

Monday 18th March

Introduction to Sudan, Chad and South Sudan

Pop: 71 million

Muslim: 72%

The countries of Sudan, Chad and South Sudan in Northeast Africa aren't easy places to live in. The climate is harsh with hot summers and unpredictable rainfall. In this dry and dusty region, comforts are few and in many areas public infrastructure is weak. The lack of water impacts health and agriculture. Illiteracy and famine continue to be widespread too.



Parts of the region have experienced ongoing civil violence and ethnic division for years, making long-term stability uncertain. It also means this region experiences some of the most extreme poverty.

Due to traditional tribal migration patterns, many Muslim people groups have seen their clans separated by international borders.

Within this large and dispersed population, there are hundreds of unengaged Muslim people groups in these three countries who still have no one bringing them the healing hope of Jesus Christ. "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few." (Luke 10:2)

Nevertheless, spiritual history is being written in this very generation! God is doing something new as Frontiers teams make disciples and help catalyse movements to Christ in Northeast Africa.

The doors of opportunity are wide open. Those skilled in education, medicine, engineering and other professions will find remarkable ease of access into even the most remote corners of the region.

More workers are desperately needed to help bring the Good News to Northeast Africa's unengaged Muslim people groups. It will require workers who courageously embrace the harsh physical realities of the region.

You can watch a one-minute video of this region [here](#)

- Ask the Lord to send more cross-cultural workers with professional skills who are unafraid to live simply for Christ in remote areas.
- Pray for new field workers skilled as doctors, teachers and engineers to help bring lasting change.
- Ask that righteous political leaders would recognise and serve the true needs of the region.

Tuesday 19th March

Sudan Pop: 42 million Muslim: 97%

Sudan is one of the poorest and least developed countries of the world. The majority of its inhabitants are dependent on farming and animal breeding for their livelihoods. For most of the Arab tribes, agriculture is the basis of the economy. Sorghum and millet are their staple crops, along with watermelons, gourds, okra, sesame and cotton. They also raise cattle, sheep, goats and donkeys. Cheese and butter are made from the milk of both their cows and goats.



Not all of the Arab tribes are farmers. Some tribes, such as the Arab Midob and the Mongaliese Arab, are nomadic herdsmen travelling from place to place with their herds of cattle and camels in search of better grazing lands. Other Arab tribes, such as the Hasania and Husseinat, have become successful businessmen and merchants in Sudan. These groups are heavily engaged in the commercial activities of the cities in their region.

Today, the majority of Sudan's inhabitants are Arab Sunni Muslims. With the death of Mohammed in 632 AD, Arabs spread from the desert pastures of Arabia and migrated to the lands to the east and west. They engaged with the local North African tribes and introduced them to Islam. As the ruling majority, their influence over law and government is strong.

Omar Hassan al-Bashir was elected president of Sudan 1996 and has been re-elected several times since. He has been a strong and harsh ruler and is now facing sporadic protests against his oppressive leadership. This is mainly due to discontent over the rising cost of living and the worsening economic crisis. He also faces two international arrest warrants issued by the International Criminal Court in The Hague on charges of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Last year, up to 40 people were killed in clashes with security forces. Demonstrators have been on the streets almost daily since mid-December, calling for an end to the long rule of President al-Bashir.

The state restricts what is broadcast on TV and radio and influences what is published in the private press. A recent agreement provided protection for non-Arabs, but conversion to Christianity is legally punishable by death and believers in Sudan face strong persecution.

Christians comprise only 7% of the population, according to Operation World. This has meant that many Muslims in Sudan remain unreached with the gospel and many workers are needed. Christians are able to enter Sudan, but are not allowed to proselytise. It is very difficult to import Bibles and Christian literature into the country.

Nonetheless, we have heard encouraging reports from a worker in neighbouring Chad that the number of Muslim background believers in Darfur in western Sudan is growing; hundreds are coming to Christ. As we so often hear, when the church is persecuted, the number of believers increases.

- Let's keep praying for the peace of Sudan.
- Pray that God would fan the faith of Sudan's small community of believers to join Him in establishing His church among Muslims.

- Praise God for the growing number of believers, despite the persecution they face. Let's pray there is a multiplication as Muslim Background Believers (MBBs) tell their friends about Jesus.
- There are 94 different languages spoken within Sudan. Let's pray for Bible translations to be available in all languages, despite the restrictions.

Source of some material: http://en.etnopedia.org/wiki/index.php?title=Harasi,_Harsiyyat

Wednesday 20th March

Vision for Sudan

In January this year, Mission Network News (MNN) reported on Vision2020 - a church planting movement that is sweeping the world. This involves ministries, churches and leaders partnering together in some of the hardest-to-reach countries in the world to build sustainable churches.

One of these countries is Sudan.

In 2012, President Omar al-Bashir said the next constitution would be '100% Islamic,' as he sought to make the country a purely Islamic state. What followed over the next six years was a systemic wave of persecution that has led to the closures or demolitions of hundreds of churches, arrests of church leaders, detentions, beatings and death. In areas with ongoing conflict, Christians are attacked indiscriminately.



At the end of yesterday's article, we read how many Muslims are turning to Christ in Sudan. A Christian worker who spoke to MNN confirms that God is moving there in big ways.

The church is visible and active in Sudan and brave Christian leaders are speaking out against the injustice and oppression. He said they have prayed for about 4,000 churches and small house groups to be planted there by the year 2020.

He believed this was only going to be possible by a supernatural move of God. As Christians, he said they have a powerful message of love and care and he sees it really touching the lives of people they meet. Many of them come to know Christ.

Tribes that have been closed off to the hope of Christ are now starting to question their beliefs after witnessing the violence done to others by extremists. They realise that this religion that they have is not the 'real' one. They're still looking for another option.

He said "100% we are depending on God's hand. Prayers can make a big difference, because really, we need God's power backing us if we are going to see His fruit this year."

He asked for prayer for the following:

- Pray for safety and angelic protection for workers while they are moving from place to place in Sudan.
- Pray for accommodation, transportation and equipment, because Sudan is a very large country for workers to cover.
- Let's also pray for the big vision for Sudan to be realised and for many Muslims to come to know that there is another way; it is the way of life and peace.

Source: https://www.mnnonline.org/news/big-vision-for-sudan-in-2019/?utm_source=MNN+Weekly+Missions+Prayer+Requests&utm_campaign=cdaec1aadd-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_TEST&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_e13bef42a6-cdaec1aadd-84402651

Thursday 21st March

Called Into Question

The following Frontiers story is from Northeast Africa and reflects what life is like for workers in countries like Sudan.

“Your appointment is in a week,” the government official stated over the phone. “Come to our office in the capital city and give us an account of your activities.”

The official was accusing Phillip, a Frontiers team leader, of working illegally in the African Muslim-majority nation that he and his family called home. “You could be expelled,” the official threatened before hanging up.



Phillip's heart felt heavy as his mind raced through the myriad directions this could go. At best, he'd have a chance to explain his work—how he and his wife, Mary, loved the country. Together with their teammates, they served Muslim communities by digging wells throughout the drought-prone region and installing solar panels in places with no electricity. If the authorities heard about their work, maybe they wouldn't revoke his visa and expel his family.

Living in a remote Muslim region wasn't easy. Phillip and Mary had faced many trials. The climate was hot and dusty throughout most of the year. Illness was a regular occurrence in their household. And their daily encounters with poverty and corruption exhausted them.

But this new threat made Phillip and Mary profoundly aware of how much they wanted to stay, in spite of all their trials.

As Phillip started the two-day journey across harsh desert to the capital, he asked God to take his fear and give him wisdom. “Do not be anxious about how you should defend yourself or what you should say,” Phillip remembered from Luke 12:11-12. “The Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.”

However his meeting in the capital started badly. Karim, an imposing government official, interrogated Phillip. He barked out questions and accusations without giving Phillip a chance to fully respond to any of them.

“Do you realise I have the power to expel you from the country?” Karim challenged Phillip as he leaned over him.

Phillip replied carefully. “I know that it is only by your kindness that I am in your land.” Tears stung his eyes. “I know that the day you no longer want me, I must leave.”

The official straightened and stepped back. Phillip’s words had caused his hostility to disappear and his countenance to soften. Karim looked distraught, even sad.

“Please do not think we don’t want you here,” Karim pleaded. “You’ve left your relatives and your home and your comfort to come here to suffer alongside our people and help us. Never say we don’t want you. You are welcome here.”

The conversation was no longer about expulsion. It was about hospitality, a value deeply ingrained in the culture of this desert nation—a place where welcoming strangers is a matter of life or death.

Karim wielded the power to bar Phillip and his family from his land. But now it came down to hospitality. With his honour in question, Karim declared Phillip as his guest—not his enemy. But for unknown reasons, some people still wanted Phillip out. “You can stay in our country,” Karim said. “But you must leave the town you live in.” It was an olive branch, and Phillip took it. He left with a mixture of relief and heartache.

Fortunately, his teammates would be able to stay in the town and continue their work and ministry. They helped his family pack up their belongings as Phillip and Mary said goodbye to their local friends. Then they drove to their new home in the regional capital, four hours away.

- Pray for governing officials to show favour to workers in countries such as Sudan.
- Ask the Lord to give grace to workers like Phillip and Mary, as they face unexpected transitions, hostility and uncertainty over their ability to stay.
- Pray for workers to see fruit among the Muslims they work with and who they long to see come to know the Saviour.

Friday 22nd March

Beja people

Pop: 2.3 million

Muslim: 97%

There are two people groups in Sudan that Frontiers have identified as in need of prayer and more workers. One of these is the Beja whom we will pray for today and the other, the Gawamaa, whom we will pray for tomorrow.

The Beja are a marginalised people who live scattered across the desert regions of Sudan, Egypt and Eritrea. In Sudan they live in the east, primarily as nomadic shepherds. Since Sudan's independence in 1956, the Beja have felt their needs have been overlooked by the government. Their way of life is being threatened by famine and drought that kills their livestock and crops. An extended drought in 1984-86 killed up to 95% of the camel herds. Beja were forced to accept food aid and move to towns to look for work. There are now large 'slums' of Beja who live on the periphery of Port Sudan and Kassala.

The Beja are said to be the descendants of Noah's grandson, Cush (son of Ham). They are a native African people who have occupied their current homelands for more than 4,000 years. During that time, they adopted their Islamic religion. The Beja in Sudan are divided into four tribes: the Hadendowa, the Amarar, the Ababda, and the Beni Amer.



As with the Somalis, the Beja's loyalty is first to their family and then to their clan and tribe. Each clan has its own pastures and water sites that may be used by others with permission. Clans vary from one to twelve families. Disputes between clans are often settled by traditional Beja law, but most day-to-day affairs are managed by the heads of the families.

In the past this has served them well, in protecting them from other tribes and in sustaining their values and customs. This is being lost as the Beja adopt more modern lifestyles in their new urban settings. When times are difficult, some of the family may stay behind while others go to urban areas to seek work. With their limited education, they operate simple businesses or get low-paid employment such as unloading ships or working on the railways in Port Sudan.

Their native language is called Bedawiya, taught by women at home, although many are also fluent in Arabic or Tigre. The first books in Bedawiya were published in the late 1990's so the Beja are just starting to become a literate people. More boys than girls go to school and drop-out rates are high. In times of water shortage, girls can be taken out of school to go and fetch much-needed water. Classes may focus on learning the Qu'ran. Not many Beja go to secondary school and even fewer manage to go to university.

In the 1950's, the Beja Congress was created as a self-help charity to educate the government about the difficult conditions the Beja endure. Not only is the environment they inhabit one of the most formidable in the world, but together with great poverty there are few services available to them. However little changed, so in the 1990's the Beja Congress Militia was created to urge the Khartoum government to act. Kidnappings, bombings and small-scale skirmishes took place. A peace agreement was finally signed in October 2006 with the promise of almost £5.5 million to help develop their land. Aid agencies also tried to help, but in reality there is little international interest in the plight of the Beja people.

The Beja practise Folk Islam and there are few known followers of Jesus. They are a hospitable people, always showing kindness to other clans; however, they are not necessarily friendly to foreigners. They urgently need gospel workers who are prepared to go and live among them, despite the barriers and difficulties.

- Pray that, as the Beja move into urban areas, they may meet followers of Christ and hear the gospel message.
- Pray for more workers to go to this marginalised people, to show the love and care of Jesus to them. He has not forgotten or overlooked them.
- Pray for Beja to encounter God as they go about their daily living. When things seem desperate and hopeless, may they know God is their portion.

Source: https://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/10766/SU
http://en.etnopedia.org/wiki/index.php?title=Beja,_Bedawi

Saturday 23rd March

Gawamaa of Sudan

Pop: 1.2 million

Muslim: 95%

The Gawamaa people are only found in Sudan. They are part of the larger Baggara people group.

They are primarily nomadic cattle herders, although like the Beja, some have settled in larger villages or cities.

The women wear tobés, loose-fitting covers draped about the body and over the head, but they do not wear veils. During wedding celebrations and other festivals, the younger women dress in costumes which reveal their figures and their heads remain uncovered in order to display their ornate hairstyles and feathered headbands.

The amount of gold worn by a man's wife during these festivals and the number of cattle within his herd are the determining factors of his prestige within the community. The men wear pristinely white jallaybiyas, dress-like cotton robes which reach to the mid-calf with trousers underneath.



Men and women do not eat together unless they are married. The women prepare the meals and take the food to the men's racuba (place for shelter and resting) three times each day. Spending time together is a vital part of Arab community living and for one to deny his friends or family this time is frowned upon. There are few extra-marital relationships between men and women, even on a friendship level.

Most Gawamaa are Muslim. There are Bible translations in their language, Sudanese Arabic, but few have met a follower of Christ. They remain unreached and unengaged.

- Pray that God will open up the doors for His Word to be spread among the Gawamaa peoples of Sudan.
- Let's pray for more workers who have a desire to reach out to this people group.
- As well as the Bible, the Jesus Film and gospel recordings are available to the Gawamaa. Pray they will have the opportunity to access these resources.

Source: https://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/11833/SU
<https://www.peoplegroups.org/explore/groupdetails.aspx?peid=42693>