

# CONNECT

*magazine*

## THE UNIQUE MINISTRIES OF WOMEN

JANUARY 2024



**AFRICA  
INLAND MISSION**

# THE UNIQUE MINISTRIES OF WOMEN

'This is a man's world. But it wouldn't be nothing without a woman or a girl.' James Brown hit the nail on the head when he sang this iconic song back in the 1960s. The world is geared towards men, dominating and usually coming out on top through the lens of history. Stop to look further and the truth is that there would be no world without women and the mission field is the same.

In this issue we explore the significant and unique impact women have. Journey alongside our female missionaries as they share the joys and challenges they have faced, from connecting with the unreached, to discipling new believers, to the joyful moment of baptism!

As AIM Europe's new Communications Officer, I am excited to be involved for the first time in creating this issue of Connect; I pray it inspires and encourages you.

Rosie

CONNECT EDITOR

*A \* indicates a pseudonym, used to protect people and their people groups.*



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**Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.**

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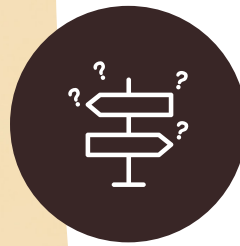


**A kind-hearted woman gains honour, but ruthless men gain only wealth.**

**Proverbs 11:16**



# THE INVISIBLE GIRLS & WOMEN



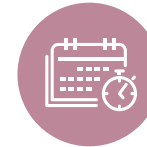
## INVISIBLE

According to UNwomen.org there are large gaps in gender data which make women and girls invisible. It is estimated that 50% of the population in Africa is female - that is a huge proportion of the African population going unseen.

### WHY ARE THEY MISSING?



Countries don't invest enough in collecting gender statistics.



Data on issues facing women and girls is not collected frequently enough.

## AFRICA IN NUMBERS

**1.45 Billion**  
Population

**424 Million**  
Unreached

**3,714**  
People Groups


**58**  
Countries


## OVERLOOKED


Opportunities are not always forthcoming for women and girls, as the primary focus for them is getting married and having children. This is often a barrier to education and careers.



 **37%** of women in West and Central Africa are married before they turn 18. (Unicef, 2021)

 **26%** Only 26% of girls complete secondary school. (Statista, UNESCO, 2020)

 **31%** There is a 31% wage gap for women with children, compared to just 4% for women without children. (Unwomen, 2022)

 **37%** Only 37% of women in sub-Saharan Africa have a bank account, compared to 48% of men. (IMF)

 **1/9** In 23 African countries, there is only 1 woman with a parliamentary seat for every 9 men.

## IN NEED OF CHRIST

Women in Africa are also at a disadvantage when it comes to the gospel. Illiteracy prevents them from being able to read the Bible in their own language and family responsibilities can hinder the opportunity further. More needs to be done to reach them.



**OVER 212 MILLION  
UNREACHED WOMEN IN  
AFRICA URGENTLY NEED  
TO HEAR THE GOOD  
NEWS OF JESUS**





# WHO WILL SHARE WITH THEM?



## PRAY

Pray for new believers to learn just how good God is and that they can draw near to him in faith.

Pray for women like Zara to understand that God can satisfy their deepest needs.

Pray for missionaries like Ann to enable church women to grow spiritually and in doing so prepare them to share the gospel with their neighbours.

## ANN LIVES IN A CULTURE WHERE MEN AND WOMEN DO NOT SPEAK FREELY TO EACH OTHER.

### HOW WILL THEY HEAR?

Although this derives particularly from the Muslim majority culture here in eastern Chad, many women in the local church – all from the south of Chad – are also not used to expressing opinions in front of men. So how will they hear the gospel unless there are women to witness to them? How can those taking tentative steps to follow Christ grow in faith if there are no women willing to share with them?

### A NEED TO GO DEEPER

Many of the local women with whom I talk have little understanding of their religion and apparently no idea of being committed to God. The God they hear of is distant and not to be known personally. Religion to them is following rules. For most, their concern is not with big questions about the meaning of life or the nature of good and evil, but problems closer to home e.g. How can they stop their husband taking a second wife or help their children be healthy? Women may have memorised parts of the Quran and recite them, but they believe it is the recitation – not understanding the text – which will bring blessing. These ideas flow over into the lives of those who decide to follow our Lord. They don't consider that growing in faith is necessary, good, or even possible.

### ACCEPTANCE WITHOUT ABIDING

One lady, Zara, illustrates some of the difficulties. She is from southern Chad, so she doesn't speak the local language, understands very little French and not much more Arabic. About 15 months ago, she reputedly accepted Christ after a visit from a pastor. But we saw little or no fruit from her decision. She didn't come to church or the women's group. I decided to do Bible studies with her, listening to the Bible in her own language and then discussing in Arabic what it says.

### FAITHFUL, STEADY WITNESSING

As I understood her the first time, she didn't know what salvation was nor of our separation from God without Christ. But she prayed to accept Christ (in her own language – so I don't know what she said). A month or so later, she had a stillborn child and many church women were very attentive.

*They don't consider that growing in faith is necessary or even possible.*

For the last three months, we have translated sermons into Arabic and used some Arabic in women's midweek meetings. Perhaps all these factors have encouraged Zara to come to the church and, sometimes, to the women's group, and I have seen a softening of her character.

### LEARN MORE ABOUT ANN

Ann works among an unreached people group in northern Chad, supporting a local church through leading the women's group and being part of the church's leadership team, as well as talking to people about following Jesus. She also treats mentally ill and epileptic patients in the government district hospital.

[eu.aimint.org/ann](http://eu.aimint.org/ann)



# SEWING AMIDST DIVERSITY



## English Classes

For women  
10am to 11 am Mondays and Tuesdays  
during the school terms



## WOMEN FROM VARIOUS CHURCHES IN LOUISE'S\* CITY IN THE UK CAME TOGETHER PRAYERFULLY SEEKING A MEANS TO CONNECT WITH INTERNATIONAL WOMEN IN THEIR AREA.

### ANSWERED PRAYERS

These women had varying levels of sewing skills, so 20 years ago they began an international women's sewing group: seeking to sow the good news of Jesus while they sew. Several years later, a Christian woman who had served overseas returned to the church and realised that international women often struggle to learn English, especially if they have small children. Through prayer and a willingness to give it a try, she started an English class for women at her church which included a crèche for their young children.

### A MINISTRY MULTIPLIED

What was started by few, God has grown to a team of more than 20 Christian volunteers. This past year, more than 100 international women from 4 continents and 27 language groups came through the doors of our church for English classes and the sewing group. The majority are from countries whose peoples are hard-to-reach with the gospel.



### SIMILARITY AMIDST DIVERSITY

As we get to know the women who come, we find there are similarities amidst the diversity. Many speak more than one language but most struggle to keep up with the pace of English classes offered at the local college; some have never been to a school before. All of them have family responsibilities in this country and retain links with family from their home country. Most have come from destitute or war-torn countries to make a better life for themselves, either by marrying a UK citizen, sponsorship via extended families, or as asylum-seekers. Tragically, we also know that some have been illegally trafficked into the UK.

### A WARM WELCOME

Many are lonely and all of them enjoy the warm welcome and relational style of teaching, as well as the opportunity to meet women from other cultures. Above all, most of these women have never heard the good news of Jesus Christ.

### PRAY AND SHARE

In the past 20 years, there have been changes to these ministries, but two things remain unchanged: the commitment to pray and the desire to share the good news of Jesus among the internationals whom God has brought to our city.

### WORTH CONSIDERING

Women from many cultures can usually only be reached by other women. How might God have positioned you and women believers you know to bring light and hope to them?

Pray for our team as we show God's love and introduce spiritual content into our English and sewing classes. Pray for wisdom to recognise those who want to learn more.

[Visit borderlessafrica.org](http://borderlessafrica.org)



# CONNECTING THROUGH MOTHERHOOD



Miriam Desborough and her family moved to Madagascar in February 2023. With her healthcare expertise as a nurse, Miriam will be partnering with others to help serve vulnerable women in Madagascar.



## A STIRRED HEART

Long before I became a mother, God was growing my passion for vulnerable women. Through stories in the Bible, I saw God's heart towards women caught in dark situations, such as Rahab and Hagar. Studying Tropical Nursing broke my heart for women around the world experiencing health inequalities with limited access to basic care (e.g. antenatal provisions). Working with Tamar, a Christian charity reaching prostitutes in London, further fuelled my God-given passion and all this led to my family and me moving to Madagascar as missionaries. I long to reach marginalised women by showing and telling them the gospel.

## DESPERATE TIMES

On a recent visit to one of the main areas of prostitution in central Antananarivo with Domoina, my friend and passionate advocate of vulnerable women, I was privileged to hear one woman's story first-hand. Illiterate and desperate, Sara\* turned to prostitution ten years ago.

It was the only option she could see for survival. She lives in absolute squalor, and, because of her work, she now has two children. Her tiny two-roomed shack also houses other family members whom Sara provides for. Her ten-year-old son is ashamed of her work and dreams of his mum becoming a seller of fruit and veg - rather than her body.

When I asked Sara what her main worries were, she said they were innumerable but, with tears in her eyes, she shared her fears about her own death. I'm sure every mother worries what would happen to their children if something happened to them, as the parent. But imagine facing this fear without the safety net of family members or a welfare system stepping in to care for your child. Imagine knowing that you have no savings to provide for them if you were gone. Imagine the weight





of responsibility of knowing that feeding your children tomorrow depends on your ability to attract men and sell sex today.

### CONNECTING THROUGH MOTHERHOOD

I can identify with Sara as a woman and mother. Although I've not experienced the same traumas, I can try to put myself in her shoes. I am hopeful that I can play my part in reaching women like Sara through helping existing organisations or establishing a new endeavour in partnership with Malagasies. Currently, I am still at the stage of researching the needs of women caught up in prostitution locally. There is a lot to understand about the complex situations of these women, but I am convinced that practical support needs to accompany gospel proclamation to have lasting impact in their lives.

Mother to mother I can relate to some of Sara's fears and anxieties, but I'm also

aware that her context exacerbates her predicament. In addition to all her worries as a mother, I can't bear to think of how degraded, ashamed, and helpless Sara must feel - as if she is totally unseen.

### THE POWER OF GRACE

Often motherhood can feel like a large task, with overwhelming responsibilities, but it can also provide a unique perspective and opportunities that can help to befriend and draw in women. The gift of motherhood coupled with the gift of grace is a powerful thing. The good news of the gospel is for all women everywhere: each woman is valued and loved by God beyond any compassion we can show. Truly he is the "God who sees" (Gen 16:13). Will you let God use your experiences and position as a woman to show others that they are seen by him too?

## PRAY

- Give thanks for the progress Miriam has made in understanding the context of local prostitutes and existing provisions for them.
- For guidance and wisdom in networking and partnering with passionate Malagasy individuals and organisations.
- That Christian women would use their unique opportunities to reach out to other women with the life-transforming gospel.



# THE POWER OF FRIENDSHIP

Ministry can look very different in nations where Christians can't freely share their faith. Our Nigerian colleague Deborah\*, has found that those who have come to faith have done so through friendship, either directly or indirectly.

### FRIENDSHIP LEADS TO FREEDOM

By the time we met Patience\*, a girl from Nigeria, we were the third family she had been hired out to as a housekeeper/nanny. Unknown to us, she was actually a victim of human trafficking. A woman, whose business was bringing young girls from poor families in West Africa to this country, had promised Patience's relatives a better future for her. But the girls usually ended up being used for housekeeping or sex work. Patience was spiritually oppressed, sickly and depressed.

I became friendly with her, taking interest in her welfare, speaking kindly to her, giving small gifts, and most importantly praying earnestly for her. She eventually opened up to me about her life story. This gave me the opportunity of preaching Christ to her. She became saved and her life was transformed.

One of the first things I did, by the grace of God, was to teach her how to read the Scriptures by herself. That had a deep impact on her spiritual growth. Today, Patience is reunited with her parents. She has established her own sewing business and has joined a Bible-believing church.

### LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS

Marie\* is a local lady who was an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) student, who I taught in 1:1 classes. During the class I would show a genuine interest in her wellbeing, asking about her family, her husband. After the classes ended, I still maintained a good relationship with her.

Sometimes she invites me to restaurants, just to meet together and have discussions. Though I am still yet to preach Christ directly to her, I have already laid the foundation. I believe she isn't far from receiving salvation.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF FEMALE FRIENDSHIPS

Friendship evangelism is vital in reaching out to women. And in this culture, friendship across the gender divide is almost unknown.

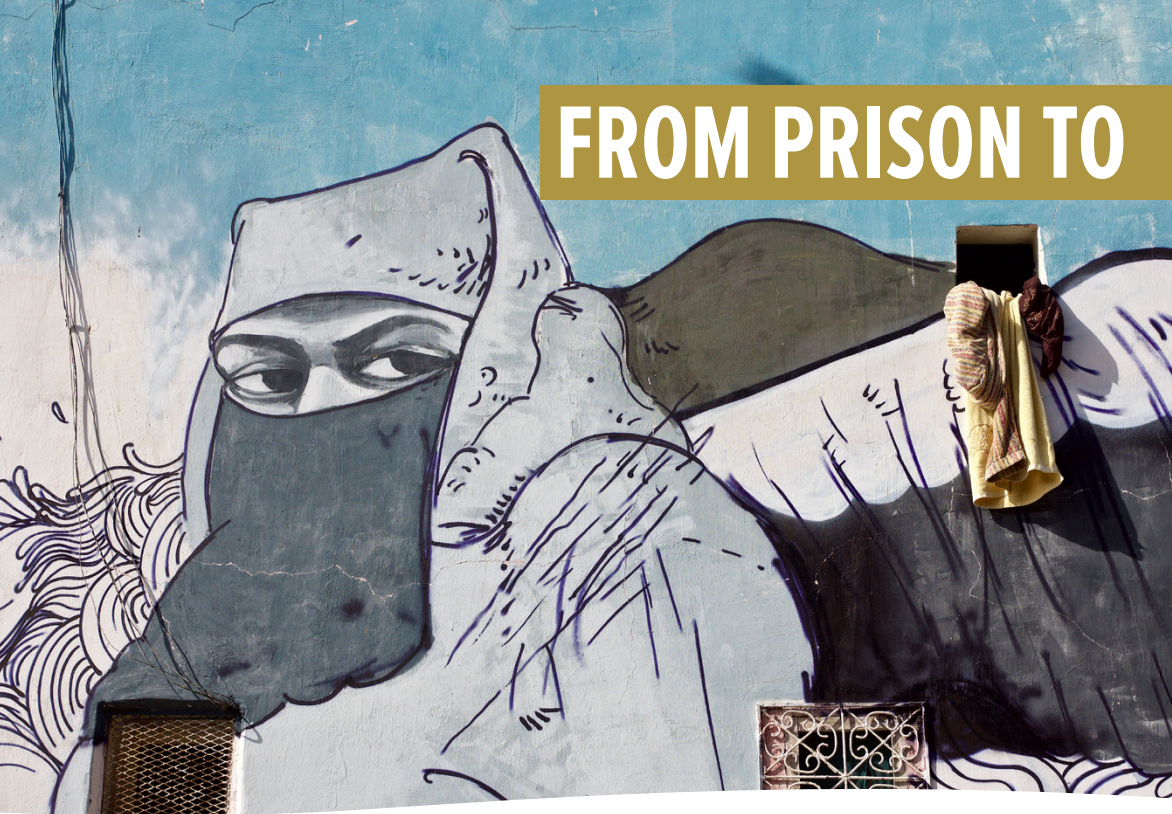
Pray for Deborah and others who are reaching out in this way and that more women would join them.





# FROM PRISON TO

# KINGDOM BUILDING



Ruby\* talks of her experience walking the discipleship road with Joy\* during her time in North Africa.

### HOW DID YOU FIRST MEET JOY?

I met her three years ago. She had moved up to our area due to her husband's job. There was no church in our city at all, and she felt very alone. She knew a friend in another city about two hours away who happened to know one of our colleagues there, and so we were connected in a roundabout sort of way.

### WAS JOY ALREADY A CHRISTIAN?

She was a believer, but she had relied on the church to keep her going. She had first encountered Jesus in her early 20s when she was wrongly imprisoned. After being encouraged by the prison chaplain to pray from the heart - instead of her usual Islamic ritual prayers - she had a dream in which Jesus told her he would provide a way for her freedom. Later that week she

was set free from prison! But once home she forgot the dream and what God had done for her.

Ten years later she found herself in a miserable marriage with two young children and contemplating ending things. But the dream came back to her mind. So, she researched Jesus online and found a local male believer on Facebook. After months of conversation, he encouraged her to meet the female believers in the city. She went to a party they were having - a Christmas party! They presented the gospel message to her and she wept in wonder at the gift of Christ and submitted to Jesus as her Lord.

### HOW HAVE YOU JOURNEYED WITH JOY?

She'd never read the Word in the local dialect, and much of our initial interactions were reading, studying the Word and praying together. It was amazing to see it come alive to her. We'd usually

meet at least once a week to talk about life and study the Word. Her husband is not a believer so we'd often talk through the challenges in her marriage, and see what the Word had to say and pray for her husband. Amazingly, though he is not a believer, he grudgingly accepts that she is. During Ramadan, we'd sit on her bed in the bedroom with the door shut, studying, and praying for him and the whole community around us stuck in darkness.

### WHAT HAS BEEN A SPECIAL MOMENT?

A few months after meeting her, Joy decided to get baptised. It was an immense privilege to be part of that day with her. We (the colleague from the city two hours away, two local sisters who travelled for the day, and I) 'dunked' (baptised) her in the sea. It was a very cold April day and we nearly got washed away by the high waves! Afterwards, we sat on the beach eating breakfast, huddling over hot tea and hearing her testimony.

### HOW IS GOD USING JOY?

Joy has caught the vision for sharing the good news herself. We frequently discussed conversations she had with different people and how she could address their objections. Her vision and prayer is that God would use her home to build his kingdom in our city. We'd love to see her husband come to faith and for them to be a household of faith reaching out to their community.

### HELP BUILD GOD'S KINGDOM

Pray that all of Joy's family would come to know Jesus and that her home would be used to build God's kingdom.

Help send more women like Ruby, women of prayer who can reach out and disciple other women.

[eu.aimint.org/give](http://eu.aimint.org/give)





# BARRIERS TO BAPTISM

As her family's time in Tanzania comes to an end, Miriam Pugh reflects on the spiritual journeys she has walked with some of her friends from the Alagwa people.

## A DIFFICULT STEP

One feature of life here is its interconnectedness. One's primary identity is as part of the community, not as an individual. When a woman is married, she becomes known as "wife of", after giving birth, "mother of", and eventually "grandmother of". You are known and respected, you belong.

This brings its own challenge. Especially for women who are being drawn to Jesus. Many say they cannot make the decision to openly follow without their husband's or their children's approval. Baptism is understood by the Alagwa as the point where you officially and publicly change religion. It is a big step, even for those who genuinely love Jesus and consider themselves his followers, as Sara\* and Hannah\* do.

## SEEKING APPROVAL

Sara\* is kind and well respected, as is her husband. Having listened to chronological Bible stories in the Alagwaisa language, she decided to follow Jesus. She prays regularly and shares scripture with her children and encourages them to follow Jesus. When a close friend of her sons betrayed one of them deeply, she encouraged him to forgive, even if the friend refused to reconcile. When her daughter is struggling with her health and spiritual darkness, she encourages her and her husband to listen to the Alagwaisa scripture. And they do.

But she won't get baptised until her husband agrees. She won't become part of the church community.

## UNABLE TO SURRENDER

Hannah\* is married to a local religious leader. She became fully convinced of

Jesus' power after our teammates prayed with her regularly about a serious family issue. She began to study and pray with me. It has taken her years to begin to understand what it means to be saved by grace, rather than religious efforts.

More recently, Hannah was captivated as we studied Jesus' baptism. She wanted to know more, so we studied other passages on baptism. She understood the importance of baptism - that she needed to surrender everything and take this step. Another wonderful, real moment.

But she won't get baptised. What if her husband refuses her access to her children? What if her community rejects her?

*She cannot imagine how to be community without sharing a common religion.*

## UNWILLING TO EMBRACE FREEDOM

Another woman experienced dramatic deliverance and healing after the team prayed for her. She knows Jesus set her free. But 10 years later, she still admits to having "one foot in Islam". She cannot imagine how to be community without sharing a common religion. She won't be baptised or become part of the church community.

Jesus died to give these women life to the full, finding the freedom that comes from surrendering their whole selves. He is the Good Shepherd who leaves the 99 to find the one. I believe he will faithfully continue to seek after these women.

## BREAK DOWN BARRIERS

Help the Alagwa embrace Jesus despite opposition by praying for them and keep up to date with the latest news from Miriam and her family.

[eu.aimint.org/pughs](http://eu.aimint.org/pughs)



# CHAD FOCUS



## LIFE IN CHAD

The majority of Chad's population live in rural areas and belong to a nomadic or pastoral tribe. With its varying geography, there is a range of crops grown in the country including rice, sorghum, peanuts, millet and cotton. Those living around Lake Chad rely on it for fish and farming, as well as using it as a watering source for their cattle and goats. There is only one major city, its capital.

## N'DJAMENA

Founded in 1900 and formerly known as Fort-Lamy, the capital city of Chad lies on the east bank of the Chari River, bordering Cameroon. Being in the centre of cotton-growing, cattle-raising and fishing areas it is an important market site. The city is home to the Université de N'Djamena and the Chad National Museum.

## ZAKOUMA NATIONAL PARK

This park is the first of its kind in Chad. Once a target for ivory poachers and dealing with dwindling wildlife numbers, Zakouma has recently celebrated six years without a single recorded poached elephant and has seen a resurgence in tourism. It is part of the Greater Zakouma Ecosystem.

## CHADIAN WOMEN

From an early age, girls cook, clean, fetch water, and sweep. As early as 13 years of age, they can be married to a stranger, sometimes someone much older than themselves. School is not considered of great importance here. Children may be in school for several years before they are able to read. Often, girls are not sent to school even if their brothers are, and will leave school if they marry early.

## IN THE DARK

With so many people groups in Chad and over half of the population being Muslim, there are a lot of unreached people groups who still need to hear the gospel, including the Neem\*.



## LAKE CHAD

The country gets its name from what used to be the second largest lake in Africa. It has shrunk by 90% since 1960.

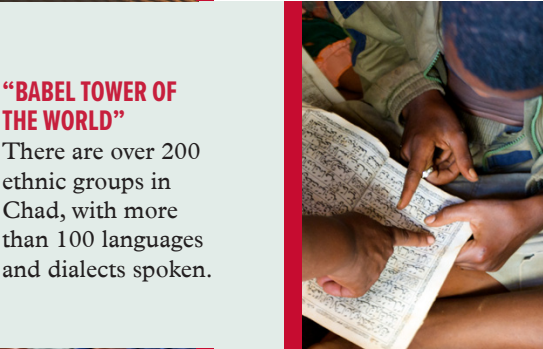
## CAMEL RACING

The Tibesti Mountains are home to some of the best camel racing in the world.



## SAHARA DESERT

Much of northern Chad is covered by desert and it occupies roughly 1/3 of the country's total area.



## "BABEL TOWER OF THE WORLD"

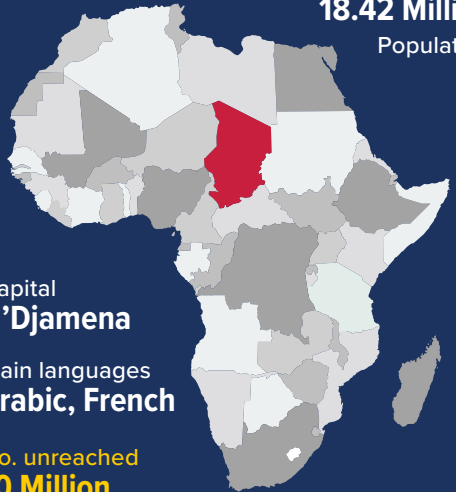
There are over 200 ethnic groups in Chad, with more than 100 languages and dialects spoken.



## YOUNG POPULATION

Over 47% of the population is under the age of 15. (2021 data from Statista)

18.42 Million  
Population

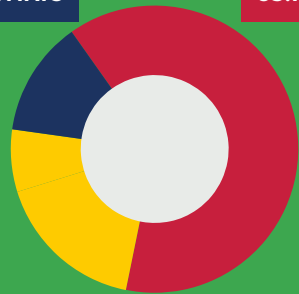


Capital  
**N'Djamena**  
Main languages  
**Arabic, French**  
No. unreached  
**10 Million**

## RELIGIONS

12.8% ETHNIC

63.1% ISLAM



24.1% CHRISTIAN

OF WHICH 7.3% IS EVANGELICAL

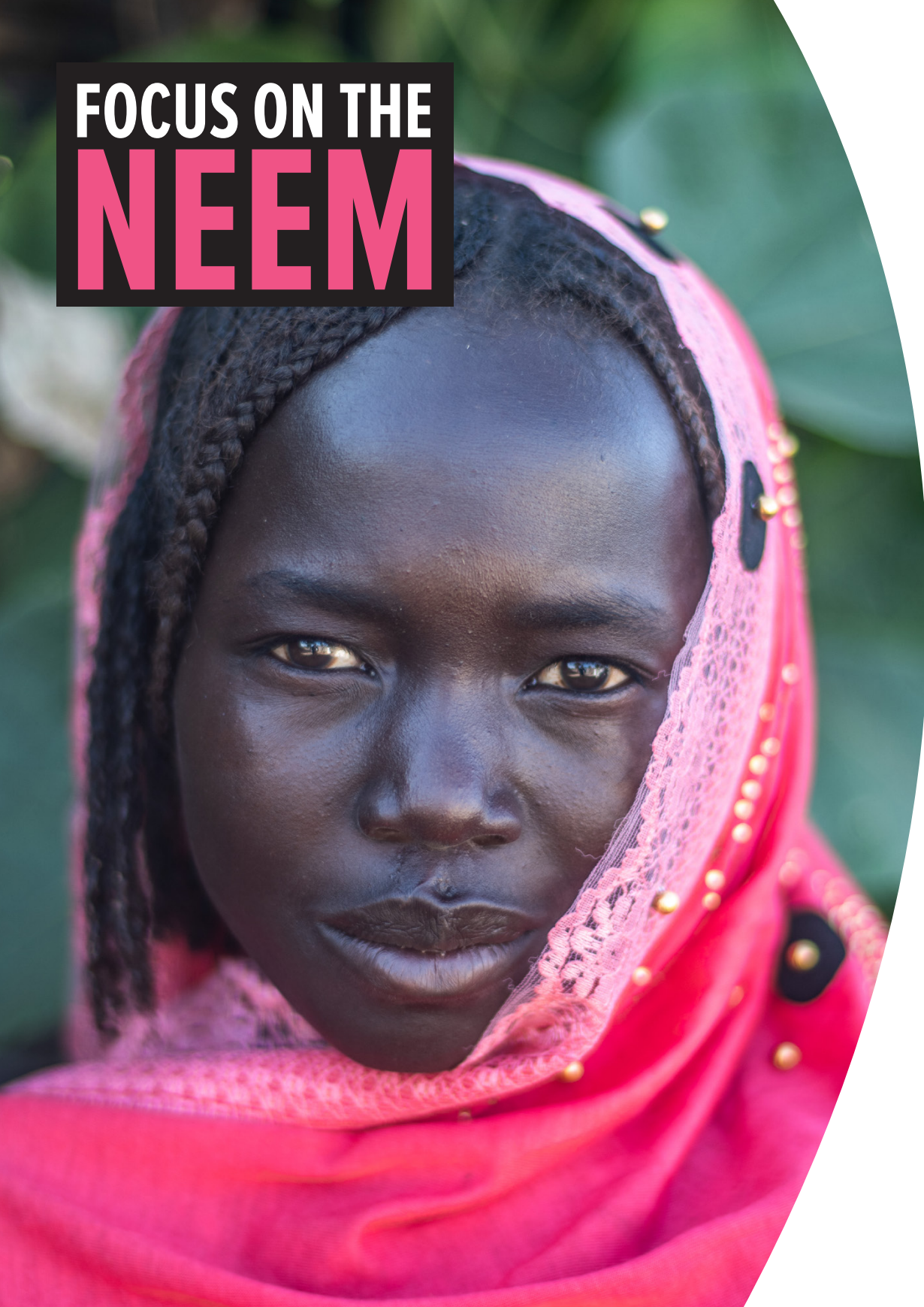
## HOPE AMIDST INJUSTICE

While it is the fifth largest country in the continent of Africa, with the tenth largest oil reserves, Chad is also the ninth poorest country in the world. The country has faced years of civil war and armed rebellions, exacerbated by poor infrastructure. But hope is being brought to its people.





# FOCUS ON THE NEEM



## WHO ARE THE NEEM?

The Neem\* are one of the largest non-Arab people groups in Chad, with a population of around 450,000 people. Living in north eastern Chad, with Neem settlements stretching into Sudan, they speak a language that's distinctively different from neighbouring groups. Known for being a conservative people, they have a strong sense of identity and are resistant to change. They have a reputation for being wary of outsiders.

## WHAT DO THEY BELIEVE?

The Neem people strongly identify themselves as Muslim although some know little of Islam's beliefs. Thus, their Islamic practices are blended with traditional African religious rituals. Many people live in fear, using amulets and charms to ward off evil and sickness. There has been an AIM team working amongst them since 2015.

## WHAT IS BEING DONE TO REACH THEM WITH THE GOSPEL?

A small team of AIM missionaries began work among them in one of their larger towns in 2015, and another organisation also has a team which has started work among the Neem. In 2020 the AIM team moved to a more rural location, with the aim of meeting Neem people in their heartland. We're currently looking to add more workers to our team. Could God be calling you to go, or to share this need?

## WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES?

Despite their reluctance to change, the Neem's traditional worldviews are being challenged by the arrival of satellite TV, mobile phones and a greater exposure to the wider world.

Many of the Neem are illiterate, so workers need to be creative when it comes to discipling believers. Those deciding to follow Christ risk being ostracised from their Muslim family and friends when their decision becomes public.

## PRAY FOR CHAD

- Lift up the Sudanese refugees who have fled from the conflict in Sudan to Abéché in Chad's Ouaddaï province. Since the start of the conflict, more than 80% of the Sudanese registered refugees have been received, many of them injured and requiring treatment at the University Hospital Centre.
- Pray for peace in Sudan, and for all the women and children escaping to Chad. Pray that they will be welcomed and safe.
- Lake Chad has dried up by more than 90% since 1960, which affects 20 to 30 million people. Pray for projects that are exploring the implementation of small dams to help prevent further issues.
- Give thanks for the Microfinance Development Support Project, which seeks to bolster women's economic empowerment and youth entrepreneurship in rural Chad.

## PRAY FOR THE NEEM

- Give thanks for the Neem believers who have had their eyes opened by the gospel message.
- Pray for those who face opposition because of their faith, that God will strengthen and comfort them.
- Pray for the team serving amongst the Neem, that God would give them wisdom in their ministry.
- Pray for those who have shown interest in learning about Jesus, but are afraid to go deeper.
- Ask God to raise up more workers for this mission opportunity.
- Pray that Jesus would break this power of fear the people are living under, and that they would seek him rather than use amulets and charms.



**Amelia\*** reflects on the joy of the first fruits of her team's ministry on an Indian Ocean island.

### **A LONG TIME COMING**

Volcano Island women are loud and colourful. They run the week-long weddings and they love to sing, dance and argue. The matrilineal society doesn't just mean that women are the property owners, it can also tie men much more tightly to the children from their maternal home rather than their own. Women are the heart of the home and families on the islands. So, surely, they will be at the heart of any movement of Jesus followers among islanders.

Well, that's the theory anyway, because we have seen very few women come to faith. In fact, it wasn't until over 15 years after I first arrived that we saw the first woman come to faith from our team's ministry. And what a day that was, for not only did this woman make a decision to follow Jesus but she brought her family with her!

### **A FAMILY AFFAIR**

I was connected with Mama Aisha after her eldest daughter (also Aisha) heard the gospel while on a neighbouring island. Once Aisha got back home, I visited her and was amazed at how open she was. Sitting with her mum and a younger sister, she shared what she had heard and how she wanted to learn more. Would I, she shyly asked, teach her? Turning to her mum, I asked her whether that was something we could do as a family. Unexpectedly she said yes! So, after waiting and praying for so long, I had this incredible opportunity each week to walk up a steep hill in the blazing sun to their house and once there to walk with them through the big story of the Bible.



# **ISLAND WOMEN**





There was lots of giggling and shyness as they got used to talking to God for themselves, as well as sharing their own thoughts and opinions. We would sit out behind their tin shack and sing worship songs in their own language - where any number of neighbours could hear us! Mama Aisha's five-year-old could sing all the words to the Lord's Prayer, while one day when a school friend happened to drop by, her 15-year-old boldly prayed for her.

*There was lots of giggling and shyness as they got used to talking to God for themselves...*

'What difference has following Jesus made to you?' a fellow worker asked Mama Aisha. She laughed and said, 'Well, at the beginning, I thought it was all just a load of rubbish, but Amelia was stubborn; she didn't give up on us and after a while the stories began to make sense. Then one day we all decided that we wanted to follow Jesus too!'

#### IT WON'T STOP THERE

And Mama Aisha didn't keep what she was learning to herself. She shared those stories with a neighbour, and a few months later they had the joy of being baptised together with Aisha. Mama Aisha shared how - as she came up from the water - she felt like a huge weight had lifted off of her. She was free!

Of course, many challenges remain. Her husband, though mostly tolerant of what is going on in his family, continues to send the younger children to Qur'anic school. Their household is chaotic, and they struggle to find means to cover their basic needs. But in the midst of this Mama Aisha is slowly learning how to lead her family in faith and share the good news with those around her.

It took 15 years, but these women are the first fruits of a harvest to come, and when island women start to hear the voice of Jesus calling to them, they will bring their families with them, and that will turn this island upside down!

## FROM LUSH GREEN TO DRY AND DUSTY

Amelia writes: I am now leaving behind these tropical islands and heading north to the Sahara! Sand and dust will be the backdrop of this new adventure as I start all over again, learning a new language and a new culture, getting to know a new people and a new team.

Many of the challenges are similar to the islands: this desert land is also nearly 100% Muslim, there have been workers here for only the past 50 years or so, the church is small, and believers are few.

On top of this there are also much more complex social issues and seemingly a harsher response to anyone choosing to follow Jesus.

There will be much to learn and discover, but I comfort myself with the knowledge that at least I know a little more than I did when I got on a plane bound for the islands all those years ago! But as then, so now, I know that God is with me, he is at work in this desert land, and he is the God who can make the desert bloom!

*"The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus, it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy...they will see the glory of the Lord, the splendour of our God." Isaiah 35:1-2*

# REFLECTIONS ON NORTH AFRICA

**Rosalind\* is currently visiting a country in North Africa where she has had the opportunity to see lots of the great work that is being done to reach a nation held tightly in the grip of Islam.**

The work here is hard and progress is slow, but God continues to open doors and create opportunities to reach people. I have been greatly encouraged by hearing the testimonies of some who have seen the truth of the gospel and committed their lives to the Lord. But what really struck me as I spoke with those who had been saved was this - where were the women?

*What really struck me was - where were the women?*

This observation has stayed with me as I have talked with workers and believers. In a society predominantly centred around men, many of the women are uneducated. How do you read the Bible if you can't read? You need someone who will teach you to read and sit with you and explain it to you. Because of the cultural sensitivities around men meeting up with women, this ministry to women needs to be conducted by other women. Men are reaching other men, but they are not able to reach the women.

*How do you read the Bible if you can't read? You need someone who will teach you to read and sit with you...this ministry needs women...*

There are also challenges in keeping them strong in their faith. Many of the believers here face being rejected by their own families for their belief in Jesus. This threat can be much more serious and dangerous for women. An uneducated woman cannot support herself without a family around her. Female believers in this nation need to be supported and disciplined by other women.

Workers here long for a day when there are many local female believers who are able to support and disciple each other and reach their friends with the gospel. But these people are hard to find. Those few who have come to know the Lord are often hiding their faith due to the very real threat of persecution. This North African nation desperately needs more women to reach the thousands of women living here in darkness. Lord, send more women.





## AMAZING AUTUMN CONFERENCE



*“Uplifting, encouraging,  
and challenging.”* Attendee

Our Autumn Conference in September 2023 was the first time we had gathered in four years. It was a great time of fellowship, teaching and hearing about the amazing work God has been doing among the unreached peoples of Africa.

If you missed out, we hope you can join us at this year’s conference 18 –20 September at the Hayes Conference Centre. We are excited to have John Gillespie, previously Associate Pastor of Westbrooke Church, Kansas, bringing the teaching. John and his wife, Tessa, have pastored churches in the UK and the USA for almost 40 years, as well as trained pastors in developing countries with the Global Training Network.

18 –20th September at the  
Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick

More at [eu.aimint.org/autumn](https://eu.aimint.org/autumn)

## DISCOVER WHAT MISSION MIGHT LOOK LIKE FOR YOU



Have you ever wondered if God might be calling you to mission? Our online Into Africa event is the perfect place to explore how God might be leading you. It will include hearing from AIM’s mission advisors and missionaries, learning what life as a missionary looks like and the practicalities of applying to be an AIM missionary, as well as exploring how churches and individuals can be preparing now.

Into Africa will take place on Saturday 9th March 2024, online from 10am – 12.30pm

For more information and to sign up  
visit [eu.aimint.org/intoafrica](https://eu.aimint.org/intoafrica)

## MAY ROADSHOW EVENTS



AIM partners with churches in Europe and Africa to reach and disciple Africa’s unreached. In May 2024 we will be hosting events in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland during which we will hear Bishop Philipo Mafuja Magwano from the Pwani diocese of the Africa Inland Church Tanzania (AICT) tell us about how AIM and churches in Tanzania have partnered together to further the gospel in that country. Come along and be inspired by this work, and see how you and your church can get involved too.

Our 2024 events will run from 11am – 1pm, with coffee served from 10.30am and a light lunch to follow the event.

Sat 11th May, Charlotte Chapel, Edinburgh  
NEW Sat 18th May, Highfields Church, Cardiff  
Sat 25th May, Great Victoria Street Baptist Church, Belfast

Go to [eu.aimint.org/may-events](https://eu.aimint.org/may-events) to book

## FAREWELL & SENDING OF THE MATTHEWS



*“It’s been a joy to be  
part of AIM Europe over  
the years and to serve  
alongside you all.”*

*Tim Matthews*

In November 2023 we said farewell to Tim Matthews, our Mobilisation & Finance Director, as he and his wife, Heather, prepare to head off to Australia.

After 11 years of serving with AIM Europe, we are sending him to take up the role of Director for the AIM Asia Pacific Mobilising Region, based in the city of Gosford, near Sydney.

We wish them well in this new adventure and pray God’s blessing upon them both.

Follow this link if you would like to partner with them or hear more.

[eu.aimint.org/thematthews](https://eu.aimint.org/thematthews)



# HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS!

ROMANS 10:15

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## Partnering with churches • Reaching Africa's unreached

*Africa Inland Mission serves and partners with churches to fulfil the Great Commission and advance the gospel among Africans who have the least opportunity to hear about Jesus.*

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