

MISSIONARY ATLAS PROJECT

MIDDLE EAST

YEMEN

Snapshot Section

Country Name:

Republic of Yemen

Locally—*Al Jumhuriyah al Yamamiyah (Al Yaman)*

Country Founded in:

May 22, 1990 (Merger of North Yemen and South Yemen)

Population:

21,456,188

Government Type: (national, regional and local)

Republic

All legislation is based on the Sharia Law.

Geography/location in the world:

Yemen is located in the Middle East, on the southernmost tip of the Arabian Peninsula. It borders Saudi Arabia and Oman, as well as the Gulf of Aden, the Arabian Sea, and the Red Sea.

Number of people groups:

31

Picture of flag:**Religion Snapshot**

Major Religion and % of population:

Islam—99.94%

All religions and % for each:

- Islam
 - Sunni—62%
 - Shi'a—37%
- Judaism—0.01%
- Christianity—0.05%

Government interaction with religion:

The Yemeni constitution declares that Islam is the state religion. Freedom of religion is only extended to non Muslims. The conversion of and proselytizing of Muslims is strictly prohibited by the government. The act of a Muslim converting or even seeking information from another religion is considered apostasy and punishable by death. Only Muslims are able to hold office

PROFILE

Republic of Yemen

Basic Facts

Country Name:

Republic of Yemen

Locally—*Al Jumhuriyah al Yamamiyah (Al Yaman)*

Demographics :

The population of Yemen is approximately 21,456,188. The capital city is Sana'a, with a population of 1,653,300. The six other largest urban areas are Aden (510,400), Tai'z (406,900) Hudaydah (382,400), Mukalla (156,800), Ibb (132,400), and Dhamar (106,300). Yemen's growth rate is currently reflected at 3.46%.

The Yemeni, in contrast to most of the Arabs of the Arabian Peninsula, are not and have not been nomadic. The Yemeni are a sedentary people, who have traditionally, and continue today, to live scattered throughout the country in small villages and towns. There are about 1,700 different tribes of Yemeni Arabs.

While the majority of the Yemeni peoples adhere to Islam, they are divided among two sects—the Zaidi Shi'as, and the Shafa'i Sunnis. The Shi'as tend to live in the north and the northwest, along the Saudi border, while the Sunnis are found more in the south and southeast regions.

Age structure:

- 0-14 years—46.4%
- 15-64 years—51%
- 65+years—2.6%

Median Age—16.6 years

Life Expectancy—62.12 years

Sex Ratio—1.04 Males/Females

Birth Rate—42.89 births/1000 population

Death Rate—8.3% deaths/1000 population

Migration Rate—0%

Infant Mortality Rate—59.88 deaths/1000 live births

Total Fertility Rate—6.58 children born/woman

HIV/AIDS rate—0.1% (12,000 living with aids)

Yemen claims one of the highest birth rates world-wide. It is almost twice that of Saudi Arabia, its border to the north.

Arabs are the predominant ethnic group in Yemen, but there is a significant population of Afro-Arabs, South Asians, and Europeans. The area known as the Hadramawt is the where the most dense population of African-Arabs mixture is found. In the Hadramawt, the population's DNA reflects 35% Sub-Saharan African. Interestingly, this is found only in the female line.

Less than 25% of Yemenis live in urban areas. Most Yemenis live in rural areas on farms or in small villages.

<http://www.mongabay.com/igapo/Yemen.htm>

www.wikipedia.org/wiki/demographics_of_Yemen

<https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ym.html>

WorldMark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life, Volume 3, 1997.

Language:

Arabic is the national language of Yemen. Arabic is the largest living language within the Semitic language family and has more than 100 million speakers worldwide. It is spoken in various distinct dialects throughout the country. The written, literary form of Arabic is called Classical Arabic. The Qur'an is written in Classical Arabic. Today, Modern Standard Arabic is used in writing and formal speech. Modern Standard Arabic is set as the literary standard throughout North Africa and the Middle East. Thus, any literate Arab can read and comprehend the written form. Arabic is written from right to left, using the Arabic alphabet, which makes no distinctions between capital and lower cases lettering. It is not even necessary for Arabic to be written on a straight line. This Literary Arabic is the actual official language the Arab world and is the only Arabic taught in the schools.

Colloquial Arabic on the other hand, is the term used for the national and/or regional variations of Arabic, spoken throughout the Arab world and learned as a first language. These variations from region to region or nation to nation, are sometimes so varied that they are mutually incomprehensible.

As each language is structured differently, and is used to communicate differently, Arabic also is used to communicate messages in ways quite differently than in English. Arabic speakers are typically more interested in the poetry and flow of their language, rather than in simply communicating data and information.

Yemeni Arabic is considered to be a very conservative form of Arabic. It has retained many of the classical features. Yemeni Arabic can further be divided into various dialects, with some distinct vocabulary and phonology. The main dialects in Yemen are San'ani, Tai'zzi, Adani, Tihami, and Hadhrami.

Arabic is not the only language spoken by Yemenis. Yemen is also a homeland of the South Semitic language family. This includes the non-Arabic language of the ancient Sabaeen Kingdom. There is only a small remnant of the languages still spoken among modern Yemenis,

and it is very closely related to the modern Semitic languages of Eritrea and Ethiopia. This family of languages is mainly spoken on the island of Socotra and the back hills of Hadhramaut. There are also modern South Arabian languages spoken in Yemen—Mehri (70,643 speakers) and Soqotri (43,000 speakers) which are both mainly spoken in Socotra and Bathari (200 speakers.)

- Mehri—The Mehri language is spoken in Southern Yemen. The estimated number of speakers is about 100,000. The Mehri language is divided into two main dialects: Northern—Negd dialect which is primarily used in Oman, and Southern. The Southern dialect is spoken in Southern Yemen, more specifically the Qishn dialect of the Southern dialect is spoken.
- Soqotri—The Soqotri language is primarily spoken on the island south of mainland Yemen called Socotra. There are actually four dialects of the language: north coast, south coast, Bedouins, and cAbd al-Kuri.

English is taught as a foreign language in public schools beginning in the seventh grade. Public school education and quality is quite low however. The number of English speakers in Yemen is quite low, especially in comparison with other Arab countries such as Egypt, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, or the United Arab Emirates.

www.wikipedia.com

<http://www.ogmios.org/105.htm>

WorldMark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life, Volume 3, 1997.

Society/Culture:

Yemen has been inhabited for about 40,000 years. Due to ancient Yemen's location in the midst of the prime trade routes of the times, Yemen amassed great wealth in its early days. In fact, Yemen was referred to as *Arabia Felix*, which translates as "Happy or Fortunate Arabia." Routes both by land and sea, passed by the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula. Yemen soon was famous for their spices, particularly frankincense and myrrh. These were made from the resins of trees that grew natively only in their lands, and were desired throughout the world for making perfumes and incense. Nevertheless, once Constantine, the emperor of the Roman worlds, issued that all of the Roman Empire would adhere to Christianity in 323 A.D., the Empire was banned from using such "pagan" incense for Christian purposes, and the demand for the spices fell dramatically. As improvements and innovations continued to be made in travel throughout the years, the trade routes shifted as well, and Yemen was no longer in such a prime location. Today, Yemen, rather than being *Arabia Felix*, finds itself as being one of the poorest and most poverty stricken nations in the world.

Yemeni tradition holds that Noah's son Shem migrated to what is present day Yemen, and founded the city of Sanaa. The tradition also holds that Yemen is the home of the Sabeen queen known as the Queen of Sheba. She is thought to have made contact and visited with Israel's King Solomon in order to set up friendly relations, as they controlled either end of the trans-Arabian trading routes. This visit is recorded in both the Bible and the Qur'an.

Muslim holidays are the official holidays of Yemen. These holidays follow the lunar calendar, thus they move back eleven days each year, rather than being on a fixed date on the

Gregorian calendar. The central holidays are Ramadan, Aya Al-Fitr, Aya Al-adha, the First of Muharram, Mawoulid An-Nabawi, and Aya Al-Isra wa Al-Miraj.

- **Ramadan** is the Muslim holy month. It is a month of complete fasting from dusk until dawn. Muslims believe that the Qur'an was revealed to Muhammad during this month. The days are intended to be a time of prayer and contemplation. In Yemen, people will in effect flip-flop their days and nights during this period. They will rest during the day, and work through the night. Eating, drinking, smoking, and even chewing qat are forbidden during the daylight hours.
- **Eid Al-Fitr** is a three day celebration, breaking the fast and marking the end of Ramadan. The night before the Eid begins, young boys often set off firecrackers. The feast is to be a reward for enduring the fast through the month of Ramadan. It is customary for new clothes to be purchased and worn for the celebration. During the Eid, Muslims are expected to pay alms to the poor, visit relatives, and visit the gravesides of family members. During this festival, government offices, private businesses, and schools are closed.
- **Eid Al-adha** is a three day feast of sacrifice at the end of the month of pilgrimage to Mecca (the Hajj). It is an act commemorating the prophet Abraham offering his son as a sacrifice. All who can afford to will slaughter a lamb. Most of the meals prepared during this time are divided in thirds, where one third is given to relatives, and neighbors, one third to the poor, and the other third is kept for the family. People will typically visit their relatives during this Eid, as they did with the Eid Al-Fitr. It is common for children to receive gifts. All private businesses, government offices, and schools are closed during this feast.
- **First of Muharram** is the Muslim New Year. While schools and businesses are closed for the occasion, the day is not celebrated on the level of the secular New Year. Friends and family typically gather for dinner.
- **Mawlid al-Nabi** is a celebration of Muhammad the Prophet's birthday.
- **Eid Al-Isra wa Al-Miraj** is a feast celebrating the evening journey Muhammad made to heaven. Muslims in Yemen typically spend the day fasting and reciting passages from the Qur'an.

Fridays are the Muslim day of rest. All government offices are closed all day long. In many Islamic countries, all shops and businesses are closed on Fridays as well, but in Yemen, many shops actually stay open.

Yemenis also recognize and celebrate a few secular holidays including New Years Day on January 1, Labor Day on May 1, National Unity Day on May 22, Revolution Day on September 26, National Day on October 14, and Independence Day on November 30.

Weddings:

Weddings are an opportunity for joyful celebration in Yemeni culture. There is much social gathering. The time begins when the groom and his father visit the future bride's father to decide on a wedding date and a bride price. The actual bride and groom are traditionally chosen by the parents. The strict separation of the sexes in Yemeni culture makes it difficult for the young people to find suitable spouses, as they are only allowed contact with family members of the opposite sex. In fact, many men might never meet any women, especially those of his own age, outside of his immediate family members. When a young man reaches a suitable marriage age, typically from 17-19, the family begins to work together to find a suitable bride. The mother typically first looks within the family, as Islamic culture allows the marriage of cousins. She will also look to the neighborhood families. Once the mother has settled on a suitable prospect, she will discuss it with her husband, as he knows the male side of these families. The parents place a high priority on the dignity of the girl and her family. Once the parents decide on a girl, they will discuss it with their son. Once the matter is agreed upon, the father and potential groom make their visit to the bride's father. The visit allows the girl to get a chance to look at the potential groom. Once the meeting is over, and the proposal is made, the bride's father will request time to discuss the matter with his family. The father will often ask the girl if she is willing to agree to the suitor.

Once agreement is made, a betrothal feast is held, typically on a Thursday or Friday, which is the Islamic weekend. At the feast, the groom will give the bride's father the engagement ring and other gifts for the bride and the bride's mother, such as clothing and jewelry. While the ceremony is very informal, it is considered a binding and firm promise between the two families. The bride price is set at this time. This gift is provided by the groom's father, for the bride to purchase private and valuable items including jewelry that she will keep forever. These serve as a type of security or insurance that if anything was to happen to her husband, she would at least have this property to support her. The groom is never allowed to touch these items.

After this preliminary business is settled, the wedding date itself is set. The wedding celebration will last for three days. The celebration usually begins on Wednesday and lasts through Friday, with Friday being the public celebration. On the Friday, the butchers will arrive early in order to feed the large guest list. There are typically at least one hundred guests celebrating with the bride and groom on this day. Men will have a qat party in the afternoon, where they simply sit and chew the qat and smoke water pipes. In the meantime, the women help prepare the food for the feast. Once evening comes, the men head to the mosque. As they return, they are dancing and singing to the beat of a drum while the groom carries a golden sword. The feast is enjoyed, the men chew more qat and smoke more pipes. Incense is passed around while old poems are recited, lutes are played, and wedding songs are sung. The bride will return to her home with a couple of girls who will help her dress. She will receive henna tattoos of delicate designs on her hands and feet. In the meantime, the men line up outside the groom's door and begin singing, and he begins to walk towards them, and leaps over the threshold. As the men sing, the women climb up on the roofs, and make a high pitch trilling sound called *zaghrada*. The bride makes her way to the groom's house. Once she crosses the threshold and enters the house, she becomes a member of his family.

Divorce is actually quite common in Yemen, and is very easy to obtain, particularly for men. Men can divorce at will, and do not need to justify their case in court. Women on the other hand, must prove in court adequate reason for a divorce if the man is not willing to readily agree to the divorce.

The basic social unit of Yemeni culture is the nuclear family. Families tend to be large, with 8-10 family members. Several generations of extended family (*bayt*) live together in one home. Multiple *bayts* associated together form a tribe. Each tribe elects a *sheikh* as a community leader.

In the public realm, men and women are segregated in Yemeni culture. Men are able to come and go as they please, and have a highly public life. Women on the other hand, tend to stay out of the public arena. They are always veiled when outside the home. Women do not eat in most restaurants. The segregation is becoming somewhat less strict in modern Yemeni culture, particularly in the larger cities, but strong segregation still exists. More women are attempting to work outside the home and to attend school. While universities in Yemen are beginning to accept female students, priority is given to males.

Typical dress for Yemeni men in the coastal regions is a *futa*—an embroidered skirt, and a light weight shirt. In the highlands men will wear a calf-length shirt type garment called a *zanna*, with a sports jacket. Men in all regions typically wear a belt with a *jambia*—a hook shaped, ceremonial dagger. The *jambia*, which serves as a symbol of manhood, identifies the clan or tribe. The younger generations in the cities, tend to dress more according to Western styles, however traditional dress is still by far the most predominant.

Women like to adorn themselves with a lot of jewelry and brightly colored cloths. When in public however, according to Muslim tradition, Yemeni women mostly wear loose black robes that cover them from head to toe.

Arabs do not ask personal questions, as the culture considers it rude. Arabs are expected to say what they wish to say, without being asked. Arabs are to learn to read body language and indirect signs, as much is communicated this way. Arabs are never to adamantly refuse something, so signs are given, indicating a “no” while actually saying “yes.” Any type of direct refusal is considered extremely rude. Yemenis display true Arab hospitality.

Yemen has a strong oral literature heritage. Stories, songs, and poetry are passed along through the generations orally. Most of the music and poems contain much emotion and repetition, enhancing memory.

The cultural proximity of space of Yemeni Arabs varies from that of Western cultures. Arabs tend to stand very close to one another often touching as they speak. People of the same gender will often hold hands while talking; this applies to men and women. Furthermore, Arabs tend to speak loudly, and tend to often interrupt one another. They repeat themselves frequently in conversation, and conversations tend to be full of gestures and emotion. Arabs strive through

their gestures, emotion, and repetition, to communicate a beautiful, poetic message, rather than simply communicating the facts.

In Yemen, as with most Arab cultures, each day is divided into *morning*, *lunchtime*, and *evening*, rather than being divided and subdivided into hours, minutes, and seconds. Their schedules thus tend to be loose and flexible, especially in comparison with the West's focus on punctuality. It is rare to find a clock in public places in Yemen.

Yemeni society is divided into four social classes.

1. The first group is the *Sayyids*, who are the direct descendants of Muhammad and the members of the former rulers. They are influential and wealthy.
2. The second group is the *Qadhis*, who are the descendants of those who were the Yemeni rulers before Islam came into play. This group tends to be well educated and scholarly. They are well-respected by the Yemeni population.
3. The third group is the *Sheikhs*, or the leaders of the tribes. They are also an influential group.
4. The fourth group is the craftsmen and merchants. They are actually subdivided into their various guilds.
 - a. The *Manasib* are the artisans. They are highly skilled and have jobs such as a goldsmith.
 - b. The *Muzayyin* are less skilled than the artisans. They have labor jobs such as bricklaying.
 - c. The *Akhdam* are even less skilled than the laborers, and serve in jobs such as street cleaning.

Different types of houses are found within each region of Yemen. In eastern Yemen, homes are made of sun-dried clay bricks. In the western coastal plain, Yemenis live in mud-covered huts made of reeds and sticks. These are one room huts and are often round, or sometimes rectangular. Each hut serves a different function: cooking hut, sleeping hut, storage hut. In the highlands, houses tend to be multilevel, sometimes six or seven stories high. The lower floors are composed of the garage and stables, while the other floors serve as housing for the various generations living in the home.

Yemenis live on a simple diet. Their staples are rice, bread, lamb, and vegetables. Fish is also a staple in the coastal areas. Yemenis eat with their hands, rather than with eating utensils such as silverware.

Coffee is thought to have somewhat originated in Mocha, a Yemeni town along the Red Sea. While the coffee beans were originally from Ethiopia, the plants were first cultivated in Yemen. The coffee made its way to Europe along the trading route during the Middle Ages. By the end of the 17th century, the smuggled some coffee plants out of Yemen, transplanting them to Ceylon and Java. The other European nations soon followed suit, carrying the coffee plants to their various colonies that had suitable climates. Coffee served as a major export for Yemen through the 18th century. Yemeni coffee is still thought to be one of the finest in the world, referred to as *coffee arabica*.

Qat, which is a large, slow growing evergreen shrub is an extensively cultivated plant throughout Yemen. The plant plays a significant role in Yemeni culture. Qat is used for chewing, as the juice of its leaves produces a caffeine-like affect.

Qat has proven to greatly increase the farmers' income. For instance, one hectare of cultivated qat is estimated to bring in 2.5 million Yemeni rials, where as the same amount of fruit only brought in .57 million Yemeni rials. Thus, most farmers are switching from planting crops of fruit or coffee and focusing in on the cultivation of qat.

While the farmers are making more money, they are also spending their profits on the qat to chew themselves, thus they are not harvesting food, nor do they have the money to buy food, thus malnutrition has become a serious issue. It is estimated that Yemenis speak 4-5 hours each day chewing qat. Researchers estimate that anywhere from 70-80% of Yemenis between the ages of 16 and 50 chew qat on occasion.

As mentioned before, chewing qat produces a caffeine-like rush, much like other common stimulants. The more frequent qat is chewed, the greater its effect. This includes positive and negative side effects. Long term use leads to dental issues, particularly among the gum and teeth. The stimulant also seems to increase fatigue. Those who chew it regularly, particularly teenagers seem to suffer loss of motivation.

The positive impact of the stimulant is the plants ability to help one socialize. Qat tends to make its chewers more talkative and open to discuss topics concerning politics, philosophy, and religion. It is a good way to meet new people, as groups will gather simply to chew qat and visit. It is thought that due to the Yemenis' interest in qat, their interest in actual drugs is low to non-existent.

Social Concern—

Child labor is a huge problem in Yemen. An official human rights report in 2004 reported by *Yementimes*, reflects that approximately 450,000 children have been driven to the labor market in Yemen. These children make up 9.1% of the national workforce. The report further claimed that Yemen holds the record for the number of children working for political, economic, and social venues.

Yemen is also identified as a nation troubled by terrorism. In fact, it is described as a “haven for Middle Eastern terrorists.” Another main factors contributing to the overall concern is a Yemeni tribal tradition of kidnapping foreigners for ransom and governmental pressure, as well as the government's inability to control the remote regions of the country including tribes. From 1992 to 1997, 100 recorded kidnappings occurred, this trend has only continued through recent years. It is worth mentioning however, that while kidnappings are easy, due to the easy availability and accessibility of weapons that the victims of the kidnappings are not typically in any danger. Most victims report being treated well.

Weapons are readily available throughout Yemen. The Interior Ministry of the Yemeni government estimates that in regards to numbers, there are an estimated 60 million firearms in Yemen, so it works out to about three weapons per citizen.

WorldMark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life, Volume 3, 1997.

Wikipedia

“The Child Labour Phenomenon in Yemen.” By Mahyoub Al-Kamaly. Yementimes. Issue 871, Volume 13.

<http://yementimes.com/article.shtml?i=871&p=business&a=1>

"Terrorist Trouble Spots Around the World." Infoplease.

© 2000–2007 Pearson Education, publishing as Infoplease.

26 Feb. 2007 <<http://www.infoplease.com/spot/terrorism7.html#yemen>>.

Alashwal, Shaker “The Truth About Kidnapping,” 1997.

Engel, Richard. “Yemen’s Weapon Culture.” January 22, 2002. BBC News.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/1775938.stm

Government:

On May 22, 1990 the Yemen Arab Republic (North Yemen) and the People’s Democratic Republic of Yemen (South Yemen) officially merged. They Republic of Yemen adopted a new constitution on May 16, 1991. This constitution was amended in 1994, and again in 2001. Yemen is the only democratic country on the Arabian Peninsula.

The nation is a republic divided into 19 governorates, with Sana’a the capital city also functioning as an additional governorate.

The country’s legislation system is based upon Shari’a law (Islamic Law). The legal system as a whole is based on a combination of Islamic law, Turkish law, English common law, and tribal customs. No law can contradict the Qur’an.

Yemen’s current constitution, provides for universal suffrage for all those who are 18 years of age or older.

- Yemen has been the first country in the Arabian Peninsula to give women the right to vote, to appoint a woman to as a Minister of Human rights, to have women elected into Parliament, and to even have a woman Ambassador (to Holland).
- Yemen has also been the first in the Arabian Peninsula to establish a Supreme Committee for the National elections, which is the first independent election body found within the Middle East.

There are currently 12 active political parties in Yemen.

Yemen has diplomatic representation in the United States, as well as a US diplomat in Yemen.

There are three branches of Yemen’s current government:

- Executive—
 - Chief of State—President—Upon the merger of the two Yemens, the president of North Yemen assumed the office of the unified nation. The president is elected by popular vote for seven year terms. The president appoints a vice president.
 - Head of Government—Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister—both of these offices are appointed by the president.

- Cabinet—Council of Ministers that are appointed by the president on the recommendation of the prime minister.
- Legislative—
 - The constitutional amendment in 2001, called for the creation of a bicameral legislature in Yemen, which consists of the Shura Council and a House of Representatives. The Shura Council has 111 seats, which all members are appointed by the president. The members of the House are elected by popular vote for 6 year terms, and there are 301 seats.
- Judicial—the Supreme Court

While there is a formal government structure, Yemeni tribal powers are still present and working. Particularly throughout the countryside, tribal authority far outweighs that of the formal government. Relations between the two spheres of authority are often tense, as integrating two completely different systems is a challenge.

Yemen has three military branches, including the Army, Navy, and Unified Yemen Air Force. In 2001 Yemen abolished the compulsory military service requirement and authorized a voluntary program.

CIA World Factbook—<https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ym.html>
<http://www.al-bab.com/yemen/soc/manea1.htm>
<http://www.yemenembassy.org/issues/democracy/index.php>

Economy:

Yemen is included in the United Nations' list of least developed countries. The list includes fifty of the world's poorest countries in which: (1) the annual gross domestic product is below \$900 per capita, (2) quality of life, which is based on life expectancy at birth, per capita calorie intake, school enrollment rates, and literacy, (3) and economic vulnerability based on instability of agricultural productions and export, inadequate diversification, and economic smallness.

Yemen is without a doubt one of the poorest countries in the Arab world. The limited funds they do have depend almost solely on their oil; from 2000-2006 they reported an annual growth rate of about 3.5%. Yemen is dependent on foreign assistance to maintain their budget and development projects. They reportedly have difficulty balancing and controlling their excessive spending and corruption. Some of the trouble has come as a result of trying to merge two distinct economic systems after the unification in 1990.

Oil was discovered in Yemen in 1982 near Mareb. The Hunt Oil Company of Texas partnered with the Yemeni government, determined to put Yemen on the international oil market. The Yemen Hunt Oil Company has worked hard to train Yemenis to work in the company, creating many employment opportunities. The workforce within the company is now 80% Yemeni, and they are continuing to work to train Yemenis to take on more senior technical and management positions.

Yemen produced 387,500 barrels of oil per day in 2005. They consumed 85,000 barrels a day and exported 370,300 barrels a day. They have 3.72 billion barrels of proven oil reserves.

Yemen is a economic aid recipient—\$2.3 Billion

Yemen also secured \$4.7billion of assistance from donors in the Arabian Gulf and the West for 2007.

Budget—\$7.314 billion (Expenditures—\$6.984 billion)

Yemen Currency—Yemeni Rial YER

Exchange Rate—197 YER/ \$1 (2006)

GDP Purchasing Power Parity—\$20.38 billion

GDP Official Exchange Rate—\$15.16 billion

GDP Real Growth Rate—3.2%

GDP Per Capita—\$900

GDP Composition by Sector—

- Agriculture—12.5%
- Industry—43.8%
- Services—43.7%

Labor Force—5.75 Million

Unemployment Rate—35%

Population below Poverty line—45.2%

Inflation Rate—14.8%

Investment—15.7% of GDP

Public Debt—30% of GDP

External Debt—\$5.4 billion

Agriculture Products

- Grain
- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Pulses
- Qat
- Coffee
- Cotton
- Livestock
- Poultry
- Fish
- Crude oil/Petroleum refining
- Cotton Textiles and Leather Goods
- Food processing
- Handicrafts
- Small aluminum products
- Cement
- Commercial ship repair

Industries

Export Partners:

- China—35.3%
- India—16.2%
- Thailand—11.9%
- Japan—6.3%
- South Korea—6.3%

- Switzerland 5.5%

- Switzerland—8.6%

Import Partners:

- UAE—18.95
- Saudi Arabia—8.9%

- Kuwait—6.7%
- China—6.1%
- USA—4.5%

Efforts have been made since the 1990 unification to create a national telecommunications network. The current national network consists of microwave radio relay, cable, tropospheric scatter, and GSM cellular mobile telephone services.

- 798,100 Telephone Main Lines
- 2 Million Mobile Cellular Lines

Yemen has 6 AM Radio stations and 1 FM station. They also have 7 Television stations.

There is an ongoing border dispute between Yemen and Saudi Arabia, as to where exactly the border is between the two countries.

Yemen is also home to almost 80,000 Somalian Refugees.

"World's 50 Poorest Countries." Infoplease.

© 2000–2007 Pearson Education, publishing as Infoplease.

26 Feb. 2007 <<http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0908763.html>>.

www.yementimes.com

CIA World Factbook—<https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ym.html>

Literacy:

In Yemen, 50.2% of the population over the age of 15 can read and write.

- Males—70.5%
- Females—30%

CIA World Factbook—<https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ym.html>

Land/Geography:

The Republic of Yemen is located in Southwest Asia, on the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula. This area is commonly referred to as the Middle East. Yemen borders the Arabian Sea, the Gulf of Aden, the Red Sea, Oman, and Saudi Arabia. Yemen is about twice the size of the US state of Wyoming. The Republic claims the islands of Perim and Socotra, the former Yemen Arab Republic, the former People's Democratic Republic of Yemen.

The terrain of Yemen is somewhat varied. The land is divided into four main regions: the western coastal plains, the western highlands, the eastern highlands, and the Rub al Khali or Empty Quarter also known as the Great Sandy Desert. Thus Yemen terrain includes desert, a narrow coastal plain, and interior mountain ranges. There is also the Hadramawt Valley in the east. The highest mountain in Yemen reaches 3660 meters.

The climate in Yemen mostly corresponds with the desert terrain. Along the coastal areas of the western coast however, it is hot and humid, and the conditions are temperate throughout the mountains. The eastern region of Yemen, which is mostly a vast desert, is extraordinarily hot and harsh, with few inhabitants.



Source URL: http://www.ameinfo.com/yemen_map/

CIA World Factbook—<https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ym.html>
www.wikipedia.com

History

Ancient Yemen

Yemen is considered to be a part of the “Cradle of Humanity,” and is one of the oldest centers of civilization in the world. From the 12th century B.C. to the 6th century AD, there were six successive civilizations which dominated this area on the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula: the Minaean, Qataban, Hadramaut, Awsan, Sabaean (Sheba), and Himyarite. Islam came to Yemen in AD 630.

The Minaean kingdom lasted from about 1200-650 B.C. The prosperity of their civilization was based upon the trade of frankincense and other spices. The Sabaean kingdom (Sheba), was founded in the 10th century B.C., and was ruled by Bilquis—the queen of Sheba. This kingdom had an impressive farming and irrigation system build upon a dam. The capital of this kingdom was Marib, near the present capital of Sana'a. Tradition holds that Shem, Noah's oldest son, founded the city of Marib. During the Sabaean rule, the Romans identified the kingdom as “Arabia Felix,” due to their successful cultivation of spice and aromatic trading along the trade routes, building up their wealth and prosperity. This kingdom not only survived, but essentially thrived for more than 14 centuries.

In what would later become South Yemen, both the Qataban and Hadramaut kingdoms emerged. They participated in trading highly prized frankincense and myrrh along the trading routes. The Hadramaut civilization was also centered around towns built near watering areas along the wadis. These areas were agricultural, harvesting wheat, millet, coffee, as well as date palm and coconut groves. Further up on the plateau, the Bedouins were herders, tending the sheep and

goats. The original Hadramis (people of Hadramaut) have surnames beginning with “Ba” or “Bin.”

The last major civilization in Yemen before the days of Islam was the Himyarite kingdom, which existed from the 1st century B.C. through the 500s A.D. This empire was invaded by the Romans in the 1st century B.C., and later occupied by the Ethiopians in the 4th century A.D. It was finally conquered by Ethiopia in 525. These Ethiopians were Christian. Shortly thereafter however, from 575-628, Persia came in and dominated the area. By 630 A.D, Islam had entered Yemen, and Yemen was made a province of the Muslim caliphate.

The Sabaean and Himyarite kingdoms were the most extensive kingdoms within ancient Yemen.

Appearance of Islam

As the Muslim empire spread across the Arab world, it reached Yemen by 630 AD. Muhammad was still alive at this time. The Yemenis were at the forefront of the invasions by the Islamic Army. They passed along their knowledge and skills of building towns, fortresses, and castles. The Yemenis were respected and trusted. Under the rule of the four Caliphs, Yemen was divided into three regions—Sana’a, Al-Ganada in Ta’iz, and Hadramaut.

The southern coastal area of Yemen came under the control of the Sunnis within the Shafi’i School, while the northern highlands fell under the control of the Shi’a sect known as the Zaydis.

In the 9th century, Yahya al-Hadi ila’l Haqq, a Zaydi ruler, initiated a long lasting line of imams that survived until the mid 20th century. Nonetheless, throughout the Middle Ages, Yemen history is intertwined around conflicting and opposing local imams.

The Isma’ilis dominated Yemen through most of the 11th century, and then Salah ad-Din took over Yemen in 1173. The Rasulid dynasty, which was of Kurdish and Turkish origin, then controlled Yemen from 1230 to the 15th century. In 1516 the Egyptians Mamluks incorporated Yemen into their reign, but it was short lived, as within a year’s time the Mamluks surrendered to the Ottomans, making Yemen a part of their empire. At this time, the Ottoman Turks occupied Yemen. Qaim the Great, a Zaydi imam challenged the Turks and expelled them from within the interior of Yemen in 1630. The Zaydi imams were successful at ruling the northern highlands of Yemen. Thus, from the mid 17th century until the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire only controlled the southern coastal region of Yemen.

In 1869, the Suez Canal was opened, which increased Red Sea traffic and substantially increased the value and importance of Aden and Yemen as a whole. During this time, the Ottomans and the British decided to establish a de facto border, dividing the northern and southern regions of Yemen. An official treaty was prepared in 1904. While the border was set, the actual boundaries were never clearly made, creating reason for many border disputes in the future. During this time, with the presence of the British and the Ottomans, the Zaydi Imamate began build up once again. In 1905, guerilla warfare broke out in Yemen, leading to the full rebellion of the Zaydis.

Northern Yemen

During the early years of the 19th century, the Wahhabis invaded and overran Yemen. The Zaydi Imamate collapsed. In 1818, however, Zaydi control was reestablished, as Ibrahim Pasha, the son of Muhammad ‘Ali of Egypt drove the Wahhabis out of Yemen. The Egyptians then occupied Yemen’s main ports for twenty plus years. In 1840 the Egyptians withdrew when the Zaydi imams formally recognized the Ottomans and paid a large subsidy to the Ottoman sultan. The Ottomans gave the Zaydi Imamate full autonomy and control within the northern regions of Yemen. The situation in Yemen however, soon became a chaotic anarchy. The Ottomans eventually moved in and occupied Sana’a, establishing it as the Yemeni capital in 1872, also serving to reestablish a sense of law and order.

The northern highland regions continued to be under the control of the Zaydi imams, under the Hamid ad-Din family, but the Ottomans maintained a large force within the rest of Yemen throughout the First World War. The Ottomans were forced to evacuate in 1918.

Yemen began experiencing tension with their borders, as Saudi Arabia and the British controlled Southern Yemen invaded and caused border clashes on their respective sides. In 1934, Yemen’s borders were established by a treaty with Saudi Arabia and Great Britain.

After the Second World War, Yemen made attempts to become more active in foreign affairs. They joined the Arab League in 1945 and the United Nations in 1947. During this time, the imam served both as king and spiritual leader. In 1948, dissatisfaction among the Yemenis erupted into a revolt, and the Imam—Yahya was assassinated. The Crown Prince Ahmad was able to put an end to the revolt and succeeded as imam. Interestingly, as he was reestablishing control, he received assistance from the West as well as the Communist bloc.

In 1958, Yemen joined with the United Arab Republic, which was made up of Egypt and Syria, to form the United Arab States. This was really only an alliance on paper and lasted until 1961. Fighting broke out after the Crown Prince Muhammad al-Badr succeeded as imam, and desired a neutral policy concerning foreign relations. He was deposed by pro-Egyptian republicans, and soon became the leader of the royalist tribes. Yemen was proclaimed as a republic in 1962 by Adallah al-Salal. Yemen soon became an international battlefield, as Egypt supported the republicans, and both Saudi Arabia and Jordan supported the royalists. By 1967, a mutual agreement was made and the Egyptians left Yemen and Saudi Arabia ended their financial support of the royalists. By November of the same year however, as al-Salal was out of the country, his government was overthrown and a new three man republican council was established under the leadership of Qadi Abd al-Rahmna al-Iryani and al-Amri. Fighting picked back up between the republicans and royalists, and continued until 1970, when Saudi Arabia finally made formal recognition of the republican regime.

Meanwhile, in 1967, tension also erupted along the border with Southern Yemen. These border clashes continued until the two countries signed an agreement to join in 1972. Nevertheless, the merger had still not occurred by 1974, and the fighting continued. Chairman of the republican council, al-Irani, decided to resign on June 12, 1974. This action was followed the next day by a coup staged by Colonel Ibrahim al-Hamidi. They served to suspend the constitution, establish a governing council, and re-establish civilian rule. Colonel al-Hamidi was assassinated in October

of 1977. He was succeeded by the short lived rule of Ahmad al-Ghashmi, who was assassinated in June of 1978.

The next ruler, President Ali Abdullah Saleh, made great efforts to strengthen the democracy and democratic procedures. While early in his rule, in 1979, the conflicts with Southern Yemen evolved into a full war, peace was quickly established as a new merger agreement was created. *The two Yemens officially merged in 1990.*

Southern Yemen

In the mid 19th century, Great Britain was seeking a way to reduce piracy on their merchant ships through Arabia. They decided to establish a protectorate in the southern Yemeni city of Aden in 1839. They continued adding surrounding lands to the protectorate in the subsequent years. In fact, between 1886 and 1914 Britain signed numerous protectorate treaties with rulers within the area. By 1937, they had 24 sultanates, emirates, and sheikhdoms making up the Aden Protectorate. The Protectorate was divided into the East Aden Protectorate and the West Aden Protectorate simply for administrative purposes. In 1959, the West Aden Protectorate, composed of six states, became the Federation of the Emirates of the South. Soon, the Emirates had ten members. The East Aden Protectorate, despite much opposition, was forced to join the federation in 1963; it was renamed the Federation of South Arabia.

In 1965, the federation had grown to incorporate 16 states. Those in Aden however, were still passionately opposed to the federation and establish a terror campaign against their British rulers. There were about 280 guerilla attacks in 1964 and more than 500 in 1965. The two nationalist groups that emerged during this campaign were the National Liberation Front and the Front for the Liberation of Occupied South Yemen. Britain made a promise to withdraw in 1968, nevertheless, the NLF decided to take matters into their own hands and seized control of the various state governments, forcing a collapse of the federation. In 1967, there was a temporary closure of the Suez Canal, and in June there was a mutiny with the Federation. Britain began working on their withdrawal in 1966, and officially withdrew their presence in 1967. South Yemen established their independence in November of the same year. Qahtan al-Shaabi, a member of the NLF, became South Yemen's first president. He was succeeded in 1969 by Rubayi Ali, and in 1970, the country adopted a new constitution and became the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen.

Yemen continued to experience problems, as they had border issues with both Oman and their northern counterpart, the Yemen Arab Republic. In 1972, there was an attempt to merge the two Yemens and cease the fighting; however the merger was not directly implemented.

President Rubayi Ali was deposed in June of 1978, by the radical Abdalfattah Ismail. Ismail signed a 20 year treaty with the Soviets in 1979, making Southern Yemen the only Marxist state in the Arab world. Fighting resumed with Northern Yemen in February of 1979, but was resolved in March. In 1983, Ismail was succeeded by Ali Nasser Muhammad. He made efforts to restore relations with both Saudi Arabia and Oman. Under his leadership however, political fighting erupted, and Muhammad had to flee to Ethiopia. He was succeeded by Haider Abu Bakr al-Attas in 1988.

Unified Yemen

Finally, in December of 1989, leaders of the two respective Yemens met and finalized agreements for the merger. The borders between them were opened in February of 1990, and on May 22, the two nations were united creating the Republic of Yemen. Yemen is the only democratic nation on the Arabian Peninsula. President Saleh, of Northern Yemen, became the president of the new unified Yemen.

The merger did not cease all conflict, and by 1993, relations had become quite tense. By 1994, the northern and southern armies broke out into a full civil war. In fact, the leaders in the south declared secession and attempted to establish the Democratic Republic of Yemen. Their efforts were not recognized by the international community. The war ended up lasting only nine weeks as the south was quickly defeated by the northern, government based forces.

At the end of the war, many southern leaders were sent into exile and Saleh was again established as president, this time receiving an official election by parliament. A coalition government was established that abolished the southern party.

The violence did not end. Muslim extremists, particularly in the south, continued in leading attacks and acts of violence throughout the south. The tribes also began staging kidnappings of tourist in order to have an audience before the government.

In 1997, Saleh again was elected as president. In 1999, Yemen held their first direct presidential elections; Saleh maintained his office, as candidates of the opposition parties were excluded from participating in the election. The government was charged with fraudulent vote counting.

In October of 2000 there was a suicide bombing attack on the U.S.S Cole, as it was anchored at the Aden Port. The British embassy was also bombed.

In 2000, Yemen also signed a border treaty with Saudi Arabia that ended border disputes beginning in the 1930s.

In 2001, Yemen received American aide as President Saleh declared to support the United States in the "War on Terror," as they began taking action against Muslim extremists. The terror attacks nevertheless, have still not ceased. In fact, in 2004, the government began Shiite raids, attacking supporters of Hussein al-Hawthi, who was accused of sedition and extremism. This led to months of fighting within the northern regions of Yemen; a cease fire was declared in September of 2004, but the fighting began again in April of 2005.

President Saleh was again elected to office in 2006, this time for a six year term.

<http://www.yemenweb.com/History.htm>

www.wikipedia.com

<http://www.bartleby.com/65/ye/Yemen.html>

Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations, 10th edition, Volume 4

Christian History

Yemen is supposedly recognized as being associated with the ancient biblical kingdom of Sheba. Yemen was the scene of numerous kingdoms and conflicts, from the Egyptians, to the Turks, to the Arabians. Christians are thought to have thrived in Northern Yemen, beginning in 500 AD. Christianity is thought to have taken root, along with Judaism, under the second Himyarite kingdom. The Christianity however, was destroyed shortly by the Muslim Empire in less than two hundred years.

Catholic

A Roman Catholic presence entered Yemen in 19th century. In fact, the first Catholic priest came to Yemen in 1841, living in Aden. The Prefecture of Aden was established in 1854, and became a vicariate in 1888. This vicariate was extended to reach regions throughout Arabia in 1889. In 1974, the vicariate of Arabia moved to Abu Dhabi.

In 1972, there were 87 Catholics in Yemen, however they were all internationals. They had obtained permission to serve in Aden, but not in North Yemen. Then in 1973, Yemen invited Mother Theresa's Missionaries of Charity to take care of a home for the aged and helpless in Hodeida. The first five nuns arrived in August of the same year. Subsequently, the Catholic Relief Services was asked to find personnel help for other medical and educational posts throughout the country. A French White Father, who was a medical doctor, came to Sana'a to work at a hospital in 1973. He eventually had a staff of 3 White Fathers and 20 sisters; they were not allowed to proselytize. The Missionaries of Charity opened a second ministry house in Taiz in 1974, and a third in Sana'a in 1975.

The Holy See has no diplomatic relations with Yemen.

Protestant

In 1964, Southern Baptists were allowed to open a medical clinic in Taiz, upon an invitation from the Ministry of Health. They opened a second in Jibla in 1968. The Southern Baptists have a 15 person staff of medical missionaries. Another team, known as the Red Sea Team, arrived in 1969 in Yarim.

There are thought to be some secret believers in Yemen, however it is not legal for a Muslim to convert to Christianity.

World Christian Encyclopedia, 2nd Edition, Volume 1. (pp 810-11)

Religions

Non-Christian

- Islam
 - Islam, which is the second largest religion in the world, is a monotheistic, Abrahamic religion that developed out of the teachings of a 7th Century Arab named Muhammad. The word *Islam* itself actually means "peace," or

“submission” and denotes the concept of completely surrendering to God (Allah). Muslims revere the Qur’an as their holy book; they believe it is God’s revelation to Muhammad, the final prophet, restoring the original faith of Adam, Abraham, and the other prophets. The fundamental concepts of the religion are known as the Five Pillars:

1. Shahada—Confession/testimony
 - Most important and foundational pillar.
 - “There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet.”
 2. Salat—Prayer
 - There are five daily fixed times of prayer.
 - You must pray facing towards Mecca.
 - It is an expression of gratitude and worship to God.
 3. Zakat—Almsgiving
 4. Sawm—Fasting
 - Compulsory during Ramadan
 - Requires abstinence from food, drink, and sex from sunrise to sunset.
 5. Hajj—Pilgrimage to Mecca
 - Everyone who is able is to make the pilgrimage at least one time.
- Islam was introduced in Yemen around 630 AD. There are two main groups of Islam present in Yemen: Sunni and Shi’a.
 1. Sunni—50-55% (Primarily in the South and Southeast)
 - Shafi’i—50-55%
 2. Shi’a—2-5%
 - Zaidi—40-45% (Primarily in North and Northwest)
 - Ja’fari—2-5% (Primarily in North)
 - Western Isma’ili—2-5%
 - The Zaydis had dominated northern Yemeni culture and politics for centuries. However the two Yemens united, and with the unification came the south’s huge population of Shafi’i Sunnis. Nevertheless the Zaydis are highly influential as they continue to be overrepresented in government and military arenas.
 - Judaism
 - The Jewish community in Yemen is the only one worldwide that has maintained the tradition of reading from the Torah in the synagogue in both Hebrew and the Aramaic Targum.
 - Three main Jewish groups in Yemen:
 - Baladi
 - Shami
 - Maimonideans
 - There were two major Yemenite Jew populations—Aden and Hadramaut
 - There was a mass migration of Jews to Israel—Most all of the known Yemeni Jews have migrated to Israel.
 - Operation Magic Carpet/Operation on Wings of Eagles 1949-1950—47,000 Yemenite Jews airlifted to Israel

- Small Jewish populations who stayed behind and did not migrate to Israel, were soon isolated from their relatives abroad and were scattered throughout the mountains of northern Yemen. They were forbidden to migrate. Due to the isolation, some of the Jews abandoned their Judaism and converted to Islam.
- There are only about 200 estimated Jews currently in Yemen, and two known functioning synagogues—Saiqaya and Amlah

Jewish Virtual Library—<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/anti-semitism/yemenjews.html>
 Wikipedia.com
<http://www.islamfortoday.com/beliefs01.htm>

Christian cults and sects

- No known groups exist

Catholics/Orthodox Churches

- Catholics
 - 3000 adherents, 1,100 members, and 4 congregations.
 - Yemen is associated with the Vicariate of Arabia.
 - The Holy See has no diplomatic relations with Yemen.
- Anglican
 - 200 adherents, 120 members, and 4 congregations.
- Orthodox
 - 3,000 adherents and approximately 1,000 members.

Protestant/Evangelicals/Pentecostals

- Christians are not recognized by the state, and proselytizing nationals is not allowed by the government, so all the national Christians that exist are crypto-Christians. Most of the existent Christians in Yemen are actually expatriates (Arabs, Indians, Europeans), nevertheless there is thought to be small number of Yemeni believers.
- There are no known Protestant/Evangelical/Pentecostal churches in Yemen.

Operation World—21st Century Edition, 2001
 World Christian Encyclopedia, 2nd Edition, 810-811.

People Groups

00000

Americans (7,000)

The Americans are a North American People of the Anglo-American people cluster. They primarily speak English and are predominately (78%) Christian adherents.

00000

Amhara, Ethiopian (8,600)

The Ethiopian Amhara are a people of the Horn of Africa-Cushitic affinity bloc. They are an ethnic group from the central highlands of Ethiopia who dominate in Ethiopian political and economic life. In fact, they are thought by many historians to have been the ruling elite of Ethiopia for centuries.

They speak the Amhraic language. Amhraic is a widely spoken Semitic language in the world, second only to Arabic.

Traditionally the Amhraic are a rural people who make their living through farming and agriculture.

Most of the marriages are arranged and divorce is not an option. Men are married in their teens to early twenties and girls are typically 18.

The Ethiopian Amhara in Yemen are 60% Christian adherents as the traditional predominant religion for the Amhara has been Christianity and adherence to the Eastern Orthodox Church.

12274

Arab, Central Arab Yemeni (4,895,614)

The Central Arab Yemeni's speak Taizzi-adeni spoken Arabic. They are adherents of Islam; there is no known resources for this group, such as the Jesus Film, radio broadcasts, or Bible translations.

This is perhaps the same people group as the Taizz-Adeni Arabs listed below.

12277

Arab, Egyptian (77,000)

Egyptians, with less than 2% evangelicals among them, are an unreached people group. Egyptian Arabic is the heart language of this people group, of which there are three dialects: North Delta Arabic, South Central Delta Arabic and Cairene Arabic. Arabic is a Semitic language and therefore is similar to Hebrew. Scripture portions, the New Testament, Jesus Film, Christian audio recordings, and Christian radio broadcasts are available in their language.

Egyptians are predominantly Sunni Muslims. In fact among the Egyptian Arabs in Yemen, there are few if any know Christians.

They are among the least reached peoples of the world.

All classes of the social system are represented among Egyptian Arabs: the rich, poor, rural peoples, and urban dwellers. Relationships with family and friends are of the greatest importance in Egyptian culture. Extended families commonly live in one apartment together. Women are permitted to work outside the home, usually other female family members such as grandmothers or aunts often care for the children in these cases. Muslims who convert to Christianity face persecution from family members and the community.

12271

Arab, Gulf (16,000)

Gulf Arabs dwell along the southern coast of the Arabian Gulf. They have traditionally been nomadic herders struggling to survive in the desert from the resources provided by their goats and date palms. Then oil was discovered in the gulf. Now Gulf Arabs have most every imaginable modern convenience.

Gulf Arabs are alternately named Emirian, Gulf Arabic Speaking, Saudi Arab, Bahraini Arab, and Iranian Arab.

The Gulf Arabs speak a dialect of Arabic known as Gulf Arabic.

Gulf Arabs are followers of Islam. They seek for truth in the Qur'an and follow the teachings of Mohammed. Only 1.2% of the Gulf Arabs in Yemen are known to be Christians. The Gulf Arabs are among the least reached peoples of the world. They have had no active church planting among the people in the past couple of years. There is an unbound Bible available in their language as well as some audio recordings in their dialect.

00000

Arab, Hadrami (380,000)

The Hadrami Arabs live in the Hadramaut in Yemen. This area is thought to have been founded by Shem, one of Noah's sons. The Hadramaut is named for the great-great-grandson of Shem, and the Hadramis are able to trace their lineage back to Joktan, who was a direct descendent of Noah. The Hadrami Arabs were significantly involved in the trading routes of Ancient Arabia, as they lived along the Frankincense Road. The Hadrami Arabs are also sometimes called Tihama Arabs. They are a part of the Yememi Arab people cluster. The Hadrami Arabs speak a Hadrami dialect of Arabic.

They are Sunni Muslims and are among the least reached peoples in the world. There is about 1% of the population that is thought to be evangelical, but they have had no active church planting among the group in the past two years. While the Bible is available in Classical Arabic, Bible translators need help translating one into the Hadrami spoken dialect.

42889

Arab, Iraqi (30,000)

Iraqi Arabs are a part of the Levant Arab people cluster. They are alternately named Mesopotamian Arabs and speak a Mesopotamian dialect of Arabic. They are adherents of Shia Islam and among the least reached peoples in the world. The Iraqis in Yemen are less than 2% Evangelical and are considered an unengaged people. There is not a Bible available in the Iraqi dialect, but there are some resources including the Four Spiritual Laws, the Jesus Film, Global Recordings, and Radio Broadcasting.

00000

Arab, Levantine (35,000)

The Levant is a somewhat geographical term referencing a crescent shaped section of land in the Middle East encompassing the land south of the Taurus Mountains, East of the Mediterranean, and west of Mesopotamia. It does not actually include any of the Arabian Peninsula proper.

The Levantine Arabs are generally considered Lebanese Arabs. Alternate names for the people include Lebanese Arab, Lebanese Sunni, and Lebanese Shiite. They speak North Levantine Arabic. Levantine Arabic is sometimes referred to as Eastern Arabic and is predominately spoken in the area known as the Levant.

The Levantine Arabs are predominately Sunni Muslims, but 50% of are Christian adherents. There are portions of the Bible translated into their dialect as well as various ministry tools including the Four Spiritual Laws and Global Recordings.

12285

Arab, Omani (162,000)

The Omani Arabs are a group that is believed to have emigrated from Oman to Yemen during the 1800's. The Omani Arabs represent less than 1% of Yemen's population. They are a very unique people who have a reputation for being very generous and polite, while still remaining impersonal.

The Omani typically reside in the less populated southern regions of Yemen where temperatures are as high as 129 degrees and rain may not fall for five years. The Omani typically live in rural areas or on the edges of smaller towns. They are agricultural and rely heavily on farming and livestock.

The society of the Omani Arabs is very patriarchal. The men of this culture do not abuse their authority because they believe that their families should obey them out of respect, as opposed to fear. Marriages typically are pre-arranged by the parents.

These extended family units carry within them very specific gender roles. The men typically work outside in the fields, while the women work inside of their homes. Children also follow these gender specific roles and are considered the family's greatest asset because they are additional laborers and they provide the family with social security.

Many important daily duties separate the men and women of this society. Prayer is a very separate act as is worship. Men worship at mosques while women attend ceremonies in their homes conducted by female religious leaders. Men and women often eat separately as well.

The hospitality of the Omani Arabs is something to note. The city dwellers tend to be less concerned with aspects of hospitality and focus more on property, wealth, and education. The nomads greatly revere hospitality in their culture and it is still valued highly today. For the nomads, anything less than excessive generosity is considered as rudeness.

The dress of the Omani Arabs consists of traditional Arab clothes. Men typically wear white robes, sashes, and turbans. The women wear long, black dresses and some of them wear the black masks to cover their faces.

Most of the Omani are Sunni Muslims. They adhere to the five pillars of Islam which include the confessional, reciting prayers five times a day, fasting during prescribed times, giving alms to the poor, and making at least one trip to Mecca in their lifetime.

There are currently no known Christians, particularly among the Omani in Yemen. The Omani are considered among the least reached peoples of the world and are further considered an unengaged group. There is no Bible and few ministry tools available for the Omani Arabs in their language of Arabic, Omani Spoken.

12288

Arab, Palestinian (23,000)

Palestinian Arabs fall into a category classified as Levant Arabs. "Levant" is a broad term that includes several groups of Arabs: the Jordanian, Palestinian, Iraqi, Arabic Jewish, Chaldean, and Syrian Arabs. Today, several hundred thousand Levant Arabs live along the northern edges of the Arabian Desert. They are spread from Israel to Kuwait and as east as Iran. Small groups can also be found in North Africa.

Most scholars consider Arabs from the Arabian Peninsula to be the original Arabs. The Arabian culture was developed by tribes of nomads and villagers who lived in the Arabian Desert. It was also from there that Arab migrations began, eventually leading to the expansion of the Arab world.

The Palestinian Arabs have had a close association with Islam throughout their history; and today, most of them are Muslims. However, there has long been a sizable contingent of committed Christians among the Palestinian Arabs. Palestinian Arabs speak an Arabic language called Mashriqi, with various local dialects.

The Palestinian Arabs in Yemen speak the South Levantine dialect of Arabic. Portion of the Bible are available. The Jesus Film and other recording of the gospel are not available.

Palestinian Arabs can be found in Villages near fertile regions and in the foothills of less arid regions. Though they are found in towns they are still tribal. Sheiks rule the various tribes and villages are very easily defending based on the building design.

Social life is important to Palestinian Arabs. One will remove their shoes when entering an Arab's home. Coffee is often served to guests. There are different classes of Arab social structure. Women wear veils in town and in the home. It is becoming more acceptable for Arabs to choose their own mates but arranged marriages still exist. Children are valued as an asset and women therefore are valued for their ability to bear children.

The Palestinians in Yemen are strong adherents to Sunni Islam. There are only a few known Christians among the Palestinian Arabs and conversion can be very costly. Only about 4% of the Palestinian Arabs in Yemen are Christian. Many Palestinian Arabs live in restricted area and it is challenging to present them with the gospel. They are no agencies or active church planting done among the ethnic group.

00000

Arab, Sudanese (394,000)

The Sudanese Arabs are a tribe of Arabs who branched off from the original Bedouin Arabs from Saudi Arabia. The Sudanese Arabs are a heterogeneous people with a mixture of cultures that originated in the Khartoum region of Sudan several hundred years ago. Today, they mostly live throughout Northern and Central Sudan and Egypt, with others scattered around Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, Libya, Yemen and the UAE. They have intermarried with Mongoloid and Negroid groups in their region, and thus have a darker skin tone than other Arabs, as well as some Negroid features.

Beginning in 1983, conflict between the Arabs in northern Sudan and the Christians and animists in southern Sudan has been tragic, accounting for an estimated two million deaths.

The Sudanese Arabs are agrarian, and typically live in rural villages. They live in clusters of mud-brick homes built in close proximity to one another, reflecting their strong family ties within the communities.

Children are valued as the family's greatest asset, as they will eventually provide for the family.

Boys and girls are treated very differently, where the boys are shown much affection and attention. The girls on the other hand are shown some affection, but are pampered very little.

They are trained in how to obey their future husband. The boys are taught to respect and obey older men. Teenagers are not allowed any contact with the other sex until after marriage.

The Sudanese Arabs are Sunni Muslims. They are devoted to their faith. The men often pray at the mosque five times each day, and the women meet in their homes and hold religious services led by female leaders. Islamic law, which is based upon the Qur'an, allows men to have 4 wives.

The Sudanese Arabs speak Sudanese Arabic. Currently there is only a New Testament available in this dialect, but there is also the Jesus Film, the Four Spiritual Laws, and Radio Broadcasting available. There are very few believers among the Sudanese in Yemen, with only 1.4% known to be Christian. The Sudanese Arabs are listed as a least reached people group, and have had no active church planting within the ethnic group in Yemen. They are considered unengaged.

00000

Arab, Southern Yemeni (3,820,967)

The Southern Yemeni Arabs live along the southern regions and along the coastal areas of Yemen. Due to their location in the trade routes, they played a significant role in the spread of Islam throughout the centuries. One of their main cultural centers is Aden, which is the third busiest seaport in the world. Aden is thought to become Yemen's "Window to the World" during the 21st century. The Southern Yemeni Arabs speak Hadrami Spoken Arabic. They are predominately Muslim adherents. While most are Sunni Muslims, there are some Sufi Muslims as well. There is no Bible translated into their language, nor other ministry resources such as the Jesus Film, radio broadcasts, or Gospel Recordings.

00000

Arab, Ta'izz-Adeni (8,900,000)

Arabs number over 200 million and form the majority population in 22 countries. Most scholars consider Arabs from the Arabian Peninsula to be the original Arabs. The Arabian culture was developed by tribes of nomads and villagers who lived in the Arabian Desert. It was also from there that Arab migrations began, eventually leading to the expansion of the Arab world. The Arabs are “the largest, most diverse and most politically influential Muslim ethnic group in the world.” (From Richard V. Weekes, ed., *Muslim Peoples: A World Ethnographic Survey*, 2d ed., *Acehnese-Lur* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1984), 35).

The Yemeni Arab social structure consists of four classes of people including Sayyid (wealthy), the Qatani (tribesmen), the Shafi’ite townsmen (merchants, artisans, and craftsmen), and the Akhdam (slaves). Despite the Islamic teachings, the different and distinct social classes is an obvious reality in Yemeni culture. Even the clothing worn serves to identify one with his social standing.

The Yemeni Arab society is patrilineal, and so all the family inheritances are passed down to the males. Wives who are able to bear several children are highly valued. The men are allowed to have four wives, but most of the Yemeni Arab men choose to only have one wife. It is even becoming acceptable in Yemen for the young to choose their own spouses. Girls are eligible for marriage at the age of nine.

The Taizz-Adeni Yemeni Arabs speak Taizzi-Adeni Spoken Arabic as their primary language, but can usually also speak Hadrami Spoken Arabic as well as Sanaani Spoken Arabic.

The Yemeni Arabs have been closely associated with Islam throughout history, and thus today almost 100% of Yemeni Arabs are Muslims. There are pockets of Shi’a Muslims along the Saudi border and south in the Aden area, but mostly the Yemeni Arabs are Sunni.

The Yemeni Arabs are among the least reached peoples. While there are some known believers throughout the country, there are no known churches, and they remain less than 2% Evangelical. There has yet to be a Bible translated into the Taizzi-Adeni Spoken Arabic. The only available resources are the Unbound Bible, the Four Spiritual Laws and some global recordings. The Jesus Film has yet to be translated into this dialect.

00000

Arabized Black (230,000)

The Arabized Blacks from the Arabian Arab people cluster. They are scattered throughout Yemen, and actually live in all the provinces with the exception of two of the eastern and northeastern ones. The people group is alternately known as Libyan and simply Yemeni. They speak Taizzi-Adeni Spoken Arabic.

The Arabized Blacks are mostly Sunni Muslims, but about .10% are thought to be Christian. Thus, they are among the least reached peoples. There is no Bible in the Taizzi-Adeni Spoken Arabic, but there is the Unbound Bible, Four Spiritual Laws, and Global Recordings available. The Jesus film has also not been translated into this dialect.

00000

British (3,400)

The British are of the Anglo Celt people cluster of the Eurasian affinity bloc. They are alternately named Anglo-Pakistani, Euronesian, Scottish, White, and Anglophone. The British in Yemen speak English and are primarily Christians (78%).

00000

Deaf

There is little known information on the deaf in Yemen. They are thought to be Islamic and are considered among the most least-reached peoples. There are no known ministry tools or reported resources available for sharing the gospel with this group.

12275

Cham, Western (250)

The Western Cham people are a South Asiatic people. They are alternately known as Cambodian, Chiem, Hoi, Tjam, Cambodian Cham, Cheim Thanh, and Thanh. They speak a language known as Western-Cham, which is classified as Austronesian, Malayo-Polynesian, Malayic, Achinese-Chamic, Chamic, South Coastal, Cham-Chru. The language uses the Devanagari script, which is the script of many Indian languages, as well as using the Roman script. The Western Cham people are primarily adherents to Islam, and are among the least reached peoples. They do not have the Bible, Jesus Film, or radio broadcasts in their language.

00000

German (5,800)

The Germans in Yemen, also known as German Standard, Saxon, Volga German, High German, and Transylvanian, speak German Standard. They are primarily Christian adherents (78%).

12278

Hobyot (25,000)

There is scarce information available on the Hobyot people. They are a part of the Arab Arabian people cluster and live in the Al-Mahrah province in Yemen. They traditionally are camel, cow, and goat breeders, but the ones who live along the sea are typically fishers. They speak a language known as Hobyot. This language is estimated to have less than 100 speakers worldwide. Hobyot is an independent language and is thought to have characteristics of the Mehri and Jibbali languages.

The Hobyot are primarily adherents to Islam. They are among the least reached peoples in the world. There are about 0.20% of Christians in the group, but there has been no active church planting in the past couple of years. The group is considered unengaged. They need a Bible translated into the Hobyot language. There are no known ministry tools available.

00000

Indo-Pakistani (232,000)

The Indo-Pakistanis are a South Asian people originally from India, but live around the world today. While natively most are Hindu, many in the Arabian Peninsula are Muslim. Hindi is their native language. Alternate names for the group are East Indian, Hindi, and North Indian. In Yemen, they are actually predominately Hindu, and about 1% Christian. They are among the least reached people of the world. There are no churches or agencies working with the people.

00000

Italian (500)

The Italians are a Eurasian people, speaking primarily Italian. They are 83% Christian adherents.

12270

Jew, Yemeni (200)

The Jews in Yemen speak Hebrew, Judeo-Yemeni Arabic, and Taizzi-Adeni Arabic. They have a Bible, the Jesus Film, Gospel Recordings, and radio broadcastings in their heart language. The Yemeni Jews are alternately names Arabic, Hebrew, Jewish, Judeo-Yemeni, and Judeo-Yemeni Jew.

There are few if any Christian believers within the Yemeni Jews, as they predominately adhere to Judaism. They are among the least-reached.

Prior to 1948, the Jews formed one of the largest non-Muslim minorities in the Arab world. The communities fared well until Islam was declared the official religion in the Arab lands. They have since experienced isolation, discrimination, and persecution. Many were even forced to “convert” to Islam. Most of the Jewish communities were taken to Israel after 1948.

12282

Mahra (85,000)

The Mahra within Yemen live within the Mahrah Governorate. These people are also named Mahri, Mehri, and South Arabic. They are a part of the Arabian people cluster. The Mahra Arabs still live in function according to tribal life. Each tribe is ruled by a sheik. The Mahras are divided into the semi-nomads and they settled. They are an endogamous tribe, so marriage can only occur within their limited social circle. They are typically monogamous.

The Mahra people primarily speak Mehri. The Mehri language is divided into two main dialects: Northern and Southern. The Southern dialect is spoken in Southern Yemen, and more specifically the Qishn dialect is spoken. The Mahra are primarily adherents to Islam, and are Sunni Muslims. They are in the 10/40 window and among the least reached peoples. They are few, if any known believers among the group. They are said to have no evangelical Christians or churches, and they have no access to any Christian resources. There are a few portions of the Bible in Mehri, which were completed in 1902.

12283

Malay (46,000)

The Malay people group is alternately known as Javar, Melaju, Malao-Polynesian, and Melayu. They are of the Malay Peoples Affinity Bloc and people cluster, and primarily speak Malay. The Malay are primarily Sunni Muslims, with very few, if any, known believers among them. They are termed as an “unengaged group.” They do have the Bible translated in their language, as well as numerous ministry tools and resources.

The Malay people were originally from Malaysia, but spread throughout other parts of Asia with sea trading routes, beginning as early as the 5th century. They are typically a rural people, and are often found living in small villages. Even though Islam allows four wives, most within the Malay society are monogamous. The Malay people are not associated with kinship groups. While they are strong adherents to Islam, they often practice it with some distorted Buddhist and Hindu influences.

12289

Persian (35,000)

The Persians compose a large, tribal ethnic group, unified originally by both language and location. Persians are also known as Ebhele, Farsi, Irani, and Parsiwan. They are an Iranian-Median people who speak Western Farsi. Persians throughout Yemen are predominately Shiite Muslims. They are among the least reached peoples of the world.

00000

Russian (16,000)

The Russian people, also known as Eluosi, Russ, and Olossu, are an Eastern Slavic people who speak Russian. The Russians in Yemen are reportedly non-religious, with about 20% adhering to Christianity.

12284

Sana’ani, Northern Yemeni (9,930,000)

The Northern Yemen Arabs, or Sana’ani Arabs, live in the northern regions of Yemen. They are among the least reached peoples. They speak Sana’ani Spoken Arabic, and there is no Bible translated into this language. They do have an Unbound Bible, a few Discipleship and Evangelism Resources, and Four Spiritual Laws in their language. The Northern Arabs are primarily Muslims however 0.01% are Christian Evangelical.

The Northern Yemenis are thought to hold a fine balance between medieval tribalism and emerging 21st century technology. While the Yemenis are fiercely committed to their tribes and are found wearing traditional dress, they also have and welcome technological advances such as computers, satellites, and refrigerators.

Socotran (102,000)

The Socotran people mainly live on the Island of Soqotra, which lies in the Indian Ocean off the Horn of Africa and the Gulf of Aden. The island belongs to Yemen. While the Socotrans are Arabs, they are also a mixture of Greek Portuguese and African. They speak Soqotir, a language which is a version of the ancient Himyarite language that was spoken in Arabia in the days before Islam.

The Socotrans are thought to be 100% Muslim; about 50% are Shi'ite Zaydis, which are rigid fanatics. The other inhabitants are Sunni or Ismailis. The Socotrans are among the least reached. They are designated as an unengaged people and have had no active church planting efforts. The island is very isolated from the rest of Yemen, and from most visitors. In fact military permission is required even to visit. There are portions of the Bible translated in the local language, but given the Islamic stronghold, it is not readily accessible. There are no other known resources available.

Somali (858,000)

The Somali in Yemen can be divided and classified into three groups: rural farmers, city dwellers, and nomadic shepherds. Most of the Somali in Yemen are actually merchants. Many have fled to Yemen to escape the war and famine of Somalia. The Somalis in Yemen mainly live in camps around Aden. The Somali people are also known as Issa, Ogaden, Sab, and Shabelle.

The Somalis tend to wear brightly colored material, worn like togas. They speak the Somali language.

The Somalis are adherents of Islam, and the majority in Yemen are Sunni Muslims. There are few, if any known believers in Yemen. The Somalis are an unengaged people group, with no active church planting and no committed agency. They do have a Bible as well as numerous Christian resources available in their language.

00000

Spaniard (23,000)

The Spaniards of Yemen are alternately known as Argentinean White, Camba, Chilean, Colombian, Cuban, Dominican, Dominican Mulatto, Hispanics, Latin American, Latin American White, Latino, Mexican, Mestico, Peruvian, and Puerto Rican White. The Spaniards are a Spanish Eurasian people who speak the Spanish language. They are 69% Christian adherents.

00000

Tigrinya, Eritrean (8,600)

The Tigrai, or Tigrinya, are descendants of the early Semitic people who settled in Africa around 1000 B.C. They are of the Ethiopian people cluster. Their traditions show them as being the descendants of the Sabaean people who trace their roots back to Menelik I, who was the child born to King Solomon and the queen of Sheba.

Religion plays a large role in the lives of the Tigrai. Most of the Tigrai people in Yemen consider themselves Coptic Orthodox Christians (60%), but very few of them are considered to be evangelical.

The language of the Tigrai is Tigrinya, which comes from the old “holy language” of Ge’ez. Tigrai Christian church services are conducted in Ge’ez, much like the Catholic Church used to conduct services in Latin, but it is not understood by the general population. The priests who speak Ge’ez have merely memorized their parts for the church service.

The Tigrai have a rich heritage of both music and dance. Coffee is also a very important part of their culture. During the “coffee ceremony,” coffee beans are roasted, ground, and served in small cups. The smoke from the roasted beans is thought to be a blessing to all those dining.

Families units in this culture are very strong because they all have to work together to survive. Women are responsible for preparing the meals, while children carry the water. Water sources are many times more that a kilometer away from a home.

Marriages among the Tigrai are monogamous and arranged by contract. Dowry is also given to the couple by the bride’s family. Newlyweds spend time in each family’s home before establishing their own at a location of their choosing. Their home will be built mostly from rock, dirt, and timber poles. Inheritance in this culture is not strictly patrilineal; rather, it follows both family lines.

There is the complete Bible, the Jesus Film, Christian radio broadcasting, gospel audio recordings, and many other ministry resources available in Tigrai.

www.peoplegroups.org

www.joshuaproject.net

www.pray4yemen.com

Missiological Implications

1. Evangelical Christians and Churches should seek highly contextualized methods to reach the predominantly Islamic population of Yemen. Such methods as Isa Mosques and the Camel method should be considered. Local believers should be trained in these methods
2. Evangelical Christians and Churches should adopt methods of Chronological Bible Storying as a possible method to communicate the Message to the peoples of Yemen
3. Evangelical Christians and Churches should accept the possibilities of conversions through visions of the Risen Christ and pray for such experiences among the peoples of Yemen.
4. Evangelical Christians and Churches should consider evangelistic efforts among some of the minority groups such as the Malay populations.

Missionaries wanting to reach those in Yemen will need to be able to share the gospel and teach through oral methods. And in fact, more and more it seems there is a need and even push for non-Western missionaries in the Arab world due to the political situation and our current foreign policy. Latin Americans, Asians, and even some Europeans will have more accessibility.

Also, because the Islamic culture is so ingrained in the Yemen way of life, and has been almost from the outset of Islam, one will have to become more familiar with both the Arabic and Islamic worldview and cultures.

Also basically, there is a great need for a reliance on prayer and Scripture. Those who serve in the Arab world in general, but even within Yemen, report that Arabs are coming to Christ in very "spiritual" ways. i.e. visions, dreams, and divine encounters. We need to be aware of this, praying for this, and be prepared and willing to be one of those "encounters."

The work in Yemen will likely take time, as Islam maintains such a stronghold. Much of the work right now, is more tearing down these strongholds, and preparing the way for the gospel to be received.

Pictures –

Links –

www.pray4yemen.com

www.yementimes.com