

Global Outreach

PRAYER GUIDE 2023



MCLEAN BIBLE CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

Dear Church Family,

The progress of the gospel in the world is dependent upon the prayers of God's people in the church. God Himself has designed it this way. Jesus told us, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest" (Matthew 9:37-38). This prayer guide is intended to help our church family obey this command from Jesus. I encourage you not only to take one, but to use it daily and weekly. Use it alone, with your family, or with your Church Group. As you use it to guide your prayers, I want to encourage you: pray with faith! Pray with confidence that God is not only listening to you, but also that you are participating with Him in the accomplishment of His purposes in the world. What a thought! What a privilege! Let us take full advantage of this opportunity we have been given to be a part of the spread of God's glory in the world, particularly among people and places where Jesus is not yet known, from our knees.

For His Glory,

David Platt

A NOTE FROM GLOBAL OUTREACH

At MBC, we glorify God by making disciples and multiplying churches among all nations, beginning in greater Washington, DC. Global Outreach serves MBC by equipping and mobilizing church members to make disciples of Jesus Christ and multiply churches among all nations. One of the ways we accomplish this mission is through prayer. Prayer is the foundational work of mission because God is the author of salvation and the head of the church. Through prayer, the church participates in God's work to advance the gospel to the ends of the earth, and we prayerfully depend on him. As Samuel Zwemer (1867-1952), a pioneer missionary to the Middle East, once said, "The history of missions is the history of answered prayer." We invite our MBC Church family to pray with us this year for our missionaries, our partners, and the countries where the gospel is growing or has yet to go!

HOW TO USE THIS PRAYER GUIDE

This prayer guide is divided into 52 weeks, which includes:

- An entry for each MBC missionary, and in some cases a separate entry to pray for the location where they live.
- Entries for MBC partner organizations and the people they serve.
- Entries with the top unreached countries of the world according to JoshuaProject.net and Stratus.earth.

Consider using these prompts as you pray personally during your daily devotions, together as a family or with your housemates, and weekly as you gather with your Church Group. We may not be able to physically join these gospel workers and their church planting efforts, but we can surely pray for their work among these God-loved peoples. Let us commit to do so and celebrate what God does in answer to our requests in 2023!

For missionaries and partners living in countries where being a Christian could compromise their security or the security of their fellow workers, pseudonyms and regions are used.

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Maldives

Total Population:	497,000
Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Unreached
Percent Evangelical:	0.01% (1 in 10,000)
Major Needs:	Evangelism, healthy churches, pastoral training

Tourism portrays the Maldives as an island paradise, with crystal-clear water and endless beaches. While it does boast those attractions, a darker reality exists. Powerful social and political forces limit the freedom of expression. Islam is the only recognized religion; in fact, the government forbids the open practice of all other religions. Beyond Islamic beliefs, many people follow occult practices called Fanditha.

The Maldives also has one of the highest divorce rates in the world. Both crime rates and gang activity continue to rise annually. Some statistics report as many as 70% of teens are drug users. Child abuse is widespread. This is no paradise.

Maldivians are among the least evangelized people on earth. Neither mission work nor Christian literature has ever been allowed in. The government denies the existence of Christianity among Maldivians and arrests those who trust in Christ. The perception of Christianity is so bad—largely due to Western media and tourists’ immorality—that political opponents use the term “Christian” to slander one another.

More recently, the government has stated a desire to honor human rights and increase freedoms. But religious freedom remains highly unpopular, and violent opposition has been promised to those who argue for it.

Pray

- That God would sustain the very few Christians there to persevere amidst persecution and isolation.
- That God would strengthen the small Maldivian church and give them grace.
- That God would bless and provide a brighter future for Maldivian peoples, torn between oppressive religion and empty freedoms.
- That God would make Jesus’ true nature known, and that the state’s contradictions and heavy-handedness toward Christianity will generate great curiosity so that many people come to faith.



Visit [Joshua Project](https://www.joshuaproject.org) to learn more about the unreached in this country.

Brook

SERVING IN THE MIDDLE EAST SINCE 2019

Total Population:	More than 100 million
Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Partially Reached
Percent Evangelical:	Less than 5% (1 in 20)
Major Needs:	Healthy churches, pastoral training

Brook grew up in Vienna, Virginia, and attended MBC as a child. When she was sixteen, while on an MBC mission trip to the Dominican Republic, a pastor said, “God will ask some of you to move cross-culturally for his glory.” Brook never forgot this.

After college, she served on MBC staff. During those years, the Lord began to lay a foundation for her to serve overseas. Brook began to sense that she would be disobeying the Lord if she stayed in the US, and after much prayer and counsel, she actively began to pursue being sent by MBC as a missionary.

In 2019, Brook moved to a region in the Middle East where the evangelical population is just 0.27%, and where everything is in some way tied back to Islam. She says, “We have all heard of unreached people groups before and their great need, but we must remember that behind each number is a face and a name. A family. Simply put, God led me to the Middle East to intentionally plant my life here to invest in these people; to see men, women, and communities come to know the radical love of Jesus—the one true God—and to see churches planted, thriving and healthy, in this part of the world.”

ENCOURAGEMENTS FROM 2022

Over the previous year, Brook built a deeper relationship with a local friend. They have had many fruitful spiritual conversations and have even begun to read the book of Matthew together! Also, another local man came to faith in Jesus, but his wife has still yet to believe. It’s exciting to see the Lord working in many Muslims’ hearts!

Pray

- That God would form healthy, thriving churches. Pray against disunity.
- That God would give Brook health; that Jesus would be her satisfaction; and that she would be bold and at the same time humble in her work.
- That God would change and soften hearts; that Jesus would show himself to refugees as the ultimate sustainer and provider; and that many Muslims would open the Bible and discover Jesus for themselves.



Visit [Joshua Project](#) to learn more about the unreached in this country.

Kenya

Total Population:	53,811,000
Major Religion:	Christianity
Joshua Project Status:	Significantly Reached
Percent Evangelical:	49.73% (1 in 2)
Major Needs:	Healthy churches

Kenya has seen tremendous growth over the last decade, and prior to the pandemic, it had one of the fastest growing economies on the continent. Christianity is the most established religion in Kenya, but many churches need to grow in health.

One MBC partner, Ekklesia Baptist Church (EBC), has a singular mission: using biblical resources to support the reproduction and revitalization of healthy, gospel-centered churches across Africa. EBC also runs a publishing platform called Ekklesia Afrika which works to provide access to high-quality theological content that is oriented toward the strengthening of the church in Africa.

One of Ekklesia Afrika's most important programs is SOMA, a non-formal theological training program that's built on the philosophies of cohort learning and Socratic discussion. This four-year theological training program is custom-built for African pastors who want to cultivate biblical convictions in the following key areas: Word-Centered Ministry, Ecclesiology, Pastoral Theology, Systematic and Biblical Theology, and Missions.

In 2022, Ekklesia Afrika also started a seminary called the Nairobi School of Reformed Theology to train pastors and church leaders, and to equip aspiring pastor-scholars with the necessary academic background to succeed in a doctoral program.

Though these missions and programs are distinct, they all serve the same overarching purpose: to aid in the steady

reformation of African churches. For that to succeed, both pastors and lay members need to be filled and equipped with sound doctrine.

Pray

- That God would grant success to the continued Bible distribution work, through the aforementioned Soma and Soma Biblia programs. The goal is to give individuals and ministries a structure to their Bible reading.
- That God would continue to use various events—a preaching workshop, a meeting with publishers, a conference for like-minded believers—to strengthen relationships and bring about lasting fruit.



Visit [Joshua Project](#) to learn more about the unreached in this country.

Afghanistan

Total Population:	41,002,000
Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Unreached
Percent Evangelical:	0.02% (1 in 5,000)
Major Needs:	Evangelism, healthy churches, pastoral training

Afghanistan is a mountainous landlocked country and has most recently been in the news due to continuous war and terrorism. Within this context, two MBC partners are working to make Christ known.

The first partner works specifically with Muslim Background Believers (MBBs) who operate a food production business. Through operating this business, the MBBs have created avenues that enable them to share the gospel with Muslims throughout Afghanistan, especially under current circumstances where access is limited.

The second partner works primarily with indigenous leaders to develop a healthy church among the unreached. After the fall of Afghanistan into the hands of the Taliban in 2021, it became even more difficult for churches and believers to share the gospel. This partner develops online content for evangelism, discipleship, and associated follow-up. The goal is to plant the gospel of Jesus among the unreached people of Afghanistan through a variety of methods, including a team that uses targeted social media, multiple podcasts, a women's online ministry, and a discipleship program for follow-up. The follow-up team is composed of mature and competent leaders with experience leading churches inside Afghanistan, but who now live elsewhere due to recent conflicts which forced them to flee.

Through creative endeavors like the projects above, the gospel of Jesus is advancing amidst insurmountable restrictions to reach those who need to hear it most!

Pray

- That God would bring peace and stability to Afghanistan.
- That God would hinder the evil plans of the Taliban and convict their hearts; that they would turn to Him.
- That God would bless the food production business so that it will become an avenue for many people to hear the gospel and be saved.
- That God would give thousands of people in Afghanistan access to online gospel resources, and that these resources would teach foundational truths to new believers and strengthen the existing church.



Visit [Joshua Project](#) to learn more about the unreached in this country.

North Korea

Total Population:	25,934,000
Major Religion:	Non-religious
Joshua Project Status:	Unreached
Percent Evangelical:	1.57% (1 in 63)
Major Needs:	Evangelism, healthy churches

Though North Korea is officially an atheist state, the country's leaders have established a personality cult around the "Supreme Leader"—Kim Jong-un and his late grandfather, Kim-Il-Sung. As a result, Christians are considered a threat to the regime, and persecution is ongoing and systemic.

Under the rule of Kim Il-Sung, all churches were closed. Since 1988, and due to foreign donations, four church buildings have been erected: one Catholic, two Protestant, and one Russian Orthodox. However, North Korean citizens are not allowed to worship at or join any of them; they are strictly for expats.

Over the past several decades, there have been numerous reports of Christians being sent to state-run prison camps. Some reports estimate as many as 50,000–70,000 Christians are in these camps today. Unsurprisingly, the Bible is banned, and some say that even owning a Bible can be punishable by imprisonment or worse.

Thankfully, certain foreign NGOs are allowed to operate in North Korea for aid and development projects. So the presence of foreign believers in North Korea does occur, but they're limited in their capacity to minister to local believers. Many people around the world continue to pray for freedom in North Korea and eagerly await the day that the door to gospel proclamation will swing wide open!

Pray

- That God would open the door for the gospel to be shared freely in North Korea.
- That God would protect and grow the underground church, and thwart the plans of wicked leaders to persecute God's people.
- That God would provide for various organizations that are trying to share the gospel in North Korea.



Visit [Joshua Project](#) to learn more about the unreached in this country.

Thomas & Tess

SERVING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA SINCE 2022

Total Population:	More than 200 million
Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Partially Reached
Percent Evangelical:	Less than 4% (1 in 25)
Major Needs:	Evangelism, healthy churches, pastoral training

Thomas and Tess both grew up in Christian homes, and each made the decision to obey Christ while in grade school. The Lord is still showing them how to grow in Christlikeness as they pursue Him and His Word.

Thomas started attending MBC Arlington in 2017 and became a member soon after. He served in the Prince William location's prison ministry, and as a patient companion in the chaplain's office of a local hospital. Tess started attending MBC Tysons in 2018, and faithfully served with Kid's Quest, specifically with preschoolers. She has always loved teaching children about the love of God and hopes to continue doing so in the future.

As a young married couple, Thomas and Tess have been spurred on by God's desire for all people to be saved, and by His perfect plan that all tongues will sing His praises. This ignited a desire in them to be part of making the gospel known where it is not. Because of that conviction, Thomas and Tess entered Global Outreach's missionary pipeline to be trained and equipped to serve internationally. They were able to leverage their jobs and relocate to Southeast Asia in the summer of 2022. They are now striving to be witnesses for Christ in a context that's surrounded by the false gospels of Islam, Hinduism, and even tribal religions.

Visit [Joshua Project](#) to learn more about the unreached in this country.

Pray

- That God would help their local church to grow in maturity and health.
- That God would provide deep and meaningful friendships with fellow believers.
- That God would cause Muslims who hear the gospel to understand it and accept it.
- That God would give courage and boldness to local Muslim-background believers to share Christ with others, even when the worldly consequences are severe.



Somalia

Total Population:	17,493,000
Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Unreached
Percent Evangelical:	0.01% (1 in 10,000)
Major Needs:	Evangelism, healthy churches, pastoral training

With 85% of its total population made up of ethnic Somalis, Somalia is one of the most “homogenous” nations in the world. It is also a nation plagued by problems. Though Somalia has the world’s highest fertility rate, it also has the world’s shortest life expectancy.

While Somalia has tried to fight for stability, it has too often been plagued by continual conflicts with failed extremist groups. The 2012 establishment of a Parliament generated some hope. The militant Islamist group Al-Shabab was ousted from most urban areas but is still active in rural parts of the country.

Due to these issues, the economic, social, and physical health of the nation is in dire straits. Fearing for their safety, many foreign NGOs are unable to operate in Somalia, so needed aid and resources rarely reach the most vulnerable. Somali women suffer genital mutilation, mistreatment, rape, divorce, abuse, and abandonment. Traffickers smuggle children to exploit or abandon them.

During the conflicts of the 1990s, the small Somali church was driven into hiding. Due to a successful propaganda campaign, many Somalis have false fears about and prejudices against Christians. Though the Bible was completed in the Somali language in 1977, it’s never been widely or safely distributed.

Somalia is a hard place to be a Christian, and an even harder place to do ministry. There are so many needs, and so seemingly few opportunities. Still, we trust that the Lord loves the people of Somalia and has a plan for them!

Pray

- That God would restore stability and peace, so that basic human needs and rights are met.
- That God would strengthen the small number of Christians and churches to share their faith and see new believers disciplined and patiently raised to leadership.
- That God would protect women and girls from abuse and show them that they are valuable and loved by their Creator.
- That God would bring terrorists to justice, convict them of their sin, and draw them to worship Christ.



Ukraine

Total Population:	39,648,000
Major Religion:	Christianity
Joshua Project Status:	Partially Reached
Percent Evangelical:	3.62% (1 in 27)
Major Needs:	Healthy churches

In 2022, the world watched as Ukraine and Russia launched into a brutal war. Though casualty numbers are difficult to calculate with certainty, most estimates say at least 100,000+ soldiers and civilians have been killed. More than thirteen million Ukrainians have been displaced to neighboring countries or internally, even as the government required most males from 18 to 60 to stay behind. In November 2022, Russia occupied 20% of Ukrainian territory, though that number is constantly changing.

The church in Ukraine is familiar with suffering. Until gaining independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, Christians in Ukraine suffered great persecution under Communism and millions died for their faith in Christ.

February 2023 will mark one year since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The situation in Ukraine has created an urgent need for spiritual and physical care for many people. Between the traumatized countrymen, the refugee children, and the everyday confrontation with the possibility of death, churches and ministries on the ground have their hands full. There is much opportunity, but it's not always obvious how churches and Christians there should prioritize these needs.

Pray

- That God would unite the church, across all sides of conflict, so that the name of Jesus is proclaimed, and the church would be a witness to the watching world. That what the enemy meant for evil the Lord would use for good.
- That God would provide local churches in Ukraine the resources to meet continued emergency needs and minister to those who need trauma counseling.
- That God would give wisdom to world leaders involved.
- That God would bring peace between nations and a quick, just outcome.
- That God would cause Russian pastors to faithfully follow Christ, and to lead with brotherly love, compassion, and patience; that Russian brothers and sisters would respond in Christ-honoring ways to the conflict around them.



Information from [NPR](#) and [TGC](#).

Visit [Joshua Project](#) to learn more about the unreached in this country.

Yemen

Total Population:	33,533,000
Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Unreached
Percent Evangelical:	0.02% (1 in 5,000)
Major Needs:	Evangelism, healthy churches, pastoral training

Yemen was once known for its fertile land and natural resources, such as silver. However, in recent decades it is now better known for its three civil wars and numerous tribal conflicts. Yemen is currently divided between Shia rebels and Sunni forces. The conflict has consistently made headlines during the last decade, as aid organizations flooded into the country to assist the most vulnerable.

It is not an exaggeration to state that the Yemeni people continue to experience one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world. More than 50,000+ combatants and civilians have died in recent years, and widespread famine and food shortages persist. Malnutrition and starvation have become a normal part of life—and, as always, children are its main casualties.

Even still, God is at work in Yemen! Yemenis are hearing about Christ through the radio, Bible distribution, and the bold but careful witness of faithful local churches. Believers must meet in secret and only in small groups. They suffer extreme opposition, imprisonment, and sometimes even death.

Christian NGOs in Yemen have a unique opportunity to do ministry under the preface of food distribution programs.

While the aim is to satisfy physical hunger, this type of community outreach gives organizations a platform to support local churches, facilitate leadership training for believers, and support the planting of healthy churches.

Pray

- That God would ease civil unrest and conflicts so that the Yemeni people can be restored.
- That various organizations would translate and distribute biblical materials for the spread of the gospel.
- That Yemeni believers would be bold and courageous in sharing their faith.
- That God would protect and provide for all Yemeni believers, grow His church, and mobilize ministries to build the local church.



Visit [Joshua Project](#) to learn more about the unreached in this country.

Heather

SERVING IN INDIA SINCE 2021

Total Population:	1,410,717,000
Major Religion:	Hinduism
Joshua Project Status:	Unreached
Percent Evangelical:	Unknown
Major Needs:	Healthy churches, pastoral training

Heather grew up in a loving Christian family who prioritized missions and attended a healthy local church. As a young graduate student in DC, she met and married a non-believer. A few years after the birth of her second son, her marriage ended.

Heather enjoyed a career as a diplomat. She reflects, “I had traveled to more than fifty-five countries and during my overseas postings I attended local churches. In these churches, I served as a Sunday school teacher and hospitality volunteer. Despite this, the hurt, pain, and stigma of my life choices held me back from being vulnerable. Instead, I just became focused internally and even though I prayed and read my Bible, I was not connected significantly to a local church and thus did not grow during this period.”

In 2018, while on a new assignment to DC, Heather began attending MBC and became a member. It changed her life.

In a 2019 sermon, Pastor David asked the church, “What if God is calling you for more than just the American Dream?” After prayer and counsel, Heather felt the Lord urging her to move overseas. She was equipped through MBC’s Missionary Sending Pipeline and is now serving in India as she pursues marketplace opportunities for gospel advancement.

Visit [Joshua Project](#) to learn more about the unreached in this country.

ENCOURAGEMENTS FROM 2022

For Heather, one joyous event in 2022 was helping establish a new church. Her church’s pastoral internship program is fruitful and flourishing, as new leaders are trained up. Heather has also been encouraged by a weekly Bible study she started at her job, where she meets with women from other faith backgrounds to study the Gospel of John.

Pray

- That God would eradicate all false gospels plaguing India.
- That God would repeal the Anti-Conversion Act in Indian states, thus ending religious extremism in the Indian education system.
- That God would continue producing fruitful work from a recent pastor’s conference. Those events sought to equip Indian pastors to preach the pure gospel and plant healthy, Christ-centered churches.
- That God would draw Heather’s teenage son closer to Him; and that other close relatives would come to know Jesus as Lord.



Kazakhstan

Total Population:	19,316,00
Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Minimally Reached
Percent Evangelical:	0.59% (1 in 169)
Major Needs:	Evangelism, healthy churches, pastoral training

Kazakhstan is known for its wild horses, the beautiful Caspian Sea, and its ornate architecture. While Astana is Kazakhstan's capital, Almaty is its largest city as well as its commercial and cultural hub. With theaters, museums, and countless outdoor cafes and restaurants, some say Almaty feels more like Europe than Central Asia. Long controlled by the Soviet Union, the country is still dealing with the lingering effects of communism.

Unfortunately, the last year has been quite difficult for the city. In January 2022, riots broke out as many citizens gathered en masse to protest an exorbitant spike in gas prices. While reports vary, it's clear that many people died; estimates range from a few hundred to as many as 2,000. These riots came on the heels of not only a price hike in gas, but after years of widespread poverty. Tensions have since simmered down even as political unrest continues to bubble under the surface, especially in bigger and more influential cities like Almaty. It is apparent that something needs to change.

Thankfully, there are faithful gospel-preaching partners laboring in Almaty. These partners have a wonderful opportunity to minister to a city that is mourning, a city full of people who see no end in sight. The only solution is in Christ Jesus!

Pray

- That God would comfort those who lost loved ones during the 2022 riots.
- That God would grant elected officials the wisdom to use their authority for good, so that the people under their authority would flourish; that any corrupt business dealings would cease.
- That God would cause healthy churches and gospel-preaching pastors to stay faithful amidst much difficulty.
- That God might save many nominal Muslims who see Christians' love for one another as they persevere through seasons of suffering.



Visit [Joshua Project](#) to learn more about the unreached in this region.

Turkey

Total Population:	85,274,000
Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Unreached
Percent Evangelical:	0.04% (1 in 2,500)
Major Needs:	Evangelism, healthy churches, pastoral training

A unique fact about Turkey is that its largest city, Istanbul, is the only city in the world that straddles two continents: Europe and Asia. Rich in world history, Turkey is technically a secular state, yet to be a Turkish national is often equated with being Muslim.

For well over 1,000 years, this region had been a stronghold of Christianity. But today, 66% of the population is unevangelized and less than 1% claim to be Christian. The country's constitution, courts, and military claim to uphold religious freedom, but some secular nationalists are as anti-Christian, anti-Western, and anti-minority as extreme Islamists. While it is difficult to share the gospel openly with Turks and Kurds, there does seem to be greater freedom to share Christ among refugees from the surrounding countries of Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan who now call Turkey home.

Despite all these obstacles, the church in Turkey is growing in maturity and health. Many church leaders are focusing on the most pressing needs: pastoral training, effective evangelism, and church-wide discipleship.

Pray

- That God would break the various structures—both formal and informal—that keep the gospel from being freely spread.
- That God might use this region's Christian heritage as a tool to bring many to faith.
- That God would encourage followers of Christ and equip new believers to be bold and courageous for the advance of the gospel.
- That God would allow current missionaries to have favor, wisdom, and access to build a strong gospel infrastructure and new healthy churches.



Visit [Joshua Project](#) to learn more about the unreached in this country.

Kyrgyzstan

Total Population:	6,603,000
Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Unreached
Percent Evangelical:	0.3% (1 in 333)
Major Needs:	Evangelism, healthy churches, pastoral training

Often described as the “Switzerland of Central Asia,” this beautiful, mountainous country is a popular hiking destination known for its nomadic culture. However, the post-Soviet years in Kyrgyzstan have been difficult. Recent regimes have only brought more corruption, crime, and poverty. Alcoholism, drug trafficking, gambling, and prostitution run rampant. Work is hard to find, especially in rural areas. Urban areas like Bishkek are full of slums.

The vast majority of Kyrgyz are culturally Muslim yet few practice the religion sincerely. In fact, the country has many Muslim missionaries, who seek to strengthen and purify the Islam practiced in their nation. In only five years, Muslims from other countries built more than 2,000 mosques and prayer rooms. In the place of a heartfelt Islam is a widespread practice of the occult. It’s not uncommon for Kyrgyz to worship ancestors, use amulets, and seek counsel from shamans. Locals will talk about how they fear “the evil eye.”

All of this makes becoming a Christian quite difficult, and quite rare. While there are a fair number of expat Christians, the number of native Christians is extremely small. Missionary partners in Kyrgyzstan seek to foster good relationships between these two groups.

Persecution also makes ministry among Christians difficult. The government is taking a harder line toward any religious expression that may cause social or political instability—and this includes evangelical Christianity. Formal registration is commonly denied to churches, and even expatriate work permits are limited. A resurgent Islam has also targeted evangelicals with intimidation, property destruction, and physical violence. Some Muslims have stoked fear in the government by falsely claiming astronomical growth in the churches.

Pray

- That God would encourage believers to stand firm and demonstrate the power and love of Christ amidst persecution.
- That God would cease the persecution and convict the persecutors.
- That God would encourage local leaders to use their God-given authority for the good of those under their care.



Visit [Joshua Project](#) to learn more about the unreached in this country.

Stephany

SERVING IN GERMANY SINCE 2018

Total Population:	83,287,000
Major Religion:	Christianity
Joshua Project Status:	Reached
Percent Evangelical:	2.08% (1 in 50)
Major Needs:	Healthy churches

As a child, Stephany saw many cultures firsthand. Over time, God planted in her a desire to live abroad. At eighteen, she aspired to be a missionary, but didn't know how or when God would open the door. After college and while working her first full-time job, God confirmed her desire to live abroad as a missionary.

Stephany first visited MBC Arlington in 2015. She soon became a member and began to serve as a small group co-leader and in other areas of the church, as needed.

Stephany now lives in Germany. As it turns out, God did open the door shortly after college. She supports and trains missionaries in over twenty countries. In addition to her work with church planters, Stephany has plugged into a local church plant. In December 2022, she married her fiancé Andy in his home country of Norway. He is also a missionary who serves church planters in Europe. They enjoy working for separate organizations that partner with one another.

ENCOURAGEMENTS FROM 2022

Stephany was most encouraged to see different countries, people groups, denominations, networks, organizations, and generations working together to see God's Kingdom expand in Europe and beyond. What unity Christians find in their

Savior! She has also seen churches planted and people saved. During the summer of 2022, Stephany's church celebrated twenty-five baptisms throughout various church campuses, and it is exciting to see the Lord move in these ways.

Pray

- That God would grow Stephany's local church in both number and maturity.
- That God would erase apathy toward the gospel and that the hearts of the people would be ready to receive the truth of the gospel.
- That God would cause local believers in Europe to recognize their place in the body of Christ and be bold in evangelizing, discipling, and serving their churches. Pray that more churches would be planted by local believers.
- That God would care for Ukrainians, Russians, and all Europeans. Pray for the war to come to an end; pray for peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation.



Visit [Joshua Project](#) to learn more about the unreached in this country.

Afghanistan

Total Population:	41,002,000
Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Unreached
Percent Evangelical:	0.02% (1 in 5,000)
Major Needs:	Evangelism, healthy churches, pastoral training

This landlocked country has a rich history of poetry and culture. However, the last 40 years have seen a vicious cycle of poverty, hunger, and high illiteracy among women, whom the Taliban keep from higher education. As a result of the 2021 Taliban takeover, pre-2021 economic and social advances have again crumbled, which has disproportionately and significantly affected the lives of women and children. Sadly, Afghanistan now has one of the highest infant mortality rates in the world. Similarly, more than one million people suffer with disabilities, many due to war injuries or a lack of access to basic care.

Afghanistan is also one of the least evangelized countries in the world; there are thousands of mosques but no visible churches. To be a Christian in Afghanistan is often a death sentence, quite literally. The small number of believers must meet in secret to avoid Taliban detection. Under Taliban control, many Christian agencies were forced to evacuate their foreign workers, leaving Afghan believers more vulnerable and less resourced.

And yet, despite these realities, the church continues to rebuild, grow, and expand. The Lord's mercy is evident!

Pray

- That God would end gender-based oppression and protect the lives of vulnerable women and children; that they would hear of the great love Jesus Christ has for them.
- That God would allow the Bible and other helpful resources to be translated and distributed locally. Over 70% of the population understands the Dari language—and yet, the Dari Bible was only published for the first time in 2008. Pray that this changes.
- That God would allow foreign agencies to find creative ways to send needed resources and encouragement to Afghan believers.
- That God would convict the Taliban of their sin and draw them to bend their knee to Christ as Lord.



Visit [Joshua Project](https://www.joshuaproject.org) to learn more about the unreached in this country.

Italy

Total Population:	58,954,000
Major Religion:	Roman Catholic
Joshua Project Status:	Superficially Reached
Percent Evangelical:	1.46% (1 in 68)
Major Needs:	Healthy churches, evangelism

Paul wrote part of 2 Timothy while imprisoned in Rome, and while Italy may seem to have deep ties with Christianity, it is in desperate need of biblical reformation. Though over 80% of the country professes Christianity, Roman Catholicism dominates. Italians are less than 2% evangelical. Italy is full of people who are highly churched and highly fluent in theological language but who have yet to put their faith genuinely in Christ.

All of this makes evangelism difficult in Italy. Rome is the capital and, in many ways, represents the heart of the Italian people and culture. A healthy church in Rome could open doors of the gospel to the rest of the country!

Since 2010, the Evangelical Church Breccia di Roma has sought to be a gospel witness to this needy city. How have they done this? By preaching the Word, emphasizing church life and evangelism, pursuing theological training, and hosting gospel-centered events and mercy ministries to refugees and the poor. This is their strategy as they seek to see the gospel transform Rome and the Roman people.

In 2017, for the first time in almost one hundred years, an evangelical organization purchased a permanent meeting space in Rome's city-center. It provides a wonderful

opportunity for this church to be a central hub for gospel work throughout the area. They also are expecting to plant more churches in 2023!

Pray

- That God would grow the new church plant in Rome's Prati neighborhood. This location is extremely strategic because it borders the Vatican.
- That God would help three new Christians from the Prati church plant to continue to follow Jesus and be discipled.
- That God would shake Romans out of their nominalism and save those who have been disillusioned by the Roman Catholic Church and now want nothing to do with Christianity.
- That God would give patience to those who teach the true gospel in Rome; that they would do it carefully—as the shared religious vocabulary with different meanings can confuse those who do not realize they are hearing something different than what they already know.



Portugal

Total Population:	10,215,000
Major Religion:	Roman Catholic
Joshua Project Status:	Partially Reached
Percent Evangelical:	3.52% (1 in 28)
Major Needs:	Evangelism, healthy churches, pastoral training

Portugal is one of the oldest and most peaceful countries in Europe. It's historically a Catholic country because the Protestant Reformation never really took root in Portugal. In fact, the first Protestant church in Portugal was not founded until around 1908. There are now over one hundred Protestant churches throughout the country that, by God's grace, are theologically sound and gospel-preaching.

One of these churches is First Baptist Church of Lisbon, which provides a unique opportunity for gospel-advancing work. The goal of this team—led by Tiago Oliveira, the church's new senior pastor—is to see healthy churches established throughout Portugal. Though the congregation has dwindled in number over the past three decades, its location—Lisbon's city-center—is extremely strategic.

Healthy local churches occupy a central place in God's plans for the salvation of his people. They are God's revealed means for accomplishing the Great Commission. Over time and with God's help, First Baptist Church of Lisbon may be used by God in this way. Through their partnership with Martin Bucer Seminary Portugal and a network of like-minded churches, they hope to train future pastors who will one day plant and revitalize Portuguese local churches.

Pray

- That God would help Tiago and his family settle well in Portugal after a long time living in the US.
- That God would strengthen Tiago; that he would preach excellent sermons that edify the Christian and encourage the non-Christian to consider Christ.
- That God would make fruitful partnerships. That their partnership with Martin Bucer Seminary Portugal—which the church started—would attract ministry-minded men whom Tiago and others can disciple and train.
- That God would make Lisbon into a hub for pastoral training and gospel proclamation in Portugal and throughout Europe.



Visit [Joshua Project](#) to learn more about the unreached in this country.

Joseph & Jennifer

SERVING IN THE MIDDLE EAST SINCE 2012

Total Population:	More than 100 million
Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Partially Reached
Percent Evangelical:	Less than 5% (1 in 20)
Major Needs:	Healthy churches, pastoral training

Joseph first attended MBC in the 1990s after graduating from college. He gained a vision for cross-cultural work while on an MBC short-term trip to Peru. Later, he completed his theological studies, earning a ThM and PhD.

As a teenager, Jennifer taught backyard Bible clubs and Sunday School classes. She met Joseph in seminary. She then served for five years in East Asia where she researched languages and studied minority-group cultures.

Joseph and Jennifer's current work in the Middle East centers on providing theological education and leadership training to believers, especially those from a Muslim background. Though their country is home to over ten million people, less than 30,000 are evangelicals (0.27%). Joseph teaches at an evangelical seminary and leads a discipleship group for men off-campus. Jennifer loves being a mom, and she also leads a Bible study for local women. She often visits her neighbors with the goal of sharing Christ.

ENCOURAGEMENTS FROM 2022

Joseph and Jennifer were encouraged by a fruitful and positive transition to a new missionary team, and the intentionality of their new leaders. God sustained them through major

trials and allowed them to remain in the same city for ongoing service. They see hunger for the Word and are working to equip others for discipleship. A key local believer understands the need for training local leaders, so they seek to further develop him.

Pray

- That God would bring continued unity to their missionary team.
- That God would foster fruitful development of theological education and leadership skills in the lives of Muslim-background believers.
- That God would provide more like-minded co-workers who are spiritually vibrant, holistically resilient, and marked by complementary gifts.
- That God would guide leaders at their church in decisions about the future.
- That God would help them maintain resilience and find balance in caring for their personal health while serving others.
- That God would help their children grow deep spiritual roots, make trustworthy friends at school, and joyfully learn the local language.



Visit [Joshua Project](#) to learn more about the unreached in this country.

Northern Iraq

Total Population:	5,123,000
Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Unreached
Percent Evangelical:	0.2% (1 in 500)
Major Needs:	Evangelism, healthy churches, pastoral training

The Kurds are a large ethnic group who have always lived in the same region, and who trace their roots back to the Medes of ancient Persia more than 2,500 years ago. In fact, the Magi, or wise men, who traveled from the East to deliver their gold, frankincense, and myrrh to the newborn Jesus were most likely Zoroastrian priests, ancestors of the modern Kurds. The Kurds are a tribal people and mostly lived, until recently, a nomadic lifestyle in the mountainous regions of Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Iran. Their refuge has always been the mountains, with their steep pastures and fertile valleys.

Though the Kurds were promised a home country in the Treaty of Sevres (1920), they never received what was promised. As a result, Kurds are the largest ethnic group in the world without a state of their own. If the Middle East map were to be redrawn to give the Kurds their own boundaries, Kurdistan would be as large as France, stretching over 200,000 square miles.

The Kurds often face persecution for just being Kurds in whatever country they end up in. In Northern Iraq, for example, they often face forced resettlement and discrimination from the Iraqi government. When it comes to religion, the Kurds are culturally Muslim, but they are rarely devout. Some Kurds still maintain a connection with the ancient Zoroastrian faith, which far predates Islam.

Nonetheless, most Kurds are Muslim, Sunni Muslims to be precise. A minority of Iran-resident Kurds are Shiite Muslims (Operation World).

Pray

- That God would save many Kurds, even as they are spread throughout Central Asia and the Middle East.
- That God would raise up Kurdish-speaking pastors who can minister to Christians and share the gospel with non-Christians in their heart language.
- That God would send more laborers into these specific regions.



Visit [Joshua Project](#) to learn more about the unreached in this region.

South Asia

Total Population:	1,800,000,000
Major Religion:	Hinduism
Joshua Project Status:	Unreached
Percent Evangelical:	Unknown
Major Needs:	Evangelism, healthy churches

More than 1.8 billion people live in South Asia; the vast majority of people adhere to Hinduism, Islam, or Buddhism. There is, simply put, no mission field like this part of the world.

If the Great Commission is the work of planting churches, then a crucial part of that is training men for pastoral ministry. Thankfully, in one South Asian country, an MBC partner church has committed itself to preparing dozens of faithful men exactly for this purpose. They have committed to making disciples and planting churches that last because they are built on the proper foundation of God's Word.

This work has been building for years. They have already planted churches and trained dozens of men from all across the country; more recently, they were even able to start a seminary. This work is neither easy nor safe. Their resources are few, and the persecution is ever-increasing. While it may surprise some, militant Hinduism can be extremely coercive and violent—not only against Christians but also against adherents of other religions like Islam and Buddhism. Anti-conversion laws often lead to violence and persecution that never gets prosecuted. Despite all these harsh realities, our partners continue their faithful work; their resolve to train men from all over the region for pastoral ministry remains strong.

Pray

- That God would help various church plants flourish despite minimal resources and significant persecution.
- That God would expand the church's pastoral training and that their evangelistic outreach efforts will bear fruit.
- That God would expose the false teachers who claim immediate and massive "success," which discourages genuine Christians, undermines the patient faithfulness of other ministers, and confuses those who do not know the gospel.
- That God would cease the persecution of Christians; that the authorities might even come to know Christ as Lord.
- That God would provide the funds to purchase 1800 new books until the core needs of the seminary are met.



Visit [Joshua Project](#) to learn more about the unreached in this country.

Egypt

Total Population:	110,903,000
Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Partially Reached
Percent Evangelical:	4.45% (1 in 22)
Major Needs:	Evangelism, healthy churches, pastoral training

For over 1,000 years, Egypt was a majority-Christian country. In fact, Egypt gave the Christian world some of its greatest theologians. In recent generations, Egyptian authorities have sought to minimize the nation's great Christian heritage, and even downplay the current size of the church. Despite these restrictions, the church continues to survive and even grow, but it does face persecution. Many Egyptian Muslims wish their country did not have such a large Christian population.

The political turmoil in Egypt has been well-documented in the decade-plus since the Arab Spring. But as the government has protected itself from radical Islamic militants it has also become more authoritarian—and with authoritarianism comes increasing corruption and suffering.

Egyptian Christians suffer in part because every citizen must carry identity cards that state a person's religion. These turn Muslim-background believers into targets. While conversion is not technically illegal, some Egyptian Christians have been imprisoned for "despising Islam" or other false pretenses. Coptic Christians, on the other hand, face less scrutiny and persecution than evangelicals.

Pray

- That Coptic Christians would believe and hold fast to the gospel of Jesus Christ. That they would have genuine faith and not compromise sound doctrine.
- That God would raise up qualified local men to shepherd faithful churches throughout Egypt.
- That God would cause authorities to stop persecuting Christians and cause the laws to change so that new believers can change their religious status on their identity card.



Visit [Joshua Project](https://www.joshuaproject.org) to learn more about the unreached in this country.

Edward & Ava

SERVING IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA SINCE 2022

Total Population:	10,005,000
Major Religion:	Christianity
Joshua Project Status:	Reached
Percent Evangelical:	23% (1 in 4)
Major Needs:	Healthy churches

While in college, Edward and Ava were active with CRU. Once married, Edward began a 25-year career working internationally. He and Ava primarily raised their four children outside the US.

Between international job postings, Edward and Ava lived in Northern Virginia from 2011-2016. During that time, they became members of MBC Loudoun. They taught Kid's Quest and hosted a home group. They decided to retire early in order to apply their experience to full-time ministry, which led them to their current positions.

In 2018, Edward, Ava, and their youngest two children moved to Malaysia to work with Bible translation and Scripture engagement initiatives in a region where more than 1,000 languages still need the Scriptures!

In 2022, they transitioned from Malaysia to Papua New Guinea. Now in the Pacific region, they work closely with local churches and organizations in Bible translation, Scripture engagement, and language development.

Pray

- That God would provide a smooth transition both personally and professionally as they settle into daily life in Papua New Guinea.
- That God would direct translation projects and bring them to completion.
- That God would give them joy in this new season as "empty nesters" after their fourth child recently began university. Please pray that their children would flourish while they are so far away.



Visit [Joshua Project](#) to learn more about the unreached in this country.

Turkey

Total Population:	85,274,000
Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Unreached
Percent Evangelical:	0.04% (1 in 2,500)
Major Needs:	Evangelism, healthy churches, pastoral training

Turkey is a beautiful country with a rich history. Some biblical scholars even speculate that Noah's Ark came to rest on Mount Ararat! Turkey is also home to some of the most beautiful mosques in the world, and most Turks identify as Muslim. Turkey is considered one of the least evangelized and one of the hardest-to-reach countries in Central Asia.

One MBC partner there is shepherding a new church. The pastor spends most of his time evangelizing unbelievers and shepherding church members through preaching, counseling, and prayer. He and his family recently moved into a newly renovated space, where fifteen church members and three elders took the Lord's Supper together and worshiped freely on their first Sunday. It was a joyous time!

Now that the pandemic and its restrictions have receded into the background, there are many opportunities for ministry to increase. For example, the church hosted a training for Central Asian pastors and, starting in January 2022, welcomed a handful of pastoral interns. After expecting just one intern, they ended up with four! It's exciting to see how God will use these men, each from a different language group, to share the gospel throughout Central Asia in the future.

Healthy local churches are the primary, God-appointed means for fulfilling the Great Commission. They're a visible manifestation of God's kingdom on earth, and God is doing exciting things in the Turkish church!

Pray

- That God would continue to grow the new church in health and in love for one another; that God would save many through its faithful ministry.
- That God would use the 10-month pastoral internship program to equip and train up men—from places like Russia, Iran, Turkey, and the US—for future ministry in the region.
- That God would raise up another core team to plant a church in a second city in 2023. In fact, there's a chance to establish two churches: an English-speaking one and a Russian-speaking one. Tens of thousands of Russians have relocated to Turkey due to the conflict in Russia.



Visit [Joshua Project](#) to learn more about the unreached in this country.

Tajikistan

Total Population:	9,904,000
Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Unreached
Percent Evangelical:	0.07% (1 in 1,428)
Major Needs:	Evangelism, healthy churches, pastoral training

Over 90% of Tajikistan is covered in mountains. While this landscape may look picturesque, it creates significant challenges in road travel and therefore isolates many communities. This makes life difficult for natives. Additionally, a civil war broke out shortly after the fall of the Soviet Union—not entirely uncommon for a former Soviet-run state. Now, 80% of the country lives below the poverty line and there is a great need for education and relief-and-development work.

The state religion is Islam, and thirty-one of the nation's thirty-nine people groups are unreached. Christians in Tajikistan face persecution, as the government keeps tight control over "deviant" religions. All churches and non-Islamic religious activities must be "approved" by the government. Violations of this—even for something as small as possessing non-approved Christian material—can result in interrogation or imprisonment.

After years of work on a more accurate translation of the Tajik Bible, 2022 saw the distribution of the newly translated New Testament to various Tajik churches. Praise God! But these churches need more than just new Bibles. They need pastoral training and church-wide discipleship.

Additionally, the Taliban's 2021 takeover of Afghanistan pushed many Afghans into Tajikistan. The Tajik church now has ongoing opportunities to minister to Afghan refugees.

Pray

- That God would raise up faithful Tajik pastors to lead local churches.
- That God would increase the proclamation of the gospel of Christ through faithful, national believers.
- That God would get Tajik Bibles into the hands of those who need to read it and those who are able to distribute it.
- That God would install leaders in positions of authority who know the wisest ways to reverse the decades of social disarray.



Visit [Joshua Project](#) to learn more about the unreached in this country.

Arabian Peninsula

Total Population:	More than 10 million
Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Minimally Reached
Percent Evangelical:	Less than 1.50% (1 in 67)
Major Needs:	Evangelism, healthy churches, pastoral training

The Arabian Peninsula attracts people from all over the world for work, study, and leisure. One collegiate ministry that MBC partners with in this region exists to “establish indigenous fellowships of students on every campus in the Arabian Peninsula, supported and led by Indigenous staff teams, all of whom bear witness to the gospel of Christ Jesus.” This ministry is now active on over twenty university campuses throughout the region! The students at these universities represent diverse cultures and nationalities, where the name of Jesus is hardly known.

This past year, God answered many prayers. Against all odds, the ministry was able to start new work on some difficult campuses. For example, one of the most restricted Islamic universities invited a number of Eritreans to study there. This has been a huge answer to prayer because of the opportunity to meet with the Eritreans and read the Bible. In fact, one of the Eritrean students came to Christ and is now learning how to share the gospel with his friends!

The ultimate goal is to see these students join healthy churches, and that is becoming increasingly common. Students are even getting more comfortable sharing the gospel with their families and friends in their home countries. At the same time, some staff members have begun to receive

training in biblical and systematic theology, which has sharpened their ability to teach God’s Word.

Pray

- That God would save many now that restrictions have been lifted and staff can freely engage with students on campus.
- That God would give staff access to more nationalities, especially people from restricted countries like Iran, Saudi, Yemen, Bahrain, and Afghanistan.
- That God would protect and give wisdom to the thirty student leaders who lead Bible discussions and teach on their campuses. Pray that they would gain favor with university administrators.
- That God would raise up more staff who are from the region and not the West. These students will always enjoy better access and opportunity.



Visit [Joshua Project](#) to learn more about the unreached in this country.

James & Lyric

SERVING IN KAZAKHSTAN SINCE 2018

Total Population:	19,316,000
Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Minimally Reached
Percent Evangelical:	0.59% (1 in 169)
Major Needs:	Evangelism, healthy churches, pastoral training

James and Lyric were born and raised in Southeast Asia. They later emigrated to the United States to raise their children and are now blessed with grandchildren. As MBC members they have faithfully served for many years. They were involved in a home Bible study and various MBC Fellowships, where they helped with several MBC projects.

After retiring, they began to wonder if God wanted them to use their time to live among unreached peoples. They searched the Scriptures, sought counsel, and prayed for God's confirmation. Throughout this process, they received much affirmation.

It was clear that their thirty years of international development experience had unknowingly prepared them for life overseas. They now live in the Muslim-majority country of Kazakhstan. In this context, it is hard to establish deep relationships with other Christians. That's why James and Lyric spend time training local pastors and leaders in Transformational Development (TD). They equip local churches to meet their communities' material needs. By meeting these needs, they can build relationships, which in turn opens the door for gospel proclamation.

ENCOURAGEMENTS FROM 2022

James and Lyric were recently discouraged by how long some necessary organizational paperwork was taking. So, as they waited, they decided to visit a partner in a different city. During that visit, they were able to mutually encourage each other. What's more, their Muslim interpreter, who belongs to the Tartar people group, came to know the Lord! What a joy to see God's hand working even in the midst of perceived "delays."

Pray

- That God would allow them to begin four pilot TD projects in 2023 to lay the foundation for long-term development ministry in local communities.
- That God would cause the authorities to approve their application for longer-term, multiple-entry visas into the country.
- That God would bless and increase a Bible study started recently by a local partner. That new believers in this group would grow in maturity and share Christ with others.
- That God would give them overall safety and health.



Visit [Joshua Project](#) to learn more about the unreached in this country.

Thailand

Total Population:	71,482,000
Major Religion:	Buddhism
Joshua Project Status:	Unreached
Percent Evangelical:	0.65% (1 in 154)
Major Needs:	Evangelism, healthy churches, pastoral training

Thailand is known as one of the most popular tourist destinations in Southeast Asia. With its beaches, famed elephants, culinary delicacies, and more, Thailand has a lot to offer any visitor. Thailand also has the second largest economy in Southeast Asia. Thailand means “Land of the Free,” and the nation is true to its name because it remained free even as Western powers colonized its neighboring countries. And yet, despite the political freedom, spiritual oppression is rampant in this Buddhist country.

There are over 40,000 Buddhist temples in Thailand. Less than 1% of the population of Thailand is Christian, even after centuries of missionary work in the region. Most of the unreached reside in rural villages outside the reach of Thailand’s major city hubs. Nonetheless, the church continues to see slow but steady growth. Though Thailand largely contained the COVID-19 virus, its economy suffered in 2020 and 2021 due to the loss of tourism and other factors. Thankfully, it is finally starting to recover.

Pray

- That God would grow the Thai church through faithful Bible study and evangelism.
- That God would send missionaries to people groups who have no known church in their area. There are over 80,000 villages and neighborhoods in Thailand who desperately need the gospel.
- That God would make the local churches in large cities like Chiang Mai and Bangkok hubs for gospel ministry throughout the country.
- That God would open the hearts of people in Thailand to see the false hope that is in Buddhism and turn to Jesus Christ.



Visit **Joshua Project** to learn more about the unreached in this country.

Sudan

Total Population:	46,773,000
Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Unreached
Percent Evangelical:	0.29% (1 in 345)
Major Needs:	Evangelism, healthy churches, pastoral training

With more pyramids than Egypt, Sudan is home to over 160 Muslim people groups, most of whom adhere to the Sunni tradition. Since gaining independence in 1956, Sudan has suffered through political instability. For several decades, the Western region of Sudan has been plagued by constant armed conflict. Countless Sudanese citizens have been killed, displaced, or left to exist in poverty.

Despite this upheaval, the gospel spread as Christian refugees became scattered throughout the country; churches even formed among several unreached people groups. But Christians still face severe persecution that threatens the stability and unity of these churches. Moreover, pastors are often isolated and ill-equipped to shepherd their churches and serve their local communities.

Churches and partners in this region work with local pastors to support Sudanese believers in the face of tremendous persecution. Churches need to equip local leaders so that they can strengthen their communities through economic development and peacebuilding.

While there are many barriers to the growth of the church in this region, the gospel continues to advance.

Pray

- That God would bring stability to Sudan and heal the minds and hearts of a people affected by decades of conflict.
- That God would give local believers courage and protection in order to establish healthy, gospel-preaching churches that can endure through hardship.
- That God would protect national believers and give them courage to share Christ.
- That God would unify local churches as they seek to serve their local communities.
- That God would provide for the needs of the people of Sudan.



France

Total Population:	64,391,000
Major Religion:	Roman Catholic
Joshua Project Status:	Superficially Reached
Percent Evangelical:	1.23% (1 in 81)
Major Needs:	Healthy churches

In previous centuries, Europe was the epicenter of global Christianity. Sadly, much has changed. Christianity in Europe is steeply declining, and many Europeans claim no belief in God at all. This need spurred Mauricio Prunera and his wife to plant Église Chemin Nouveau (New Path Church) in Saint-Lô, Normandy, France.

The majority of French people are apathetic to the gospel; many occasionally attend church. Thankfully, there has been a recent influx of refugees into France who seem willing to listen to the gospel. Because of this mass immigration, ministry among unreached groups is a reality in France, as many of the refugees come from Muslim countries. They come to France seeking safety and prosperity.

In August 2022, after two years of hosting a Bible study in the Prunera's home, Chemin Nouveau secured their own building. This was a great answer to prayer! Not only can the building host weekly gatherings for over forty people, but it is equipped to provide temporary housing to needy refugee families on the second floor. Please pray for Muslim families fleeing surrounding regions, who Chemin Nouveau will continually have the opportunity to temporarily house over the coming years.

Pray

- That God would reveal himself to the people of Saint-Lô and the surrounding towns. There are more than 80,000 inhabitants in the 60 nearby "communes."
- That God would help the members of Chemin Nouveau to grow in spiritual maturity.
- That God would provide money for rent, everyday operating costs, and support for Mauricio's family.
- That God would allow the refugees who are hosted in the church building to hear the gospel and believe it.



Visit [Joshua Project](https://www.joshuaproject.org) to learn more about the unreached in this country.

Miriam

SERVING IN EGYPT SINCE 2018

Total Population:	110,903,000
Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Partially Reached
Percent Evangelical:	4.45% (1 in 22)
Major Needs:	Evangelism, healthy churches, pastoral training

Miriam became a member of MBC in 2016 when her family moved to Northern Virginia. She served as a small group leader and Global Outreach intern. She is glad to call MBC her spiritual family!

As a middle schooler, Miriam fell deeply in love with Jesus. She then read and was captivated by missionary biographies. In high school, Miriam traveled on several short-term mission trips and her love for the nations grew. After graduation, she learned a shocking statistic: only 3% of Christian missionaries are among the world's nearly two billion unreached people. Those numbers lit a fire in her, and from that day she prepared to spend her life making Christ's name known among the unreached.

In 2018, Miriam moved to Egypt. While Egypt has a moderate amount of gospel infrastructure, there's still a lot of work to be done! Many Egyptians will likely never meet a Christian. Miriam studied the language and culture full-time for two years. She and her husband, who is Egyptian, look forward to all that the Lord has in store for them as they continue to make Christ known.

ENCOURAGEMENTS FROM 2022

In 2022, Miriam married a local believer. Their marriage has given Miriam insight into the values and nuances of Egyptian

culture. They are excited to welcome a baby boy to their family in 2023! Miriam's language studies have gone well, and she has learned most of a second dialect. She also formed several relationships with women who want to know more about Jesus, and often hosts them in her living room where they study the Word together.

Pray

- That God provides access to the gospel for Muslims who seek it and then connects them to healthy local churches.
- That God would incite government leaders to remove "religion" from national ID cards, so those who follow Christ can live boldly and freely.
- That God would bless local fellowships. That local churches would grow in maturity to be salt and light in their neighborhoods without fear.
- That God would give Miriam a mentor to help her amid all the transition as a new wife and mother.



Visit [Joshua Project](#) to learn more about the unreached in this country.

Indonesia

Total Population:	275,128,000
Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Partially Reached
Percent Evangelical:	3.23% (1 in 30)
Major Needs:	Evangelism, healthy churches, pastoral training

Jakarta is the capital city of the world's largest Muslim country: Indonesia. If you include neighboring satellite cities, Jakarta is also the second-largest urban area in the world behind only Tokyo. And yet, Jakarta will not be the capital much longer. Rising sea levels force the city to deal with regular flooding—and the city is sinking at a rate of 6.7 inches per year. Because of this, the President recently announced that the capital of Indonesia would move to Nusantara in 2024.

By some estimates, there are as many as thirty-three million Christians in Indonesia (the nation-wide population is 275 million). Nonetheless, persecution is intense, and it has grown in recent years. Jakarta in particular experiences above-average persecution due to its predominantly Muslim population. Meanwhile, some areas of Indonesia, like North Sumatra, are more amicable toward the Christian faith.

But even where Christianity has a long history, Indonesian churches are rarely vibrant and healthy. They struggle to find qualified, mature leaders who can fight off the rapid growth of prosperity gospel churches. Many new believers come from Muslim backgrounds,

which means that their conversion almost immediately leads to persecution and rejection from their communities. These young believers need discipleship and training—not to mention a basic support system.

Pray

- That God would raise up qualified Indonesian men to lead healthy churches that will last through the generations.
- That God would mercifully cause the many false religions—including the prosperity gospel—to stop growing and confusing people about God and the Bible.
- That God would end persecution in all areas of the country.
- That God would allow Jakarta's transition from being the capital city to occur peacefully and without negative consequences.



Visit [Joshua Project](#) to learn more about the unreached in this country.

Syria

Total Population:	21,976,000
Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Minimally Reached
Percent Evangelical:	0.19% (1 in 526)
Major Needs:	Evangelism, healthy churches, pastoral training

Syria has a geography rich in biblical history. Damascus, the capital, is the oldest continuously “lived-in” city in the world! In the past, Christians could worship in Syria with relative freedom; both the Orthodox and Catholic churches existed long before Islam did. But that’s all ancient history.

Since the bloody civil war began in 2011, it’s estimated that over 400,000 people have died and close to half the country has been internally displaced. Thousands more have fled to surrounding countries. This conflict has created a food shortage, which of course affects the most vulnerable.

Because of all these difficulties, Christians in Syria struggle to survive. Radical Muslims heavily persecute and even kill Christians. Some Christians have stayed behind; many others have fled in order to survive.

The church in Syria grows under persecution as faithful believers persist in daily life under these realities. Churches focus on outreach, evangelism, and discipleship to Syrians who

are both displaced and still at home. The primary goal of churches is to equip their members for effective evangelism to reach their Muslim neighbors, friends, and family, while also discipling them toward further maturity in Christ.

Pray

- That God would bring peace to Syria.
- That God would cause many in the Sunni Arab majority to hear the gospel and respond in faith.
- That God would raise up faithful leaders with the gift of teaching to aid in the church’s efforts to train and equip new believers.
- That God would protect His church in Syria and allow these Christians to grow despite hardship and persecution.



Visit [Joshua Project](https://www.joshuaproject.org) to learn more about the unreached in this country.

Russia

Total Population:	144,540,000
Major Religion:	Christianity
Joshua Project Status:	Superficially Reached
Percent Evangelical:	1.46% (1 in 68)
Major Needs:	Healthy churches, pastoral training

Russia is an immense country. One MBC partner there ministers with national brothers and sisters to plant and nurture healthy churches among the least-reached peoples of Russia. In particular, this partner supports a bi-vocational pastor who runs an electronics business and pastors a church plant among the North Caucasus peoples.

The North Caucasus region of Russia shares a land border with Georgia and Azerbaijan. Of this region Operation World says, “The North Caucasus region is the poorest and least stable region in Russia. It has the highest unemployment, the highest birth rates, and widespread corruption. The region’s seven republics contain 50 to 60 ethnic groups of Caucasus, Turkic, and Iranian origin. The North Caucasus peoples are among the least reached on earth, and they live in Europe’s least-evangelized region.”

Ministry in this region is intentionally hard and requires a special kind of resolve. And yet, God has begun to produce evident fruit, and pastors there have seen believers grow in their faith despite increasing pressure from both isolationist politics and the ever-increasing Islamic culture. They have also seen people groups who, 30 years ago, were considered “unreached,” but have since matured to the point where they are sending their own cross-cultural workers!

Pray

- That God would give courage to new believers among a certain Muslim people group so they can persevere in the face of pushback from their families.
- That God would allow a church planter, who recently relocated, to turn a home Bible study into a healthy local church.
- That God would give joy and endurance to those who are ministering among the Uyghurs people, even amidst inevitable persecution.
- That God would continue to grow local churches, that local believers would be disciplined, and that local elders would be raised up.



Visit [Joshua Project](#) to learn more about the unreached in this region.

John

SERVING IN HAITI SINCE 2010

Total Population:	11,549,000
Major Religion:	Roman Catholic
Joshua Project Status:	Reached
Percent Evangelical:	17.5% (1 in 5)
Major Needs:	Healthy churches

John grew up in Northern Virginia and began attending MBC in 2002. He joined the church and served in Kid's Quest and the Rock. Though he desired to serve as a cross-cultural missionary, he wanted to be debt-free first.

Once his finances became stable, he looked for ministry opportunities overseas. In 2010, a pastor asked him to pray about going to Haiti to assist with the earthquake relief effort. He arrived in Haiti in March 2010 and has served there ever since!

John attends Rendez-Vous Christ Church, which is led by godly Haitian leaders. They encourage rising generations of Haitians to know and follow Jesus Christ. John spends his time making disciples and teaching classes about Jesus.

Haiti is by no means a "closed country." And yet, recent natural disasters, political assassinations, and widespread poverty and violence have crippled the country. Some estimates say 90% of Haitians grow up without a father. This lack of family structure is debilitating. John and his fellow church workers have given their lives to see young Haitian men and women come to Christ and become the voices of hope and truth their communities so desperately need.

ENCOURAGEMENTS FROM 2022

God faithfully provided for the financial needs of John's ministry and others in times of crisis in 2022. They have been able to feed people and provide medical care and shelter for the most vulnerable. With each discouraged and often hopeless person along the way, John was able to share the gospel message of hope. God is raising up believers with great faith in the midst of turmoil in Haiti!

Pray

- That God would bring peace to Haiti.
- That God would protect His people and give grace for His church to grow.
- That God would give Haitian Christians wisdom so that others would see their love for Jesus and come to know the peace only He can give amid chaos.
- That God would provide funds for a new ministry location.



Visit [Joshua Project](#) to learn more about the unreached in this country.

Algeria

Total Population:	44,818,000
Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Unreached
Percent Evangelical:	0.07% (1 in 1,428)
Major Needs:	Evangelism, healthy churches, pastoral training

The Christian faith in Algeria is long established, especially among the Berber people. Muslim occupation has driven many Christians to flee to rural areas or underground which opened the door for Islam to become the state religion. The Berber people still practice the faith even as Christian persecution is intensifying. New legislation has criminalized evangelism and “non-Muslim worship” outside pre-approved buildings. In the past several years, authorities in Algeria have engaged in a targeted campaign against Christians; as a result, local authorities have forcibly shut down many churches.

Despite the persecution, Algeria has experienced one of the world’s largest movements of Muslims coming to faith in Christ. Years of hard, patient, and prayerful work have resulted in evangelistic fruit in the Algerian church. Praise God for this! Even as believers face intimidation by family, friends, employers, Muslim extremists, and the government, the church grows. Algeria has become a leader in North Africa for theological training and church development, at least in part because it is legal to print and distribute Bibles there, even as it remains carefully monitored by the government.

Pray

- That God would remove corruption and Islam-biased practices from the government and raise up leaders who love Jesus.
- That God would strengthen Christian families to stand against religious and social pressures that force Christian girls to marry Muslims.
- That God would reopen closed churches and establish Bible-preaching local churches so that believers can grow in their faith, learn how to share the gospel, and make disciples.
- That God would reduce unemployment among Muslim-background Christians so that their economic situation would improve.



Visit [Joshua Project](https://www.joshuaproject.org) to learn more about the unreached in this country.

Morocco

Total Population:	37,374,000
Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Unreached
Percent Evangelical:	0.10% (1 in 1,000)
Major Needs:	Evangelism, healthy churches, pastoral training

Arab armies brought Islam to the region around Morocco in the seventh century. Moroccans are immensely proud of their strong Islamic history and culture which has contributed to a strong resistance to Christianity. Until recently, Morocco was ruled by a monarch who was supposedly a direct descendant of the prophet Muhammad who believed in leading with Islamic principles.

The Moroccan constitution now promotes a more liberal government, which guarantees freedom of thought and the right to practice one's own religious affairs. But Islam and Judaism are still the only recognized religions, and the king is still revered as the nation's spiritual authority.

As a result, it is still extremely difficult to be a Christian in Morocco. Bible distribution is illegal; as recently as 2010, hundreds of missionaries were forced to leave. Converts from Islam to Christianity face opposition from family members and persecution from former government strongholds. Believers gather in exclusively underground churches, so it can be difficult to find Christian fellowship. Moroccan law also makes it illegal to "undermine the faith of Muslims," which makes evangelism and church outreach nearly impossible.

Pray

- That God would give new believers stamina and courage to grow in their faith.
- That God would help believers remain faithful even when they lose basic rights and face persecution.
- That God would reopen the country for missionaries and that healthy local churches would be established.
- That God might save Moroccan authorities, and that believers would occupy places of power to establish lasting change.
- That the many ways Christians have pursued digital and online evangelism might bear fruit, and that new Christians would be able to find in-person community through the local church.



Visit [Joshua Project](https://www.joshuaproject.org) to learn more about the unreached in this country.

Egypt

Total Population:	110,903,000
Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Partially Reached
Percent Evangelical:	4.45% (1 in 22)
Major Needs:	Evangelism, healthy churches, pastoral training

While there is a long history of Christianity in Egypt, and it is still considered the second largest religion, the church in Egypt has much room for growth. One MBC partner traveled to the Arabian Peninsula to receive solid biblical training and has recently returned to Egypt to plant and nurture a healthy church. Currently, he is training two men in a pastoral internship to serve with him. These two brothers will also receive formal theological training at a local theology school which will allow them to stay close to the church as they continue to evangelize their neighbors and disciple new believers.

While this new church is small, the Lord is bringing slow growth. This is exemplified through the story of one man who recently started attending. He considered himself a “backsliding Christian,” so much so that he had not sung in church in 15 years! He said he felt “unworthy to sing.” Yet through faithful church involvement and the biblical lyrics of songs during corporate worship, he has been

encouraged to sing again as he relies on the grace of Christ alone. It is these kinds of people and many more that the church continues to minister to!

Pray

- That God would help the church’s relationships with its local denomination to improve. Newly elected leaders seem open to supporting biblical church planting in other area cities.
- That God would aid the two pastoral interns in their studies as they learn to serve the church. That God would yield fruit during evangelistic conversations with church visitors.



Visit [Joshua Project](#) to learn more about the unreached in this region.

Tami

SERVING IN ETHIOPIA SINCE 2022

Total Population:	123,061,000
Major Religion:	Christianity
Joshua Project Status:	Reached
Percent Evangelical:	17.96% (1 in 5)
Major Needs:	Healthy churches, evangelism, pastoral training

Although Tami grew up in a Christian home, it was not until a trip to Europe in 1999 that she fully surrendered her life to Christ. She moved to Northern Virginia in 2006 and became a member of MBC around 2009. Over the years, Tami was a faithful church member, serving as a Kid's Quest volunteer, a small group leader, and a small group leader coach.

In 2019, she went with MBC to Ethiopia to engage local churches in caring for orphans and the most vulnerable. During that trip, the Lord grew her heart for global missions, and she began to wonder if she could return to Ethiopia long term. She eventually learned of a Christian Missionary School in need of teachers. After being trained through Global Outreach's sending pipeline, Tami began the 2022-2023 school year in Addis Ababa serving at the local Missionary School.

In Ethiopia, the Orthodox Church is the primary "religion"; this tradition remains very intertwined with Ethiopian culture. Additionally, Islam is on the rise as many Muslims come from surrounding countries to

find refuge. In this context, Tami is leveraging her career for the gospel as she serves children and families, participates in a local church, and continues to learn the local language and culture.

Pray

- That God would bless Tami's students as they learn about Christ; that her life, like Paul's, would be worth imitating as she imitates Christ.
- That God would help her grow deep roots in Christ and His Word, and that her faith would sustain her.
- That God would end the war in the northern Tigrayan region and provide survival resources to those who have been cut off.



Visit [Joshua Project](#) to learn more about the unreached in this country.

Jordan

Total Population:	11,196,000
Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Unreached
Percent Evangelical:	0.27% (1 in 370)
Major Needs:	Evangelism, healthy churches, pastoral training

Jordan is a socially conservative country with a rich, diverse history. As part of the Middle East, it is surprising that Christians there have enjoyed relative freedom; some Christians have even served as government officials. Still, Jordan has very few Christians, and even fewer evangelicals. In previous generations, there was a thriving Christian subculture. But that has changed over the last forty years due to lower birth rates, largescale Christian emigration, and a large influx of Muslim refugees.

Because of the ongoing conflict in Syria, Amman is now also home to thousands of Syrian refugees, many of whom are vulnerable women and children. This refugee crisis has resulted in an increase of all forms of violence, particularly domestic violence. Churches in Amman have clear opportunities to minister to distressed families in their communities.

Ministering to these women will stand out to Jordanians who are watching. While women's rights have improved over the past twenty years—for example, they can attend university and drive—Jordanian women are still largely barred from the

workforce and rarely enjoy the same freedoms as men. The Lord is working in surprising ways to get the gospel to women and refugees in Jordan.

Pray

- That God would give churches specific and tangible ways to meet the needs of women in order to build relationships and share Christ.
- That God would grant opportunities for Syrian women to hear the gospel and that their lives would be radically changed.
- That God would stop violence against women in Jordan and that the government would continue to support just programs and laws.



Visit **Joshua Project** to learn more about the unreached in this country.

Japan

Total Population:	123,874,000
Major Religion:	Buddhism
Joshua Project Status:	Unreached
Percent Evangelical:	0.57% (1 in 1,754)
Major Needs:	Evangelism, healthy churches, pastoral training

Japan has a complex and ancient cultural heritage and is known for its technology and innovation. It also has a high life expectancy and places great emphasis on education. But Japan is in desperate need of healthy, gospel-preaching local churches. The nation is less than 1% evangelical, and 90% of those evangelicals are over 30 years old. In other words, the Christian witness is a generation and a half away from near extinction. Churches must focus on reaching young people for Christ.

One MBC partner is doing just this! A young couple arrived in Japan in January 2023. Their next two years will be tough and isolating as they focus full-time on language acquisition. While the husband is already “mostly proficient” after ten years of study, he is still aiming at fluency. His wife, however, will be starting with the basics and will be in language school full-time.

This couple is coming alongside a pre-existing organization who works for the spread of the gospel in Japan. This church planting ministry has an ambitious, yet simple goal: to plant twelve churches in twelve major Japanese cities by 2025. This couple will be working in the local church to prayerfully aid in this goal over the next five years.

Pray

- That God would grant this young couple endurance in their language acquisition. May they be spurred on by the stories of men like Hudson Taylor and Adoniram Judson who tirelessly studied Chinese and Burmese for years before fully engaging in missionary work.
- That God would make them a helpful addition to the church they are joining; that they would humbly learn from those who have been in Japan much longer.
- That God would give them a gospel-centered marriage.
- That God might save people who live in Tokyo. This city is home to thirty-seven million people, 95% of whom will never hear the gospel.



Visit [Joshua Project](#) to learn more about the unreached in this country.

Morocco

Total Population:	37,374,000
Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Unreached
Percent Evangelical:	0.10% (1 in 100)
Major Needs:	Evangelism, healthy churches, pastoral training

Morocco is a beautiful country with Spanish and French influences. Moroccan law makes it illegal to “undermine the faith of Muslims” which makes evangelism and church planting challenging. One MBC partner there is committed to planting an Arabic-speaking church. They desire to make disciples, raise up elders, and equip other pastors nearby through theological training workshops. In short, the work is hard!

During 2022, the Lord brought many unbelievers to visit the church. What started as a small Bible study has since grown into a regular meeting for teaching and prayer. As a result, many church members eagerly want to invite their friends. Some local believers are even getting opportunities to teach and lead. One brother in particular is going through a pastoral internship to become a future elder.

Earlier in 2022, this partner hosted a country-wide training for pastors; the goal for events like this is both to instruct and to cultivate a network of like-minded churches that care for one another and partner together for the advance of the gospel.

The road ahead appears promising, though the work will remain hard. A local business is growing, which will help to support the ministry long-term. The Lord also enabled vital partners to obtain their visas, and new teammates are set to join the work soon. This is a huge answer to prayer!

Pray

- That God would allow for the completion of the translation of sound theological resources; that more donors will give to this vital, church-strengthening work.
- That God will help the churches represented at the preaching workshop to remain committed to faithfully proclaiming God’s Word week after week; that churches in Morocco would unite in truth to advance the gospel.
- That God would allow plans for a three-year theological training program to succeed. This is yet another way to equip Moroccan pastors for ministry so that their churches might be healthy.
- That God would bless the small, newly formed church. After instructing prospective members about church membership and other aspects of ecclesiology in late 2022, they began to meet. Help them grow in maturity and unity!



Visit [Joshua Project](#) to learn more about the unreached in this region.

Ben & Erin

SERVING IN GERMANY SINCE 2017

Total Population:	83,287,000
Major Religion:	Christianity
Joshua Project Status:	Reached
Percent Evangelical:	2% (1 in 50)
Major Needs:	Healthy churches, pastoral training

Ben began attending MBC when he was just two years old! He joined the church when he was fourteen and eventually served on the worship staff for over 20 years.

Erin began attending MBC in 1991. She was on staff for seven years. Throughout their time at MBC, their daughters Elise and Emily were involved in many ministries.

Ben and Erin had an interest in Germany for many years. In 2016, Ben began to lead Eurobrass, an evangelistic Christian ensemble that tours Germany each summer. The next year, the Roundtrees moved to the Black Forest region of Germany to serve with Artists in Christian Testimony Intl. God had clearly been preparing them for this path. He also provided a special-needs school where Emily could excel (she has CHARGE Syndrome). Thankfully, both daughters learned German quickly.

Germany's historic appreciation for brass music opens many ministry doors. But sadly, despite centuries of rich spiritual heritage, Germans today are quite secular. Most do not personally know a single evangelical Christian. Technically, of the eighty-three million people in Germany, roughly half "belong" to either the Protestant or Catholic church. But only 9% of Catholics and 3% of Protestants attend church on a regular

basis.

ENCOURAGEMENTS FROM 2022

The summer of 2022 saw the first "normal" Eurobrass tour since 2019. The audiences appreciated the combination of excellent music and the clear gospel message. With the invasion of Ukraine in February of 2022, six Ukrainian families with special needs sought refuge in Germany. The Roundtrees and their church helped these families with their various needs as they settled into their town, and it has been a blessing to serve them!

Pray

- That God would allow their new concept for handbell performances during Christmas and beyond to reach more people with the gospel.
- That God would enable them to build meaningful relationships and offer spiritual encouragement to the Ukrainian families with special needs children in their village.
- That God would bless their eldest daughter's time at university in the US and provide a deep Christian community for her.



Visit [Joshua Project](#) to learn more about the unreached in this country.

Turkmenistan

Total Population:	6,398,000
Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Unreached
Percent Evangelical:	0.11% (1 in 909)
Major Needs:	Evangelism, healthy churches, pastoral training

One of the least visited countries in the world, Turkmenistan's geography is well known for being 70% desert. Until 2006, this country was ruled by a dictator who named himself "the father of all Turkmen." He functioned as a kind of cult leader. His death brought some hope that more freedoms would be respected as both human rights and religious freedom are guaranteed by Turkmenistan's constitution.

The religious landscape for Christians in Turkmenistan is very harsh. Very few ethnic Turkmen claim Christ, though the number has steadily grown in the years since the fall of the Soviet Union. Most believers in the country are of Russian, Ukrainian, or Armenian origin. Persecution is intense. Many Christians have been expelled, especially foreign ones; native Christians endure worse treatment. Pastors have been exiled, beaten, fined, or even imprisoned. Authorities routinely intimidate churches, and sometimes force them to shut down. This is the case even among churches that are "registered," which is a near-impossible process that often just subjects the church to greater surveillance.

The most promising gospel opportunities among Turkmen exist among those who have fled their homeland. Many now live in surrounding countries such as Iran, Afghanistan, Iraq, Uzbekistan, Syria, and others. There are many gospel workers among diaspora Turkmen.

Visit [Joshua Project](#) to learn more about the unreached in this country.

Pray

- That God would give endurance to the believers in Turkmenistan to persevere amid great persecution; that the Holy Spirit would guard their hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.
- That God would soften the hearts of and even save the authorities so that they would act justly and fairly as it relates to both human rights and religious freedom.
- That God would give grace to those who minister among the scattered Turkmen, and that God would grant faith to many.



Uzbekistan

Total Population:	756,000 (Karakalpak People Group)
Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Unreached
Percent Evangelical:	0.01% (1 in 10,000)
Major Needs:	Healthy churches, pastoral training

The Karakalpak people are a semi-nomadic tribe who reside in northwestern Uzbekistan, but also have small populations in Turkey, Iran, and other regions. The Karakalpaks who live in Uzbekistan often struggle with unemployment and poverty. This area of Uzbekistan is a desert; it rarely receives more than 4.5 inches of rain a year. It is also a spiritual desert, as there are very few reported Christians among a people group that is more than 756,000 people.

Nonetheless, a small but growing Karakalpak church is advancing. The work there is in its initial stages, and much attention is on how to get hard copies of translated biblical materials to the church. While the Bible has been translated into the local language, it exists primarily online because it is unsafe to distribute printed versions. Local pastors do have about thirty copies of a translated “Bible Overview” class which is used for training.

MBC partners there have also begun a micro-loan business. The economic situation in this region is dire, and many Karakalpak believers leave the country to find work elsewhere. For the budding Karakalpak church to be stable, believers need to learn how to provide for their families without moving away. The micro-loan business addresses financial needs while also allowing opportunities for discipleship. Thankfully,

the first group of five entrepreneurs successfully paid back their initial loans within 12 months!

Pray

- That God would bless the church and grow their numbers. That they would grow in their love and understanding of God’s Word.
- That God would cause the authorities to grant permission for the Karakalpak Bible to be printed and distributed throughout the region.
- That God would give a local pastor’s church the formal registration he needs so they can meet legally in their building.
- That God would use the inter-church outreach to young people with disabilities to model Christ’s love.
- That God would allow the micro-loans business to positively impact the Karakalpak community, both financially and spiritually.



Visit [Joshua Project](#) to learn more about the unreached in this country.

Mauritania

Total Population:	4,701,000
Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Unreached
Percent Evangelical:	0.12% (1 in 833)
Major Needs:	Evangelism, healthy churches, pastoral training

In the African nation of Mauritania, leaving Islam is a betrayal of tribe and family. Christians from Muslim backgrounds often keep their faith a secret. They fear losing not only their status in their community but also their citizenship. Nearly all Mauritians are Sunni Muslims, but radical Islam is on the rise.

The people suffer under huge economic and social challenges. Only 1% of the land can be farmed, and that number is constantly decreasing as the once-rich soil becomes desert. Many are starving. Discovering oil could bring wealth, but it would also increase corruption and further divide the rich and the poor. Mauritania is also known for being the last country in the world to abolish slavery (1981), yet many still labor as illegal slaves.

National Christians often attend church services for expats, as there is no national church, and the government still persecutes Christians. The importation of Bibles is restricted, and evangelism is illegal. Publicly criticizing Islam can carry the death penalty. There is a great need for vibrant, healthy churches.

Visit [Joshua Project](https://www.joshuaproject.org) to learn more about the unreached in this region.

Pray

- That God would bring freedom and justice for all those oppressed in Mauritania, and that they would experience the true freedom found in following Christ.
- That God would break the cultural and tribal bondage of Islam; that he would strengthen Muslim-background believers who fear the consequences of following Jesus.
- That God would open access for the Word to be distributed freely and placed into the hands of believers so that they may grow in Christ and evangelize the lost.



Zoe

SERVING IN THE MIDDLE EAST SINCE 2020

Total Population:	More than 100 million
Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Partially Reached
Percent Evangelical:	Less than 5% (1 in 20)
Major Needs:	Healthy churches, pastoral training

Even as a young child, Zoe could see how God was preparing her for overseas ministry. She especially enjoyed when missionaries visited her church to share about their work. Through her teaching career, the Lord continued giving her a specific love for certain parts of the world. Zoe got to know several students from the Middle East, which increased her interest in that region.

Several years later, Zoe traveled to the Middle East as part of a short-term team. During the trip, she sensed that she should return to this country—and stay there. Zoe worked at a local special needs school from 2015–2017.

In 2017, she returned to the United States and began attending MBC Tysons. She faithfully served on Sundays and participated in all aspects of life at MBC, especially through Access Ministry and Local Outreach during the pandemic. In 2020, she returned overseas to rejoin the school, and in 2022 transitioned into a new leadership role!

ENCOURAGEMENTS FROM 2022

One thing that encouraged Zoe over the last year was seeing various Muslim friends share her desire to serve the special needs community. She is praying that this will become a bridge to share the gospel with them. She also appreciated the way the local government responded to the victims of a tragic church fire.

Pray

- That God would open discipleship opportunities for special needs families; that these individuals and families would know the great love God has for them.
- That God would incite local communities to care for those with special needs; that they would accept them and allow them to be included in all areas of life.
- That God would allow her school to be a light for the gospel in their community.



Visit [Joshua Project](#) to learn more about the unreached in this country.

India

Total Population:	1,410,717,000
Major Religion:	Hinduism
Joshua Project Status:	Unreached
Percent Evangelical:	Unknown
Major Needs:	Healthy churches, pastoral training

India is about one third the size of the United States of America but is the second most populous country in the world. It's divided into 28 states and 8 territories. Some areas are quite hostile to Christianity, while others like the state of Telangana seem to have a significant Christian population. These former places need local churches; they need missionaries who are willing to risk their safety to spread the gospel among militant Hindus and radical Islamists. These latter places, however, have churches that are able to meet in relative safety, even as Christians are a considerable minority.

One MBC missionary in Telangana relocated for a job and spends her time "just being a faithful church member." She is discipling younger believers in the church who desperately need mentors. She is helping converts from Hinduism and the prosperity gospel to grow in wisdom and knowledge of God's Word.

When most people think of ministry in South Asia, they do not think opportunities like this exist. But they do. Following Jesus with wisdom and maturity may seem basic to Western Christians, but in some places, it is extremely rare and therefore extremely needed.

Pray

- That God would multiply churches throughout India.
- That God would protect believers in India who are facing persecution and discrimination.
- That God would send mature Christians from all over the world to be faithful members of churches like these.
- That God would use the churches in this area to grow in pastoral training.
- That God would bring fruit from the faithful, everyday evangelism of church members.



Visit **Joshua Project** to learn more about the unreached in this country.

Nepal

Total Population:	30,407,000
Major Religion:	Hinduism
Joshua Project Status:	Unreached
Percent Evangelical:	Unknown
Major Needs:	Evangelism, healthy churches, pastoral training

Nepal is widely known for its beautiful mountainous landscape, the Himalayas. It's also the birthplace of the founder of Buddhism. The city of Lumbini is the holiest pilgrimage site for Buddhists from all over the world. Despite being a secular state on paper, Hinduism permeates the government and all aspects of life. Persecution of Christians is a reality, as most Nepalese view Christianity as foreign and the government keeps a close eye on all non-Hindu religions. Even though William Carey first translated the New Testament into Nepali in 1821, Nepal's low literacy rates mean much of the population struggles with basic education.

One MBC partner church in this region is working tirelessly to see healthy churches grow and flourish. One of the biggest needs is pastoral training. To address this, they recently began a year-long internship which is currently equipping a group of young men in biblical foundations for ministry. Also, they have begun a publishing ministry, which translates, publishes, and distributes biblically faithful resources into the Nepali language.

Most recently, this partner has experienced extreme levels of government scrutiny. This is making their work of evangelism, discipleship, and literature distribution difficult. But they are not deterred in their mission.

Pray

- That God would sustain the faithful members of this church to endure amidst pressures and persecutions; that He would enable them to live lives worthy of the gospel in 2023 and beyond.
- That God would provide the funds needed for more Nepali translations of faithful, gospel-centered, ministry-minded resources.
- That God would end the persecution of Christians, and that many anti-Christian authorities would hear the gospel and bend their knee to Jesus Christ as King.



Visit [Joshua Project](#) to learn more about the unreached in this country.

Arabian Peninsula Pray

Total Population:	More than 10 million
Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Minimally Reached
Percent Evangelical:	Less than 1.50% (1 in 67)
Major Needs:	Evangelism, healthy churches, pastoral training

Located on the Asian continent, the Arabian Peninsula includes countries such as Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. After more than two years of pandemic-related difficulties, one church in this region is in a phase of rebuilding and reconnecting. But rebuilding and reconnecting does not mean retreat. In fact, the pastors are planting a new church outside a major city, among a highly unreached population.

This church is uniquely positioned for fruitful gospel work. Their city is composed of all nations living and working together, and by God's grace their church has over sixty nationalities represented. They also enjoy significant economic diversity—from highly paid executives to labor-camp workers to everything in between. No member is higher than another in the shadow of the cross as they share in fellowship and unity.

Their location in the peninsula means they can reach their Muslim neighbors, whether native to the area or foreigners from nearby countries. They also hope to plant more churches throughout the city that serve different language groups, including English, Arabic, Urdu, and Tagali.

- That God would grow this church in evangelistic urgency.
- That God would give endurance to the pastor, his wife, and their young children as they labor for the Lord.
- That God would bless their plans to plant a church in a nearby location. Pray that the government would allow them to meet in a school, which would set a new precedent for the local government.
- That God would encourage more Christians from the West to move here for their job; an American campus in this city provides a wonderful opportunity to evangelize the best and brightest university students from this part of the world.



Visit [Joshua Project](#) to learn more about the unreached in this country.

Iran

Total Population:	88,418,000
Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Unreached
Percent Evangelical:	1.18% (1 in 84)
Major Needs:	Evangelism, healthy churches, pastoral training

Iran, also called Persia, is the second largest country in the Middle East, and home to many ancient civilizations. Christianity has long been present in Iran and many old church buildings remain standing from the early days of Christianity. Iran has also seen tremendous growth in Christianity over the last several years.

As a center for Shia Islam thought, most Iranians agree that religion has a place in government but are divided on how that should look. Addiction rates, orphaned street children, and widespread prostitution are a handful of the issues ignored by the conservative Islamic leadership, leading many to question their traditional Islamic faith. Many young people (two thirds of Iran is under age 30) are open to the gospel and make up much of the underground church.

Knowing this, one MBC partner is working hard to resource the Iranian church with Christian translation materials and theological education for young pastors and leaders. These resources are disseminated in a variety of ways to foster spiritual growth to believers in all areas of life.

Over the past year, this partner led a few pastoral training conferences and ESL gospel programs which encouraged many local fellowships. Believers in Iran face any number of

risks: punishment by fines, lashing, imprisonment, or even the death penalty if a judge so desires to give it. But with the Holy Spirit's help, and spurred on by solid training and resources, they have the means to continue forward amidst these threats!

Pray

- That God would establish qualified mature leaders in churches throughout Iran and keep them safe as they minister to others.
- That God would allow new pastoral training conferences to take place in 2023. That these training events would result in much fruit for the Iranian church.
- That God would continue to allow the Bible and other translated materials to be safely distributed throughout Iran to those who need it most.



Visit [Joshua Project](#) to learn more about the unreached in this country.

Uzbekistan

Total Population:	34,576,000
Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Unreached
Percent Evangelical:	0.18% (1 in 555)
Major Needs:	Healthy churches, pastoral training

Once part of the Persian Empire, Uzbekistan is a story of continuous powerful regimes vying for control. Strategically located in Central Asia, this nation gained freedom from the Soviet Union in 1991. The capital city of Tashkent is often considered the “Islamic Capital” of Central Asia.

In the years since independence from the Soviet Union, tensions have remained high between the post-Soviet regime and various Islamic movements seeking to control the country. Islam is part of the Uzbek cultural identity, but it's not practiced as strictly as in other countries. Also, folk and occult traditions are deeply entwined in most rural communities. The vast majority of Uzbeks are tired of poverty, corruption, and their leaders' failure to make any economic progress.

Meanwhile, Christianity is slowly but steadily making inroads into Uzbekistan. Most Christians are non-natives, and these men and women rarely put down lasting roots. While evangelical Christianity has grown, it is primarily among non-Uzbeks. For example, Russians and Koreans

are free to evangelize their countrymen, but the government punishes any attempt to convert Uzbeks or any other Muslim peoples. Nonetheless, over the last decade, the national Uzbek church has seen steady growth!

Pray

- That God would allow leaders to use their God-given authority to bless their fellow countrymen; that they would use their authority to advance justice and righteousness in the land.
- That God would open doors for legal ministry among local Uzbeks.
- That God would save many through the faithful ministry of the churches and Christians already there.



Visit [Joshua Project](#) to learn more about the unreached in this country.

Libya

Total Population:	6,764,000
Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Unreached
Percent Evangelical:	0.16% (1 in 625)
Major Needs:	Evangelism, healthy churches, pastoral training

Boasting the longest African coastline and the largest desert in the world, Libya is a unique nation. After the fall of long-time ruler Qaddafi in 2011, Libya became a land divided by civil war. Radical Islamists such as ISIS and smaller local groups took advantage of the chaos to seize control. External powers supported the warring factions; foreign countries, “defense suppliers,” and smugglers profited by arming the various combatants.

Libya’s people suffered greatly during this time. There were thousands of casualties, and some suggest as many as one-quarter of the nation fled to surrounding nations. Once a proud, rich, and self-sufficient people, the struggle for basic food and resources continues for many still living in Libya.

Thankfully, various parties signed a permanent ceasefire in 2020. Still, elections originally planned for 2021 have been indefinitely postponed. So, Libya remains in political and developmental limbo.

Roman Catholic and Orthodox groups are the majority, while Protestants are in a significant minority. But these smaller groups are active whereas others are marked by nominalism. Persecution of national believers is severe; if authorities discover a Libyan believer, the response is usually

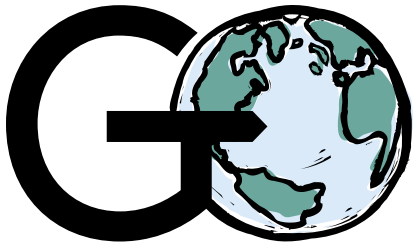
incarceration and torture. Some have even reported several martyrs over the past decade (Operation World).

Pray

- That God would grant lasting political peace, to include rebuilding infrastructure that enables communities to thrive and hear the gospel.
- That God would help translation efforts make quick progress and be available to the people in need.
- That God would protect His church, and that believers who are experiencing persecution would look to Christ and endure by faith; that God might use the deaths of His saints to bring about the growth of the church.
- That God would save many of the non-local nominal believers who are currently non-practicing Roman Catholics or Orthodox.
- That God would protect migrants attempting to cross the Sahara Desert to reach Europe; that they might hear the gospel and be saved.



Visit [Joshua Project](#) to learn more about the unreached in this country.



GLOBAL OUTREACH

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SOURCES

*Some entries adapted from last year's guide
and from:*

Country & Region Statistics

<https://joshuaproject.net/>

General Country Information

<https://operationworld.org/>

