

Monday 10th August

Yemen

“He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.” Isa 2:4

Since the Arab Spring in 2011, Yemen has been in turmoil as a result of a devastating civil war. The violence and its consequences for the people have escalated since the Saudi-led coalition intervened in 2015 against the Iran-aligned Houthi group that ousted the Saudi-backed government in the capital, Sanaa, forcing it to rebase in the south. These last five years of war for this poorest Arab nation, have ravaged the country. Now the coronavirus crisis has hit, leading to what the United Nations describes as the world’s largest humanitarian crisis. Among the 24 million Yemenis, 80% rely on humanitarian aid to survive each day, as millions face hunger. An estimated 2 million children are acutely malnourished, and the country was already struggling to cope with diseases such as dengue fever, malaria and cholera before the first cases of coronavirus were reported. Almost 20 million people lack access to adequate healthcare and almost 18 million do not have enough clean water or access to adequate sanitation.

Five years of war have shattered the country's health system, leaving it incapable of coping with a pandemic. Save the Children told the BBC that there are only 500 ventilators in the country and just four labs that can test for the virus. They reported how they were hearing of families who have lost two or three members in recent weeks to the virus, that people are being sent away from hospitals breathing heavily or even collapsing and that people are dying because they can't get treatment that would normally save their lives. Some patients have gone from hospital to hospital and yet cannot get admitted. Alongside a lack of medicine to treat cases, medics in Yemen lack personal protective equipment (PPE), such as masks and gowns, to shield them from the disease.

Yemenis in other Gulf countries normally send money to their families there, but many have lost their jobs due to the virus and falling oil prices, so even less money is reaching the country. The United Emirates Red Crescent, a volunteer humanitarian organisation, has been distributing food aid to people in Yemen.

For more information to help you pray for Yemen, watch this short 90-second video:

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

- Pray for God’s mercy on all the people in Yemen, and for a halt to the spread of this virus.
- Pray for the desperate situation in Yemen to ignite a longing for lasting hope and security.
- There are a few Muslim background believers in Yemen. Pray they will have the courage and opportunities to share the peace they have in Jesus with those around them who are suffering and fearful.

Sources: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-52669301>

<https://www.prayercast.com/yemen.html>

<https://www.mnnonline.org/news/yemen-arabian-peninsula-wage-war-against-coronavirus/>

Tuesday 11th August

Yemeni Arabs

Yemeni Sunni and Shia Arabs are unreached people groups, listed by Frontiers as two of their priority people in need of more workers to go to them if they are to hear the good news.

Yemen remains one of the least evangelised nations on earth. Only 0.08% of its population knows and follows Christ; 99% of the population is Muslim. The terrible treatment of Yemen's small body of believers has put this nation eighth on Open Doors' World Watch List for its persecution of Christians. Most believers are first-generation. The majority of expatriate or migrant Christians have fled due to the war and violence. Of the few believers that remain, most have converted from Islam. Evangelism is against the law, and those who do so risk death.

Prayercast have listed Southern Yemeni Arabs, both Sunni and Shia, as an unreached people group. Watch a moving video about them to inform and inspire your prayers for all Yemeni Arabs:

<https://www.prayercast.com/southern-yemeni-arab.html>

Frontiers is looking for workers to go to Yemen, in the hope that God will open doors of opportunity to send teams there.

- Pray that all Yemeni Arabs, both Sunni and Shia, will have access to the truth, the life, the hope and the joy that are only available through Jesus Christ.
- Let's ask God to raise up workers with a heart for this nation, prepared to count the cost for the sake of the gospel message being brought to the people there.
- Pray for the salvation of those in government and in authority, that God will impact their lives and lead them to walk in His ways.

<https://www.prayercast.com/yemen.html>

Wednesday 12th August

Marib, a city in western Yemen

"The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon's wisdom, and now something greater than Solomon is here." Matt 12:42



The governorate of Marib

An interesting development in Yemen as a result of the war is the revival of the ancient city of Marib, considered the capital of the Queen of Sheba's kingdom 4,000 years ago according to the Yemeni people. Its ruins lie on the edge of the modern-day city, and was the site where pilgrims would have travelled to the temple of Awwan.

Today Marib has been described as an island of stability and good governance in the midst of a land in a chaotic civil war.

Before 2015, the population there was about 40,000. Today it is estimated to be about 1.8 million. The population of the Marib governorate of which Marib is the capital city, is estimated to have grown tenfold, from 300,000 people to 3 million. The International Organisation for Migration estimates that 800,000 people fleeing fighting in other parts of the country have come to Marib seeking refuge. Thousands have settled in a refugee camp on the edge of the city. They hope to return home when the war ends, but if peace doesn't come they will stay.

Businesses in Marib are growing and thriving.; so too the university which had 1,000 students in 2015 and now has 5,000.

Marib is seen as a pro-Saudi city. Houthi forces have reportedly been making advances towards it and it is reported that they have gained control over one of the most important main entrances to the city.

Watch the following BBC video released in March 2019 about the city of Marib and keep in mind what Jesus said about the Queen of Sheba in Matthew 12:42.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A8ZUXEVozZA>

- Pray that the Yemeni people would follow in the footsteps of the Queen of Sheba and rise up from the ends of the earth and seek the wisdom of Solomon; that is, the wisdom of Jesus.
- The war and conflict is getting closer to Marib. Let's pray for continued peace for this city and for its influence to spread across Yemen.
- Yemenis want more than peace. They also want the police and local governments to be accountable. Let's pray that their hopes are realised and Yemen will be transformed into a beacon of light and hope in this troubled region.

Sources: <https://www.pray-ap.info/downloads/AP%20Ramadan%202019%20Prayer%20Guide.pdf>
<https://www.dawn.com/news/1558012/yemen-could-face-catastrophic-food-situation-as-pandemic-worsens-fao>

Thursday 13th August

A prayer for Yemen

Just before Pentecost this year, 67 people from 16 Arab nations including the Arabian Peninsula, came together in just two weeks to record this song. People from the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman and Yemen took part in this video. It is called the Arab World Blessing and is based on Numbers 6:24-26. You can listen to it here and let it guide your prayers for Yemen and the whole Arabian Peninsula: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qy0v69p5Jik>

Let's pray for Yemen:

- Giver of Life, Who hears the cries from Yemen; of mothers choosing between medicine or food, of parents grieving children lost to starvation, of those who have given up everything in hunger.
Hear our cries for hope, for change, for peace.

In your mercy, break political deadlocks, soften hardened hearts, change closed minds, open unhearing ears.

Let people come before power.

Let life be holy again.

Let your justice and peace shape the nation of Yemen and the lives of all people. Amen.

(A prayer for Yemen from Cafod).

- In May, the UN envoy to Yemen said that significant progress had been made towards cementing a temporary truce prompted by the coronavirus pandemic and to pave the way for a resumption of stalled peace talks. Pray for these talks and for peace in Yemen. It seems impossible, as nothing has yet worked. But God is the God of the impossible and we trust that He can bring peace to this nation.
- Yemeni believers are on the frontline providing spiritual and humanitarian aid. Let's ask God to provide and protect them so they can help their Muslim neighbours and to send more workers to help and to encourage them.

Source of some content: <https://cafod.org.uk/Pray/Prayer-resources/A-prayer-for-Yemen>

Friday 14th August

The United Arab Emirates (UAE)

The UAE became a British protectorate in the 19th century and remained so until independence in 1971. Today, the UAE is a federation of seven states, called emirates, ruled by tribal chiefs called



Sheiks or Emirs. Each of the Emirates maintains a degree of independence with an individual ruler to oversee the local government. The largest and richest of the emirates is Abu Dhabi with significant oil and gas reserves. The next richest, Dubai, is the commercial centre of the Gulf having the major port of Jebel Ali. The less wealthy emirates rely on the federal government (largely financed by Abu Dhabi) and Dubai for economic support.

The development of the oil and financial industries in the UAE have brought fabulous wealth and rapid modernisation. Millions of expatriates have come from around the world to work there, often illegally. UAE nationals make up only 15 – 20% of the total population. The coronavirus has affected this country too; Dubai, known as a global business centre and popular tourist destination, was locked down for about a month to halt the spread of the virus. Its flagship Emirates airline grounded passenger flights and some staff are being laid off. The Expo 2020 exhibition scheduled to start in October has been delayed for a year. By mid-July there was a progressive drop in new daily confirmed cases and an increase in recoveries.

Islam is the state religion of the UAE, with a Sunni majority and a Shia minority. Of the 43 people groups, 25 remain unreached by the gospel, but the number of people coming to Christ from other ethnic backgrounds, such as South and East Asians, is rising as they are granted religious tolerance. The government has given land for church compounds to be built in some of the emirates.

In fact the UAE has the most expat churches and the largest number of expat Christians in the region. The city of Dubai has over 1000 expat fellowships! Praise God, an estimated 8% of the population are followers of Jesus.

However, there is little freedom and tolerance for local Emiratis to turn to Christ. The UAE has just handfuls of local believers now. Sharing the gospel with Emiratis is illegal. Those who do can be arrested, imprisoned and deported. Medical ministries have been serving in this nation for decades and have provided healing for both physical and spiritual needs.

- Pray that God would protect and grow His church in the UAE.
- Pray that God will empower believers to speak boldly and demonstrate signs, wonders and healings through them in Jesus' name.
- Ask for God's supernatural provision and comfort for those in need and who are fearful.

Sources of material: <https://www.pray-ap.info/downloads/AP%20Ramadan%202019%20Prayer%20Guide.pdf>
<https://prayercast.com/ united-arab-emirates.html>

Saturday 15th August

Themes to pray for in the UAE

Workers in the region have asked for prayer for the following themes in the UAE and the wider Arabian Peninsula:

Media

This has always been a difficult place to have meaningful interactions with the local population but the lockdown and new normal of social distancing and wearing of masks have made this even harder. At the same time however, there has been a rise in responses to Christian media from the local population. Unfortunately there are too few people to follow up with those who respond. Pray for many more to hear the good news this way and for more workers to come to this country to disciple followers, churches and movements to Christ. Pray for protection, provision and encouragement for field workers already there.

Paradigm shift

Society is slowly shifting there with many global influences affecting the way people view the world and live their lives. This is a great opportunity for the gospel and the church. With so many things vying for people's attention, pray they find lasting truth and hope which is only available through Jesus. Pray for the church to respond to this opportunity.

Women

Although many women are independent, educated and empowered, there are also many who are still prisoners to their husbands and cultural or religious tradition. Having more than one wife is common although rarely discussed. We know one lady who, on the basis of many lies, was brought from a neighbouring country to become the second wife of a local man. While she lives a comfortable life by many standards, she feels very much trapped and as neither her nor her children can get full citizenship she doesn't have hope for the future. She is even trying to get asylum for her

daughters in Europe. We know that Jesus can bring hope, acceptance and joy to the many suffering in this way. Pray for these families and relationships to be redeemed by God.

A Dry Land

This metaphor is apt for this desert land where there is no church among the local population. Let's ask the Lord, to move powerfully in this land and plant churches of local Emirati believers made up of whole families and tribes. Our capabilities may be limited in this time of global crisis, but God is not limited by anything. Let's join our hearts and prayers with His purposes for His glory in this land and region.