


PRAY FOR THE WORLD

Abridged from *Operation World*, 7th edition,
by Jason Mandryk
Advising editor: Molly Wall



OPERATION
WORLD
family of resources


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AFRICA

Pop 1 billion.

Christians 503.7 million. *Evangelical Christians* 182.4 mill.

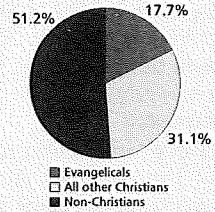
Largest Religion Christian.

Fastest Growing Religion Non-religious.

The 57 countries of Africa contain 15% of the world's population, and its population grows at nearly double the world's average. 32 of the 33 least-developed countries in the world are in Africa.

All Languages 2,110. **Languages with Scriptures** 173 Bibles, 335 New Testaments, 223 Old or New Testament portions (figures from the United Bible Society). Work is underway on 693 language projects. At least 225 languages (and possibly as many as 925!) still need the Scriptures. Africa remains among the greatest challenges for Bible translation!

Christian Population



Almost all countries in Africa became independent only since 1957. Democracy and true multiparty politics have begun to take hold across the continent, but slowly. Not all Africans believe that Western-style politics works best in the African context. Many leaders cause greater poverty and upheaval through corruption, tribal favouritism, poor economic policies, and a refusal to give up their power. Some have built billion-dollar personal fortunes through corruption and theft.

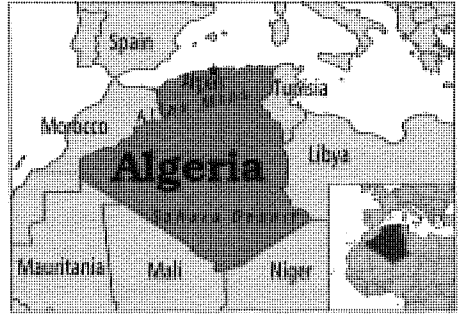
Africa is the continent with the greatest human needs and the most widespread poverty. Yet decades of aid and development have achieved too little progress. Many argue that less aid and more global free trade will better assist Africa.

The national boundaries drawn 100 years ago by Western colonial powers still cause problems today, and lead to violence and even war in over a dozen countries. Violent Islamist movements generate terror and war in several hot spots along the great fault line between Muslim and Christian majorities that runs west to east across the whole continent.

Algeria

Africa

Pop 35.4 million. Capital Algiers (2.8 mill).
Christians 99,000. Evangelical Christians 84,000.
Largest Religion Muslim.
Fastest Growing Religion Non-religious.
Largest Ethnic Groups Maghreb Arabs (69.9%), Berber (22.8%), Bedouin (6%), Other Arabs (1%).
Official Languages Arabic, Berber. French and English used widely. 25% speak one of the Berber languages.
All Languages 22.



Economy Fast-growing due to oil and gas reserves and nationalization of related industries. Most oil wealth does not reach the general population, and unemployment is high.

Politics French colony for 132 years. Independent in 1962 after a bitter war. A 1-party socialist regime held power for 25 years. Islamists won the 1992 election, but the army intervened. This led to a civil war with over 100,000 deaths. The current president (1999-present) worked to achieve peace and harmony. The violence decreased, though attacks by Islamist militants increased again from 2006.

- 1** The growth of the Algerian Church over the past decade is an answer to prayer! Many years of hard work by missionaries and praying people produced beautiful fruit. Most believers come from a Kabyle Berber background, but faith grows among Arabs and most other people groups as well. The Christian community enjoys a spirit of unity, which stands out from the long history of conflict among ethnic groups. Some received supernatural visions of Jesus, but most came to Him through personal evangelism. New fellowships began throughout Algeria, partly because Berber believers moved into unreached Arab areas in order to share the good news. Pray for continued growth of this people movement to Christ!
- 2** Algeria suffered deeply in the past. First it was from French colonial oppression, then the war of liberation that ended in 1962, and most recently the brutal civil war that began in 1992. The constitution promises democracy, but people have limited freedom. Violations of human rights continue. Islamists, who want *shari'a* law to rule, fight against the state, media, foreigners, and any imams who oppose them. Pray that God will use this situation to draw many more to Christ. Pray for powerful conversions to Jesus among Islamic leaders in Algeria.
- 3** The Algerian Church faces persecution and other challenges. It grew through bold witness and evangelism, but religious and political leaders reacted strongly against this new movement. Believers face threats from family, friends, Muslim extremists, and employers. Unemployment among believers from a Muslim background is as high as 90%. They face new restrictions from the government on evangelism and gathering for worship. The government also banned the import of Bibles, which hinders discipleship. Many still need access to Scripture. Pray that the Algerian Church will respond to these pressures with faith and perseverance.
- 4** The Church has a very indigenous, truly Algerian way of expressing faith. Scriptures and study materials, worship styles, and even training and leadership reflect Algerian culture well. Algeria needs more workers to help strengthen the local church and to bring the gospel to the unreached millions. Several agencies reach out to Algerians through radio, literature, satellite TV, portable media, and Bible correspondence courses. Praise God for the increase of these resources, and pray for wider distribution!

5 Pray especially for these less-reached groups:

- **Over 4 million Algerians live in Europe**, many illegally. They have more access to the gospel in Europe, but also to Islamic teaching. Pray for the network of agencies and churches who reach out to them. Pray for discipleship, for churches planted among the Berber and Arabic language groups, and for God to raise up many Algerian believers as missionaries to their own people.
- **Young people** often try to move to Europe in search of more freedom and a better life. 65-70% of the population in Algeria is under age 30. In school, students receive much teaching from the Qur'an. No ministry specifically reaches children.
- **The Berber peoples** of the Atlas Mountains (23% of the population) seek a return to their cultural roots after centuries of domination by Arabs. Their ancestors were Christian, and many have turned to Christ among the Kabyle. But the other 13 Berber groups are among Africa's least evangelized. Pray for Christian witness among each of these groups!

Angola

Africa

Pop 19 million. **Capital** Luanda (4.8 mill).
Christians 17.9 mill. *Evangelical Christians* 4.3 mill.
Largest Religion Christian.
Fastest Growing Religion Muslim.

Largest Ethnic Groups Ovimbundu (25.5%), Mbundu (22.9%), Kongo (12.9%), Luvale (8.1%), Chokwe (5.0%), Mixed race (1.2%), Khoisan (0.6%).

Official Language Portuguese. **All Languages** 41.

Economy Some of the world's richest natural resources (oil, diamonds, minerals, farmland), but widespread poverty. Infrastructure devastated by war, but now rebuilding.

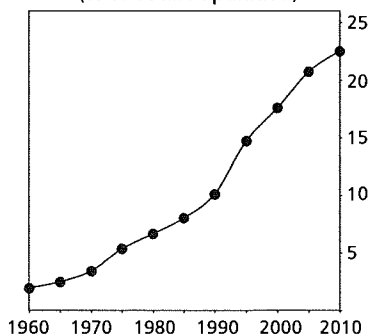
Politics Former Portuguese colony (450 years). A Marxist coup ended colonial rule (1975). Civil war displaced millions. 900,000 died. Peace deal in 1990, but fighting 1998-2002. Parliamentary elections (which determined president) held in 2008. Some separatist fighting continues in Cabinda.



1 Forty years of almost constant war (1962-2002) devastated Angola. Innocent civilians suffered most. Fighting destroyed roads, schools, hospitals, homes, and churches. Millions fled their homes. Land mines crippled over 80,000 people. 70-90% of the population live in poverty. Deep psychological, social, and spiritual wounds will require years to overcome. Praise God for peace, and the return of many to their homes. The Church helps lead the way to reconciliation as the country works to rebuild.

2 **Biblical Christianity** grew, even amidst war and poverty! The first president, a Marxist, vowed to eradicate Christianity in 20 years. He failed! The number of evangelicals grew 4 times larger from 1990 to 2010. The Church needs much prayer to overcome the wounds of conflict. Pray for forgiveness and love in action. Only a few

Evangelical Growth
(% of Total Population)



congregations have trained pastors. False beliefs, ignorance of the Bible, witchcraft, and animistic practices pollute many lives and churches. Islam grows with its simple message and foreign financial support. Pray for Christian unity, holy living, and biblical faith.

3 Young people and children. Marxism and war left a scarred generation, deprived of educational opportunity and physical security. This generation is the first in decades to know peace. Most of Angola's Christians are under age 25. Pray for primary and secondary schools to be rebuilt, staffed, and full.

4 The foreign missionary presence was a good testimony during years of suffering. Ministries should now shift from aid/relief to development, and from evangelism to discipleship and training. Most missions work holistically, and minister to both physical and spiritual needs. Pray for ministries such as World Vision International, Samaritan's Purse, and others, as they focus on primary health care, education, vocational training, and disease prevention.

Benin

Africa

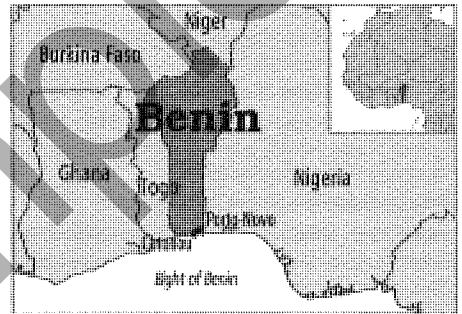
Pop 9.2 million. **Capital** Porto-Novo (287,000).
Christians 3.7 mill. *Evangelical Christians* 768,000.
Largest Religion Christian.
Fastest Growing Religion Muslim.

Largest Ethnic Groups Over 60 ethnic groups, mostly in the south. Guinean (59.5%), Gur (17.4%), Yoruba (13.1%), Fulani (4.8%).

Official Language French. Trade languages: Fon (south), Dendi (north). **All Languages** 56.

Economy Built on agriculture, with cotton the largest product. Strong trade links with Nigeria, but remains one of world's poorest countries.

Politics Independence from France (1960). After 7 coups and 1 Marxist regime, a democracy was formed in 1991. Stable government.



1 Benin remains one of the world's least-developed countries. Efforts to help the economy often fail because of corruption. Almost 75% of economic activity is "underground" or illegal, with ties to Nigerian interests. Some suspect that criminals smuggle tens of thousands of children out of Benin each year to sell them as child labourers. Pray for justice and righteousness to grow in Benin, and for Nigeria's influence to be more positive and godly.

2 Benin has the highest percentage in Africa of people who follow traditional ethnic religions. Many Christians mix their faith with animism. They go to the church on Sunday, but consult the witch doctor during the week. Pray for revival that makes the Church pure. Pray also for many witch doctors to experience the power of Jesus and turn to Him! Voodoo developed from Fon animism, and it touches the lives of all Fon (the largest people group), even the Christians.

3 Church growth continues across the whole country, but especially in the African-originated denominations. All churches feel a desperate need for discipleship and for trained leaders. Almost half of Benin's languages still need a Bible or even a New Testament. Some evangelicals have a goal to plant 20,000 congregations by 2020! Pray for the endurance to reach every region of Benin,

and to plant churches among every people. Village health ministries and holistic rural development bring good responses from both animists and Muslims.

4 **Most peoples in Benin remain unreached.** Only a few smaller groups have a Christian majority. It is one of the few countries where almost equal numbers of Muslims, Christians, and animists live side by side. Christians have freedom to minister and evangelize, but Benin is probably the least-evangelized non-Muslim country in Africa! Pray for churches and missions to send more workers, especially to the central and northern regions. Very few evangelical believers live among the Muslim peoples of the far north.

Botswana

Africa

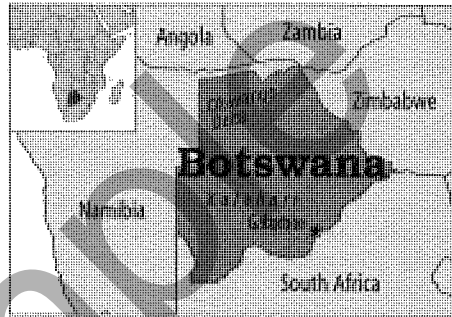
Pop 2 million. **Capital** Gaborone (201,000).
Christians 1.3 mill. *Evangelical Christians* 160,000.
Largest Religion Christian.
Fastest Growing Religion Christian.

Largest Ethnic Groups Tswana (69.1%), Kalanga (10.1%), Ndebele (3.3%), San (Bushmen) (2.8%), Shona (2.4%), Kgalagadi (2.3%), Herero (1.2%), Mbukushu (1.1%), Yeyi (1.1%).

Official Languages English, Setswana. **All Languages** 40.

Economy Rapid development since independence (1966) through export of diamonds, copper, nickel, gold, and beef. Tourism now part of economy. Revenue used wisely to develop the country. The most stable, sustained growth in Africa (1990-2010).

Politics Independent from Britain in 1966. Stable, multiparty democracy (rare in Africa).



1 **Praise God for political stability, economic growth, and lower corruption in Botswana.** Religious freedom allows agencies to evangelize and plant churches. The government set new goals for health, economy, and society (Vision 2016), which fit well with biblical principles.

2 **The Tswana responded to the gospel first out of all the Bantu people in Africa.** Several tribes found God in the 19th century through the London Missionary Society. Today many Tswana families break apart, and people struggle with sexual sins and drunkenness. Pray for moral and spiritual renewal among the Tswana.

3 **Botswana has the world's second-highest AIDS rate.** Life expectancy has dropped by 28 years, and over 100,000 orphans need care. Pray that those who suffer receive the drugs they need, and that the government acts wisely. AIDS now touches every congregation. Pray that ministries and churches show Christian love to victims and orphans, and work together to prevent spread.

4 **The Church.** Western missionaries planted mainline Protestant churches, but most of these now lose members and need revival. Pentecostal churches grew rapidly at first, and many of these churches truly help people change their lives. African Indigenous Churches (AIC) are the largest religious group in Botswana. Most AICs focus on God's healing power, but some mix biblical teaching with harmful traditions. Pastors need good Bible training. Pray that each of these churches uses its strengths to reach others with the gospel of Jesus. Praise God for the unity and cooperation among them!