

GLOBAL  
OUTREACH 2024

# PRAYER GUIDE



MCLEAN BIBLE CHURCH



## A NOTE FROM PASTOR DAVID PLATT

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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

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 missions 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 take root!

## HOW TO USE THIS PRAYER GUIDE

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

- An entry for each MBC missionary.
- Entries for MBC partner organizations and the people they serve.
- Entries with the top unreached countries of the world according to JoshuaProject.net.

Consider using these entries 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 2024!

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

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# KEN & RUTH

*SERVING IN CENTRAL ASIA SINCE 2023*

<b>Major Religion:</b>	Islam
<b>Joshua Project Status:</b>	Unreached
<b>Percent Evangelical:</b>	Less than 0.1% (1 in 1,000)

Ken and Ruth were both raised in the DC area. They each separately heard the gospel, believed in Jesus as Lord, and developed a strong desire to take the gospel to those who had never heard the good news. They first moved overseas in 2002 and served among an unreached people group for the next twelve years, working to start and strengthen local churches.

Ken and Ruth then returned to the States for a season. During that time, they served on staff at MBC. As MBC members, they developed a deep love for MBC and served in different ministries, including Global Outreach and Church Groups. They faithfully and consistently prayed for the unreached, and God continued to draw their hearts to those who had little to no access to the gospel.

In 2023, after much prayer and counsel from church leadership, Ken and Ruth returned overseas so Ken could serve as the lead pastor of an international church in an unreached megacity in Central Asia. This church is one of the few Christian churches in a city of close to twenty million people! They ask their MBC family to pray for them fervently as they serve!

## Pray

- That God would show favor to their ministry and bless the work of their hands.
- That God would protect and bless the church where they serve.
- That God would help the members of their church to grow more like Christ and to love one another deeply.
- That God would guide them to lead well, with godly character, humility, grace, and love for the saints.





# MALDIVES

Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Unreached
Percent Evangelical:	0.01% (1 in 10,000)

The Maldives is widely known for its pristine beaches and tropical amenities and attracts countless tourists each year. The citizens of the Maldives live under a government that limits their freedom of expression and forbids the open practice of all other religions except for Islam. Many Maldivians also follow an occult called Fanditha.

Representing the smallest nation in South Asia, Maldivians are among the least-evangelized people on the earth. Historically, there has been a negative perception of Christianity in the Maldives—largely due to Western media and the behavior of tourists—so much so that political opponents use the term “Christian” to slander each other. High rates of divorce, crime, and drug use plague this small nation, and resources were strained after recent years of population growth. There are reports of some positive developments. At the end of 2023 Maldivians witnessed the second time a free and fair presidential election was successfully held. This will hopefully continue to be a catalyst for greater protection of human rights and religious freedom.

## Pray

- That God would sustain the very few Christians to persevere amidst persecution and isolation.
- That God would strengthen the small Maldivian church and give them grace to persist in proclaiming the gospel with endurance.
- That God would protect women and children from the high rate of abuse in their country.
- That God would help churches proclaim Christ clearly, and that the state's opposition to Christianity would generate greater curiosity in the gospel.



# AFGHANISTAN

Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Unreached
Percent Evangelical:	0.01% (1 in 10,000)

Afghanistan is a vast, mountainous country with a long, complex history. After the Taliban reclaimed control in 2021, they reinstated strict Islamic rule. Freedoms gained over the previous twenty years were erased, and persecution against Christians intensified. Persian-speaking populations of unreached people groups make up a sizable portion of Afghanistan and the surrounding areas of Iran, Tajikistan, and parts of Pakistan.

Originally from these regions, one MBC partner and his family fled the area due to ongoing conflict and settled in the US, where they were affirmed by their local church in 2022 to engage in cross-cultural ministry to Persian-speaking populations. Not only are they working to engage the local Dari/Farsi-speaking diaspora, but they serve believers and nonbelievers in Afghanistan and surrounding areas with the gospel and provide solid biblical resources to the most isolated.

Last year, they saw the Lord work in amazing ways! Christians in danger in Afghanistan were able to reach safety and connect to healthy churches in neighboring countries; many people came to Christ while still trapped within Afghanistan; and several resources were written and distributed in Dari/Farsi on the topic of discipleship and leadership for the growth and edification of the Persian-speaking church.

## Pray

- That God would help leaders in this ministry to remain faithful to Him and His Word.
- That God would protect believers still living in Afghanistan and Iran and help them persevere in the faith.
- That God would help the translation and printing of ten theology books to be accurately and faithfully translated and completed on time by the end of 2024.



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



# TURKMENISTAN

<b>Major Religion:</b>	Islam
<b>Joshua Project Status:</b>	Unreached
<b>Percent Evangelical:</b>	0.11% (1 in 909)

Turkmenistan is comprised of almost 70% desert. It is one of the least-visited countries in the world and came into modern existence in 1991 after the fall of the Soviet Union. With only two leaders since 1991, the country persists under a dictatorship and is one of the most repressed countries in the world. Both the former and current presidents have enacted some of the world's most restrictive laws. For example, only men older than seventy can maintain a beard; black or dirty cars are not allowed in the capital city of Ashgabat; all video games were banned in 2006; and makeup is prohibited.

The religious reality for Christians in Turkmenistan is harsh, and persecution is normal. Very few ethnic Turkmen follow Christ, though the number has steadily grown since the fall of the Soviet Union. The majority of known Christians are of Russian, Ukrainian, and Armenian descent. Many Christians have been expelled, especially foreign ones, and national Christians frequently endure unfair treatment. Pastors have been exiled, beaten, fined, and imprisoned. Authorities routinely intimidate churches and sometimes force them to shut down. This is the case even among churches that are officially registered with the government, which is a near-impossible process that often only subjects the church to greater scrutiny and surveillance. Due to the harsh conditions in their homeland, many Turkmen have fled to surrounding regions.

## Pray

- That God would strengthen and empower the church in Turkmenistan and give them favorable status with the government.
- That God would sustain and encourage believers in Turkmenistan, who are often denied equal justice under the law, and that God would protect and strengthen them.
- That God would soften the hearts of the authorities to act justly and fairly as it relates to 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.



# TAMI

## SERVING IN ETHIOPIA SINCE 2022

Major Religion:	Christianity
Joshua Project Status:	Reached
Percent Evangelical:	17.96% (1 in 5)

Although Tami grew up in a Christian home, it was not until a trip to Europe in 1999 that she was converted to Christ. She moved to northern Virginia in 2006 and became a member of MBC Tysons around 2009. Over the years, Tami has been a faithful church member, serving in various roles including Kid's Quest.

In 2019, she traveled with MBC to Ethiopia to engage local churches in caring for orphans. During that trip, she developed a heart for global missions and began to consider serving as a long-term worker in Ethiopia. She eventually learned of an international school in need of teachers. Tami was later commissioned by the church as a marketplace missionary and began serving at an international school in Addis Ababa in 2022. She is currently serving in her second year.

In Ethiopia, the Orthodox Church is the largest religious group; this tradition remains heavily intertwined with Ethiopian culture. Additionally, Islam is on the rise as many Muslims come from surrounding countries as refugees. 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.

## ENCOURAGEMENTS FROM 2023

Last year, Tami had a front-row seat to see God work in her students' lives. She loved seeing them treasure His Word as they learned to pray and rely on Him. She also matured as a teacher and learned to rest and find power in God's Word.

### Pray

- That God would bless Tami's students as they learn about Christ and that her life would be worth imitating as she imitates Christ.
- That God would help her grow deep roots in Christ and that her faith would sustain her.
- That God would show Tami how to best invest in other teachers and people who work with vulnerable children and orphans.





# SOMALIA

<b>Major Religion:</b>	Islam
<b>Joshua Project Status:</b>	Unreached
<b>Percent Evangelical:</b>	0.01% (1 in 10,000)

Over 85% of Somalia's total population is ethnic Somali. After years of conflict, most foreign NGOs cannot operate in Somalia; consequently, needed aid rarely reaches the most vulnerable. Somalia has the world's highest fertility rate and shortest life expectancy. Women and girls suffer horrific abuse and mistreatment. It is estimated that over 73% of Somalis live on less than two dollars a day, and almost four million are displaced within their own country.

The establishment of a Parliament in 2012 generated some hope for stability, but the country is plagued by continual conflict and rival extremist groups. The militant Islamist group Al-Shabab was ousted from most urban areas but is still active in rural parts of the country.

During the 1990s, the Somali church was driven into hiding. As a result of successful propaganda campaigns, many Somalis harbor false fears and prejudices against Christians. A Bible translation in the Somali language was completed in 1977 but has not been safely or widely distributed to this day. It is very difficult to be a Christian in Somalia. Even still, the Lord is at work.

## Pray

- That God would fortify and encourage the small number of Christians and churches, and that new churches would be planted.
- That God would restore stability and peace so that basic human rights are guaranteed.
- That God would protect women and girls from abuse and show them that they are valuable and loved by their Creator.
- That God would convict leaders of their sin and put just leaders in power who desire the good of others.



# NORTH AFRICA

<b>Major Religion:</b>	Islam
<b>Joshua Project Status:</b>	Unreached
<b>Percent Evangelical:</b>	Less than 0.2% (1 in 5,000)

The government in this North African Muslim country often sways between conservative and liberal, so it is difficult to be a Christian in this context. Churches are small, and Christian evangelism is illegal.

One MBC partner here pastors a small but growing church. After three years, they recently celebrated the appointment of their first elders! Over the past year, their first pastoral intern completed his training and is now serving the congregation. They also hosted workshops to train other pastors in the region on how to faithfully preach and teach the Bible and held core seminars to equip and disciple church members.

Our partner reported, “This last year, we saw three conversions from the preaching of the Word! One was one of our own children, and two were young local men that a member of our church brought from a homeless youth shelter! One of the young men came to our service and left saying, ‘You all really love each other like family.’ The words of Christ came to mind at that moment, ‘They will know that you are my disciples by your love for one another.’ It wasn’t long after that this brother was confessing Christ himself.”

## Pray

- That God would help this church grow in their love and service for one another.
- That God would raise up and equip more elders to serve.
- That God would help church members to frequently and intentionally proclaim the gospel so that many would be converted by God.
- That God would allow this church to be a resource to equip and strengthen other churches in the region toward biblical health.





# THAILAND

Major Religion:	Buddhism
Joshua Project Status:	Unreached
Percent Evangelical:	1.02% (1 in 98)

Thailand is the eighth most popular tourist destination in the world. Known for its beaches and exotic culture, it boasts the second-largest economy in Southeast Asia. Over forty thousand Buddhist temples dot the Thai landscape, making Buddhism the dominant religion. Despite the presence of missionaries for over four hundred years, only 1% of the population claims to be evangelical Christian.

One partner in Bangkok started a new church in late 2022. Dedicated to gospel proclamation, discipleship, and the centrality of the local church, they now have over thirty-three members fellowshipping weekly.

One of the main challenges facing the health and growth of the Thai church is the lack of mature leaders. Last summer, the church successfully hosted a training conference where eighty leaders gathered to learn about the biblical doctrine of conversion. Conferences like this help to equip Thai pastors and leaders, and this kind of investment will benefit the health of the Thai church for years to come!

In 2023, the church saw two women from Buddhist backgrounds converted to Christ. Church members shared the gospel with them and have been faithfully discipling them. The women were eventually baptized and are now growing in their faith in community!

## Pray

- That God would continue to unite the church as they practice evangelism and discipleship.
- That God would bless the translation and publication ministry of the church to equip Thai pastors. Pray that these resources help the church grow in biblical health.
- That God would allow the church to begin a pastoral internship for Thai men in 2024.
- That God would bless the pastor's wife and children as they homeschool and that the children would grow in their personal knowledge of Jesus at an early age.



# DOUG & SARA

*SERVING IN UGANDA SINCE 2022*

<b>Major Religion:</b>	Christianity
<b>Joshua Project Status:</b>	Reached
<b>Percent Evangelical:</b>	33.14% (1 in 3)

Doug and Sara each came to faith in Christ as young children. Doug was very interested in global missions, specifically to Muslims. Sara went on several short-term trips, but it wasn't until serving the unreached in India that she developed a similar heart.

Doug and Sara began attending MBC Tysons in 2019 and became members shortly thereafter serving in the Adoption and Foster Care Ministry and in Kid's Quest. They were commissioned as marketplace missionaries in 2021 and relocated their family to Senegal for Doug's job. After spending a year in Senegal, Doug was assigned a new position in Uganda.

Since arriving in Uganda, they have become members of a local church where they serve in the children's ministry and Doug helps disciple young men. They also regularly host a women's prayer group and gatherings in their home. Sara homeschools the children and the Lord has been working in wonderful ways in their home; one of their children was recently baptized, and the others continue to ask good spiritual questions about the gospel.

## Pray

- That God would bless their time in their local church and give them boldness to share the gospel and disciple others.
- That God would continue to give Sara endurance, patience, and wisdom as she homeschools the children.
- That God would prepare their family for Doug's last job posting, most likely in the fall of 2024. This will require another move within the continent. They're exploring ways to leverage their time to serve the unreached once the next assignment ends.
- That God would guard the health of their children and keep them safe.





# YEMEN

<b>Major Religion:</b>	Islam
<b>Joshua Project Status:</b>	Unreached
<b>Percent Evangelical:</b>	0.02% (1 in 5,000)

Located in the Arabian Peninsula, Yemen is rich with natural resources such as silver, oil, coffee, and fish, but the country has been plagued by civil war since 2014. Yemen is currently divided between Shia rebels and Sunni forces. The conflict has consistently made news headlines as aid organizations flooded into the country to assist the vulnerable.

Civil war in Yemen triggered a widespread humanitarian crisis as social, economic, and governmental systems collapsed, leaving the general population unable to access basic services. Malnutrition and starvation persist, and children have been among the most vulnerable.

UNICEF reports that “[t]he ongoing humanitarian crisis has increased the vulnerability of children and women to exploitation, violence and abuse, child labor, killing and maiming, recruitment and use of children by parties to the conflict as combatants and in various support roles, domestic and gender-based violence, child marriage and psychosocial distress.”

Christianity entered Yemen as far back as the fourth century. Yet, the church has suffered much and continues to face adversity today. Now, believers have to meet in secret and only in small groups.

Despite this reality, there are encouraging reports of Yemenis hearing about Christ through the radio, Bible distribution programs, and the bold but careful witness of faithful local churches.

## Pray

- That God would end all conflict in Yemen and restore peace and control to a just government.
- That God would protect and provide for the physical and emotional needs of children and women in Yemen.
- That God would strengthen and multiply the church in Yemen.
- That God would protect believers in Yemen and give them opportunities to share Christ with others.



# IRAQ

<b>Major Religion:</b>	Islam
<b>Joshua Project Status:</b>	Unreached
<b>Percent Evangelical:</b>	0.29% (1 in 345)

Often called the “cradle of civilization,” Iraq has a long and ancient history. One MBC partner is serving faithfully in a local church to make the name of Jesus known. This particular region in Iraq has allowed a degree of religious freedom. As a result, churches have been permitted to gather, and even some evangelical churches have been established.

Our partner church has over seventy members from over twenty-one nationalities. This young church is faithfully working toward biblical health as they seek to be a light for Christ in this region. They also have opportunities to minister to refugees and displaced people. Our partner said that visitors to the church often marvel to see “local Kurds and Arabs worship together in peace, two groups with much animosity and history, because of what Jesus has done.” In 2023 they had the joy of seeing five people from Muslim backgrounds profess Christ and be baptized! The church is thankful for all the Lord has done and continues to do.

## Pray

- That God would bless and bring to fruition the expected church plant in the spring of 2024.
- That God would equip and successfully train the Iranian and Syrian pastoral interns.
- That God would raise up more local believers for the edification of the church and the spread of the gospel.
- That God would give the church elders wisdom to care for one another, particularly for those in the church who fear for their lives because of their former faith background.



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



# TAJIKISTAN

<b>Major Religion:</b>	Islam
<b>Joshua Project Status:</b>	Unreached
<b>Percent Evangelical:</b>	0.07% (1 in 1,429)

Comprised of rugged and famous hiking mountains, Tajikistan sits between China, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. The snow-capped ranges make for beautiful landscapes, but much of the land is remote due to significant challenges in road travel which isolates many villages throughout the country.

All through history, Tajikistan has been ruled by many different groups. In 1991, however, the country declared itself an independent sovereign nation as the Soviet Union crumbled. Shortly thereafter, a five-year civil war broke out that left many impoverished. In the years following, some political stability and foreign aid helped the economy grow, but today, it is the poorest economy in both Europe and Central Asia.

Islam is the official religion of Tajikistan, and the government keeps tight control over “deviant” religions. All churches and non-Islamic religious activities must be approved by the government, and violations can result in interrogation or imprisonment.

Despite these challenges, the Lord is growing His church in Tajikistan among more than ten million unreached people. Various Tajik churches now have more faithful New Testament translations, creating a growing need for pastoral training and church-wide discipleship. Tajiks also have ongoing opportunities to minister to Afghan refugees taking shelter within their borders.

## Pray

- That God would protect the growth of new indigenous churches and raise up faithful Tajik pastors.
- That God would increase the proclamation of the gospel of Christ through national believers in the face of persecution.
- That God would install wise leaders in positions of civil authority.
- That God would reveal the truth of Christ to Muslims in Tajikistan.



# THOMAS & TESS

*SERVING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA SINCE 2022*

<b>Major Religion:</b>	Islam
<b>Joshua Project Status:</b>	Partially reached
<b>Percent Evangelical:</b>	Less than 3% (1 in 33)

Thomas and Tess both grew up in Christian homes and converted to Christ in grade school. Thomas began attending MBC in 2017 and became a member soon after. He faithfully served in MBC Prince William's prison ministry. Tess started attending MBC in 2018 and served with Kid's Quest.

As a young married couple, Thomas and Tess were spurred on by God's desire for all nations to hear the good news of Jesus Christ. This ignited a desire in them to make the gospel known among the unreached. They were later commissioned as marketplace missionaries in 2022 and relocated to Southeast Asia through Thomas's work.

They are currently living in a major city that is comprised mostly of Muslims. Over the past year, they plugged into a church plant in a very strategic area in the city. This church plant began as a Bible study during the Covid pandemic and grew as more people attended. They eventually formed into a church and are discipling members and raising up leaders. There are several churches in the area, but few are doing evangelism among nationals from other religious backgrounds. The church plant has a vision to proclaim Christ to the many unreached in their city.

## Pray

- That God would strengthen their church and give Thomas and Tess opportunities to share the gospel and disciple others.
- That God would equip local Christians to proclaim Christ to nationals from other religious backgrounds.
- That God would work in the hearts of government officials and protect local believers.
- That God would establish more healthy churches to proclaim Christ and disciple believers among the unreached.



# TUNISIA

<b>Major Religion:</b>	Islam
<b>Joshua Project Status:</b>	Unreached
<b>Percent Evangelical:</b>	0.03% (1 in 3,333)

Tunisia is the northernmost country of Africa located on the Mediterranean Sea. Tunisia has close relations to some European countries due to proximity and is seen as one of the most progressive and open countries in the Arab world. Yet even though it claims to value education and sanitation, its high unemployment rates, poor living conditions, and economic decline continue to linger.

Tunisia also places a growing value on religion, and the majority of its population identifies as Muslim. The government is designated as the “guardian of religion,” and only Muslim citizens are permitted to hold government positions. Bibles are not widely available and are only allowed to be distributed with special permission.

Even though the country has a rich Christian history, life for Christians in present-day Tunisia can involve high levels of pressure and persecution in family and church life. The Tunisian Constitution gives the freedom to practice individual beliefs, but it is not uncommon for Christian converts to feel restricted in their ability to worship freely. The hostility they face from the surrounding community makes gathering for fellowship and worship very difficult to do in peace.

## Pray

- That God would protect and embolden believers in Tunisia who are experiencing persecution from friends and family.
- That God would send faithful workers to Tunisia to proclaim the gospel to those who have never heard.
- That God would strengthen local churches to grow and thrive amidst opposition.
- That God would advance the distribution of Bibles so that everyone has access to God's Word.





# UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Minimally reached
Percent Evangelical:	1.18% (1 in 85)

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is a magnet in the Middle East for work, study, and leisure. People of all nationalities are drawn here in pursuit of economic and educational opportunity and tourism. One MBC partner in the region is working to reach college students with the gospel. The ministry exists to “[E]stablish 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.” Students involved in this ministry represent diverse nationalities from surrounding nations in the Middle East and Asia, where the name of Jesus is not widely known.

Last year, ministry leaders prayed for God to open opportunities for them to minister on nearby restricted campuses where they had not gained access. By God’s providence, He brought some students off campus (from one of the restricted campuses) from the Horn of Africa to study the gospel alongside local believers. After hearing the gospel, one student began to follow Jesus. Our partner said, “He’s now boldly seeking to meet students and share the gospel with locals in the UAE. He’s bringing students to church and taking significant risks to make Christ known on his campus. Pray for him to grow in knowing Christ and making Him known.”

## Pray

- That God would continue to give strength and wisdom to the ministry staff, many of whom are from restricted countries of origin, to be clear and bold in proclaiming Christ.
- That God would save many Muslim students on college campuses throughout the UAE.
- That God would allow new Christian students who are returning to their countries of origin to find favor with their families and opportunities to share Christ in challenging situations.



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

# FRANCE

<b>Major Religion:</b>	Roman Catholic
<b>Joshua Project Status:</b>	Superficially reached
<b>Percent Evangelical:</b>	1.23% (1 in 81)

France is the largest country in the European Union and has recently become home to many migrants from the Global South. They will be in the spotlight this year as hosts for the 2024 Summer Olympics. France also has a rich Christian heritage, but Christianity throughout Europe has been in steep decline over the past century. Today, most people in France are apathetic to the gospel or even hostile to religion in general.

The spiritual climate in France spurred Mauricio Prunera and his wife to plant Église Chemin Nouveau (New Path Church) in Saint-Lô, Normandy, France. After several years of meeting in their home, they were able to secure their own building in 2021. Not only can the building host weekly gatherings for over forty people, but it is equipped to provide temporary housing for refugee families on the second floor.

The recent influx of migrants from predominantly African and Middle Eastern countries into France has created a unique ministry opportunity for Chemin Nouveau. Many of these people seek safety and prosperity in France and are open to gospel conversations.

Some ministry highlights from 2023 include growing families, increased discipleship, and several short-term trips that presented the gospel to over 130 local residents.

## Pray

- That God would mature the members of Chemin Nouveau into devoted followers of Christ and raise up leaders in the church.
- That God would equip local churches to evangelize the eighty thousand residents of Saint-Lô and its surrounding towns.
- That God would give the church wisdom about their current building situation.
- That God would sustain and provide for the Prunera family (Mauricio, Rachel, and children Esteban and Lidia).



# BROOK

*SERVING IN THE MIDDLE EAST SINCE 2019*

<b>Major Religion:</b>	Islam
<b>Joshua Project Status:</b>	Unreached
<b>Percent Evangelical:</b>	Less than 0.3% (1 in 333)

Brook grew up in Virginia and attended MBC Tysons as a child. While on an MBC short-term trip to the Dominican Republic as a teenager, she was challenged to consider serving the Lord overseas as a missionary.

After college, she served on MBC staff. During those years, her interest in serving overseas continued to grow. After much prayer and counsel, she was commissioned as an MBC missionary in 2019 and moved to a region in the Middle East to minister to Muslims.

In describing her work, 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....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 2023*

Over the previous year, Brook continued to build deep relationships with local friends. She was trained in Advanced Trauma Care, which equipped her to minister to women fleeing war and domestic abuse who often live as refugees in a foreign country. Brook has been serving in this location for almost five years and she looks forward to the next season of life and ministry.

## *Pray*

- That God would protect, strengthen, and unify the local church, especially believers from other faith backgrounds.
- That God would allow the name of Jesus to be proclaimed and worshiped without fear.
- That God would strengthen workers to persevere amidst daily challenges and provide rest.





# ALGERIA

Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Unreached
Percent Evangelical:	0.05% (1 in 2,000)

Algeria is the largest nation in Africa, nearly five times the size of Spain. Though Christianity in Algeria has long been established, Muslim occupation has driven many Christians underground to rural areas. In recent years, legislation criminalized evangelism and “non-Muslim worship” outside of preapproved buildings, and authorities have engaged in a targeted campaign against Christians. As a result, local authorities have forcibly shut down many churches.

Amidst the intensifying persecution, the Algerian church is growing! Years of hard, patient, and prayerful work have resulted in evangelistic fruit in the Algerian church. Berber believers moving into unreached Arab areas with the gospel have seen many Arabs come to faith in Jesus. The church grows as believers face intimidation from family, friends, employers, Muslim extremists, and the government. Algeria has even become a leader in North Africa for theological training and church development, partly because it is legal to print and distribute Bibles there, even as it remains carefully monitored by the government.

## Pray

- That God would help Algerian Christians respond to persecution with faith and perseverance.
- That God would remove corruption from the government and raise up wise leaders.
- That God would 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 believers so that their economic situation might improve.



# JAPAN

<b>Major Religion:</b>	Buddhism
<b>Joshua Project Status:</b>	Unreached
<b>Percent Evangelical:</b>	0.57% (1 in 175)

This uniquely innovative and tech-savvy culture has the highest life expectancy in the world, even as the ongoing mental health crisis among its youth grows. In desperate need of healthy, gospel-preaching churches, 90% of the less than 1% of evangelicals in the country are over the age of thirty. This means that young people in Japan must be reached with the gospel, or there may be no Christian witness in the next generation!

Two MBC partners are currently at work in the same town for the spread of the gospel. One is Christ Bible Institute (CBI). CBI's mission is to equip Christians in Japan for gospel ministry. Despite being the world's second-largest unreached people group, few high-quality evangelistic resources are available in Japanese. CBI hopes to change that and has a three-phase plan to translate, design, print, and distribute new materials over the next several years. The second partner is Logos Community Church. Planted in 2021, this church seeks to see the gospel transform the people of Japan. After a wonderful VBS this past summer, the church saw entire families come to visit the church this past fall! They hope to continue these relationships.

## Pray

- That God would provide help to complete CBI's new evangelism resource site, the Uchi-Soto Evangelism Project.
- The God would refresh and encourage Japanese pastors and that CBI can provide valuable resources to them.
- That God would continue to grow Logos Community Church and help them build relationships with people in the community.
- That God would bless the missionaries serving at Logos Community Church and help them quickly acquire needed language skills.



# ITALY

<b>Major Religion:</b>	Roman Catholic
<b>Joshua Project Status:</b>	Superficially reached
<b>Percent Evangelical:</b>	1.46% (1 in 68)

Although the church's history in Italy extends as far back as the New Testament, evangelicals are less than 2% of the population today. Italy is full of people who are culturally "churched" but lack saving faith in Christ.

Since 2010, the Breccia di Roma Church has sought to be a gospel witness in Rome. They preach the Word, teach sound doctrine, practice evangelism, provide theological training, and serve refugees and the poor.

In 2017, they purchased a permanent meeting space in Rome's city center—just outside the Vatican walls. The building provides an incredible opportunity for the church to be a central hub for gospel work throughout the city and to plant other churches. MBC was able to send a small short-term team to serve the church in the summer of 2023, and each church was mutually encouraged!

One highlight from last year was the first anniversary of the Vatican neighborhood church plant. Two new church members were added to the congregation.

## Pray

- That God would open the eyes of Italians to see the glory of God in Christ and be converted.
- That God would equip churches to preach the gospel and defend the faith among devout Catholics and secular skeptics.
- That God would strengthen the church plant and provide a permanent location for them to meet.
- That God would give continued church unity and wisdom in evangelism plans and activities.





# REED & CLAIRE

*SERVING IN THAILAND SINCE 2023*

<b>Major Religion:</b>	Buddhism
<b>Joshua Project Status:</b>	Unreached
<b>Percent Evangelical:</b>	1.02% (1 in 98)

Reed and Claire were both raised in the DMV area and lived in northern Virginia for many years. Reed worked as a manager in a manufacturing company, and Claire was a teacher and reading specialist. They were each converted as adults. As faithful members of MBC Prince William, they served in Kid's Quest, Access, and Global Outreach. They have two children.

Reed and Claire had no plans to engage in global missions, but things dramatically shifted after an MBC short-term trip in 2019 when they developed an interest in serving overseas among the unreached.

While they did not feel strongly about a specific people or place, they received counsel from the church and the Lord provided an opportunity to serve in Thailand. They were commissioned as MBC missionaries and moved to Thailand in the summer of 2023.

In Thailand, Claire is serving as a teacher in an international school where she is able to minister to local children. Their family joined a church plant, where Reed is working with other missionaries to proclaim Christ locally. He is concentrating on learning the language over the next several years.

## Pray

- That God would help Claire and their children to transition smoothly at school and connect with friends who will strengthen their faith.
- That God would help the entire family learn the Thai language, especially Reed as he hopes to engage in evangelistic activities in Thai.
- That God would help Reed and Claire connect well with the existing missionary team and their new church.



# SOUTHEAST ASIA

<b>Major Religion:</b>	Islam
<b>Joshua Project Status:</b>	Partially reached
<b>Percent Evangelical:</b>	Less than 4% (1 in 25)

This country in Southeast Asia is predominantly Muslim, but their constitution allows freedom of religion. Similar to other countries in Southeast Asia, wealth disparity among social classes is significant. Home to numerous unreached people groups, multiple Bible translation projects are currently underway to meet these Scripture needs.

Christians in this country face distinct types of injustice and persecution from the government. Additionally, unity among Christians can also be fragile. Operation World reports that local believers “face social ills, injustices[,] and growing discrimination against ethnic and religious minorities” and often struggle to overcome these obstacles.

One partner church in this country was planted in one of the fastest-growing cities in Asia. This city is home to over 2.5 million people, which has uniquely situated the church among unreached peoples and languages. While the church was originally planted over a decade ago, it recently welcomed a new pastor. The city has witnessed the planting of several healthy churches and is becoming a hub for healthy gospel proclamation and church planting in the surrounding regions.

## Pray

- That God would protect the church planter’s family and draw his four young children to Christ.
- That God would raise up godly elders to lead the church effectively.
- That God would empower churches to mobilize local believers for evangelism among the unreached.
- That God would establish healthy churches to partner together to plant more churches in surrounding regions.



# MAURITANIA

<b>Major Religion:</b>	Islam
<b>Joshua Project Status:</b>	Unreached
<b>Percent Evangelical:</b>	0.12% (1 in 833)

The African nation of Mauritania is known for its ancient cities, unique mud-brick architecture, and its national parks. Sadly, farmable land is shrinking as the once-rich soil has turned to desert over time. The scarcity of land, among other factors, has left Mauritaniens suffering under substantial economic and social challenges.

At least one-third of children go hungry, and the growing divorce rate has caused even more strain on families at large. Mauritania is also known for being the last country to abolish slavery in 1981. Today many are still enslaved and forced into labor illegally.

About 99.5% of Mauritania's population is Muslim, and leaving Islam is a severe betrayal of tribe and family. Christians from Muslim backgrounds often keep their faith a secret and fear losing their citizenship and status in their community. Nearly all Mauritaniens are Sunni Muslims, but radical Islam is also on the rise.

The importation of Bibles is restricted, and evangelism is illegal. Publicly criticizing Islam can also carry the death penalty. There is an immense need for gospel workers and healthy churches.

## 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 strengthen Muslim-background believers who fear the consequences of following Jesus.
- That God would open access for Bibles to be distributed widely without restrictions.



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



# NORTH KOREA

<b>Major Religion:</b>	Non-religious
<b>Joshua Project Status:</b>	Unreached
<b>Percent Evangelical:</b>	1.57% (1 in 64)

There are over twenty-six million unreached people in North Korea, and the persecution of Christians is active and severe. Operation World reports that “North Korea today is like a nightmare. The state creates a cult around the young ‘Supreme Leader’ (Kim Jong-un) and his dead grandfather (Kim Il-Sung) and does not allow the people to interact with the outside world. More than three million people have starved to death since 1994.” Over the past several decades, it has been reported that political dissidents, including Christians, are sent to state-run prison camps. It is estimated that fifty to seventy thousand Christians are being held in these camps today. Additionally, the Bible is banned; and possessing one is punishable by imprisonment, or worse.

One MBC partner is working to support North Koreans by way of a Bible-teaching radio program. Based in the US, they partner with Free North Korea Radio in South Korea. This organization works in partnership with North Korean defectors (who prepare Bible-based radio programs to broadcast to North Korea) and American churches and individuals (who support the program’s costs). Since 2013, Free North Korea Radio has published daily gospel programming in North Korea to provide its listeners with resources, encouragement, and hope.

Ministry highlights from 2023 include the success of Operation Truth, which saw six hundred shortwave radios (with batteries and earbuds) delivered directly into North Korea and three hundred radios provided to North Korean refugee women waylaid in China. These radios give them access to listen to God’s Word.

## Pray

- That God would free the people of North Korea and give them just and fair leaders.
- That God would continue to provide support to Free North Korea Radio so they can aid the underground church and that He would open the hearts of unbelievers who listen to their programs.
- That God would protect the leaders of Free North Korea Radio and give them courage and boldness as they continue their ministry in North Korea.



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

# MIRIAM

SERVING IN EGYPT SINCE 2018

Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Partially reached
Percent Evangelical:	4.5% (1 in 22)

As a middle schooler, Miriam fell deeply in love with Jesus. She loved reading 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.

Miriam became a member of MBC Tysons in 2016 when her family moved to northern Virginia. She served as a Church Group leader and Global Outreach intern and is glad to be commissioned from MBC.

In 2018, Miriam moved to Egypt. While there is a moderate amount of gospel work taking place in Egypt, much work remains. Many Egyptians will likely never meet a Christian in their lifetime. She and her husband, who is Egyptian, are faithfully working to make Christ known in this region.

## ENCOURAGEMENTS FROM 2023

This past year, Miriam had many opportunities to share her story to help challenge the faith and obedience of local believers. She also had the opportunity to take her Muslim friend to church, which allowed her to openly discuss what she believes and why. Miriam and her husband were able to use their apartment for ministry—hosting regular Bible studies, prayer nights, and game nights, which were a constant source of joy. They have also enjoyed settling into their role as parents to an active toddler.

### Pray

- That God would provide access to the gospel for Muslims and connect them to healthy local churches.
- That God would help Miriam explore and identify new opportunities for ministry in 2024.
- That God would give Miriam and her husband wisdom and grace as they adjust to parenting a toddler, plus the arrival of a new baby in 2024.



# SOUTH ASIA

Major Religion:	Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism
Joshua Project Status:	Unreached
Percent Evangelical:	Unknown

South Asia is a melting pot for three of the world’s major religions, and one MBC partner is diligently laboring in a local church in one of the most populated cities in this region. A beacon of technology, wealth, and entertainment, this city needs to know about the hope found only in Jesus!

The mission of this church is to glorify God by making mature, healthy disciples of Christ who can tell others about Christ. With a vision to equip and train leaders and pastors to be sent out to unreached areas throughout the country, they accomplish this aim through a pastoral internship program in partnership with a local seminary.

Some highlights from 2023 include God saving a young Muslim woman and calling her into a personal relationship with Him. Her mother and sisters are still Muslim and are extremely displeased with her decision. The pastor told us that “[s]he continues to struggle at home because her family is not happy about her decision. However, she is unwavering in her faith. She is even more convinced about the truth of the gospel and continues to share it with her own family. She has motivated our entire church family to dig deeper into Jesus despite difficult circumstances. Pray for her and our entire covenant community.”

## Pray

- That God would sustain this young woman and draw her mother and sisters to Christ.
- That God would help the new primary school started in late 2023 in support of the seminary to flourish.
- That God would allow for the successful planting of a new church in the city-center in 2024.
- That God would grant unity to the church, as they transitioned last year to a single-language service.
- That God would allow the newly constructed faculty housing at the seminary to be well-used for ministry and a blessing to the staff.





# DJIBOUTI

<b>Major Religion:</b>	Islam
<b>Joshua Project Status:</b>	Unreached
<b>Percent Evangelical:</b>	0.14% (1 in 714)

Djibouti is home to several indigenous people groups, mostly Afar, Arab, and Somali. This small African country on the northern border of Somalia has unique access to the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, making Djibouti a growing commercial hub and a popular site for various foreign military bases.

The country experiences a measure of freedom and safety, but widespread social and economic issues press heavily on its people, including famine, unemployment, poor education, human trafficking, prostitution, suicide, and drug abuse. The government allows a handful of Christian organizations to operate helpful social projects, but local believers are few in number and often left isolated and persecuted by their communities for abandoning Islam. Many Christian converts are jobless, and some are without basic education. Amidst such difficult circumstances, praise the Lord that small groups of local believers are known to gather for fellowship, and a growing interest in Christ is reported.

The Afar have the New Testament and almost all of the Old Testament published, and translators are working to record audios of Scriptures to reach the illiterate. The Somali Bible has also been published and recently revised!

## Pray

- That God would establish healthy churches in Djibouti and protect them from division.
- That God would preserve freedom and appoint faithful leaders to do good and fight against oppression.
- That God would send long-term workers from nearby countries and people groups to grow and strengthen the church in Djibouti.
- That God would raise up church leaders to make disciples of Jesus and teach the Scriptures faithfully.



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

# LEBANON

<b>Major Religion:</b>	Islam
<b>Joshua Project Status:</b>	Minimally reached
<b>Percent Evangelical:</b>	0.71% (1 in 141)

Lebanon is a beautiful country overlooking the Mediterranean Sea with a unique history spanning thousands of years. Known for their generosity, many Lebanese speak Arabic and French, as French was the official language until 1943. The last few years have been difficult for the nation. Between the COVID-19 pandemic, an explosion that killed and injured thousands in 2020, and the ongoing economic meltdown, Lebanese Christians have faced many challenges.

One MBC church partner is located in a strategic area of the country. Their recent move into a new church building opened new opportunities for ministry within the community. Our partner reports that one main issue affecting society is the despair that people feel due to the dire economic situation. As the central banking system and the currency value began to collapse, people who had sacrificed and saved for decades were told that their savings had little to no value. Most citizens worry daily about how they will live and support their families. This is the context in which the church is serving. Despite these challenges, they are seeing the gospel advance. In 2023, they celebrated the baptisms of several church members from Lebanon, Kurdistan, Romania, and the Philippines!

## Pray

- That God would give wisdom to the church elders as they shepherd the flock and integrate new members into the life of the church.
- That God would help the church grow in their outreach and evangelistic efforts.
- That God would stabilize the Lebanese economy and that people would find faith and stability in Christ.



# STEPHANY

*SERVING IN GERMANY SINCE 2018*

<b>Major Religion:</b>	Christianity
<b>Joshua Project Status:</b>	Partially reached
<b>Percent Evangelical:</b>	2.12% (1 in 47)

As a child, Stephany saw many cultures firsthand and developed an interest in living abroad that grew over time. At eighteen, she aspired to serve the Lord overseas and waited for an opportunity while working after college.

Stephany first visited MBC Arlington in 2015. Soon after she became a member and began to serve as a Church Group co-leader and in other areas of the church as needed.

Stephany now lives in Germany. She supports and trains missionaries in over twenty countries through a missions organization. In addition to her work with church planters, Stephany has plugged into a local church plant. Her husband Andy, who is from Norway, is also a missionary who serves church planters in Europe. They enjoy working for separate organizations that partner with each other for the spread of the gospel among the unreached in Europe.

## ENCOURAGEMENTS FROM 2023

Last year Stephany was encouraged to see her local church plant a new location. They celebrated the baptism of thirteen new believers. It is exciting to see the local impact when people are evangelized, converted, and baptized into the family of Christ.

Additionally, she attended a regional church planting conference where pastors and leaders from around the continent prayed for a ten-year goal to see churches planted around Europe.

## Pray

- That God would help church planting materials to be translated swiftly into 32 major European languages to be used at subsequent training events.
- That God would allow Stephany and Andy to build relationships with their new neighbors in order to share Christ with them.
- That God would raise up more workers to be sent out and healthy churches to be planted throughout Europe.



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



# PAKISTAN

<b>Major Religion:</b>	Islam
<b>Joshua Project Status:</b>	Unreached
<b>Percent Evangelical:</b>	Unknown

Pakistan is the second largest country in South Asia and is known for its rich cultural and geographic diversity. Today, Pakistan continues to face several sources of conflict, including rising extremism driven largely by the Taliban, especially along the border with neighboring Afghanistan. The country is also vulnerable to natural disasters and experienced severe flooding in 2022.

Pakistan has the second-largest concentration of unengaged, unevangelized peoples and the second-largest Muslim population in the world. There are 350 people groups within the country that are considered unevangelized—many of them without churches, missionaries, or any Christian witness.

One MBC partner, Masihi Isha'at Khana ("The Christian Publishing House" or "MIK"), seeks to edify local churches by publishing faithful Christian literature for Urdu speakers. MIK also works to engage and equip pastors by providing theological training. One pastor said, "This training helped me understand the main teaching of the New Testament books; now, based on these key points, I will study the New Testament in more detail." Since the devastating floods of 2022, MIK has also helped hundreds of local pastors and partnered with their churches to provide relief aid to their communities.

Last year, through one of these churches, over one hundred adults professed faith in Christ and began attending church for the first time. MIK saw similar fruit in a youth program launched by a partner church. After five years of faithful participation in this program, seventeen young people were baptized after professing faith in Christ. The Lord is working in Pakistan!

## Pray

- That God would strengthen the work of MIK to encourage more pastors and churches.
- That God would use the outreach efforts of churches as they serve the poor and minister to the suffering.
- That God would sustain believers during times of trial so they may continue to proclaim Christ.
- That God would establish more healthy churches to partner together for the spread of the gospel in Pakistan.



# LIBYA

<b>Major Religion:</b>	Islam
<b>Joshua Project Status:</b>	Unreached
<b>Percent Evangelical:</b>	0.16% (1 in 625)

Libya possesses the longest African coastline along the Mediterranean and the largest desert in the world (Sahara Desert). After the fall of longtime ruler Muammar Qaddafi in 2011, Libya has struggled to establish a stable government. Opposing leaders and rival factions were engaged in civil war until 2020. Libya's people suffered immensely during the war; there were thousands of casualties and it's estimated that one-quarter of the nation fled to surrounding countries. A ceasefire was signed in 2020, and the country is hopeful for elections in 2024. In September 2023, Libya experienced catastrophic flooding during Storm Daniel. The floods were the worst natural disaster in Libya's modern history.

Christianity in Libya is primarily comprised of Roman Catholics and Orthodox groups; Protestants are a significant minority. But these smaller groups are active, whereas others are marked by nominalism. Persecution for national believers is severe; if authorities discover a Libyan believer, the response is usually incarceration and torture. Several martyrs over the past decade have been reported (Operation World).

## Pray

- That God would grant lasting political peace and rebuild infrastructure that enables communities to thrive and hear the gospel.
- 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 grow the church.
- That God would save nominal Roman Catholic and Orthodox people and establish healthy churches marked by biblical teaching and practice.
- That God would protect migrants attempting to cross the Sahara Desert to reach Europe, that they might hear the gospel and be converted.



# KAZAKHSTAN

<b>Major Religion:</b>	Islam
<b>Joshua Project Status:</b>	Minimally reached
<b>Percent Evangelical:</b>	1.67% (1 in 60)

Kazakhstan is the largest country in Central Asia, rich in minerals and known for its beautiful landscapes and ethnic diversity. Since breaking free from Soviet rule in 1991, there have been improvements in Kazakhstan's economy and its record on human rights. It is the only country where Islam is not given special status, and the government strives to keep Islam moderated within its borders. Still, 73% of the population identifies as Muslim, but the form of Islam is often intertwined with indigenous practices.

In 2011, the government enacted laws prohibiting public worship, which has hindered the growth of churches. Kazakh Christians from a Muslim background face immense hardship and are often ostracized from their families. Nonetheless, churches continue to gather and proclaim the gospel despite many of these challenges.

One partner church in the region is faithfully preaching the gospel. They reported that after a four-year “drought,” they celebrated four adult baptisms in 2023. They also hosted their first Bible training workshop on how to faithfully preach and teach the Bible, attended by thirty pastors from twenty churches. Additionally, a free Christian audiobook app with professionally recorded audiobooks in Russian was launched. Over forty biblical resources have been added so far, with over one thousand active users. Check out [Audioslovo](#) in the App Store.

## Pray

- That God would bless the church's bimonthly preacher's cohort, encompassing pastors from ten area churches. Pray for growth and good fruit.
- That God would help train, equip, and mature the 2024 pastoral interns.
- That God would sustain two pastors who recently graduated from the pastoral internship and have returned to their congregations in Uzbekistan and Karakalpakstan. Pray for continued gospel partnership and the health of their congregations.





# JOSEPH & JENNIFER

*SERVING IN THE MIDDLE EAST SINCE 2012*

<b>Major Religion:</b>	Islam
<b>Joshua Project Status:</b>	Unreached
<b>Percent Evangelical:</b>	Less than 0.5% (1 in 200)

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. Later, he completed his theological studies, earning a doctorate in theology. As a teenager, Jennifer taught backyard Bible clubs and Sunday school classes. She met Joseph in seminary, then served for five years in East Asia before they married, 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. Joseph teaches at an evangelical seminary and leads a discipleship group for men off campus. Jennifer loves being a mom to their two children, and she also leads a Bible study for local women. She often visits her neighbors with the goal of sharing Christ.

## ENCOURAGEMENTS FROM 2023

Joseph and Jennifer were greatly encouraged last year as the Lord provided three new teammates and a small group of students to launch a new training. One local leader who received training came from a people group where he was the only believer. He wrote to report that in 2023, his network baptized three new believers from local tribes. He was excited because "lately, more and more people from the local tribes have accepted Christ after a long time of praying and waiting."

## Pray

- That God would unite their missionary team to love one another and partner together effectively.
- That God would multiply their team's time and abilities to be fruitful in evangelism and discipleship.
- That God would protect their families, teammates, and students from the enemy's schemes.



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

# SENEGAL

<b>Major Religion:</b>	Islam
<b>Joshua Project Status:</b>	Unreached
<b>Percent Evangelical:</b>	0.19% (1 in 526)

The Republic of Senegal is located on the westernmost point of Africa and is also known as the “Gateway to Africa.” The country has a rich history, abundant natural resources, and beautiful landscapes. Senegal was a French colony until 1960 when it gained independence and is now considered a relatively stable country within Africa. Over 90% of the population claims Islam as their religion, and the Wolof are the predominant people group.

The capital of Senegal is Dakar and is reported to have upwards of sixty small churches. Still, other parts of the country, mostly rural areas, have little to no access to the gospel. There is a need for Christians to proclaim Christ to the least reached and for healthy churches to be established. Forty-seven percent of the total population is considered unreached with the gospel, encompassing twenty-six distinct people groups.

Over the last few years Senegal has experienced political unrest despite its history of stability. In 2023, the military clashed multiple times with young protesters, and the government dissolved the opposition party—raising fears that civil rights were being taken away. Additionally, many Senegalese have fled the country to find economic opportunity elsewhere by attempting to cross the sea to the Canary Islands in hopes of reaching Europe.

## Pray

- That God would increase the health of existing churches in the capital of Dakar so they can be a light for the gospel.
- That God would establish new churches in unreached areas throughout the country.
- That God would empower believers in Senegal to share Christ with their neighbors and friends in love and with clarity.
- That God would open the eyes of the younger generation, who make up the majority of the population, to see the glory of Christ.



# PORTUGAL

<b>Major Religion:</b>	Roman Catholic
<b>Joshua Project Status:</b>	Partially reached
<b>Percent Evangelical:</b>	3.52% (1 in 28)

One of Europe's oldest and most peaceful countries, Portugal has a rich maritime history, beautiful beaches, and the world's oldest bookstore still in operation! Historically a Catholic nation, there are now over one hundred theologically sound and gospel-preaching churches nationwide.

One of these churches is First Baptist Church Lisbon (FBC), a historic church located in the heart of the city center. FBC was first established in 1922 and is currently led by Pastor Tiago Oliveira, who is from Portugal and desires to revitalize the church. He is also the president of Martin Bucer Seminary, an evangelical seminary, in partnership with and hosted at FBC.

Through the seminary and a network of healthy churches, Pastor Tiago hopes to train future pastors who will plant and revitalize healthy churches throughout Portugal. In the past year, FBC saw many new visitors and members added to the church. The seminary also expanded their classrooms and library, which now holds over five thousand volumes. In addition, they established a partnership with an accredited master's program.

## Pray

- That God would strengthen FBC and give the elders knowledge, wisdom, and patience in revitalizing the church.
- That God would bless the seminary and launch of their master's program. There are currently twenty-five students!
- That God would sustain the Oliveira family, especially their three sons, and mature them in the faith.



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



# SAUDI ARABIA

<b>Major Religion:</b>	Islam
<b>Joshua Project Status:</b>	Unreached
<b>Percent Evangelical:</b>	0.53% (1 in 189)

As the birthplace of Islam and the location of the religion's most holy site, Saudi Arabia influences billions of Muslims worldwide. Saudi Arabia also ranks among the world's worst with respect to religious freedom and human rights. Today, over thirty-three million people in Saudi Arabia are considered unreached with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

For centuries, Saudi Arabia has been ruled under an absolute monarchy where the official religion is Islam, and the practice of other religions is strictly outlawed. Despite having a large expatriate community (more than 30% of the population), Saudi authorities deal harshly with those of other religions. Poor work environments, discrimination, lack of freedom, and social restrictions are typical. Christians are continuously monitored, and if caught assembling, either in public or private, are subject to imprisonment, physical punishment, deportation, and even execution.

With only a small number of expatriates who can speak Arabic, meaningful spiritual interactions with Saudis are limited. Nonetheless, the number of Saudi Christians has been slowly increasing, especially as believers share their faith via technology.

## Pray

- That God would protect believers serving in Saudi Arabia and that the church would be able to worship freely and grow as disciples through God's Word.
- That God would reveal Christ to Saudis and other pilgrims who visit Mecca.
- That God would send Arabic-speaking Christians to Saudi Arabia to proclaim Christ.
- That God would stir the younger generation to open their eyes to their need of salvation in Christ.
- That God would open more opportunities for Saudis to hear the gospel.



# JAMES & GRACE

SERVING IN THE ARABIAN PENINSULA  
SINCE 2024

Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Minimally reached
Percent Evangelical:	1.5% (1 in 67)

James and Grace began attending MBC Montgomery County in 2018 after moving to the DMV area from the Midwest. James worked as a physician; Grace served in a parachurch ministry teaching the Bible to women while working part-time as a researcher. As members of MBC, they served as Church Group leaders, and as volunteers in the church nursery along with their two sons.

Their interest in serving among the unreached in the Middle East began over seven years ago. Grace was serving on their church’s global outreach volunteer team; and in 2016, they attended a missions conference for healthcare workers. At that conference, as James puts it, “God hit me over the head” with the prospect of serving the unreached in countries that are typically closed to missionaries but open to professionals, like specialized physicians. Since that pivotal moment, their family continued to pursue the possibility of serving God overseas.

James and Grace chose to attend MBC in part because of its focus on missions and desire to make disciples of all nations. They were further equipped through the church; and in 2023, God opened the door for James and Grace to move to the Arabian Peninsula through James’s occupation. They have since plugged into a healthy church and are transitioning to their new life as they seek to proclaim Christ in this Muslim-majority context.

## Pray

- That God would draw them closer to Him as a family and give them grace with one another—many workers experience a difficult season of transition during their first year.
- That God would help their teenage sons adjust to their new school and make meaningful friendships.
- That God would direct next steps for their oldest son, a senior in high school, as he begins applying to colleges.
- That God would use each member of their family to make Jesus known and to serve as faithful members of the church.



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

# UZBEKISTAN

<b>Major Religion:</b>	Islam
<b>Joshua Project Status:</b>	Unreached
<b>Percent Evangelical:</b>	0.19% (1 in 526)

Uzbekistan is located in the heart of Central Asia and is surrounded by several landlocked countries. It is known for exporting cotton and gold. Since gaining independence from the former Soviet Union in 1991, its economy has been steadily growing. Once the fourth-largest inland sea on earth, the Aral Sea has been drying up due to poor irrigation and the overuse of chemicals. This has resulted in an environmental disaster and has left people in the region poorly resourced.

One of the indigenous people groups in Uzbekistan is the Karakalpak people. They are a semi-nomadic tribe residing in northwestern Uzbekistan but also have small populations in Turkey, Iran, and other regions. The Karakalpaks who live in Uzbekistan struggle with unemployment, poverty, and basic health. Due to the shrinking of the Aral Sea, the areas they live in are now essentially desert and rarely receive more than 4.5 inches of rain each year. This region is also spiritually impoverished; there are very few Christians among the Karakalpak.

A small but growing Karakalpak church has taken root in Uzbekistan. Currently, the biggest needs in the young church are discipleship and pastoral training. It is difficult to get hard copies of translated biblical resources to the churches. The Bible has been translated into the local language, but it exists primarily online as it is generally unsafe to distribute printed versions.

## Pray

- That God would strengthen local pastors and help their churches to mature through sound biblical preaching and teaching.
- That God would protect and empower Christians to print and distribute the Bible widely throughout the country.
- That God would raise up young pastors to establish new churches.





# TÜRKİYE

Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Unreached
Percent Evangelical:	0.03% (1 in 3,333)

Türkiye is a secular state spanning two continents, yet most Turkish nationals identify as Muslim. For over a thousand years, this region was a stronghold for Christianity, but today, 66% of the population is unevangelized, and less than 1% claim to be Christian. Most recently, Türkiye made world news due to the devastating earthquake in 2023. This event resulted in over fifty thousand deaths and left hundreds of thousands injured and homeless. Türkiye is still recovering from this disaster.

One MBC partner and his family lead a young church in this difficult context. The work includes evangelism and shepherding church members through preaching, counseling, and prayer. The church also runs a pastoral internship to raise up faithful pastors and elders. Additionally, the church has started to meet monthly with other gospel-centered churches in the area to pray and fellowship together.

The work is slow and steady, as our partner describes in this story: “Mehmet was an unbelieving college student when he met one of our church members who teaches at his school. He was invited to attend Sunday service, where he came and met other church members. Over the ensuing year, he came regularly, and various members shared the gospel and their lives with him.

Over many meals, conversations, and countless cups of tea, Mehmet began reading the gospel of Mark with a church member and came to believe the gospel in faith and repentance. He now hopes to share his testimony with others ...”

## Pray

- That God would continue to bring unity to the congregation, which recently added members from Iran, the Philippines, Russia, Zambia, Brazil, the USA, and a few nationals.
- That God would bless the church’s outreach efforts to university students and bring salvation to many.
- That God would grant wisdom to the church as they seek to plant a new church in a different region, in cooperation with other national churches, during the summer of 2024.



# KENYA

Major Religion:	Christianity
Joshua Project Status:	Significantly reached
Percent Evangelical:	49.73% (1 in 2)

Well-known for its natural resources and wildlife, Kenya is relatively stable compared to some neighboring countries and has a significant evangelical presence. Operation World reports that nearly half of all Kenyans have some affiliation with a Protestant church, and most would call themselves Christians. But many churches are heavily influenced by prosperity teaching and lack sound biblical teaching.

Sound theological resources are largely unaffordable and inaccessible throughout the African continent. Most African pastors have no access to theological education, leaving them ill-equipped to faithfully shepherd their churches, especially in rural areas.

One MBC partner ministry, Ekklesia Afrika, exists to address this need. They work to equip the church in Africa by providing access to sound theological resources by publishing Christian literature, offering theological training, and hosting conferences and events. Ekklesia Afrika publishes resources locally and hosts strategic conferences to equip pastors through faithful preaching and teaching in conjunction with Emmanuel Baptist Church in Nairobi, Kenya. Ekklesia Afrika also offers a non-formal theological curriculum in a cohort learning format through a program called SOMA. By translating books into Swahili and printing locally, Ekklesia Afrika offers a sustainable training program for African pastors. Ekklesia Afrika prays that these initiatives will have an impact on generations of Kenyan Christians and churches.

## Pray

- That God would continue to grow and strengthen the pastor’s network and allow new students to attend conferences in 2024.
- That God would train and equip Kenyan Christians to prevent the spread of false teaching, especially the prosperity gospel.
- That God would increase partnerships with healthy churches and faithful pastors throughout East Africa through the SOMA program.



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

# HEATHER

*SERVING IN INDIA SINCE 2021*

Major Religion:	Hinduism
Joshua Project Status:	Unreached
Percent Evangelical:	Unknown

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 nonbeliever. A few years after the birth of her second son, her marriage ended.

Later on, she 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 Montgomery County and became a member soon after. In a 2019 sermon, Pastor David asked the church, "What if God is calling you for more than just the American [d]ream?" After prayer and counsel, Heather felt the Lord urging her to move overseas. She was equipped and commissioned through the church and is now serving in India as she pursues marketplace opportunities for gospel advancement.

## ENCOURAGEMENTS FROM 2023

Heather enjoys working and discipling the women of the church. One highlight of 2023 was that Heather's church planted a Telugu-speaking church, which has been steadily growing. The church also runs a pastoral internship, which she has been assisting as an admin. Through this internship, the church is able to train up young men to be future church planters.

## Pray

- That God would continue to bless Heather with wisdom and grace as she serves in her local church.
- That God would help equip the interns to be sent out as faithful church planters.
- That God would save many in this city as churches are mobilized to do evangelism.
- That God would allow a permanent building for the church to be secured, as property owners often do not want to rent to a church.



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



# AZERBAIJAN

Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Unreached
Percent Evangelical:	0.22% (1 in 455)

Azerbaijan is a captivating and diverse terrain of mountains and lowlands. Its capital, Baku, is prized by the government as it attracts many tourists to its historic sites, palaces, temples, and vibrant culture. Azerbaijan is a democratic republic, and the vast majority of its population is nominally Muslim (97%). Millions of Azeri citizens, however, are currently living in poverty and have been internally displaced due to the Armenian-Azeri conflict.

This territorial conflict has scourged the country for decades. The government launched a large-scale military offensive strategy in September of 2023 resulting in the surrender of the breakaway republic of Artsakh, forcing thousands to flee to neighboring Armenia.

Amidst the unpredictable political tension, the Azeri government also oversees the religious activity of its people and requires registration and permission for activities such as congregating or publishing materials. The Constitution of Azerbaijan states that it guarantees religious freedom to all its citizens and prohibits discrimination based on religion. However, because of Christianity's negative perception in the region, believers are often threatened, harassed, and forced to stop gathering. Christians can be arrested if caught without proper registration, and proselytizing is illegal for foreigners. Despite these roadblocks, the gospel continues to advance, even while some churches meet in secret.

## Pray

- That God would continue to diffuse political conflicts and bring about lasting peace. That those who are displaced would be cared for and come to faith in Jesus Christ.
- That God would send out workers to reach the millions across Azerbaijan who have never heard the gospel.
- That God would develop mature leaders and establish healthy churches to proclaim the gospel while under scrutiny.



# SRI LANKA

<b>Major Religion:</b>	Buddhism
<b>Joshua Project Status:</b>	Minimally reached
<b>Percent Evangelical:</b>	Unknown

Sri Lanka, the “pearl of the Indian Ocean,” is a small, biodiverse island nation. It has experienced many hardships over the last few years, which include the tsunami in 2004, a twenty-six-year-long civil war ending in 2009, continued ethnic tensions, a suicide bombing on Easter in 2019, and the COVID-19 pandemic. All of these hardships converged in a severe economic crisis that began in 2021. The crisis culminated in 2022 when protestors overran the presidential palace and forced the president and prime minister to resign.

The country is 70% Buddhist, but the evangelical church is slowly growing. While Christians have historically been concentrated in urban areas, younger leaders are more willing to serve in rural and challenging contexts. Operation World reports that Christian persecution comes in waves, but when it occurs, it is intense.

One MBC partner in Sri Lanka is an evangelical seminary working to train and equip pastors and Christian leaders to establish and strengthen churches throughout the country. Many of these pastors were affected by the economic crisis and unable to care for their families. The seminary was able to help provide for their needs so they could continue in ministry throughout the crisis.

## Pray

- That God would continue to meet the financial needs of the seminary so that pastoral training can continue despite ongoing economic hardships.
- That God would raise up pastors and leaders who can plant healthy churches in rural and remote places in Sri Lanka where no churches are yet established.
- That God would raise up leaders to establish just laws to protect basic human rights.
- That God would continue to ease the economic situation in the country so that basic needs are met.



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

# SOUTH ASIA

Major Religion:	Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism
Joshua Project Status:	Unreached
Percent Evangelical:	Unknown

This beautiful, mountainous country is a mix of various religions and warring cultures. Buddhists and Hindus converge here yearly for sacred pilgrimages. While the government says it does not cater to one religion over the other, it is easy to see that in its day-to-day practices, government regulations are heavily influenced by religion, and state policies often negatively affect Christians. Persecution of Christians is ongoing and widespread.

The remote and rugged landscape of this country poses many challenges to accessibility. It is a challenge to get essential resources to remote areas and people; and the same is true of the gospel! One of the most significant needs of the local church here is pastoral training. One MBC partner church in the region is running a year-long pastoral training program. This program aims to equip young men with sound biblical teaching so they can faithfully preach God's Word. The church also translates and distributes theological resources to supplement this training.

Over the past few years, the church came under extreme government scrutiny, which has since dissipated. In 2023, they saw the appointment of a new pastor and deacon and had the opportunity to share the gospel with some Hindus who began attending the church! They were also delighted to see ten new Christian books translated in the local dialect and distributed within the church.

## Pray

- That God would raise up more faithful men to be equipped to serve in the church.
- That God would allow more healthy churches to be planted throughout the country.
- That God would continue to train and equip pastors and ready them to be sent out in 2024 to plant new churches and revitalize existing ones.



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



# JAMES & LYRIC

*SERVING IN KAZAKHSTAN SINCE 2018*

Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Minimally reached
Percent Evangelical:	1.67% (1 in 60)

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 longtime members of MBC Tysons they were involved in a home Bible study and various MBC fellowships. After retiring, James and Lyric began to wonder if God wanted them to use their time to live and serve among unreached peoples. They searched the Scriptures, sought counsel from MBC leaders, and prayed for God’s direction.

It was clear that their thirty years of international development experience had 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 through a program called Transformational Development (TD). They equip local churches to serve the practical needs of their communities. By meeting these needs, they can build relationships, which in turn opens the door for gospel proclamation.

## ENCOURAGEMENTS FROM 2023

In 2023 James and Lyric were granted long-term visas after five years of waiting! This means they will no longer have to cross the border every thirty days and

can now spend their time in-country more effectively. Their organization is also now fully operational as a legal entity with official bank accounts. After years of planning, they were finally able to implement the TD training program through a local church. The community has a diverse group of unreached peoples composed of Kazakhs, Karakalpaks, Turkic, Uyghurs, Roma, Ukrainians, and Russians. The pastor and the local government have an open working relationship, allowing the potential for further gospel proclamation.

## Pray

- That God would give their team safety and health.
- That God would continue to help the local village where the TD training was started. That it would prosper and succeed and would create opportunities for the gospel to spread.
- That God would bring peace and stability to Kazakhstan.



# SUDAN

<b>Major Religion:</b>	Islam
<b>Joshua Project Status:</b>	Unreached
<b>Percent Evangelical:</b>	0.68% (1 in 147)

Sudan is located in northeast Africa by the Red Sea and its history can be traced back to the ancient Kingdom of Kush (7 BCE). This republic is home to over 160 Muslim people groups, most of whom are Sunni Muslim.

Since gaining independence in 1956, Sudan has continually suffered from political instability and the western regions have experienced constant armed conflict for several decades. Today, Sudan is one of the world's least developed countries and ranks among the worst in human rights abuses.

Despite this reality, the gospel is spreading as Christian refugees scatter throughout the country and form churches. By God's grace, churches have even formed among several unreached people groups. Sudanese Christians face severe persecution, and 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. They work to equip local leaders to strengthen their communities through economic development and peacebuilding. While many barriers exist to the church's growth in this region, the gospel continues to advance!

## Pray

- That God would provide for the needs of the Sudanese people and bring rescue to the oppressed and enslaved.
- 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 to establish healthy, gospel-preaching churches that will endure hardship.
- That God would raise up national believers and give them boldness to share Christ.
- That God would unify local churches as they seek to serve their communities.



# ARABIAN PENINSULA

Major Religion:	Islam
Joshua Project Status:	Minimally reached
Percent Evangelical:	Less than 1.5% (1 in 67)

Located on the Arabian Peninsula, this country is home to many cultures and is predominately Muslim. The church MBC partners with here was planted over nine years ago in a city of two million people. The church is located in a very complex context. Most people in this city are originally from the peninsula or the Global South. The church is multiethnic and encompasses people who are mid- to low-wage income earners. The last three years have been especially hard emerging out of the pandemic.

By the end of 2023, over twenty-five faithful members were attending the church each Sunday. New people continue to participate each week and ask questions about membership. The church has a good reputation in the region for biblical preaching and sound doctrine, for which they are very thankful. Our partner reports that “[o]ur church has become a shelter for believers from Muslim backgrounds. We baptized five people in 2023, and they remain and endure with us despite the challenges they face.”

## Pray

- That God would raise up godly elders to help the church grow and mature.
- That God would keep the church faithful in its preaching and teaching of His Word and give them patience, endurance, and wisdom to lead and shepherd God’s flock.
- That God would give the pastors and church members opportunities and courage for evangelism with their Muslim family, friends, and neighbors.
- That God would send more faithful people to the Arabian Peninsula who desire to serve the church and reach the unreached.





# KYRGYZSTAN

<b>Major Religion:</b>	Islam
<b>Joshua Project Status:</b>	Unreached
<b>Percent Evangelical:</b>	0.3% (1 in 333)

Kyrgyzstan, often described as the “Switzerland of Central Asia,” is a beautiful, mountainous country and popular hiking destination known for its nomadic culture. However, the post-Soviet years in Kyrgyzstan have been difficult. Throughout its existence as a republic, the country has continued to endure ethnic tensions, revolts, economic hardship, political conflict, and transitional governments.

Most Kyrgyz are culturally Muslim, yet few practice the religion sincerely. Recently, Muslim missionaries seeking to purify the practice of Islam came from other countries and built more than two thousand mosques and prayer rooms over five years. Outside of Islam, occult participation is also widespread. It’s not uncommon for Kyrgyz to worship ancestors, use amulets, and seek counsel from shamans.

While there are a fair number of expat Christians, the number of national Christians in Kyrgyzstan is very small. Persecution can make gospel work challenging. The government is drawing a harder line against any religious expression that may cause social or political instability, including evangelical Christianity. Formal registration is commonly denied to churches, and expatriate work permits are limited. Some Muslims have stoked fear in the government by falsely claiming over-inflated numbers of church growth.

## Pray

- That God would encourage believers to stand firm and demonstrate the power and love of Christ amidst persecution.
- That God would bless Christians in Kyrgyzstan with good, legal jobs.
- That God would transform the hearts of those who are persecuting Christians and save them from their sin.
- That God would establish healthy churches to partner together in evangelism.



# BEN & ERIN

SERVING IN GERMANY SINCE 2017

Major Religion:	Christianity
Joshua Project Status:	Partially reached
Percent Evangelical:	2.12% (1 in 47)

Ben began attending MBC Tysons when he was just two years old. He joined the church when he was fourteen and eventually served on the worship staff for over twenty years. Erin began attending MBC in 1991 and served with Access Ministry staff for seven years. While at MBC, their daughters Elise and Emily were involved in many ministries.

Ben and Erin had an interest in Germany for many years. In 2017, Ben joined Eurobrass, an evangelistic Christian ensemble that tours Germany. The next year, they moved to the Black Forest region of Germany to serve with Artists in Christian Testimony International. They also perform handbell concerts as a way to share the gospel. God provided a special-needs school near their town, with a life and job skills training program, that Emily could attend. Elise is now studying at a university in the US.

Germany’s historic appreciation for brass music opens many ministry doors. But despite centuries of rich spiritual heritage, Germans are quite secular. Technically, of the eighty million people in Germany, roughly half “belong” to either the Protestant or Catholic Church. But only 4% of Catholics and 3% of Protestants attend church on a regular basis. Among those who are Protestant, even fewer would identify as evangelical.

## ENCOURAGEMENTS FROM 2023

There are still over a million Ukrainian refugees in Germany. Erin leads a monthly support group for four Ukrainian mothers with special-needs children still living in their village. Additionally, for only the third time in their forty-five-year history, Eurobrass had a summer tour. Many people had the opportunity to hear the ensemble and listen to a presentation from God’s Word.

### Pray

- That God would use the concerts (both Eurobrass and handbells) to encourage believers and to present the gospel clearly to nonbelievers.
- 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 daughters and that Ben and Erin would be open to whatever God has planned for them.



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

# SOUTH ASIA

<b>Major Religion:</b>	Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism
<b>Joshua Project Status:</b>	Unreached
<b>Percent Evangelical:</b>	Unknown

Almost two thousand of the remaining seven thousand unreached people groups live in this region of the world. This is where one MBC partner, Good Church International (GCI), focuses its work. GCI is fueled by the cooperation of US churches aimed at backing a fully vetted, financially efficient, church-based ministry. Their aim is to train and equip indigenous pastors to rightly handle God's Word in order to be ministers of the gospel in areas overwhelmed by spiritual need, few resources, and governmental opposition.

Last year, GCI supported over fifty seminary students through full-time studies, including books and housing, as they prepared to become church planters. Eleven new students were added to the 2026 cohort class, and ten students in the 2023 cohort class graduated. Sixty new Christian books were published and spread throughout the region in an effort to disseminate solid Christian literature. And over six hundred Christian pastors were able to freely meet for a three-day conference on expositional preaching. The network of faithful pastors and healthy churches is growing!

## Pray

- That God would change the government and cause a reduction in oppressive tactics used to squash so-called “conversionist activities.”
- That God would sustain and bless recent graduates as they go on to plant churches and that they would be well equipped for the task ahead.
- That God would help current pastoral interns grow in their love of Christ and His Word as they prepare to become preachers of the gospel.





# IRAN

<b>Major Religion:</b>	Islam
<b>Joshua Project Status:</b>	Unreached
<b>Percent Evangelical:</b>	1.2% (1 in 83)

Iran, formerly known as Persia, sits at the crossroads of Central Asia, South Asia, and the Arabian Peninsula. Christianity has had a long presence there, and many ancient Christian sites still remain. Joshua Project reports that evangelicals make up 1.2% of the population, but the number is difficult to verify and could be as low as 0.5%. Over the last several years, however, Christianity in Iran has seen fresh growth.

Iran is a center for Shia Islam thought and most Iranians agree that religion has a place in government but disagree on how that should look. Addiction rates, orphaned street children, and widespread prostitution are a handful of issues ignored by the conservative Islamic leadership, leading many to question their traditional Islamic faith. So, many young people are open to the gospel and comprise 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 various ways to foster spiritual growth in believers.

Believers in Iran face many risks: punishment by fines, lashing, imprisonment, or even the death penalty if a judge so desires to give it. But with the Holy Spirit and the spurring on through training and resources, they have the means to continue forward amidst these threats!

## Pray

- That God would establish more qualified leaders in churches throughout Iran and protect them as they minister to others.
- That God would make the truth of His Son, Jesus Christ, known to more Muslims in Iran and comfort persecuted converts through His Word and the fellowship of believers.
- That God would continue to allow the Bible and other translated materials to be safely distributed throughout Iran to those who need it most.



# OMAN

<b>Major Religion:</b>	Islam
<b>Joshua Project Status:</b>	Unreached
<b>Percent Evangelical:</b>	0.65% (1 in 154)

Oman is the oldest independent state in the Arab world. Due to its location, Oman has a strong economy funded by its maritime industries, large oil reserves, and popular tourism. Interestingly, it is also known as one of the quietest countries, with strict laws against excessive noise.

Even though Oman is more modern than its neighbors, its government and culture are still intricately tied to Islam. The Omani government claims to tolerate other religions, but Islam takes priority and continues to dictate legislation and daily family life.

Most Christians in Oman are foreigners from the Philippines, India, or Western countries, concentrated in urban areas. Foreign Christians meet together in locations designated by the government and are allowed to share with other foreigners, but it is illegal to evangelize Muslims. Muslims who become Christians face immense pressure to return to Islam.

In rural and tribal regions, there are no known churches. Bibles are widely available to foreigners, but not to Omanis. By God's grace, Omani believers can access digital and audio Bibles online, which are readily available.

## Pray

- That God would send out workers to plant healthy churches to the unreached rural and tribal regions of Oman.
- That God would open the hearts of people in Oman and that despite their wealth, they would see their need for a true Savior.
- That God would work through foreign and Omani Christians and give them boldness and wisdom to share the gospel with Muslims in creative ways.







**GLOBAL OUTREACH**  
MCLEAN BIBLE CHURCH

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## SOURCES

Some entries adapted from previous years' guides.

**Country and region statistics:**  
<https://joshuaproject.net/>

**General country information:**  
<https://operationworld.org/>

