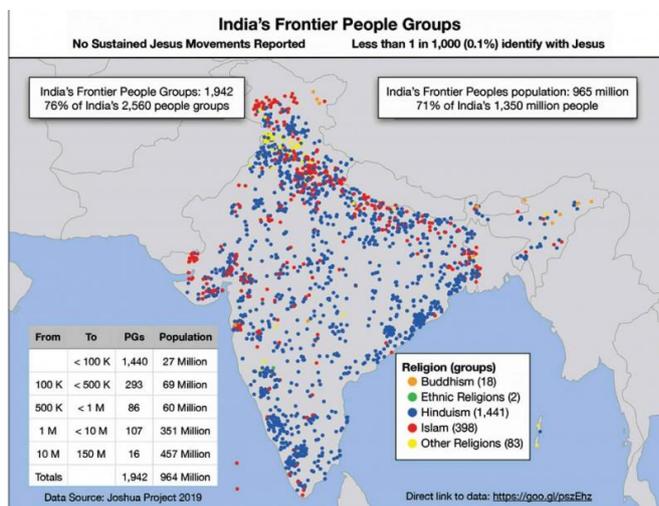
The challenges

India struggles to sustain its vast population. Although the economy is growing, only a relatively small proportion is benefitting. Many remain impoverished, particularly women and children, both in

urban and rural areas. The government have made some decisions that have complicated the economy and affected the lives of many people. Illiteracy is a continuous struggle; only 82% of men and 65% of women can read.

The Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, was re-elected in May this year after first coming to power in 2014. He is a Hindu and a member of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). As of 2018, this is the country's largest political party in terms of representation in the national parliament and state assemblies. It is a right-wing party and its policy has historically reflected Hindu nationalist positions. Narendra Modi has tried to implement policies where non-Hindu communities are given greater opportunities to raise their standard of living. This has not been well received by some Hindu groups and protests have taken place.

According to Open Doors, the government turns a blind eye to attacks on followers of Christ and other minorities including Muslims. In many places, there are undercurrents of cultural tension between Muslims and Hindus. This year, India has moved up to 10th on Open Doors' World Watch list.



India also has the greatest number of unreached people groups in the world. Some of the largest of these are known as Frontier People Groups (FPGs), which have less than 1 Christian in every 1,000 people. The May issue of Mission Frontiers magazine featured an article entitled "India: The Greatest Challenge to World Evangelism" and included the map showing the number and distribution of FPGs in India. If you would like to read more, the link is [here](#). The red dots on the map are Muslim FPGs.

As in so many countries today, social media, TV and radio present great opportunities in India for reaching Muslims who may never meet a follower of Jesus. Scriptures and other evangelistic ministries are increasingly available via satellite TV and the internet. There are around 197 million households that have access to a television. FM radio stations are plentiful. India has the second largest number of internet users in the world, after China.

- Pray for a government and leadership that cares about the rights of the minorities and in particular for the poor, uneducated and marginalised.
- Pray for the many different religious and people groups living there, to celebrate diversity and to find common themes that bring them together.
- Let's pray for the impoverished to find hope in the true living God.
- Let's pray that the internet is a good route to reaching Muslims with Christian material that is available in their language and that is relevant to them for the situations and issues they face and for the questions they have about faith.

Source of some material: <http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/india-the-greatest-challenge-to-world-evangelism>

Wednesday 28th August

Pashtun – a large unreached people group

“Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.” Matt 16:24-25

The Pashtuns in India are one of the Frontier People Groups we mentioned yesterday. They are also a priority people group in India for Frontiers as a global organisation.

The Pashtun featured in the May edition of the Global Prayer Digest.

“Pushtunwali is the strict unwritten honour code of the Pashtun people, who follow Sunni Islam.



They practice hospitality and protection to guests, the right of fugitives to seek refuge, the right to seek revenge, bravery, steadfastness, righteousness, persistence, defence of property and honour and defence of their women. Revenge and blood feuds between families last for generations and are common owing to Pushtunwali.

The Pashtuns are one of four major Muslim communities in India. There they are considered fourth in rank below Sayyids, Sheikhs and Mughals in the Muslim hierarchy. Most of them love India, since it has been a place of refuge for many of them.

While many Pashtuns are educated and work as professionals in cities, others are extremely poor, living in unsanitary conditions caused mainly by poor water. Many cannot read and they find it difficult to have their medical and educational needs met.”

- Pray that Pashtun families and communities in India will be blessed spiritually and physically.
- While India has been a place of refuge for many Pashtun, let’s pray that they will know God alone as their refuge and defender.
- Pray for the Lord to raise up Pashtun believers with courage and passion to follow the King of Kings and influence their family and community.

Source: <http://www.globalprayerdigest.org/issue/day/pashtuns-aka-pathans-in-india/>

Thursday 29th August

Ansari – a large unreached people group

“And the grace of God overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.” 1 Tim 1:14

A second priority people group for Frontiers and an FPG is the Ansari of India. They also featured in the May edition of Global Prayer Digest.

“What if the name of your people means ‘one who helps’ and you needed help yourself? This situation applies to the Muslim Ansari people who live in six countries including India. If the Ansaris are ever to receive the forgiveness of sins and the hope that can only come from knowing Jesus Christ, they will need the prayers of Christ’s followers like you and me!

The traditional occupation of the Ansari people has been that of weaving silk and other fabrics. Although some Ansaris have moved to the cities, most live in villages like their ancestors did. Many of the Ansaris are poor and illiterate and they would benefit from the practical assistance that Christian workers can potentially offer. They need help in educating their children, learning new jobs skills and in obtaining access to clean water and electricity.”

- Pray that the Muslim Ansari people of India would experience an overflowing of God’s grace in their communities.
- Pray for believers to reach out to the Ansaris with practical help that meet their needs.
- Pray that the few Ansari believers would be effective and fruitful in sowing God’s word among their families and communities. Let them fuel a movement of God’s blessings of salvation that would spread from household to household.

Source: <http://www.globalprayerdigest.org/issue/day/muslim-ansari-people-of-india/>

Friday 30th August

Bringing the Good News

“Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.” Isaiah 43:19

On Tuesday we read the great challenge of reaching the many people groups in India who have never met a follower of Jesus. One of the ways to meet this challenge is by disciple-making movements – a few followers of Jesus who disciple local Muslims who are open to hearing the gospel, who then catch the vision for their people group and tell them the good news. Churches can then be planted which in turn reproduce.

A few years ago a group of 50 CEOs of large mission agencies and churches in India came together and signed an agreement to commit 10% of their energy and resources to reaching Muslims, as they recognised they had largely been overlooked and ignored. The leaders were encouraged that when they did reach out, it really did make a difference. However, they found that Muslims would not necessarily come to the local church. Each people group needed a disciple-making movement and its

own church which was relevant and attractive to them. Their churches needed to be self-sustaining and workers needed training and equipping in how best to help locals achieve this. Some local Christians remain fearful of Muslims, believing they may be killed if they go to them with the gospel message. Yet they are key to the advancement of the gospel. The challenge remains for all workers and believers to bring the blessings of the gospel to every Muslim family and community so that it is welcomed as good news for them.

For those considering moving to the field there as workers, business visas are available. Language schools, vocational training and other service-based businesses are welcomed. India tends to favour businesses that hire locals. Gospel workers can bless the communities they live in and work to build a disciple-making movement.

Let's be encouraged – God is stirring up the church and His people and there are Indian Muslims who are choosing to follow Jesus. Many movements are currently taking place in India.

- We thank God for all workers who labour for the harvest in this land. Let's pray for many workers who have a heart for reaching Muslims in India, to answer the call to go, despite the challenges and the fear of persecution.
- Thank God for the mission agencies and churches who are working together to reach Muslims. Let's pray for a great blessing and much fruit in their outreach initiatives.
- Praise God for the many movements that are taking place in India. Let's pray for an amazing multiplication of disciple-making movements among Muslims.

Saturday 31st August

Margaret's story

The following article was originally printed in GO Magazine, published by Interserve - a non-denominational Christian mission organisation, which has been serving across South Asia and the Arab world for 160 years. Their website can be found at <https://interserve.org.uk/>

This is Margaret's story. She went to India in 1964 and shares what life was like in mission.

"After two years Bible College training I went to India by boat – a luxury previously unknown and a great time to gradually become accustomed to the unknown East. There were 30 missionaries on the boat with me. When I left home, I knew I would not see my family and friends for the next five years and the only communication would be by airmail letters. This meant my colleagues and I became totally immersed in our new life. For the next two years, we studied the language of the people with whom we were going to work and had ample opportunity to discover more of the culture and customs of those around us. Indian food was a totally new experience which took some getting used to.

We were first and foremost 'missionaries' with the aim of telling people, most of whom had never heard, of the love of the Saviour who had died to forgive their sins and offered the promise of eternal life. Through my professional skills, living amongst those I had gone to serve, I was able over many years to help them improve their lot in life. I trained many staff members to follow in my

professional footsteps. Gradually people came to accept Jesus as their Saviour. Some were baptised while others remained believers in their hearts.

Life was not always easy. While doing language study, four of us shared a room. While on holiday one year in Kashmir, my friends and I had to arrange the burial of a fellow worker who had died of hepatitis. Travel had its hazards from petty thieves, unpleasant men and on one occasion being on a bus which overturned at a hairpin bend on the Himalayan Mountains.

The fellowship of my colleagues and fellow workers was very precious and has lasted to this day.”

We thank God for the sacrifice of Margaret and all workers across so many organisations and agencies, who paved the way and gave so much over so many years for the purpose of bringing the Good News to those who had never heard it in India and across the world.

- Pray for an increasing stream of well-trained, spiritually passionate workers, prepared to serve long-term in India, to build those relationships and give all for the sake of the gospel message.
- Let’s petition God to plant workers in strategic places where the hearts of key people have already been prepared and softened and where the impact of the gospel would spread far and wide.
- Let’s ask for God’s help in persevering in prayer when at times we feel spiritually dry and we question whether our prayers are making an eternal difference. Pray for God’s anointing to energise our work of intercessory prayer and to remind us of His promises.
“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.” Gal 6:9