

Syrian Arab Muslims



Quick Facts

Population: 16,000,000

Syria: 14,000,000

Turkey: 1,000,000

Lebanon: 400,000

Jordan: 280,000

Religion: Islam-Sunni, Shia

Believers: 0.003% (MBB)

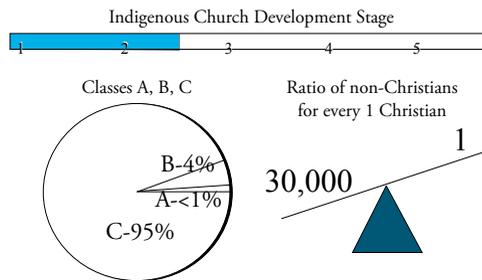
Scriptures: NT, OT

Ministry Tools: JRGT

Church Status: 2

Mission Status: 2

MS Subgroups: 10+



Class A- Are members of a Culturally Relevant Church
 Class B- Have close access to a CRC, but have not yet joined
 Class C- Have no reasonable or close access to a CRC

Identity: Syria has been a melting pot of cultures and ethnicities for thousands of years, including the Chaldeans, Aramaeans, Assyrians, and most significantly the Arabs, who conquered the region in the 7th century. The Syrian Arabic dialect and culture is unique in the Arab world. Syrian Arabs consider their dialect to be the purest form of classical Arabic.

Lifestyle: There is a steady urbanization as the country transforms itself from an agricultural based economy to an industrial one. Half the population continues to make a living through farming, growing wheat, lentils, cotton and grapes. Along the coast, there are many citrus orchards. The export of skilled labor hampers growth, though many families continue to depend on the foreign remittances they receive.

Customs: Ideally, Syrians practice a three-generation household system, which includes the senior couple, their

children, and grandchildren. When the last patriarch or matriarch dies, the household breaks up and each married couple begins their own household. Traditionally, the Syrians also practice lineage endogamy, in which marriages happen within families that can trace their origins to a common ancestor.

Religion: The conversion and assimilation of the majority of Syrians to Islam and Arab culture was accomplished under the Umayyad dynasty, founded by Muawiyah in 661 A.D. Syrians today regard themselves as the “Sons of Umayyad.” Muawiyah gave Syrians double pay to serve in his military. His mercenary army conquered all of North Africa and Southern Spain. Muawiyah’s magnanimous personality and military victories persuaded most of the population to convert to the new religion.

Christian Outreach: The apostasy of the majority of Syrian Christians to Islam in the 7th century is regarded as

one of the greatest setbacks in the history of the Church. Today, it is illegal to convert from Islam, and no missionary presence is permitted. However, there are now over 20 underground fellowships of new believers from Muslim backgrounds, and their numbers are increasing.

How to Pray:

✚ The small Syrian Christian communities that held onto their faith, culture and language, have shown little desire to evangelize Muslims today. Pray for revival to come, and for its impact on Syrian Muslim society.

✚ Syria is ruled by a family that comes from the Alawi sect. Though this group is a majority among the Syrians living in Turkey (who were cut off by the 1939 Turkish seizure of Hatay) they are a minority in Syria itself. Pray for breakthrough among this unique Islamic community which believes in both divine incarnation and the triune nature of God.

✚ Since 1973 Syria has been a secular state, though many radical Muslim groups would like to revert back to state sponsored Islam. Pray that these efforts will not succeed, and for increased freedom for minority groups and Christian witness.

Every year 135,000 Syrian Arab Muslims die without Christ.