

PRAYING FOR THE WORLD


WEEK 6, FEBRUARY 8-14

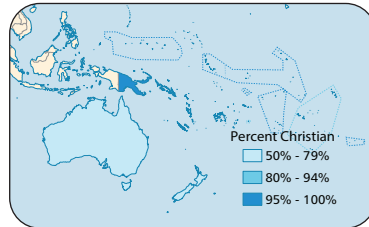
OCEANIA

Oceania (39 million people) consists of 25,000 islands scattered across a third of the globe. The largest populations are in Australia, Papua New Guinea and New Zealand.

Until the mid 20th century, Australia and New Zealand's peoples were mostly of European descent and reflected Western countries economically and spiritually, with rising secularism against a fading Christian background. However, in recent decades, significant migration from China, South and Southeast Asia has seen the demographic profile shift and some Asian churches are now growing. Both nations have significant indigenous populations (Aborigines and Maoris) who suffered significant injustice from European colonists.

The other states of Oceania are typically poor, isolated and largely dependent on foreign aid and remittances from islanders working abroad. Almost all the region's 1300 peoples adopted Christianity, but Biblical literacy is often poor, heresy prevalent, and a Christian veneer masks many problems.


 Yet God is still at work: pray that justice might roll like a river and that God's people will humble themselves and pray.




AFGHANISTAN

Armed conflict since 1979 has impoverished this country of 37 million people. In 2017 Afghanistan had the world's worst infant mortality, 11 babies dying for each 100 births.

Tribalism divides Afghanistan. The Dari-speaking Pashtuns and the Persian-speaking Tajiks are both Sunni Muslims. The minority Hazara, made famous by the novel *The Kite Runner*, are Shi'as. Several thousand Afghans have started to follow Christ in recent years, mostly from the Hazara and Tajik peoples. Yet Afghanistan is the second most dangerous place to live as a Christian (only North Korea is worse). No Afghan churches meet publicly.

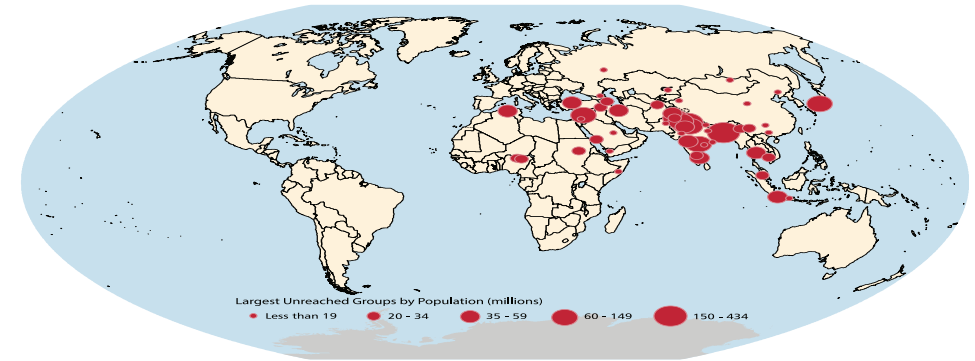
 Pray for peace and the rebuilding of the nation. Pray for God to work among the extremist groups seeking to spread violence and overthrow the government. Pray for children to get an education: under-14s are nearly half the population.

 Pray especially for the increase of the Kingdom in the hearts and lives of Afghans and in Afghan society.



THE NATIONS

A Church for every people




Where has the gospel been least preached? Humans can be divided into around 17,000 people groups, defined by language, national borders, or (often in the Indian subcontinent) by old ideas of caste. Each people group needs its own Christian movement, so that all peoples are brought to a wonderful unity and fullness in Christ.


Of these 17,000 people groups:

- 4,800 people groups are the 'least-evangelized peoples'. No more than one person in a thousand in these groups is a Christian.
- Most of these least-evangelized peoples are small, with populations no bigger than a medium-sized city.
- A few of the least-evangelized peoples are very large. The 400 biggest contain 1.6 billion people.
- 250 of these largest groups are in India or Pakistan.

Several hundred groups, which together include about eight million people in total, have no known Christians and no known Christian work. These are known as the UUPGs -- unengaged unreached people groups.



 Remember the forgotten. Scattered through the world are thousands of people groups, often migrant communities, with very small populations and very few Christians. Some groups merge with the majority cultures around them, especially as generations pass. But these groups also need thousands of outsiders to enter their cultural world as servants to bring the gospel. Pray it will happen!

 Pray for the gospel to spread in the Indian sub-continent - nowhere in the world has such a concentration of least-evangelized people groups and people.

Search for the Joshua Project to see the most comprehensive, freely available database of unevangelized peoples. See also the Finishing the Task network who work to make sure that every one of the least-evangelized peoples has at least one church-planting initiative among them.

Praying for the World is a free weekly prayer guide to inspire and inform the whole church to pray for the whole world. Visit www.lausanne.org/pray to start any week. Created through the partnership of Operation World and the Lausanne Movement.