

The **Power** of **JESUS**

31 Days of
Life-Transforming
Stories and
Prayer Guide

Jesus Film
Project
A Cru Ministry



The **Power** of **JESUS**

31 Days of Life-Transforming
Stories and Prayer Guide



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“One of the most powerful tools God has given us to proclaim the gospel today is the medium of film Perhaps this film, JESUS, is one of the means God is using to hasten the day when ‘every knee shall bow’ before our great King.”

—Rev. Billy Graham

“Jesus Film Project is one of the greatest cutting-edge evangelistic efforts the world has ever known. Agencies like us consider it a privilege to be involved in this endeavor that has the stamp of God upon it.”

—George Verwer, Founder, Operation Mobilization

The **Power** of **JESUS**



Dear Friend,

My first exposure to Jesus Film Project® was at a college student conference, hearing Paul Eshleman, the ministry's founding director, tell stories of how God was using this unique tool to lead people into personal encounters with Jesus Christ. God touched my heart that day, and I joined the ministry. That was more than 20 years ago. My first assignment was serving as a language-dubbing administrator. In between my travels every month, my

future wife Holly and I would keep our long-distance relationship going by dreaming of what the Lord might be calling us to, together. After we were married, we sensed His new direction, an open door to work in North Africa and the Middle East. For the next decade, our task was to help get the film into some of those really tough places. There we saw firsthand how God was using the film *JESUS* to reach men, women and children and to transform lives!

Today, I am privileged to give leadership to Jesus Film Project and its work in evangelism and global church-planting efforts. The *JESUS* film, the gospel story from the Book of Luke portrayed on film, is perhaps the most widely used tool in world evangelism today. In the hands of more than 1,700 partnering missions agencies, denominations and local churches, God is using *JESUS* to lead millions to Christ every year. Why is it so effective? Because it is being viewed and heard in people's heart languages, the ones

they most understand. *JESUS* speaks 1,700 languages and counting!

As you read each day's story and country (or area) profile, I believe God will touch your heart, lift your vision for the world and build your faith. And may you be prompted to act. First, pray for the requests for the day; ask God to give you a greater burden for the lost in various corners of the globe. Next, *sign up* to receive additional stories, video reports and updates by email (www.jesusfilm.org/morestories). Please visit our website to learn more. New prayer requests and stories are posted every month. You can watch *JESUS* and other evangelistic films online or download them, or you can order copies on DVD. The website provides you additional opportunities to act, including visiting (touring) our *JESUS* Film Master Studio (Orlando, Florida) and going on short-term mission trips that can put you in the front lines of directly helping reach people for Christ.

I pray that reading "The Power of Jesus" will be just your first step with us. Will you pray, subscribe and get informed, then consider giving and going to the nations? You may not be called to North Africa and the Middle East like Holly and me, but I pray that, because of the time you invest in praying through this book, God will prompt a bold response in you and that you act on it in faith!

Until everyone sees Jesus,


Josh Newell
Executive Director, Jesus Film Project®

Central Asia

Nations: Multiple

Location: Central Asia

Population: 91 million

Literacy Rate: 98.6%

Official Languages: Kazakh, Kyrgyz,

Russian, Tajik, Turkmen, Uzbek

Spoken Languages: 43

JESUS Language Translations: 10

Central Asia includes the large strategic, geographic region of five former Soviet states that adhere to the predominate religion of the region. Two examples are Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

Central Asians in general are the least-reached people on earth. In that region, Christians face acute pressures on every side—from governments, Islamist groups, and traditional church hierarchies, to family members and society. “Salt and light” in their communities, local believers constantly face violence and turmoil.

Believers need the support of trained church leaders, but training programs are lacking, and due to the threat any evangelism must be carried out with sensitivity and wisdom.

Extremists’ hatred and excessive violence now contributes to Central Asians’ disillusionment and a greater openness to the gospel, although it is still under the radar and on a limited level in many areas.

Prayer Starters:

- Safety, growth and spiritual maturity for those in underground house churches.
- A miraculous explosion of religious freedom.
- Believers to be bold in evangelism.

See, I am sending an angel ahead of you to guard you along the way and to bring you to the place I have prepared.

Exodus 23:20, NIV



A Door Radicals Had Closed, Opens

JESUS Film team members were racked by guilt for events that happened a year earlier. They had arranged for a film showing outside the village of Chanddon.

Upon arrival near the community, an area they recognized would be dangerous because of religious radicals, they sensed something was not right. With no moon, all the team members could see were faint silhouettes of buildings and trees. They felt an unsettling and eerie foreboding but began playing music through the speakers to attract people from the nearby community to the film showing. Nobody came, which almost never happens.

Suddenly, they heard the sound of rustling bushes and the cracking of branches breaking under the feet of 12 radicals rushing toward them. Waving machetes, they screamed, “We are going to kill you and every infidel with you.” The three team members fled for their lives, running as fast as they could to their Jeep. With hearts pounding and fumbling to get the Jeep started, they sped away.

A year later, through prayer, they recognized that those people still needed to hear the gospel, so they asked the Lord what they should do. In agreement they felt God urging them to go back, although the risk was great.

The members loaded the *JESUS* film and equipment into the back of their Jeep, along with three boxes of Bibles, and headed for the village, several hours away.

On the road, they came to a police checkpoint—a potentially dangerous stop in the road considering the load of Bibles. The officer asked where they were going. Trying to be noncommittal, they said, “We are headed south.” To their surprise, he said “Well so am I. Can you give me a ride?” There was no way they could refuse the officer’s request.

Insisting on climbing in the back of the Jeep, the officer sat on a box full of Bibles. They feared if the officer looked into the box, they could be arrested or possibly killed. So they prayed and drove on.

Soon, the team approached another police checkpoint. Popping his head out from the back of the Jeep, the first police officer told the other officers, “I’m with them. You don’t need to search the vehicle.” The police waved them through. This happened at three more police checkpoints, and all three times he got them through!

The officer asked the film team, “Tell me, what’s your destination?” “The village of Chanddon.” “Why, that’s my village!” he replied, “I’ll go with you!” At his request, they drove him to his home where he invited them in for tea.

Inside, he asked, “And why have you come to Chanddon?” “We’ve come to show a film about the Great Prophet Isa (Jesus).” Having experienced their kindness, the officer asked, “What do you need?” This was **the same village** where radicals chased them out a year earlier, nearly killing them with machetes.

“We need permission,” they answered.

“Oh, that’s no problem. My brother is the mayor! Where do you want to show this film?” They asked, “Could we use the town square (where they had tried unsuccessfully before)?” To which the policeman replied: “Sure, but you know we have some radical elements here. So I’m going to have my police force guard you as you show the film.”

The team prayed and set up their equipment. Once again, as they did a year earlier, they played music as darkness fell to draw the people. This time a crowd gathered, sat down and watched *JESUS*, hearing the Word of God in their heart language. For the first time in their lives, they learned who Jesus really was.

The Holy Spirit ministered to their hearts. Jesus was not just a great prophet, but he was the Son of God who demonstrated power and authority over sickness and death, was raised from the dead, and offered all who believed eternal life. That night 167 people came to Christ!

East Asia

Nations: Multiple

Location: East Asia

Population: 1.6 billion

Literacy Rate: 94.5%

Official Languages: Mandarin Chinese, Japanese, Korean, English

Spoken Languages: 895

JESUS Language Translations: 56

Although on course to be one of the world's most Christian nations within the next decade, of the hundreds of millions of people, fewer than 10 percent are Christian. Many people groups in East Asia remain unevangelized, where more indigenous workers and more scriptural resources in their own languages are needed.

Unregistered churches are illegal and members who are found out may be subject to police raids, harassment and violence. Church property may be destroyed and believers dragged off to jail. Most underground churches have limited



resources and are forced to meet secretly in converted living quarters.

The area's focus more recently has been on economic development and the promise of building a better life. But, the single-minded pursuit of profit has resulted in widespread corruption, environmental degradation and the realization that material wealth does not equal a meaningful life.

Prayer Starters:

- Continued church growth and Bible teaching amidst ongoing persecution.
- Christ's teachings to take deep root in the culture exposing false religions.
- A renewed valuing of life, to abolish abortion, suicide, abandonment and human trafficking.

Scavenger Finds “Bread of Life”

Odo* was a loyal party member. He had a terrible problem that affected his entire family. Like so many others, they were starving.

He had heard there was plentiful food in a neighboring nation. But crossing the border would be extremely dangerous.

Because he was familiar with the roads and terrain—and under the cover of darkness—Odo crossed a body of water on the border into the neighboring nation.

Safely on the other side, he began walking until he found a small group of people. They seemed to be expecting individuals like him and said they could help. It turns out they were Christians who provided Odo food for his body and for his soul. He had never experienced people like these. They showed him love and kindness.

After a few days with the believers, it was time for him to return home with the bags of food they had given him. Before leaving, the Christians asked Odo if he would like to watch a DVD. It was *Magdalena*—and in his own language.

So there sat Odo, no longer hungry, watching and listening, touched by love, and generously supplied with food to take back to his family. Though he was a committed atheist and party member to the core, the story of the gospel and the Word of God entered his heart. Odo watched as Jesus was cruelly sacrificed for his sins and then was raised to life. And something deep within him (the Holy Spirit) said, “This is true.”

Odo believed, and with the help of his hosts, prayed to receive Jesus. Before he crossed back over, they spent time talking about the Lord. In addition to the food, they gave him a set of small, portable film-showing equipment and a supply of *JESUS* and *Magdalena* DVDs—tools you have helped provide for use in restricted countries. Odo promised he would be back two

or three times each year—not necessarily for food but to be discipled.

As you might imagine, communication in and out of this closed country is very difficult. So we don’t yet have any follow-up reports about Odo. But we are confident that the same Lord who protected him across the lake was able to see him safely home. Pray, even as you read, that Odo is actively showing *JESUS* and *Magdalena* to family after family, telling them of the love he experienced and winning scores—if not hundreds—of people to Christ.

In my distress, I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God. He heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears.

Psalm 18:6, KJV

* Name changed for security purposes.

Day 3

India

Nation: Republic of India

Location: South Asia

Population: 1.25 billion

Literacy Rate: 71.2 %

Official Languages: Hindi, English

Spoken Languages: 456

JESUS Language Translations: 200

The advancement of God's kingdom in India faces many hardships.

- Believers there often live in situations of potential persecution and need creative ways of sharing the good news among unreached, resistant people. More than 1 billion Indians remain unreached with the good news of Jesus Christ.

- Poverty in India affects hundreds of millions, predominantly in rural areas, but also in cities like Delhi where half the population lives in slums.

- No country has more children in crisis than India: 35 million orphans, 20 million child laborers and 1.2 million children involved in prostitution.

- Discipling new believers can be a challenge, when illiterate, isolated Christians must walk miles to reach the nearest fellowship group or church.

Prayer Starters:

- The cultural barriers of the caste system and Hinduism to be overcome by the gospel.
- The good news of Jesus Christ to reach people in every village, town and city.
- Justice and hope in a nation plagued by oppression, poverty and disease.



JESUS in a Garment Factory

Walk in obedience to all that the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live and prosper and prolong your days in the land that you will possess.

Deuteronomy 5:33, NIV

Jesus Film Project® staff members and a partner organization banded together to take the gospel to the Mishnaol* people for the first time. To reach them, a film team was equipped with a small projector set. The compact size of these sets enables a film team to move about and show *JESUS* in hostile locations without attracting attention.

First, the film team contacted Milton*, the head of the well-known family. He owned a garment business and oversaw a number of employees who manned banks of sewing machines, working long hours and days.

The dedicated film team met with Milton and privately shared the gospel. The more he heard about Jesus, the more he wanted to know. When the team said they had a film about the life of Jesus, and it was in a language he could understand, Milton became excited.

He asked the team to set up the showing not in his home, but inside his garment factory. He invited his entire family, relatives and employees to attend.

* Name changed for security purposes.

Because it was a work day, they weren't able to start the showing until 8 p.m. Sitting by their sewing machines, the Mishnaol people heard the Word of God and experienced His love, death and resurrection on their behalf. When *JESUS* concluded at about 10:30 p.m., the team invited anyone who wished to pray to become followers of Jesus.

There were 43 people who experienced *JESUS* in the garment factory. All 43 people prayed ... and became followers of Christ. All of them!

There is now a church among the Mishnaol—the first, we pray, of many to come. They meet weekly in the factory, their “church building.” Milton’s life has totally changed, and he encourages the team to show *JESUS* to others. He told the film team that before the showing, his business was down. But since their new church was born, God is blessing him and the employees: “We are getting new garment contracts every day.”

That was just one showing for one unreached people group. The film

team is using the compact projector equipment to share *JESUS* with other unreached groups of the city. It's hard for them to contain their excitement for this new tool, as several other churches have been planted.

And the film team made this request: “Please pray continuously that we might be able to share the gospel and the Word of God with every unreached person [in our nation]. The *JESUS* film brings people together from families, neighbors, friends and co-workers.”



Iraq

Nation: The Republic of Iraq

Location: Middle East

Population: 37 million

Literacy Rate: 79.7%

Official Languages: Arabic, Kurdish

Spoken Languages: 26

JESUS Language Translations: 7

*You are my hiding place; you
will protect me from trouble
and surround me with songs of
deliverance.*

Psalm 32:7, NIV

Iraq's Christian population was one of the oldest in the world, but it is now vanishing in the face of extremism and organized corruption. Christians are under siege from the genocide and religious cleansing by radicals. Thousands of Christian women and girls have disappeared from the streets. Persecution and harassment have caused up to 80 percent of Christians to flee the country or relocate to Northern Iraq. While the previous regime tolerated Christians, the new government is Islamic-oriented. Many churches in Iraq's capital of Baghdad are closed.



Although decades of war and hardship have humbled the Iraqi people, forming a new government is still difficult due to political clashes among three political groups: the Shi'a, majority, the formerly dominant Sunni minority, and the Kurds of Northern Iraq. Yet, there is some renewed openness to the gospel, especially among those people who have been displaced.

Prayer Starters:

- Evil and terror to be overcome by the power and love of Christ and His people.
- The gospel message to break through hearts hardened by long-standing divisions and intense rivalries.
- Courage for believers to stand firm in their faith despite persecution and terror.
- Believers to reach out to people who have been displaced by radicals and the Syrian Civil War and share God's love in both word (the gospel on film) and deed (humanitarian aid).
- Effective use of evangelistic *JESUS* film and audio tools with refugees and other displaced peoples.

Taxi Takes a Wrong Turn

Iraqi Christians are reaching out to people in a restricted area with humanitarian aid and DVDs of *JESUS*. At a distribution center in one part of Iraq, there is a medical/dental clinic. One day, a taxi driver from a dominate religion walked in with his wife. He needed dental work. The driver didn't know the center was run by Christians. When he saw the Bibles and Christian materials, he became quite upset.



Even though repulsed, he waited to see the dentist. In Islam, people are taught that Christians are filthy infidels ... people to be shunned. After the procedure, he angrily walked out the door.

One of the disciples followed him to his taxi, offering a copy of *JESUS*. He told the driver, “Here, you may need this.” Still upset, the taxi driver accepted, saying, “OK, OK, give it to me.” He grabbed the DVD from the worker, hurled it on his dashboard and drove away.

An hour later he was back—pale, shaking and terrified. He told the workers: “This film saved my life! I wanted you to know what it did for me. Thank you!”

Mystified, they asked, “When did you have time to watch it so quickly and become saved?”

“I didn’t watch it!” he exclaimed. “When I left your clinic I was stopped at a false checkpoint.” (Armed radicals will sometimes set up traps or

“false checkpoints” on the road, where they demand to see a person’s ID. They are looking for people not of their religious sect. Many have been killed in this way.)

He continued: “When I discovered I had no way out, I thought I was a dead man. I knew that when they saw my ID, that I was Shi’a, they would shoot me on the spot. As I pulled up and the guard was about to ask for my papers, he saw the DVD of *JESUS* lying on my dashboard. He waved me on, calling to the other guards, ‘Let him go, he’s just a dirty Christian. Let him go.’”

Now back at the clinic and still shaking, he told the workers that he for sure would watch the film that night at home. The next morning he returned, totally changed and joyful, raving about all he had seen and experienced. He then asked: “Can you give me 50 more DVDS of *JESUS*, please?! I have 50 taxi drivers I work with. They all have to see this film!”

Day 5

Peru

Nation: Republic of Peru

Location: South America

Population: 30 million

Literacy Rate: 94.5%

Official Languages: Spanish, Quechua, Aymara

Spoken Languages: 92

JESUS Language Translations: 28

The third largest South American country, Peru abounds in natural resources, yet there is also much poverty. Although poverty and unemployment have fallen dramatically over the last decade, especially along the coast and in the cities, many poor populations live in the Amazon and mountain regions. A third of Peruvian children, aged 6-14, work long hours in mining or construction.

Peru has dropped to second largest producer of cocaine (behind Colombia), due to greater economic prospects. Foreign demand for the illicit drug lures farmers to grow the crop.

Peru's strong history of Catholicism continues, but Catholics as well as mountain Quechua and Aymara people remain bound by syncretism of Christianity with Andean paganism. Peru needs pastors and teachers rich in solid biblical theology to mentor the next generation and more teams to translate the Bible into the smaller languages of tribal people groups.

Trends: Street children

Human trafficking

Exploitation of land and workers

Christian renaissance with Quechua and Amerindian peoples

Prayer Starters:

- A return to peace and stability after decades of corruption, dictatorships and terror.
- Humble pastors, trained in biblical theology, who reflect Jesus to a watching culture.
- Christians to boldly oppose sin and injustice while also ministering to the poor and oppressed.
- The work of translating and dubbing/recording the film *JESUS* for smaller people groups in Eastern Peru and throughout the six-country Amazon River Basin.
- The equipping of indigenous churches and mission organizations with compact solar-powered digital projector packs to show *JESUS* in rural towns and remote villages from the coastal South Pacific Ocean to the Andes Mountains.



JESUS Comes to the Urarina

You are knee deep in a tributary of the Amazon River, pushing hard through the shallows. Your small boat just ran into a sand bar. Your only choice is to get out, lift and push. It's wretchedly hot and humid. As muddy water laps around your legs, you see the eyes of alligators in all directions, with snouts poised just above the waterline.

And the mosquitoes—malaria-bearing mosquitoes—along with thousands of black flies! Then there are the hidden dangers below. Concealed by liquid murkiness are hundreds of stingrays and electric eels. This is not a place you want to be! But, at times, this has been the remote world of David Palusky.

David, an engineer/missionary and president of Renew World Outreach, had been working with Wycliffe missionaries Ron and Phyllis Manus. Ron and Phyllis were Bible translators laboring for 50 years to give the Word of God to the Urarina people, speakers of an extremely difficult-to-translate language. Ron was just completing their New Testament, but many Urarina people could not read, because theirs was an oral society, learning through stories, listening, sights and sounds. David and Ron decided they needed to experience the *JESUS* film. But the film wasn't yet available in Urarina.

Coordinating with Jesus Film Project®, Ron prepared a recording studio in his home. They planned to bring about 10 language speakers to record their voices for *JESUS*, based on Ron's translation of the Book of Luke. But the "actors" would have to travel down the shallow tributary, then over the actual Amazon River, and to the city ... at this time of year, a very difficult journey.

The waters of the tributary were very low, and had been dropping for weeks. The villagers couldn't make it through the treacherous waters, nor walk through the jungle. Believing that God wanted the Urarina to understand *JESUS*, and knowing the rains were still many weeks in the future, the team began to fast and pray, seeking God's intervention.

Then it happened! Though it was June, the driest month of the year, the waters began to rise as though it was the heavy rainy season, 20 feet higher (the height of a two-story building). They even researched the phenomenon and found that a rise of this magnitude during the dry season was unprecedented. The only explanation was that God had acted.

With their prayers answered, they hired a speedboat, went up the tributary and picked up the voice actors, bringing them to the temporary studio. Days later, *JESUS* was recorded in the Urarina language. New,

***Behold, I am doing a new thing!
Do you not perceive and know it?***

Isaiah 43:19, AMPC

advanced portable equipment helped refine the recordings and match the voices. After much work, the team began showing *JESUS* in the villages.

David said the results were equally unprecedented. People could finally see, hear and understand the story of the gospel. In a village showing with 130 people, all the people became enamored with the story, understood in their own mother tongue. Afterward, the men of the village gathered saying, "We must consider this." One called out to David, **"We've been waiting our whole lives to hear this!"**

In a matter of days, 20 new believers were baptized. The church began to grow, and quickly! Next, other remote Urarina villages needed to hear and understand the gospel through *JESUS*. But how to reach them?

Transporting the traditional 16 mm equipment film sets wasn't practical in this environment. David, an engineer by training and trade, began to consult with engineers of Jesus Film Project to develop a more portable tool to show people *JESUS*. Using a solar-powered video player/projector and a new, innovative screen with compact speakers, they engineered the 'Acclaimer Package'—all the equipment needed to show *JESUS* to remote people. And it all fits in a backpack!

Day 6

Siberia

Nation: Siberian Federal District,
Russian Federation

Location: Eurasia

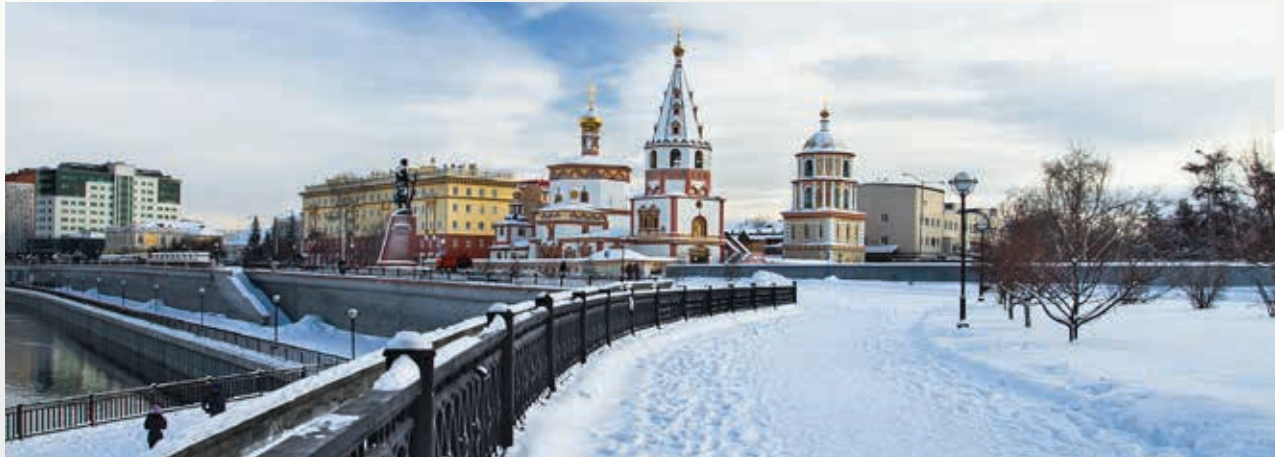
Population: 40 million

Literacy Rate: 99.7 %

Official Language: Russian

Spoken Languages: 135 (Russia)

JESUS Language Translations: 31 (Russia)



For 70 years under Communism, the Russian Federation (Soviet Union) used every opportunity to eliminate religion and replace it with atheism. The government imprisoned thousands of priests and pastors, decimating seminaries and churches, and outlawed religious instruction to children. Schools promoted atheism and, as a result, many Russians remain atheists today.

Russians from ethnic minority groups sometimes view Christianity as part of the Russian

oppression. Evangelism is more difficult in areas where Islam is the second largest religion.

Less than 30 years ago, Christians were persecuted and denied the freedoms we take for granted. But, today there is an ever-growing movement of disciples and churches leading people to Christ, as the Holy Spirit transforms lives and believers become true disciples.

Prayer Starters:

- True religious freedom to reign as discrimination and prejudices against evangelicals are rooted out.
- The millions who consider themselves Russian Orthodox Christians to embrace spiritual change that leads to biblical faith.
- A hope found not in drugs, alcohol, crime or corruption, but in Jesus alone.
- The training and equipping of public school teachers across the former Soviet Union to teach a curriculum of “morality and ethics” which includes the use of the *JESUS* film.
- The effective use of DVDs of *JESUS* and other digital evangelistic tools to share the gospel and follow up with new believers.

Finding Peace on Television

In the Siberian Federation of Russia, staff members actively give out DVDs of *Magdalena* (the adaptation of *JESUS* for women). They also conduct group showings where they distribute DVDs and then form follow-up groups and Bible studies. Staff workers have also arranged for showings in Siberia on broadcast television stations, (something that would have been impossible under Communist rule).

A woman named Galina was watching her TV at home. She remembers what happened: “All my life I considered myself a good person ... but I always felt something lacking in my soul. I tried going to [a church], but peace didn’t come.

“For Easter, the local TV channel showed the film *Magdalena: Released From Shame*. I watched the movie and wanted to learn more about the One who was crucified. I had questions, and I needed

to find the answers. At the end of the showing, there was an invitation to visit a church service and the address of a local church. I decided to go.

“When I came, I was invited to a Bible study group. At one of the group meetings, I received Jesus into my heart.”

“Now almost all of my neighbors, relatives and friends have watched this film that helped me find peace in Jesus Christ.”



Galina holds DVDs she loves to give others, so they can find peace too.

**Jesus said to the woman,
“Your faith has saved you;
go in peace.”**

Luke 7:50, NIV

Day 7

Sri Lanka

Nation: Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

Location: South Asia

Population: 22 million

Literacy Rate: 92.6 %

Official Languages: Sinhala, Tamil, English

Spoken Languages: 7

JESUS Language Translations: 1

Sri Lanka, “The Pearl of the Indian Ocean,” is a densely populated but beautiful island nation across the southern strait from India. Although the economy is on an upswing, most of the people live in poor, rural areas, depending on agricultural ventures, like tea plantations.

Several ethnic groups co-exist, not always peacefully. The largest group, the Sinhalese Buddhists (70%), the Hindu Tamils (12.8%) and the Sunni Muslims (8.5%) worship many, diverse gods. Christians (8.4%) draw from all ethnic groups, but many are from a Portuguese Catholic heritage.

Long plagued by ethnic divisions and issues of self-governance, the Sri Lankan government became embroiled in a 26-year civil war with the Tamils. The secessionist fighters were finally

crushed in 2009, at a cost of 40,000 lives. A legacy of human-rights-abuse accusations lingers to this day.

A significant increase in alcoholism, suicide and violence reveals a crisis in their belief systems.

Prayer Starters:

- Physical and relational healing after a generation of civil war.
- Freedom of religious expression without proposed anti-conversion laws.
- Growth and maturity for the indigenous church.
- The work of mission organizations like JESUS Film Harvest Partners who are effectively using the film *JESUS* to reach the lost and plant new churches.
- The ongoing use of *JESUS* and other films to reach men, women and children through the channels of television and the internet.



Nature Reveals the One True God

Thirty-five missionaries with Nazarene Missions International were in India and Sri Lanka on a prayer journey. They decided to show the *JESUS* film at a tea plantation.

The rolling hillsides were covered with green blankets of tea plants, crisscrossed by meandering trails for harvesting. Near the center of the plantation was a village with a town square—right next to a temple. It was the only location available where they could show *JESUS*. There, the team hung the screen between a light pole and a bamboo rod, all the while keeping a watch on the weather and threatening clouds.

It was getting dark. White and orange lightning flashes illuminated the hillsides. Thunder rolled down into the square. They started the projector. The missionaries prayed, “Lord, hold back the rain so these people can see *JESUS*.”

Some of the missionary team scattered themselves among the people, sitting on the rocky steps of homes. More flashes of lightning ... more thunder. The speakers carried the Word of God contained in *JESUS* to all around, heard with an unusual authority. A few missionaries pointed to the hillsides. They could see people turning on their lights, stepping onto their porches to watch the screen from a distance, and listening—drawn by the sound of *JESUS* in their mother tongue.

About halfway into the film the rain began, lightly at first, then more and more. The team shielded the projector from the weather and prayed, “Oh Lord, please stop the rain. These people have no umbrellas; they are getting wet and won’t stay to hear the gospel.”

But the rain continued. The people witnessed His love and miracles, His power over nature. Then, when Jesus was being nailed to the cross, the heavens broke loose and a deluge of rain poured down over all. Yet the crowd remained! It was a mystery to the team, as the people stayed through the invitation. Soaked and deeply moved, many indicated decisions

The LORD will open the heavens, the storehouse of his bounty, to send rain on your land in season and to bless all the work of your hands.

Deuteronomy 28:12, NIV

for Christ. It was only after the showing that the team came to fully understand what had just happened.

That particular area was in the midst of a drought. It hadn’t rained in three months. Their tea plants were turning brown and starting to die—and with them, the people’s livelihoods. The people were desperate. The priests and all the followers of the local religion had been praying for weeks, seeking rain, offering sacrifices, **WAILING ALOUD TO THEIR MANY GODS**. Several women had been at the temple that very day, pleading for rain. The answer from their gods? Nothing ... just silence.

But then later, as they were all watching *JESUS*, the Holy Spirit witnessed powerfully to their spirits. As they watched the Lord suffer at the hands of the soldiers’ cruelty, as the nails were driven into His hands and feet, as His cross was raised, the people were transfixed. At that moment the deluge began—and it became clear to them: This Jesus is indeed the God of all, the Lord of nature. He alone had answered their prayers!

Day 8

Syria

Nation: Syrian Arab Republic

Location: Middle East

Population: 17 million

Literacy Rate: 86.4%

Official Languages: Arabic, Kurdish

Spoken Languages: 22

JESUS Language Translations: 4



With a Mediterranean coast location, ideal for agriculture and tourism, Syria boasted a population of 22 million people as recently as 2010. Ninety percent are Arab Muslims, although the government is secular.

Coups and political instability have been the norm for decades, but five years ago

during the “Arab Spring,” Syria began unraveling. Governmental corruption led to pro-democracy protests and demands, followed by violence on all sides, demands for President Assad’s resignation, international sanctions, and possibly worst of all—invasion by ISIS (the terrorist group, “Islamic State”). ISIS capitalized on Syria’s instability and started a war within a war, primarily in the regions bordering Iraq and Turkey.

Today 13.5 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, 6.5 million are displaced internally, and 4.8 million displaced as refugees, making the Syrian situation the largest humanitarian crisis in the world. Everyone who could have

left has left, leaving the most vulnerable: the elderly, the handicapped, families with small children, and those who couldn’t make the trek to safety.

Trends: Persecution
Jihadist movements
Humanitarian crisis
Refugee crisis
More Muslims coming to faith in Jesus

Prayer Starters:

- A swift end to the horrific civil war, with people of peace rising to leadership.
- Jesus to reveal Himself to the millions of Syrian individuals and families displaced by the war.
- The church in Syria to stay strong under immense pressure and to remain faithful and loving witnesses.
- The safety of Syrians—especially families—escaping the civil war and traveling by land and sea.
- The efforts to bring the gospel to displaced Syrians in Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and across Europe.

“It’s Food From Heaven!”

“But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins”—then He said to the paralytic, “Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.” And he arose and departed to his house.

Matthew 9:6-7, NKJV

Deadly chemical bombs rained down on a civilian neighborhood near Damascus, Syria. One bomb fell near the home of a couple, Javed* and Yana and their six children. All the children died. The chlorine gas also paralyzed Javed.

All Yana could do was drag her husband out of the ruins. Through great struggle, they made it to the relative protection of nearby woods. There they hid for several months from the violence, surviving only on roots and water. All the while, they remained faithful to their religious beliefs. With Javed paralyzed, Yana fulfilled their Islamic obligation to pray five times per day.

Early one morning, still in the woods, Yana was startled awake, “Javed! I just had a dream ... I saw a Man in white ... He was talking to me. I saw people nearby ... for the first time, I think I have hope!” She had no idea what the dream meant, and neither did Javed.

When it was day, Yana went to find water, leaving Javed behind, paralyzed. She was

actually gone a few days but returned not only with clean water, but also fresh food and most importantly, a changed heart. With a sense of wonder, Javed asked, “How did you get this?” She replied, “It’s food from heaven!”

In the following weeks, several times Yana would leave and return, again taking a few days but coming back with more water and “food from heaven.” And she was changed. Javed said she was loving, joyful, and she stopped praying five times per day. Instead, she went off by herself, praying “to a different God.”

Finally, in the middle of the night, Javed had to know: “You are my wife. What is going on?! You are changing!” Yana replied, “I will tell you, but before I do, you must promise to follow my God.” Lying there paralyzed, Javed had nothing to lose: “OK, I will follow Him. Tell me now. Who is your God?”

“His name is Jesus, and He is the One True God. When I went hiking over the mountain, I encountered secret Christians (in reality a *JESUS* film team). They gave me food and

water. And they showed me a film about Jesus. As I watched, as they talked to me, I understood that Jesus is the One True God and that He could forgive my sins. I’ve been learning from them.” Then Javed and Yana both fell asleep.

Now it was Javed’s turn. He awoke and stirred his wife: “Yana, Yana, I’m healed! Look ... I can move my legs ... I can walk!!” Yana knew why. She showed him the Bible that the team had given her. “I’m reading this book and praying to Jesus. He healed you.” Javed took the Bible and kissed it, saying, “I need to go meet these people too and learn about Him. I want to follow Jesus.”

The next morning, Yana and Javed, now healed, walked together over the mountain and found the *JESUS* film team. Equipped with a small solar-powered projection set, they showed Javed *JESUS* as well. He too became a follower of Jesus. Though they lost their six children in the gas attack, they are both seeking ways to share the good news with the rest of their family to tell them that they have found hope and life, that Jesus is the One True God.

* Names changed for security purposes.

West Africa

Nations: Multiple

Location: West Africa

Population: 362 million

Literacy Rate: Varies

Official Languages: Arabic, French, English, Portuguese, indigenous African languages

Spoken Languages: 2,100 African languages

JESUS Language Translations: 313

West Africa includes 18 countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, the island of Cape Verde, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, the island of Saint Helena, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sao Tome and Principe and Togo.

The north-south “fault line” between Christianity and other hostile religions borders are Nigeria and the Sahel, a semiarid region stretching across the north. For years, there have been sporadic outbreaks along this line, with violence becoming more frequent, and persecution against Christians more intense. Hundreds of churches have been burned and many Christians killed.



But today, many of the areas that used to be under their control are freed, praise God!

West Africans continue to heal personally and nationally from the terrible pain inflicted by civil wars, violence and the Ebola virus crisis. Many remain traumatized and destitute, with poverty and joblessness rife.

Prayer Starters:

- True stability, sustained peace, integrity and honesty in government.
- An emphasis on discipleship and balanced Bible teaching.
- Restoration and wholeness for those who have suffered the atrocities of war and disease.
- Supernatural love and forgiveness by persecuted Christians.
- The church to be both burdened and equipped for evangelism.

Demanding Herdsman Hears the Truth

There is a large nomadic group of herdsmen who wanders through much of West Africa. Centuries ago, caravans of traders “converted” millions of these people to their religion. Today, the most devout among them have taken on a burdensome duty: to memorize their “holy book,” all of it, even if it takes a lifetime.

One of these devout followers had a small cassette tape recorder to aid his memorization. As he herded his livestock, he listened to the recorder, reciting the texts over and over. He literally lived and breathed that book.

One day he “just happened” to come across a *JESUS* film showing. From a distance he perceived words he had never heard before, spoken in his language. They were different words, strangely alive, with a power that reached deep into his heart.

He walked to the showing site, watched and listened more. Even as the film continued to play, he boldly approached the team. He



insisted they record the words he was hearing onto his tape recorder! “No, that’s not how it works,” the team replied, “We’re showing these people the film right now. We can’t stop in the middle of a reel.” He demanded, “No, I want this now, this moment!” Perceiving that he was a man with authority who was not about to relent, they agreed.

They took his recorder and pressed “record,” taping the words from where the film happened to be playing at that moment. When the film was over, he told them his story, how he had heard the words from afar. They were stunned to learn he had just made them record *JESUS* over one of the tapes of his holy book!

Then he made another demand: “Bring this film to my village!” It turned out he was the village chief of a large community, where the next day he commanded all to come and watch *JESUS*. As a result, a church was planted and he now follows Jesus.

The word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12, NIV

Zambia

Nation: Republic of Zambia

Location: Southeast Africa

Population: 15 million

Literacy Rate: 63.4%

Official Languages: English, Bemba, Nyanja

Spoken Languages: 72

JESUS Language Translations: 19



Although declared a Christian nation in 1991, many Zambians have never heard a clear presentation of the gospel. Rural farmers continue to combine Christianity with traditional African beliefs, including witchcraft and sorcery.

With half the population under 18, including 900,000 orphans, many are not achieving the minimum goal of schooling—fourth grade in the United States—due to poverty and its many causes. The young, needy and uneducated are vulnerable to cults, mushrooming everywhere.

Another major religion, from the north, is pushing hard to expand in Southern Africa, their last frontier. Representatives of this religion appeal to poor villagers, giving them food and placing children in sponsored, religious schools, where they are indoctrinated.

While many international agencies work to meet Zambia's basic human needs, church leadership and Bible training are equally needed to lift up the nation, spiritually.

Prayer Starters:

- The ongoing commitment by Zambians to see their nation flourish as a Christian one that honors the Lord.
- The development of training programs to raise up educationally and spiritually equipped leaders.
- Wisdom in tackling extreme poverty and the devastating HIV/AIDS crisis.
- The planting of new churches across Zambia by film and partner teams using *JESUS* and other evangelistic films and digital tools.
- The use of *Walking With Jesus*, a culturally relevant follow-up and discipleship film which was produced to reach people in Zambia and across the continent of Africa.

Powers of Witchcraft Defeated

One of the Wesleyan *JESUS* film teams in Western Zambia was working in an area known for witchcraft. Witchcraft and the power of the demonic are very real, locking millions in chains of fear.

The team sought out the village “headman,” to secure his permission to show *JESUS*. But they failed to secure permission from his sister, Berena, the area’s powerful witch.

The team chose an open field and began setting up their equipment: a table, DVD player, video projector, screen, speakers and lights. A curious crowd began to build. That’s when Berena came storming in. “What do you people think you are doing?” They tactfully explained that they had obtained permission from the headman, her brother. She fired back: “I don’t care who gave you permission. There will be no showing of your *JESUS* film in this village. So just pack your things and go somewhere else!”

But the team felt they couldn’t stop now. The people had helped erect the screen and were excited to see a film in their language. So the team told Berena they would continue. She snapped back, “OK, we shall see who is in

authority here.” She angrily turned away, and left.

The sun set, the people continued to gather, now about 1,000 in all. *JESUS* began to play, captivating the people, proclaiming the very Word of God. Team leader and eyewitness Alex told what happened next: “I was sitting just behind the table, monitoring the equipment. About 30 minutes into *JESUS*, something strange overwhelmed us. It was like a cold, eerie wind descended on the showing site. I can’t really describe it. We all felt it. The whole crowd fell silent. Evil was in our midst.

“I saw it with my own eyes. The table on which we had placed the DVD player, projector and sound system lifted off the ground, about a foot, flipped over and crashed to earth. The screen went black. The crowd knew it was witchcraft. Most panicked and scattered in all directions. All we could do was try and calm the remaining people. We announced we would hopefully be back the next day to show them *JESUS*.”

Before Alex and his film team left the showing site, they knelt to pray: “Lord, the earth and its

Put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground.

Ephesians 6:13, NIV



fullness belong to You. This ground is Yours, and we cover it in the blood of Jesus. We declare in

(Continued on next page)

Powers of Witchcraft Defeated, continued...

the name of Jesus Christ that this ground shall witness the salvation and deliverance of many.”

The next morning the team inspected their equipment. Instead of finding damage, they were surprised to discover it was all in perfect working order. As before, the team went to the headman, to ask his permission. As they spoke, here came Berena! She smugly announced, “I suppose you know who is powerful in this village ... your God was made into a public spectacle, and He did nothing about it.” Undaunted, the team went to the site and set up their equipment.

As night fell, the team was ready. They had placed the equipment on the same spot. The people gathered, but now the crowd was double in size from the night before, about 2,000 people, wondering if they would witness a supernatural confrontation.

The team pressed play on the DVD player. The digital projector beamed the images clearly on the screen. The people heard Jesus speak the Word of God in their own language. At 30 minutes, nothing happened ... at 60 minutes, nothing ... 90 minutes, nothing...

Then, at the end of the film, something indeed supernatural happened. When the team gave the invitation for salvation, all but a handful of the crowd indicated decisions for Christ—nearly 2,000 people!

The workers were overwhelmed by the response and began following up with their new “Babes in Christ.” Then a few days later, while they were showing *JESUS* in another village, Berena showed up again. No longer hostile, she described watching *JESUS* that second night, but from afar. She confessed that she had since been struggling with deep conviction, for she had witnessed for herself that Jesus (and His cross) was greater than the demons she

commanded. Berena also told of a recurring dream [a vision of hell] and how a voice kept saying His cross could save her. Now, she was ready.

Her heart soft, the team opened the Four Spiritual Laws booklet and explained the gospel. Sitting on the ground, holding the hand of a team member, she bowed her head in prayer, giving her life to the Lord. How wonderful that there is now a thriving church in that village! Berena is now one of its most committed members, a leader of the church who speaks boldly for the Lord. When we interviewed the team member, he happily reported that 35 new believers had just been baptized at the new church!

***“I think the JESUS film is one of the great tools for evangelism ...!
This single project has been probably one of the most effective in
getting the ear and the hearts of a lost world.”***

— Franklin Graham, President, Samaritan’s Purse



Jordan

Nation: The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Location: Middle East

Population: 8.75 million

Literacy Rate: 95.4 %

Official Languages: Arabic, English

Spoken Languages: 16

JESUS Language Translations: 1

As the Arab Spring began sweeping across the Arab world in 2011, and large-scale protests demanded economic and political reforms, many demonstrations turned into civil war and instability. But in Jordan, King Abdullah II replaced his prime minister and introduced a number of reforms amending the constitution and establishing governmental commissions. Still, due to unprecedented regional instability, 1.4 million Syrian refugees fled ISIS and joined the 2.1 million Palestinians already seeking refuge in Jordan.

Though Jordan is named after the Jordan River, the place where Jesus was baptized, 96 percent in Jordan are Muslim and only 4 percent are Christian. Even today, 14 of the 21 people groups in Jordan have not heard the gospel. Religious freedom is allowed, as long as Islamic law and public morality are not violated. Though legally protected, many new followers of Christ experience pressure from society.

Evangelical churches, though small, are experiencing encouraging growth. The majority of the population is overwhelmingly Sunni

Muslim, but the Iraq wars have raised questions about their religion and are creating an openness to Christianity.

Media ministry is proving to be effective, including Christian satellite TV and radio broadcasts.

Prayer Starters:

- Current religious freedom to remain despite increasing pressure to suppress it.
- The multitude of refugees, who have crossed into Jordan, to clearly hear the true gospel.
- Christianity to be held in high regard so that God's work in this strategic part of the world would not be thwarted.

In Love With That Person Jesus

*For the joy of
the LORD is your strength.*

Nehemiah 8:10b, NIV

One day Umar was browsing the internet and found the *JESUS* film in his language. He watched on his computer and contacted a follow-up center. He told a counselor, “I am in love with that person Jesus Christ,” and after further discussion, gladly gave his life to the Lord.

Umar was discipled and grew rapidly in his faith but then was caught by the secret police, who informed his family. They turned on him ferociously and began a series of beatings that lasted months.



Yet he remained steadfast. Between beatings Umar would strengthen himself by watching one of the DVDs he had requested by mail, which he kept hidden in his bedroom.

His younger brother hated the beatings his sibling received and eventually admitted he was disillusioned with their religion. He told Umar, “I found your DVDs and watched. I want to know more about Jesus.” Umar explained the gospel, and his brother also believed.

Next, his mother confessed, “I was so impressed while Umar suffered the beatings. He would look up at his father and say ‘I love you.’ I had to ask, what power is behind this man, my son.” So she too gave her life to the Lord. At last report, Umar was praying that his entire family would come to Christ, including his father. And I’m sure he wants to show them *JESUS*, the tool that God used to lead him out of darkness into light.

***“The JESUS film is the most effective
evangelistic tool ever invented...”***

—Rick Warren
Pastor and Author of *The Purpose Driven Life*

India

Nation: Republic of India

Location: South Asia

Population: 1.25 billion

Literacy Rate: 71.2 %

Official Languages: Hindi, English

Spoken Languages: 456

JESUS Language Translations: 200

Located in Southern Asia, the advancement of God's kingdom in India faces many hardships. Although India's constitution provides for full religious freedom, the rise of extremism has resulted in hate campaigns against both Muslims and Christians. Due to mass conversions of low-caste Dalit groups away from Hinduism to Christianity, anti-conversion laws are sensitive and important.

population lives in slums. No country has more children in crisis than India: 35 million orphans, 20 million child laborers and 1.2 million children involved in prostitution.

Isolated Christians must walk miles to reach the nearest fellowship group or church; therefore, discipling believers is a challenge—especially when they are illiterate.



Believers in India live in situations of potential persecution and need creative ways of sharing the good news among unreached, resistant people. More than 1 billion Indians remain unreached with the good news of Jesus Christ.

Poverty in India affects hundreds of millions, predominantly in rural areas, but also in cities like Delhi, where half the

Prayer Starters:

- The collaborative work of planting churches in India by the ministries of the American Bible Society, Wycliffe Bible Translators, Faith Comes By Hearing, Campus Crusade for Christ® and Jesus Film Project®.
- The evangelistic use of the film *JESUS* in more than 160 languages by churches and partner ministries throughout India.

A More Powerful Spirit



“I was a respected witch doctor.* Spirits responded to my call. I possessed them and they possessed me. My fame was wide. People with all kinds of problems came to me for relief. I used to

my village (brought by a film team). I couldn't believe there could be someone who loved so greatly, yet, was so powerful as Jesus.

perform rites on moonlit nights in a graveyard, calling on the spirits of ancestors who wandered above their graves. People thought I was very powerful and happy.

“But the truth was I was miserable, disturbed and confused. So many spirits haunted me day and night. I felt terrible all the time. One day, I happened to watch *JESUS* in

“My mind was in conflict. Different scenes from *JESUS* kept flashing through my head. Finally, I went to the film team and a pastor. The pastor explained more about Jesus. In Jesus' name the pastor cast the demons out of me. I was free! I surrendered to Jesus.”

That pastor, who was also part of the film team, reported that many other leaders have since followed Jesus, because of this man's fame and example. The former witch doctor even donated land for a new church, attended now by 300 people!

Therefore, if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

John 8:36, NKJV

* Direct personal testimony paraphrased for clarity and understanding.

Benin

Nation: Benin

Location: West Africa

Population: 10.7 million

Literacy Rate: 38.4%

Official Languages: French, Fon, Yoruba

Spoken Languages: 56

JESUS Language Translations: 16



One of Africa's more stable democracies, one-third of the population still lives illiterate, in poverty. Benin's economic struggles even lead parents to sell their children as slaves to neighboring Nigerians; 50,000 are trafficked each year.

In this least-evangelized non-Muslim country in Africa, evangelical believers are few. Many tribes and villages ask for pastors to show them

biblical Christianity to replace their syncretic version, combined with animism and voodoo. The need for trained pastors is high, as is the need for media ministry. Thirty of 60 total people groups do not have a Bible.

Prayer Starters:

- Those who practice voodoo and witchcraft to be set free from the powers of darkness.

- Bibles and Christian literature to be translated into the many languages still without Scripture.
- Church purity, with uncompromising faith and steeped in prayer.

Bird Woman

In Benin, West Africa, the birthplace of voodoo, a film team was working to reach a village in the heart of voodoo worship. The community combines three oppressive belief systems, Islam, witchcraft and voodoo ... a spiritual “perfect storm.”

Supported by prayer, the team showed *JESUS* in the Fon-Gbe language six consecutive nights. On the last night, the people saw a huge black bird fly right through the village, landing directly in front of the church. People chased it away crying, “It’s a witchcraft bird.”

Struggling to get airborne, it continued its flight. The bird landed again—this time in front of the chief’s house, who happened to be a strong believer in Christ. He had helped bring the

people *JESUS*. Word spread quickly of the strange bird. The police and town officials were called. A huge crowd formed. They watched in astonishment as what they thought was a bird transformed into a woman, a town witch.

(Let us be careful with this report, which came directly from our staff in Benin. They don’t believe that a literal transformation took place. Rather it was a demonic manifestation, a deception, one that the entire crowd witnessed. Having served many years in Africa*, I am aware that there are often demonic manifestations which we in the West are not normally familiar with. When Satan rules unhindered, he has nearly free reign to deceive and oppress.)

Next, the police and town leaders called a pastor and the film team members. When they arrived, they confronted the woman. She confessed that she and other witches had done everything within their abilities to interrupt the film campaign, but had failed. She also confessed that she had tried to use her powers

to kill the pastor and the Christian chief, but that the power in them (the Holy Spirit) had rendered her impotent.

The result of her testimony, the work of the teams, and demonstrated power of God resulted in hundreds being liberated in Jesus. There is now a thriving new church in this village.

When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick.

*Jim Green, Executive Director of Jesus Film Project®: September 2004 to April 2012.

Ecuador

Nation: Republic of Ecuador

Location: South America

Population: 16 million

Literacy Rate: 94.5%

Official Languages: Spanish, Quechua, Shuar

Spoken Languages: 25

JESUS Language Translations: 5

Located on the equator in South America, Ecuador includes sections of the Amazon rain forest between Colombia and Peru, in the east, while the Andes Mountains tower over the Pacific in the west. Despite this beautiful landscape, Ecuador has long been marred by political turmoil and poverty. In 2016, a 7.8-magnitude earthquake struck Ecuador, Peru, and Colombia causing widespread devastation. The ongoing political uncertainty, border wars and a series of natural and economic disasters have broken down old structures of state and church. As Ecuadorians have become more receptive to the gospel, the long-established Catholic church in Ecuador has found its position being challenged. This

has resulted in violent actions and intimidation against churches, yet the impact of the gospel continues to spread.

In 1967, only 120 of 3 million Quechua were Christians. Today in some areas, almost 50 percent of the Quechua people have come to know Christ as their personal Savior. Additionally, since the 2016 earthquake, 2,000 small groups have been started and 196 churches planted, by the grace of God.

Prayer Starters:

- Effectively trained workers equipped to address physical and spiritual poverty.
- Spiritual maturity in the church, to root out false teaching and embrace a heart for the less evangelized.
- Wise government leaders who are committed to justice and willing to address difficult social issues.



Lightning, a Fire and Two Flat Tires

*Do you know how the
clouds hang poised?*

Job 37:16, NIV

Standing under a tree during a torrential downpour, 10 young disciples were being drenched. Huddled closely together, lightning struck a nearby power pole. The explosion of the strike was unnerving.

The 10 workers had been riding a bus, taking portable *JESUS* film equipment and a translation of *JESUS* to a village in Ecuador. En route, the bus suddenly blew two tires, lurching to a stop. A fire broke out—a fire so severe that the team had to escape with the equipment through the windows!

As they stood in the pouring rain, another lightning bolt struck ... this time much closer. Again, a loud boom. This was not the kind of outreach they expected.

Two blown tires ... a fire with a harrowing escape ... close lightning strikes ... they must have felt their mission was under spiritual attack. Fortunately, a second bus stopped to pick them up. They loaded up the equipment, boarded, and traveled again over the rough, dirt road.

When they reached the “end of the line,” they offloaded their equipment. Now on foot, the team of 10 hoisted all the equipment on their shoulders—the generator, a projector, collapsible screen, PA system and lights. Then, another obstacle. They came to a river, swollen by the downpour. If they were to reach their target village, they had no choice but to lift the equipment above their heads and carefully wade through the swift current.

Finally, the weary evangelists made it to the village, a group of people steeped in idolatry. They set up the equipment. Then, as though right on schedule, the rain stopped. About 600 people heard the gospel and the Word of God in their own language. It was the first time they ever learned about Jesus and

what He had done for them. Of the 600 in attendance, 218 indicated decisions for Christ—about 36 percent!

This team of 10 young disciples is exemplary of a growing movement of partnership. The 10 were volunteers working with Church of the Nazarene, a key partner of Jesus Film Project®. Such partners supply workers and support. Our role is to supply them with projection equipment, translations of *JESUS*, films and training. The dedication of those 10 workers, and the equipment supplied by friends of Jesus Film Project, were used by the Holy Spirit to move 218 people from darkness into His marvelous light!

Day 15

Kenya

Nation: Republic of Kenya

Location: East Africa

Population: 46.7 million

Literacy Rate: 78%

Official Languages: English, Swahili

Spoken Languages: 69

JESUS Language Translations: 36

Today, nearly 50 percent of Kenyans consider themselves evangelical, and many are engaged in church planting and sending missionaries to other countries. Yet churches are challenged by nominalism, syncretism, and the need for trained leaders. Islam and tribal religions constitute 17 percent of the population.

Kenya is a country of great ethnic diversity, and tension between the groups causes many of the problems. In the 1990s, politically instigated tribal clashes killed thousands and left tens of thousands homeless. More recently, Kenyan soldiers have been battling the terrorist group Al-Shabaab in Somalia with relative success.

Although Kenya has become a stable country since independence from the United Kingdom in 1963 and one of the best economies in East Africa, still 41 million Kenyans live in poverty and 1.5 million suffer from AIDS.

Prayer Starters:

- The end of government corruption that continues to broaden the gap between the rich and poor.
- Foreign agencies and missionaries to transition from leadership to consulting roles for growing national organizations.
- Fresh Holy Spirit fire among the majority, though nominal, Christian population.



The Towering Wall of Rain

*I will also command the clouds
that they rain no rain on it.*

Isaiah 5:6b, NKJV

Bob was leading a Jesus Film Mission Trips® team* as they traveled northward from Nairobi to the vast, often drought-stricken land of the nomadic Pokot people. Part of his team began setting up for a showing. As they worked, Bob joined a Kenyan pastor on a breathtakingly beautiful hike up a large stone-faced mountain. They wanted to see the valley below from God's perspective while interceding for the people and the team.

While praying they saw a huge cloud begin to grow and tower above the valley. Soon they could see rain pouring down violently. There were strong winds and lightning bolts striking all around. As the cloud passed over, the two prayed, “Lord, hold back this rain during the showing tonight.”

Evening came. But the huge rain cloud was still there, and thundering. They began the showing. The team members prayed—fervently—that God would hold back what appeared to be an imminent deluge. Then, in amazement they watched. The rain fell. But it was as though the downpour split apart—falling all around them.

Enclosed on at least two sides by towering walls of falling rain, hundreds of Pokot people watched the entire film in their mother tongue, listening silently, intently to the Word of God—even as rain pounded the soil a mere 500 feet away. Some of the team went to check on the generator and could feel mist coming from the walls of water. Marveling at the scene, one team member said, “This is crazy!” So, with lightning bolts flashing, and thunder rumbling through the dark towering clouds above, the people stayed unafraid, remaining completely dry during the entire showing, captured by *JESUS*!



According to Bob, “The same hand that parted the Red Sea and calmed the storm on the lake, held back the rain so these people could see and hear the glorious gospel. It was also very eerie. I have never seen anything like it in all my days of showing the film.” Most importantly, Bob reported that 75 people in that showing indicated decisions for Christ that night!

*To learn more about Jesus Film Mission Trips®, go to: www.jesusfilm.org/go

Solomon Islands

Nation: Solomon Islands

Location: South Pacific

Population: 635,027

Literacy Rate: 84.1%

Official Languages: Melanesian Pijin, English

Spoken Languages: numerous immigrant languages

JESUS Language Translations: 9

Independent, yet part of the British Commonwealth, Solomon Islands are grouped in the South Pacific Ocean. Ethnic groups include the Melanesian (95 %), Polynesian (3.2 %) and Micronesian (1.2 %).

Geographically and politically fragmented, rival ethnic factions crippled the country in a wave of violence from 1993-2003. Governmental misconduct and crime continued to overwhelm the small economy and undermine stability and civil society. Today, only 23 percent of Islanders have electricity, 10 percent use the internet, and 68 percent enjoy mobile phones.

Solomon Islands has become a source and destination country for Southeast Asians subjected to forced labor and prostitution. Locally, some parents sell their children into

marriage to foreign workers, or put them up for “adoption” to pay off debts. Children can find themselves forced into domestic servitude or prostitution.

Training of pastors and leaders is a strategic need for church growth and maturity. Even though 73 percent of Solomon Islanders are Christian, nominalism is a problem. Cults have grown up and the old animistic worldview persists in some areas.

Prayer Starters:

- The church to be a source of reconciliation after years of civil division and war.
- A wave of revival to sweep across every island.
- The Word of God to be translated into every tongue.



30 Armed Men: Christ Won Us Tonight

*Commit your actions to the LORD
and your plans will succeed.*

Proverbs 16:3, NLT

In the South Pacific, just east of Papua New Guinea, lie 900 picturesque islands, known as the Solomon Islands. A *JESUS* film team was working along the coastline of one of the nine inhabited islands, showing the film in village after village.

JESUS film workers, volunteers from island churches and a partnering organization known as Language Recordings worked together to show *JESUS* in 11 villages.* They were preparing for a 12th village when a two-way VHF radio call came from a church leader:

“I strongly advise you ... don’t come to the next village. Two tribes are in a land dispute, essentially at war over a logging operation. The situation is very tense and quite dangerous. Don’t come. Go to another village.” The team was concerned. But the next morning they shared a common impression that they should go.

Another radio call came ... “I’m urging you ... it’s very dangerous here and risky, extremely tense. Don’t come! They are armed with machetes, spears, bows and arrows, steel rods and knives.

You will be caught in the middle!” The film team spent an hour in prayer, seeking guidance from the Holy Spirit. They all felt His leading ... “Go.”

It wasn’t easy. And as they arrived, they could sense tension in the air. No one officially greeted them. They felt like outsiders, unwanted and that they had come at the very worst time. They proceeded anyway.

About 6 p.m. and using their PA system, the team announced the film. People streamed from all directions. They sat down quietly before the screen, unsure of what would happen next. The team started the projector. Out from the speakers came their language, “Pijin,” the national tongue of Solomon Islands. More people came.

During the second reel of the film, under the cover of darkness, five canoes silently landed on the beach carrying 30 armed men from the opposing tribe. They crept in, moving unseen through the bushes, placing themselves strategically behind the crowd, ready to attack. But they held back, just standing there or kneeling with their weapons, listening and watching.

The crowd, including the armed warriors, took in the gospel story. The Word of God went deep into their hearts. They felt His love, saw Him die for their sins, and were thrilled by His resurrection on their behalf. They listened to the invitation to receive Christ as Savior and Lord.

“I will never forget what I saw,” said the team member ... Of about 900 people present, 478 gave their hearts to the Lord, including the 30 armed men! The leader of the raiding party could not hold back his emotions. He went to the front, and stood with our team. Through his tears he announced, ‘We came here to fight, but Christ won us tonight.’”

* Story courtesy of Every Home for Christ, one of more than 1,700 partnering churches, denominations and mission agencies that use the *JESUS* film in their evangelism and discipleship work.

Day 17

Pakistan

Nation: Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Location: South Asia

Population: 202 million

Literacy Rate: 57.9%

Official Languages: Urdu, Punjabi, Sindhi

Spoken Languages: 60

JESUS Language Translations: 12

Pakistan is a unique fusion of diverse customs and unity through a predominantly shared Islamic faith. Although rich in culture, 35 percent of Pakistanis live below the poverty line. Children often miss school to work and supplement the family income. Difficulties include substance abuse, low literacy and government corruption.

Religious freedom is promised to minorities by law, but in practice, those not from the dominate religion worship cautiously. Previous governments imposed radical religious values on the legal system, taxation measures and public life as well as discrimination against all religious minorities. Despite the public's misgivings, radical religious law is increasingly applied to all.

Extremists have controlled entire territories for a decade and Christians live in constant danger. Bible translation is exceptionally difficult, and 95 percent of the people are unreached.

Prayer Starters:

- Extremist and terrorist strongholds to be demolished and rendered powerless.
- The spiritually oppressed in remote areas to encounter the gospel.
- That the church will multiply in the power of the Spirit, even as persecution intensifies.



Glove Box Evangelism

A staff member named Roger* was recently in a city of Pakistan's Sindh province. There he met with a number of Pakistani Christians who were distributing DVDs of *JESUS* by the thousands. Among them was a cab driver called Yasir.

Although driving passengers is his livelihood, Yasir sees sharing Christ with his passengers to be his primary purpose. As he picks people up, driving them from place to place in the often jammed, slow city traffic, Yasir has time to tell them about Jesus.

He explains who the Prophet Isa really is, the risen Lord, the Son of God ... their Savior. To any who are interested, he opens his glove compartment and gives them a DVD of *JESUS* saying, "This DVD will tell you more and it is in

our language." He also gives each person a small New Testament, in the Urdu language. In the safety of his car, where no one can see, many passengers gladly receive *JESUS* and a New Testament.

You might ask ... has he had any success in such a closed nation? Roger described his amazement when Yasir pulled out a log book. He showed Roger the names and addresses of all the passengers he had led to Christ through his witness, the DVDs and New Testaments.

Roger said there were a hundred (100) people listed! Yasir joyfully reported that he had helped get the majority involved with local churches. There they will be grounded in their new faith and foster a Pakistani movement of evangelism and church planting. He has also been

instrumental in helping several new believers become trained themselves to share their new faith and to give out the DVDs! In fact, partners in the country report that DVDs of *JESUS* are greatly accelerating understanding of the gospel, leading to many new followers of Jesus.

So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

Isaiah 55:11, NKJV

* All names have been changed for security purposes.

Nigeria

Nation: Federal Republic of Nigeria

Location: West Africa

Population: 186 million

Literacy Rate: 59.6%

Official Language: English, Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, Fulani

Spoken Languages: 500+

JESUS Language Translations: 143

Located in Western Africa, bordering the Gulf of Guinea, Nigeria is currently experiencing its longest period of civilian rule since independence in 1960. It is Africa's most populous country, divided among 250 ethnic groups. Nearly half the population are Muslims, living in the north, and half are Christians, living in the south. The rest follow indigenous African beliefs.

there are now 50 mission-training institutions in Nigeria, and it is one of the leading missionary-sending countries of the developing world. Nigeria's prayer movement is one of the world's strongest, stimulated by political stresses, by religious persecution of Christians, and by a genuine desire for revival and evangelization.



The scale of corruption in Nigeria is staggering, and the challenges facing the government are myriad and urgent. Nigeria has the highest number of out-of-school children in the world: 10.5 million.

Church growth has been massive and remains so, but such growth is not without its own dangers like second-generation nominalism and syncretistic Christianity. Thankfully,

Prayer Starters:

- The dismantling of widespread corruption, crippling all levels of society, especially the government and including the church.
- Discipleship and balanced Bible teaching.
- Increasingly persecuted Christians in predominately Islamic northern states to be characterized by supernatural love and forgiveness. Pray that wounds may be healed and that Christians in Nigeria will be able to forgive and move on with their lives.

God's Sacrifice for Jigar

*If we say we have fellowship with Him,
and walk in darkness, we lie and do not
practice the truth.*

1 John 1:6, NKJV

JESUS film teams and partners in Nigeria report that the people in remote villages are deeply enmeshed with ancestor, idol and demonic worship. Workers say it's a place of great spiritual darkness. Fifteen people have been murdered there in the past several years, offered as human sacrifices to the gods.

Then Akin* came ... fearless, gifted, zealous and a JESUS film team partner leader. He is so effective that film teams described his arrival among these villages as "terrorizing Satan's kingdom with the gospel." When Akin began showing the people JESUS (in the local Jenjo language), among the first to watch was one of the cult leaders, a man named Jigar. He was active in the ceremonies, beating the drums during human sacrifices.

As Jigar watched JESUS, spiritual light flooded his heart—a light he didn't even know existed. The Holy Spirit convicted Jigar of his sin. He witnessed Jesus giving His life willingly, God's sacrifice for not only the sins of all men, but

most especially for Jigar's. The truth was powerful. He believed and found new life in Christ. Jigar became transformed and totally



committed to serving Christ, driven to see all the villages around him experience the Word of God as he had through JESUS. Other leaders of the cult of death also watched the film. They too believed.

Some cult members have tried every means

to kill Jigar, attacking him physically, seizing his house and all his property. But their attempts have failed to stop him from preaching Christ.

Jigar: "If I die, I am dying in the Lord and I know where I am going. But I will never die under their power. For the power in me is greater than in them. Though I have lost everything in the world, yet I have gained all in the heavenly realm."

Another former cult leader is a man named Enofe. Just before Enofe was to be elevated to a very high rank in the cult (he was to be ordained as a priest), film team leader Akin showed him JESUS. He too believed.

Jigar and Enofe became part of a six-person discipleship group led by Akin. He taught them to preach the gospel, to help people see JESUS, and to learn and study the Word of God so they might prevail against the evil that they once followed. One of these six disciples himself has since raised up 56 more disciples!

* Names changed for security purposes.

North Africa

Nations: Multiple

Location: North Africa

Population: 276 million

Literacy Rate: 99.4%

Official Languages: Arabic, French

Spoken Languages: 189

JESUS Language Translations: 33

North Africa lies in the northernmost region of the African continent and includes 10 countries: Algeria, Chad, Libya, Morocco, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Sudan, Tunisia and Western Sahara.

Tied to Southwest Asia and Europe more than sub-Saharan Africa, the Islamic influence is significant and North Africa is a major part of the Muslim world. Terrorist groups continue to be active across the continent, attempting to overthrow governments, destabilize politics and intimidate populations. ISIS continues to regularly attack Christians.

Efforts to reach North Africans with the gospel must be “quiet,” often through modern technology like Wi-Fi devices, the internet, *JESUS* DVDs, CDs and audiocassettes. Radio and satellite television broadcasts of the *JESUS* film help overcome political, cultural and religious barriers.

Prayer Starters:

- Protection and safety from fighting, theft, kidnapping and ISIS attacks.
- More than 1 million refugees needing food, shelter and education for their children.
- That many will be saved through satellite TV and media outreaches.

Contraband for Jesus

One believer who took DVDs into a radical part of North Africa was waiting in line at customs. In his baggage were hundreds of DVDs of *JESUS*. An officer instructed him to open the bag. When he saw the New Testaments and DVDs, he confiscated all, saying they were “contraband.” Fortunately the believer was not arrested and allowed to pass through.

He tried again and took in another bag of New Testaments and DVDs. The same thing happened. An officer instructed him to open his bag. They saw the DVDs and confiscated them. He feared they would recognize him in the future.



So once more he returned, but this time not with DVDs. An officer did recognize him and instructed that he open his bags. He found nothing.

The officer queried, “OK, where are the DVDs?” He answered, “I didn’t bring any.” “Why not?” the customs official asked. “Because you confiscate them.”

The officer surprised him, speaking quietly, “Yes, we confiscate them. But we are selling all you bring. There is great demand here. Many people want the DVDs. Can you bring more next time?” The Christian asked, “How many do you want?” On his next trip in, he “smuggled” 300 DVDs. They were immediately confiscated!

Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation of the Lord which he will accomplish for you today ...

Exodus 14:13, NASB

Day 20

The Congo

Nation: Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

Location: West Africa

Population: 4.8 million

Literacy Rate: 79.3%

Official Languages: French, Lingala,
Monokutuba

Spoken Languages: 217

JESUS Language Translations: 45

In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC/ formerly Zaire), a remarkable number of Congolese turned to Christ last century— from 1.4 percent of the population in 1900 to 70 percent professing Christians today. Yet, not all really know Christ. The major religions are Christianity and Islam.

The DRC is a massive country, with the fourth largest population in Africa and abounding in natural resources. Yet, the majority of Congolese receive only three years of education, and many have never heard the gospel. There is no real centralized government or connectedness between vast regions, nearly no functioning infrastructure or single uniting language or culture. After many years of insecurity and war, many areas still suffer from violence and insecurity. Nearly 1 million people were displaced in 2016.

Through it all, the church's social impact has grown and emerged as the only viable national structure to endure. Christian leaders of spiritual maturity and moral integrity need to

be raised up for ministry both in the church and in society.

Prayer Starters:

- A stable national government rooted in righteousness.
- Followers of Jesus to be ambassadors of spiritual and national reconciliation.
- The Prince of Peace to heal those traumatized by widespread violence.

The Mysterious Saving Voice

Brutal, radical groups are operating in parts of Africa. In one strategic area, a dangerous rebel group took power, and they went on a multi-week rampage, targeting cities and communities with many evangelical Christians.

They ransacked the Jesus Film Project® ministry offices in a large city, stole all the office equipment and two vehicles and a motorbike. The national director and ministry leader, whom I will call Osagie, and his staff workers escaped and hid.

Next, the radicals took their rampage to Osagie's home neighborhood and killed all the men they could find, sparing the women.

Osagie's house was next.

Armed men broke down the gate. Osagie's time on earth was up as he knew he would surely be killed unless the Lord intervened.

Suddenly he heard a voice outside: "It's enough, it's enough, leave him, don't enter, leave him, don't enter!" Osagie is convinced it was divine

intervention in answer to his prayers. Once it was safe, he and his family fled. Thirty days later, the rebels were gone and Osagie returned home, but his family's house had been looted. There was absolutely nothing left. All the film-showing equipment at the office was also gone.

Still Osagie persisted in sharing the gospel. Two months later, he went to a neighboring country for ministry training to sharpen his skills as he presented the good news. There, a ministry leader showed Osagie the latest tools: video tablets and other digital devices, to let people experience *JESUS* and follow-up films.

Osagie went to work and was amazed at the ease of use and the power of a single video tablet to win people to Christ, right in the midst of radicals and jihadists. After just six months, Osagie reported that he had shown the films on his

He got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters; the storm subsided, and all was calm. "Where is your faith?" He asked His disciples.

Luke 8:24b-25, NIV

tablet, including the *JESUS* film, to about 400 people, many of whom were refugees like him and his family.

More than half of the people who watched indicated they wanted to follow Jesus. From these new believers, nine discipleship groups were formed—from fledgling Bible studies to new churches. Today, he reports that seven of these groups continue and are growing, "healthy in the Lord."



Mauritius

Nation: Republic of Mauritius

Location: Indian Ocean

Population: 1.4 million

Literacy Rate: 92.7%

Official Languages: Creole, English (official)

Spoken Languages: 13

JESUS Language Translations: 1

Coral reef nearly surrounds this beautiful island nation—*Ile Maurice*—located near the center of the Indian Ocean, 810 miles off the eastern coast of Africa.

Mauritius is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious society, with no indigenous people, where two-thirds of the population are of Indian descent, nearly a third are Creole (mixed African and European), and a small proportion are Chinese and European. The parliamentary government ensures freedom of religion, yet Hindus, the majority religion (50%), are subtly favored at the expense of Christians (33%), and Muslims (16%). Buddhist and Chinese faiths are also found.

Evangelism remains a challenge with 18 people groups, seven of which are unreached. While older, historic churches are in gradual decline, Evangelicals continue to experience growth, particularly within the Pentecostal and charismatic groups. Young people are open to the gospel but may hold back from commitment due to family pressure and expectations. Missionary work in Mauritius

has been limited due to difficulty in obtaining long-term visas, and the lack of appropriately trained personnel.

Prayer Starters:

- Unity among Christians to shape a positive testimony to young believers.
- Well-trained teachers of the Word who are models of godliness.
- Ministry to the young, who often receive the gospel with joy, but are tempted by crime, immorality and drugs.

Going Mobile With the Gospel

*Get the word out. Teach all these things.
And don't let anyone put you down
because you're young.*

1 Timothy 4:12, MSG

Recently, the Campus Crusade for Christ® country director for Mauritius, Mark,* and his team trained 251 volunteers from local churches and campuses to use the Jesus Film Project® app which delivers the *JESUS* film, related films, and short films in more than 1,600 languages directly to phones and tablets via the internet.

The app has proven to be a powerful tool, and Mark's team was eager to see how God would use it in Mauritius where nearly 50 percent of the people are Hindu, and the rest are Muslim or Roman Catholic. Very few have heard the gospel. Mark and the team found that a good place to start was by showing them a pre-evangelistic film, like *Liberté*, using the app.

- One of the team's first outreaches was in the schools. Seven girls gave their lives to Christ ... then 13 ... then 33 ... then 37!
- One boy was a 17-year-old drug dealer; the main dealer in the school. He was deeply touched by the story of the good

Samaritan. He was completely changed and no longer sells drugs.

- In addition, a number of the adult school staff members watched *JESUS* and gave their lives to Christ. The team was incredulous.
- One man who attended the original training was Ashvin. Shortly after completing it, Ashvin texted Mark to tell him he was using the app. "Mark, 14 people were saved and three want to be baptized."

Mark later shared, *"I felt like shouting 'Wow!' when I heard that."*

Mark and his team showed a short film to a group of students from a particularly aggressive religion. "I was actually afraid," Mark said, "but the film had a profound effect on them. They openly shared how they were imprisoned by their traditions and practices, that they felt trapped ... pressured by their parents. It was just amazing."

Although Mark did not have the opportunity to show them the *JESUS* film that day, nearly all of the students gave him their email addresses. Through the app, Mark was able to email a link to enable the students to download and watch *JESUS* on their own, in safety and privacy.

As Mauritius continues to grow as a hub of business and tourism, God has given Mark and his team a vision to train and equip many more people to share the gospel with the help of the Jesus Film Project app and other tools.



* All names have been changed for security purposes.

Day 22

Central Asia

Nations: Multiple

Location: Central Asia

Population: 91 million

Literacy Rate: 98.6%

Official Languages: Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Russian, Tajik, Turkmen, Uzbek

Spoken Languages: 43

JESUS Language Translations: 10

Central Asia encompasses a large strategic, geographic region, which includes five former Soviet states that predominantly practice the majority radical religion of the area. Two examples are Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

Sandwiched between the Middle East and East Asia, the majority of these 36 Central Asian people groups have 1 percent or fewer evangelical Christians. As former, secular Soviet states, these nationals also have histories and

traditions of Islam and Orthodox Christianity.

Diverse ethnically and culturally, most Central Asians have never known an evangelical Christian. Although evangelical Christians are beginning to multiply, they face many pressures including cultural difficulties and community rejection.

Prayer Starters:

- Well-trained, godly leaders despite the lack of Bible schools and seminaries.
- Effective use of the *JESUS* film and derivative films for women and children across Central Asia.



Bicycle Evangelism

Vlad* lives in Central Asia, where 90 percent of the people follow a dominant religion from the Middle East.

One day, someone showed Vlad the *JESUS* film. He believed, was made new in Christ and became a house church pastor. Vlad chose to serve the Lord as a volunteer and of his own accord, began showing others *JESUS*.

He and a close friend, Anton, rode their bicycle from place to place to help others experience *JESUS*, the film that brought them to Christ.

Soon, people in a nearby town heard about *JESUS* and asked this volunteer team to come and show them the story of the gospel, too — a remarkable occurrence in a culture that is typically hostile toward Christians. The two men hit the road.

Vlad sat on the rear seat of the bicycle, holding their video player tightly—one of the precious few in that part of the country. He also had the only known video of *JESUS* in the area. Anton was in front, peddling and steering the bike.

On the way to the town, they approached a narrow bridge where a car was coming. Anton did not see the approaching car and had to quickly swerve to avoid being hit. They both fell off the bridge, plunging into the water below ... video player and all. Shaken but uninjured, they recovered their bike and lifted the player out of the canal. Water gushed out of the machine. They doubted if it would ever work again.

But Vlad and his partner were resolute—they felt they must keep going. People were waiting to see the film. Still soaking wet, Vlad and Anton got back on the road, anxious about their equipment, but trusting God in hopeful prayer.

When they arrived, at least 50 people were in

But the children of Israel had walked on dry land in the midst of the sea, and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

Exodus 14:29, NKJV

the room, eager to see a film in their language about “The Great Prophet Isa.” Vlad and his partner prayed for the Lord’s help.

As water was still draining out of the unit, they set the player on the tabletop. When they plugged it into the 220-volt outlet, they feared the current would fry the unit. But as before, they felt they had no choice. These people needed to see *JESUS*!



This photo from Google Earth® is a typical bridge in the area, perhaps the same bridge where Vlad and Anton were forced off the road.

(Continued on next page)

They plugged it in and turned the player on.

* All names have been changed for security purposes.

Bicycle Evangelism, continued...

Nothing ... no shorts ... no sparks ... no smoke. Instead, the unit came alive. Somehow it had survived the ordeal, **as though the water was never there.**

They pressed “Play.”

All 50 people watched the entire film, moved

by the greatest story ever told—God’s plan of the ages to rescue them from their sins. They felt His love and experienced His miracles. They heard His words—the Word of God—in a language they understood and marveled at His resurrection. And the Holy Spirit witnessed to their hearts that it was all true.

At the end, when the invitation was given, 11

people indicated decisions to follow Christ. Their lives were forever changed by the gospel, because of the courage and hopefulness of Vlad and Anton.

“The JESUS film continues to cause powerful repercussions around the globe. Hundreds of thousands of people are coming to Christ as a result of the many teams who take this film into unreached areas; but also, the film is shaking up the rest of us on the home front who are emblazoned and emboldened to proclaim Christ to our own communities.”

—Joni Eareckson Tada, President, JAF Ministries



Day 23

Horn of Africa

Nations: Multiple

Location: East Africa

Population: 123 million

Literacy Rate: 53%

Official Languages: Amharic, Arabic, English, Tigrinya, Tigre

Spoken Languages: 134

JESUS Language Translations: 47

In the Horn of Africa, the easternmost region of Africa jutting out into the Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean, the economies are mainly based on agriculture, though the land is arid and the hot climate unforgiving. Regions that used to be successful producers are now exhausted, destroyed and degraded and only able to produce a fraction of what is necessary to feed the population. The result is widespread, enduring famine.

The four Horn countries of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia suffer from clan warfare, religious extremism, and decades-long civil wars. The ongoing turmoil has led to the exodus of skilled workers.



Though today the governments are generally unstable, and the majority of the populations follow a dominant religion that often rejects outside beliefs, there are some areas that maintain a degree of religious freedom. This can range from laws that protect foreigners with differing beliefs to, in a few nations, the freedom to evangelize. However, in other parts of the region, these freedoms are totally non-existent, and the murder of Christians is increasingly common.

Prayer Starters:

- Supporting nations to be wise in their “help” programs so as to not cause a diminished work ethic among the people.
- A resurgence of deep Christian beliefs held from the earliest church history.
- Militants to know the truth of Jesus Christ and to stop persecuting believers.

Stronger Than Iron Bars

Opposition and resistance are very strong in this part of Africa where it is said that “bronze doors and iron bars” of a dominant religion persecute believers and oppose the gospel.

Trusting in God, one of the film teams took a bold step. They arranged a public showing in an open field despite the threat of opposition, and a large crowd gathered to watch the *JESUS* film.

The team started the film—the gospel story in the people’s heart language. It didn’t take long for the crowd to become transfixed by what they saw and heard: the miracles and love of Jesus and His Word—the very Word of God.

The film came to an end. As the team began to pack up their equipment, they were thankful that there had been no trouble. There was no report of any becoming followers of Christ that night, possibly because the people were afraid of radicals and kept their decisions private. But one man at the showing was not afraid. His name was Mohammed.



Mohammed approached the film team and said, *“I have been waiting for this day for a long time. I saw a dream about this man in the film. I know I need Him in my life. But I didn’t have a clue who He was. But today after watching the film and hearing His voice, I know that He is the One I have been looking for all this time. I want to be His follower. Tell me what to do next.”*

The team further explained the gospel and answered his questions. They led Mohammed in prayer and he joyfully became a follower of Jesus.

For the Lord God will help Me; therefore, I will not be disgraced; therefore I have set My face like a flint, and I know that I will not be ashamed.

Isaiah 50:7, NKJV

But Mohammed and the Lord didn’t stop there! Mohammed started telling others in his community about Jesus and about his new saving faith.

Soon radicals learned of what he was doing. They searched his home and found New Testaments given to him by the film team. They jailed him immediately. Two weeks went by and a government official visited the prison. Speaking of Mohammed, he asked, *“And what is this man’s crime?”*

The chief of police replied, *“He was preaching about Jesus ... but didn’t hurt anyone.”*

The official ordered Mohammed be released from prison.

Mohammed became even more committed to proclaiming the gospel to everyone in his village. At last count, Mohammed had led 27 people to Christ and planted a church. His church is now one of 645 new churches formed in the past two years in this part of Africa.

South Asia

Nations: Multiple

Location: South Asia

Population: 1.7 billion

Literacy Rate: 70%

Official Languages: Bangla, Dhivehi, Dzongkha, English, Hindi, Nepali, Sinhala, Tamil

Spoken Languages: 456

JESUS Language Translations: 233

The advancement of God's kingdom in South Asia—Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka—faces many hardships.

Believers there live in situations of potential persecution and need creative ways of sharing the good news among unreached, resistant people. Nearly 1.7 billion South Asians remain unreached with the good news of Jesus Christ.

Poverty affects hundreds of millions, predominantly in rural areas, but also in cities like Delhi, India, where half the population lives in slums. No country has more children in crisis than India: 35 million orphans, 20 million child laborers and 1.2 million children involved in prostitution.

The younger generation is rising above the struggles of the past and opening their hearts and minds to new ideas and ways of living. However, many also become entrapped in modern materialism.

Discipling new believers can be a challenge when literate, but isolated Christians must walk miles to reach the nearest fellowship group or church.

Prayer Starters:

- The cultural barriers of the caste system and Hinduism to be overcome by the gospel.
- The good news of Jesus Christ to reach every village and town.
- Justice and hope in a region plagued by oppression, poverty and disease.
- The collaborative work of planting churches by the ministries of: American Bible Society, Wycliffe Bible Translators, Faith Comes By Hearing®, Campus Crusade for Christ® and Jesus Film Project®.
- The evangelistic use of the *JESUS* film in more than 233 local languages by churches and partner ministries across South Asia.

Modern-Day Resurrections Open Door to Reaching South Asians

Years ago, Dr. Daniel Thomas,* a very ill Hindu priest, was on the brink of death when he heard about Jesus, and he was immediately healed and saved.

Now Daniel is one of our partners in the region. In the 30 years since his miraculous recovery, he has planted 25 churches and has seen seven resurrections!



The first resurrection saved his own life, but within days of his conversion, his family sent thugs to kill him. At the same time, a couple had taken their sick baby to the local clinic, but the doctors could not save him, and he was lost to his illness. Having heard of the Hindu priest who was healed from the brink of death, they decided to bring their child to him.

The grief-stricken couple appeared at Daniel's door and asked him to pray for their baby. The thugs arrived at the same time. Daniel said to the thugs, "If my God heals this baby and brings him back to life, you will know my God is the real God. And if He doesn't, you can kill me."

Daniel prayed that Jesus would bring the child back to life and He did—the child was alive again. When the thugs saw the power of God, they did not kill Daniel but

Therefore the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness.

John 12:17, NKJV

instead responded in faith and proceeded to start a church.

Daniel continues to witness to people in this region who have never heard the gospel. He has seen God perform many miracles and in the last three years using the *JESUS* film, Daniel has planted 75 more churches.

Tens of thousands of people, in many different tribes, who have never heard of Jesus before are coming to faith.

People are seeing *JESUS* for the first time in remote villages, and our outreach teams are planting churches in many villages and towns. At the end of last year, Daniel's teams were given two more projectors and are now praying they will be able to plant at least 100 churches this year.

* All names have been changed for security purposes.

Day 25

West Africa

Nations: Multiple

Location: West Africa

Population: 362 million

Literacy Rate: 49%

Official Languages: Arabic, French, English, Portuguese, indigenous African languages

Spoken Languages: 2,100 throughout Africa

JESUS Language Translations: 313

West Africa includes 18 countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, the island of Cape Verde, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, the island of Saint Helena, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sao Tome and Principe and Togo.

The physical and spiritual needs of local churches are many, as they seek to rebuild. Some of today's most vibrant and growing churches are located in Africa. But, undermining both major religions is a value system steeped in the old ways—fetishism, ancestor worship and idolatry. Leadership is a great need, as trained spiritual leaders are few. Churches need spiritually mature leaders who will preach the Bible with integrity.

Prayer Starters:

- The perseverance of Christians under continual threat of violence.
- Restoration and wholeness for those who have suffered the atrocities of war and disease.
- The church to be both burdened and equipped for evangelism.
- That evangelists will be encouraged and strengthened in the Lord as they share Christ in difficult and dangerous places.
- The translation and dubbing of scores of languages of *JESUS* and their use across the region.

The Talk of the Town

*As they went along the road they came to some water;
and the [court official] said, “Look! Water!
What prevents me from being baptized?” And Philip
said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.”*

Acts 8:36,37, NASB

Recently, a **JESUS** film team in West Africa approached a highly placed chief, a religious leader known as the “Sultan.” They asked if they could show **JESUS** in his palace square, saying it had just been released in his people’s language. But being a fervent follower of his dominant religion, he refused.

The team planned to return later, still hoping to saturate the area with the gospel. They gave themselves to prayer, worked out several strategies, and organized into teams. Upon arriving, they debated whether they should go back and visit the Sultan to try again. Even though he refused them before, they wondered whether the Lord might have changed the Sultan’s mind.

After spending more time in prayer, they became convinced of the Lord’s leading. They requested to meet with him again.

The Sultan agreed to meet. With grace and humility, the team leaders explained, “We are here to preach the good news to your people ... to be your friends.”

(Continued on next page)



*The man seated in the center is the “Sultan” of the area. He not only allowed **JESUS** to be shown in his historically closed area, but he also offered safety and protection for the film team. This is the result of prayer, obedience and faithful work.*

The Talk of the Town, continued ...

He listened and this time, gave his full permission. The teams left the meeting praising God for answering their prayers and immediately went to work.

As the team began to set up in the palace square of the Sultan, they sensed growing opposition. Fearing they could be stoned, they sent word to the Sultan and asked for help. To their surprise, he sent his officials to actually assist the team and ensure their safety.

The Sultan's officials told the team where to set up the screen and the projector so that the Sultan, his wives and all the officials could watch.

The team wasn't sure what to expect. Anything can happen when a Christian film is shown in an area like this—known for its resistance.

They started the projector. A few stones were thrown, but they landed harmlessly on the ground, and soon the stoning stopped. The team reported, “Those who were once opposed—the chief and all his officials—sat glued to the film from beginning to end. About 1,925 people watched. The hillside, neighboring homes and the palace square were all packed full.” More than 200 people prayed to receive Christ that night!

After that, three of the villages in the area requested that the film be shown to them, also. Young Christians from nearby villages asked to be trained, so they could work like the teams. Pastors and missionaries who had tried for years to reach the area rejoiced over the breakthrough.

The team reported, “*JESUS* became the talk of the town, and the impact was felt tremendously.”

“No single evangelistic campaign in human history has touched as many lives as the showing of this film worldwide.”

—U.S. Center for World Missions, Pasadena, California



North Africa

Nations: Multiple

Location: North Africa

Population: 276 million

Literacy Rate: 76.7%

Official Languages: Arabic, French

Spoken Languages: 189

JESUS Language Translations: 33

Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.

Matthew 17:1,2, NKJV

North Africa lies in the northernmost region of the African continent and includes 10 countries: Algeria, Chad, Libya, Morocco, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Sudan, Tunisia and Western Sahara.

Even though these countries may not face the same economic and social challenges as the rest of Africa, they are still vastly underdeveloped. And although some North African states are politically stable and pro-western, converting from Islam to Christianity remains not only illegal but also dangerous. Missionaries are banned, and the known Christians face persecution and ostracism even from friends and family. In some nations, slaying a Christian is considered “a service to God,” and shedding his blood atones for their sins, ensuring both a place in heaven.

Prayer Starters:

- Faith-filled, bold believers to persevere despite intensified persecution by extremist groups.
- Many will be saved through satellite TV and media outreaches.
- The Berber peoples and many other unreached people groups who span the region.
- The many church leaders who are weary and tired, needing wisdom to deal with the many challenges.

The Man in the White Robe

Barir* was raised in an impoverished, nomadic tribe. He always wanted to grow in wealth and personal power—a quest that leads some in his area to embrace radicalism.

Attracted to the power and wealth of a radical faction nearby, soon Barir was seduced by those empty promises. He joined that faction and went on to study his religion's rigid law, eventually achieving a high-ranking position within that strict tribe. He thought he was on the right side of truth, having achieved all he had sought, including wealth. But something deep inside was missing and he knew it.

One night, Barir experienced a powerful dream. A Man wearing a long white robe and turban (a symbol of respect and status in his culture) came near. The Man in white told Barir to follow Him and that He would show him the way of truth. Barir woke up with his dream vividly



imprinted on his mind, never to be forgotten.

One day a *JESUS* film team was showing the film in a home near his, but the team knew nothing of Barir.

That same day, Barir was walking to his religion's house of prayer to fulfill his daily obligations, when the Man from his dream approached him. He was wearing the same long white robe and turban.

As He came near, Barir asked, *"Who are you?"*

"I am Isa (Jesus), your God. Come with Me," the Man said.

Astonished and unsure of what was happening, Barir followed Him. The Man led him to the very house where the film team was showing *JESUS*. Barir peered in, immediately fascinated because the film was in his mother tongue. Barir turned around to the Man in white. But

He had vanished.

When he entered the house and began to watch the film, he became captivated by Jesus (Isa) and His Word, by His love and miracles, and His death and mighty resurrection that proved that He is the victorious Son of God. That day, Barir found what was missing in his life. He put his trust in Jesus as his Savior.

Barir soon turned away from all he knew and had held dear—status, position, power and income. Though his family initially opposed him, the transformation in Barir's life was dramatic. He was a new man. Eventually, his entire family became followers of Jesus.

Today, Barir is a member of a ministry team that, like many others, gives hundreds or even thousands the opportunity to know Jesus by regularly showing the *JESUS* film despite constant threats of danger.

* All names have been changed for security purposes.

Day 27

East Asia

Nations: Multiple

Location: East Asia

Population: 1.6 billion

People Groups: 516

Official Languages: Mandarin Chinese, Japanese, Korean, English

Spoken Languages: 895

JESUS Language Translations: 56

East Asians constitute around 1.6 billion people, or 22 percent of the total global population. Major cities include Beijing, Hong Kong, Seoul, Shanghai, Taipei and Tokyo. Much changed over the last century and today, East Asia has communist states, democratic states, constitutional monarchies and one communist dictatorship. Several East Asian countries have emerged as economic and political leaders.

In turn, people's attention has turned to economic development and the promise of a better life. But with the pursuit of profit has come materialism, environmental degradation, corruption and disillusionment.

In some places, the gospel of Christ has transformed communities. Where Communism sought to replace religion, the move to a common language instead has aided the sharing of the gospel! But most of the region has not seen or heard the gospel. Hundreds of unique people groups in East Asia remain unevangelized. Although many—miraculously—have come to Christ over the past few decades,

more than 1.3 billion have yet to hear the good news of Jesus, including many ethnic minorities.

The need everywhere is for more Christian workers, scriptural resources and training in their own languages. Reaching these countries with the gospel is an immense challenge.

Prayer Starters:

- Christians in East Asia who boldly stand even as authorities close and destroy their churches and church property.
- Families of those imprisoned for their faith will experience God's presence as they continue to be Christ's ambassadors.
- The perseverance of Christians who face persecution and harassment.

Inspiring Wonder and Awe

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.

John 10:27, NKJV

Yang and Kuan* listened to Chen, stunned. They had never heard something as intriguing and unique as the gospel. The couple had lived their entire lives in a remote province in China with strong ties to Central Asia's dominant religion. They had never heard of Jesus.

But while Yang and Kuan were fascinated by Chen's message, they did not receive Christ into their lives.

Though disappointed, Chen bought the couple a smartphone. He and the other ministry workers were leaving the couple's village, and he wanted to keep in touch with Yang and Kuan. Chen helped his new friends set up a social media profile and also installed the Jesus Film Project® app on the device.

For weeks Chen spoke with the couple through social media. He sent them gospel messages and invited them to view their heart language version of *JESUS* on the



app. One month after meeting Chen, Yang and Kuan contacted the ministry worker with exciting news. They both had put their faith in Christ as Savior!

By the grace of God, Chen's dedication and Jesus Film Project media in their heart language helped this Chinese couple to go from casual fascination to full surrender.

* All names have been changed for security purposes.

Central Asia

Nations: Multiple

Location: Central Asia

Population: 91 million

Literacy Rate: 98.6%

Official Languages: Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Russian, Tajik, Turkmen, Uzbek

Spoken Languages: 43

JESUS Language Translations: 10

Historically, Central Asia was a trade route, linking the west from the Caspian Sea to the east at the Chinese border, and the Afghanistan-Pakistan border in the south to Russia in the north.

In modern times, the collapse of the Soviet Union gave the world 15 new states, five of which are in Central Asia. Two examples are Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Some states retain their old guard communist government practices, while other states have been influenced by Iran's Shiite fundamentalist movement.

Some of the worst violations of religious freedom occur here. "Religious freedom" in these countries is limited to Islam, or perhaps only the Orthodox Church (5 percent). Under Islamic law, Christian converts face detention, arrest, imprisonment, denial of rights, fines and church closings. Many continue to practice ancestor worship, and the occult, demonic forces and shamans hold many in further bondage.

Prayer Starters:

- People to find true hope in Jesus rather than in the secular government.
- The small church to mature in faith and stand strong against evil.
- Courage for cultural Muslims who are open to Jesus but frightened by potential persecution.
- The effective use of Jesus Film Project® tools in reaching the unreached with the gospel in Central Asia, and for the following up and discipleship of those who are coming to Christ.

Farming for the Lord

And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams

Acts 2:17, ESV

A team of workers entered an unreached area in Central Asia to share the good news of Jesus.

With another religion being dominant, the area is very dangerous and known to be not only unreceptive, but also resistant toward Christianity. The team needed to gain the trust and acceptance of the people before proclaiming the gospel. Enabled by a partner ministry, they opened a business that would benefit the community—a dairy farm.

The team was well-equipped with compact *JESUS* film-showing equipment, DVDs and microSD cards provided by Jesus Film Project® but had little else, including cows. To build their business, the team offered to buy one cow from every willing villager. But surprisingly, a local man, Umar*, sold them all of his cows.

* All names have been changed for security purposes.



When the team asked him why, Umar replied:

“I had a dream. I saw men coming to me. Their faces were so bright. And there was one man with them whose face was brighter than them all. He said to me, ‘I am Life. Come serve me with my people.’

“I answered, ‘But I don’t know your people.’ He told me, ‘My people will come to you and they will ask you for something. Give them whatever they ask.’

“When you came to my house and asked to buy a cow, I saw the same brightness on your faces. I knew you were the people in my dream and did as He asked ... selling all my cows. Now I want to be with you and serve you. I’m waiting for you to tell me how.”

Knowing that God had gone before them and that Umar was His chosen instrument, the team shared the gospel and showed him the *JESUS* film. Though he was from a hostile religion, Umar believed, along with all of his family.

Umar is now among several new believers who are helping to share the gospel and the *JESUS* film using Jesus Film Project tools in this very dangerous area.

Day 29

South Asia

Nations: Multiple

Location: South Asia

Population: 1.7 billion

Literacy Rate: 70%

Official Languages: Bangla, Dhivehi, Dzongkha, English, Hindi, Nepali, Sinhala, Tamil

Spoken Languages: 456

JESUS Language Translations: 233

South Asia is a complex blend of old and new. Ancient Islamic influences predate some countries, and dozens of distinctive cultures are scattered throughout various tribes.

Although rich in culture, South Asia has many poor people. An estimated 35 percent of the people live in poverty, and children are often pulled out of school to help provide for their families. Substance abuse is common with rampant heroin addiction in some areas.

Terrorism, radicalism and extremism have brought widespread devastation and death to thousands and hinders economic advancement.

South Asia sits at the center of the unevangelized world. Despite constitutional guarantees of religious freedom, these are some of the world's most persecuted nations. At less than 2 percent of the population, Christianity is still considered a large religious minority. But, believers face persecution and they are often among the poorest. Even in the face of conflict and despair, movements are rising up and South Asians are increasingly coming to Christ.

Prayer Starters:

- The spiritually oppressed in remote areas to encounter the gospel.
- The church to multiply in the power of the Spirit as persecution intensifies.
- The strongholds of Islamist extremism and terrorism to be demolished and rendered powerless.



Man of War, Man of Peace

“**L**ast night I felt change was coming,” Makeen* said to the two national film workers, Gabriel and Ira. “But I didn’t know what that meant. Now my nokeer [field worker] told me strangers had come to visit, and my spirit woke up like you might be the change. You are my guests. Come.”

Makeen, the village leader, was a kind tribal leader, well-liked in the community. His son, Farid, however, was not. The opposite of his father, Farid lived a rebellious life. A harsh, angry young man, he liked to pick fights and often beat his father’s workers.

Makeen welcomed Gabriel and Ira into his good guest room and invited them to stay the night. He instructed his house workers to prepare dinner for the men. Encouraged by Makeen’s openness, Gabriel and Ira began setting up the film equipment.

Farid suddenly entered the room, riled as usual, and asked them, “What are you doing with this equipment?”

“We have films on the prophets,” Gabriel said calmly. “Would you like to watch them with us tonight?”

“No,” Farid shot back. “We are ... [followers of the Great Prophet] and don’t look at pictures of the prophets or videos of them.”

“You should at least watch the film about the life of Isa [Jesus],” Gabriel continued. “You will gain useful knowledge. We came here because your father is a great man and all the villagers respect him. But if you don’t want to see the real story of Isa, then we’ll just go to another village.”

Farid went quiet. He paced back and forth and Gabriel and Ira prayed silently. “Alright, you can stay and show the film,” said Farid.

Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth.

James 5:17, ESV

Grateful for the change of heart, the film team workers resumed setting up the equipment. After a moment, Farid began to help them.

When 84 adults and their children gathered to watch *JESUS*, Farid sat among them. God opened his eyes to understand who Jesus really is.

After the film ended, Farid approached Gabriel and said, “It really touched me when I saw Jesus caring for the people. Even when He was crucified, He still blessed them. I have decided to follow Jesus.”

Farid turned and told the whole crowd about his decision. By the end of the night, 62 people indicated the same decision.

Today the old Farid is gone. The villagers know the new Farid as a kind and loving man. He is growing in his faith in Christ and serves with the film team by ministering in his village and beyond.

* All names have been changed for security purposes.

Day 30

Near East

Nations: Multiple

Location: Middle East

Population: 82 million

Literacy Rate: 86%

Official Languages: Arabic, English, French, Hebrew, Greek, Kurdish, Persian, Turkish

Spoken Languages: 79

JESUS Language Translations: 56

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 6:23, ASV

With the Caspian Sea to the north and the Persian Gulf to the south, this region has been a doorway from East to West throughout history.

Although much of the Near East is desert, its strategic geographic position and tremendous oil wealth could support a vibrant economy. Instead, wars, political strife and corruption have taken their toll.

Nearly 100 percent in this region are another religion. Anyone converting to Christianity is declared an apostate and could face death. The courts have the power to impose the death sentence or life imprisonment on males or females who renounce their faith. A few historic minority religions are recognized, but Christians are not allowed to preach or distribute materials.

By the grace of God, the number of the followers of the dominant religion coming to Christ continues to grow greatly, regardless of certain persecution. Political strife has so wearied the younger generation that many are

now open to new ideas and ways of

life, including the gospel, and many are curious about the Bible, although it is illegal.

Internet, radio and TV broadcasts provide encouragement and training for believers as more come to Christ and more underground house churches are established.

Prayer Starters:

- A great harvest resulting from faithful believers sharing bold accounts of their faith.
- Christians to capitalize on unprecedented opportunities to share the gospel via internet, television and other media.
- House church leaders to be mentored and trained by godly leaders and develop a deep love for and competence in teaching and applying God's Word.
- The SD cards and DVDs that are hand-carried into this closed region to be used to reach many for Christ.

A Dream, a New Testament, and a Copy of ***JESUS***



Jamal* shared his story with us:

“My mother and father escaped from [a closed Muslim nation] to the U.S. years ago. One night, Mom had a dream. She saw a Man named Jesus who handed her an envelope.

“He told her, ‘The contents of this envelope will not only change your life but change the lives of many to come.’

“It was Sunday morning. She awoke and told me of the dream and through many tears, said, ‘I want to go to church!’

“I argued, ‘Mom, you are not from that religion, we can’t go to church!’

“But she insisted. We went and during the church service, visitors were asked to stand. They welcomed us and handed my mother an envelope! My mom’s knees began to shake; she sat down and she started bawling.

“Inside the envelope was a New Testament and a *JESUS* film. She just sat there in tears. Once we were home, she watched the video many times. She locked herself in a room for a week. When she came out, Mom was transformed. Later, all of us came to know the Lord!”

Today, Jamal leads one of the premier Christian television ministries that is reaching all of his parents’ closed nation, via satellite. Tens of thousands have come to Christ. And it began with a dream, a New Testament, and a copy of the *JESUS* film.

* All names have been changed for security purposes.

Day 31

Western Europe

Nations: Multiple

Location: Western Europe

Population: 397.5 million

Literacy Rate: 99%

Official Languages: Dutch, English, Flemish, French, Frisian, German, Irish, Welsh

Spoken Languages: 69

JESUS Language Translations: 28

As refugees from the Middle East pour across Western Europe's borders seeking asylum, the region finds itself in the biggest crisis since World War II. Due to the refugee crisis, Germany and France now have the largest Middle Eastern immigrant populations in Europe, with roughly 5 million migrants in Germany alone.

Syrian refugees outnumber the rest. It is estimated that 4.8 million people have fled the

violence in Syria that to date has killed more than a half million, internally displaced 6.3 million, and left 13.5 million people in desperate need of aid—the largest humanitarian crisis in the world.

Once the birthplace of many Bible translations, and home to some of the world's most beautiful, vibrant cathedrals, now many churches in Western Europe sit dark and empty. Humanism, secularism and skepticism are pervasive. Only 14 percent of Germans attend church, and only 2 percent claim Jesus as Savior. The good news is that evangelical initiatives have the potential to reach both the growing immigrant population and also Europeans who are spiritually lost.

Prayer Starters:

- A swift end to the horrific Syrian civil war with people of peace rising to leadership.

- Jesus to reveal Himself to the millions, mostly Middle Eastern immigrants, displaced by the war.
- Protection of the expansion of the church amidst hostility.
- A second Western European reformation.
- Wisdom, compassion and provision as the continent receives and assimilates historic numbers of migrants.



“Save Us!”

They didn't know how they could ever survive. Siham's* 6-year-old daughter cried out in fear as her mother held her tightly. It was night. The wind was fierce. Icy waves of the Aegean Sea crashed over the fragile bow of their inflatable boat, soaking the passengers.

They were a refugee family, among thousands from the Middle East fleeing war, radicalism and poverty, looking for a better life in Europe. Siham, the head of their family, had already renounced his faith. Driven away by ISIS, he was done with all he had believed. He still knew there was a Creator but didn't know His name.

With their lives threatened and helpless against the sea, Siham cried out to the unnamed God, “Save us!”

Suddenly, inexplicably, and miraculously, the sea around them became calm and still. Amazed, they continued their journey and by dawn, safely made it to a Greek island.

Weeks later, Siham and his family were in a church in Germany. After receiving humanitarian aid, and at the invitation of their hosts, they decided to stay and watch a film. A worker began playing a DVD, and they heard the Word of God in their heart language—it was the *JESUS* film.

As he watched the film, Siham saw the scene in which the disciples were threatened by the wind and waves on the Sea of Galilee. When Jesus stood and commanded the waves to be still and the sea became calm, light flooded into Siham's soul. Instantly, he knew that Jesus was the Creator-God who had saved them during their stormy ordeal on the seas weeks earlier. Tears of joy poured down his face, soaking his shirt. Now he knew His name ... Jesus.

A few days later, Siham and his family were back in the same church, which was now packed with refugees like them who had also experienced the *JESUS* film. But this time they were all there to be baptized as new followers of Jesus.

*And He awoke, and rebuked the wind,
and said unto the sea, Peace, be still!
And the wind ceased, and there was a
great calm.*

Mark 4:39, ASV

Before the crowd of new believers, nearly all of whom were from the Middle East, Siham stood and told their story. He and his family had journeyed over the ocean for a better life, but they found even more.

“God moved me from complete darkness into the light of Christ,” he said.

He shared that his prayer was that everyone in his country would have the opportunity to watch *JESUS*.

The people of Siham's church routinely use the *JESUS* and *Magdalena* films to explain the love of Christ to immigrants. After receiving humanitarian aid, and then seeing these films, refugees begin to understand the love they have been shown. Many refugees and immigrants then ask for their own DVD of *JESUS* or *Magdalena*.

* All names have been changed for security purposes.

“Whether in closed countries, illiterate cultures, or in places of open harvest, the graphic portrayal of the gospel in the JESUS film has radically accelerated the potential for fulfilling the Great Commission.”

—Jerry Rankin, President Emeritus, Southern Baptist International Mission Board

“Jesus Film Project® is unquestionably the most successful of the many global mega plans to evangelize the world that have surfaced The Project has worked out an exact and comprehensive way to actually contact with the gospel everybody in the world”

—David B. Barrett, Global Evangelization Movement



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