

Email

Dear Friend,

Last week we prayed for Indonesia, the nation with the highest population of Muslims in the world. This week we are praying for India, a country with the third highest population of Muslims in the world. In spite of the large numbers of Muslims, Hindus dominate both the population and the politics in India, with the result that Muslims often feel that they are at a disadvantage.

India has the highest number of unreached Muslim people groups in the world. We will be praying for some of the least-reached groups and hearing a testimony from an Indian Muslim who became a follower of Christ.

May God mightily bless you as you pray and intercede this week.

For His Glory in the Nations

Charlie

Prayer Coordinator

Monday 9th May

India Pop: Over 1.3 billion

One fifth of the world's population lives in India, making it the second most populous country in the world behind China. Although only 14% of the population is Muslim, the majority religion being Hindu, they are estimated to be between 190-200 million in number. It is predicted that within decades, India will be the world's largest Muslim nation. Today there continues to be tension between India's Hindus and Muslims. This can be traced back to its past. When India and Pakistan were granted independence from Britain in 1947, India was created to be a secular-Hindu nation and



Pakistan was created as a safe haven for South Asia's Muslims. However, India was left with a large Muslim minority despite efforts of Hindu militants to drive them out of India.

Christians make up only 5% of India's population. This year, India remains 10th on Open Doors' World Watch list. Religious radicals and government oppression challenge gospel growth, but this has decreased considerably as people have been focussed on the coronavirus outbreak. India

being such a densely populated country, as well as low levels of testing and poor access to an already overstretched healthcare system, means that the country has been hugely impacted by the pandemic and there have been long and incredibly strict lockdowns.

The economic impact of the lockdowns has meant businesses have closed, unemployment which was already at a 45-year high has risen and productivity has fallen. Millions of migrant workers left cities when they lost their jobs and tried to return to their home villages.

Prayercast have an excellent short video about the country to inspire your prayers:

<https://vimeo.com/23640682>

- Pray for God's will to be done in this time of economic, physical and spiritual upheaval; for many more people to find Jesus and for others to be prepared to disciple them both in and after the crisis.
- Pray for believers living there to grasp this window of opportunity to preach the good news of Jesus and to offer practical help.
- Pray for justice and hope in a nation plagued by oppression, poverty and disease.

Source of some material: <https://www.mnnonline.org/news/gospel-opportunities-surface-as-india-confronts-covid-19/>
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-52117704>
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/01/india-coronavirus-cases-rise-amid-fears-true-figure-much-higher>

Tuesday 10th May

The unreached in India

“Then Jesus told him (Thomas), “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”” John 20:29

India has the highest number of unreached Muslim people groups in the world; 32% of the world’s unreached people groups live there. According to the Joshua project there are 2,718 people groups, of which 2,445 are unreached. This means a staggering 90% of all the people of India have not met a follower of Jesus.

Most Christians live in the far northeastern and southernmost states. In the rest of India, believers are scarce. This means some people groups, especially in North India where 80% of Muslims live, are unreached and tend to be small in terms of total population. They do not have workers to reach them and plant churches among them. Over the next three days we will be praying for places and the Muslim people living in places identified by Frontiers as in great need of more long-term workers to go to them with the good news.

According to Church tradition, the apostle Thomas went to India on two occasions, sharing the gospel before he was martyred for his faith. Not only did he bring many people to faith, but he planted many churches in the area where he preached.

While some local catalysts are sparking a few disciple-making movements, there are still less than 3 field workers per million Muslims working in the South Asia region and India is no different.

Watch this one-minute clip about the need for more workers there: <https://vimeo.com/131302797>

- India desperately needs more labourers to reach its vast and growing population. Let’s cry out to God to draw workers to follow Thomas’ example and to go to this nation to share the good news.
- Pray for churches to have this country as a priority for prayer, intercession and sending workers to go to the many unengaged Muslim people groups.
- India is hot, crowded, chaotic and noisy. It takes a special type of person to go there. Let’s ask God to raise up such people with a heart and a passion for the lost of this nation.

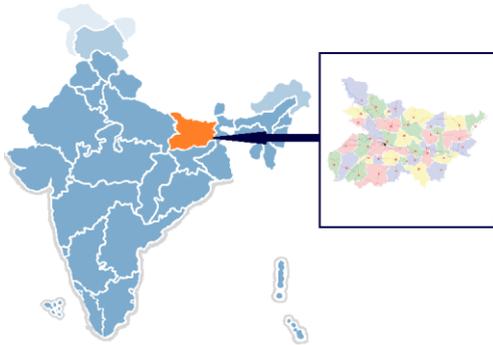
Wednesday 11th May

Muslims in Bihar

Muslim Pop: 20 million

"It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation." Romans 15:20

Bihar is in East India and is India's third most populous state, with a population of 105 million; of which 20 million are Muslims. They represent dozens of people groups, speaking different languages who have no access to the good news.



Bihar is a hard place to live, having a reputation as India's most 'backward' state. There are high levels of poverty and illiteracy, coupled with low levels of development and hot weather. It is one of India's least developed regions, but is racing to catch up with the rest of India in terms of development and education. There has recently been a lot of investment in infrastructure and in combatting corruption so things are improving. Fertile land is perhaps the region's

greatest resource, fed by the River Ganges. With the highest percentage of youth in the country, 58% of people in Bihar are under 25 years of age. Flooding and poverty force family members to seek work elsewhere.

The percentage of Christians in Bihar is very small, but the huge population turns a small percentage into many tens of thousands of believers. In the past, much of the disciple-making fruit amongst the Bihar has come through partnerships with Muslim background believers. They have been very effective in reaching and discipling their own communities. There are also great opportunities for workers to engage with Bihari Muslims through business, community development, healthcare and education.

- Pray for workers who have the skills and ambition to come and live in this challenging part of the Muslim world and preach the gospel where Christ is not known.
- Let's ask God to give local Muslim background believers the motivation and boldness to reach out to their own people with the hope of the gospel message.
- Pray for God to show Himself in miraculous ways to the people of Bihar.

Thursday 12th May

The Hajam Pop: Approximately 370,000

“Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.” Psalm 19:14

The Hajam are one of the unreached people groups in the state of Bihar.

A well-established trade among the Hajam is hairdressing. Their name derives from the Urdu word for barber or hairdresser. Claiming to be descendants of King Solomon, the Hajam follow the art of haircutting set forth in a manual believed to have originated with their royal ancestor.

According to this manual, the angel Gabriel was the first to teach Adam to shave with a flint after Eve disapproved of the first man’s unshaven appearance.

Rafeeqa comes from a long line of respected Hajam hairstylists. She wipes her shears clean and invites the next customer into the salon chair. As she trims the woman’s hair, Rafeeqa entertains her with small talk. Her sharp wit takes over and the young woman laughs at her gentle teasing.

The Hajam’s skills aren’t limited to hairstyling. Some haircutters serve as matchmakers or midwives, and some perform circumcisions, tooth extractions and minor surgery too. Their varied roles give them access to Indians from every part of society. But few Hajam have ever met a follower of Jesus.

- Pray for the Hajam to know Christ and use their words and wit to proclaim His wondrous works.
- Ask God to send gospel messengers to make disciples and catalyse movements of faith among the Hajam.
- Pray for opportunities for future Hajam believers to engage with powerful people in India and influence them towards Christ.

Friday 13th May



Mappila in Malappuram District in the state of Kerala
Pop: Over 2.9 million

“And you will be called priests of the Lord, you will be named ministers of our God.” Isaiah 61:6a

The Malappuram District stretches from the coast and into the green jungles of Kerala state in the southwestern tip of India. Middle class villages, each with their own colourful mosque, lie amidst coconut and rubber trees, tea plantations and rivers. Half the

population live in a rural setting, often in large homes built by a family member living in the Arab Gulf. At least one family member is sent abroad to the Arab Gulf to send back money. The other half of the population congregate in small towns of about 50,000 people. With a majority population, this state is one of the few places in India where this people group can be easily identified. With a high literacy rate, the Mappila are educated, often well-travelled and have established mosques and madrassas where children are trained in moderate Islam.

Life in this district is believed to be generally slower, more family orientated and organised around a village system where everything is provided in the form of small, family-run shops, community mosques, schools, and colleges and hospitals in the smaller towns. There are no westerners living in the villages although some may settle in one of the three cities of Ponani, Manjeri or Malappuram which each have populations of about 100,000. Malappuram is almost completely Muslim.

Almost 2% of the population of Malappuram District is classified as Christian. Some local churches and pastors are trying to reach their Muslim neighbours and communities. Workers are needed who could help to mobilise local believers to reach their own people so that entire families and even villages could be brought into the kingdom. Being able to speak English is prized amongst this literate and educated population who are keen to go abroad if needed to improve their job prospects and careers. Gospel workers who might open an English Centre and work as teachers would be a great blessing to these people.

- Pray for English language teachers to go to the Mappila people and live among them as a blessing from God and as priests of the Lord.
- Pray for this family-orientated people to become part of the family of God.
- Pray for churches and believers to disciple them in the ways of Christ.

Saturday 14th May

Shaik's testimony

"Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." John 1:12

Prayercast have recorded this amazing testimony from Shaik, a Muslim living in India who became a follower of Christ. You can listen to his testimony here: <https://prayercast.com/shaik.html>
This is his story:

Shaik was born into an orthodox Muslim family. One day, Shaik tried to commit suicide. Miraculously, he survived. His father told him that he could convert to any religion he wanted except Christianity! Shaik obeyed and studied Islam and a Hindu philosophy but he was not content with his life.

Not long after this, he was travelling from home to college on the bus with a friend who had a stack of books beside him. Curious, Shaik picked one up. "If you die right now," the author asked, "where would you go?" After that Shaik couldn't rest until he declared that Jesus was his Lord. Since then God has sustained him, brought him peace and joy and given him a purpose in life.

He used to disobey his father and didn't respect him, but this changed when he became a believer. Although the first two years after coming to faith were hard as his family felt that he had brought shame on them, he prayed for them. Before his father died, he wrote to Shaik and told him that he had started to pray to Shaik's God. For 9 years Shaik prayed for his mother before she came to faith. He prayed for his sister and brother for 25 years and now they too are believers!

- Let's praise and thank God for pursuing Shaik and his family with His relentless love even when they did not want Him to.
- Pray for millions of Muslims across India to know Jesus as their Saviour and for many more wonderful testimonies to come from Muslim Indians for the glory of God.
- Shaik never gave up praying for his family until they came to faith. Let us not grow weary in praying for our own loved ones and for Muslims from the least-reached groups in India until they too come to know Jesus.

Source: <https://prayercast.com/shaik.html>