

MISSION ATLAS PROJECT

Middle East

Qatar

Snap Shot

Country Name: Qatar

Dawlat Qatar'



Country Founded:

Independence Day, 3 September 1971.

The current constitution was ratified by the Qatari public on 29 April 2003, endorsed by the Emir on 8 June 2004, came into force on 9 June 2005.

Population: 863,051

Government Type: (national, regional and local)

Traditional Monarchy: ruled by an Emir

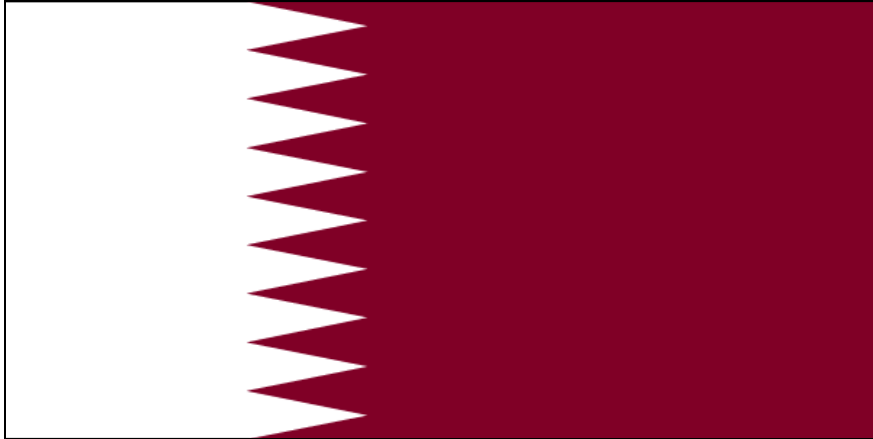
Ten municipalities (baladiyat, singular - baladiyah); Ad Dawhah, Al Ghuwayriyah, Al Jumayliyah, Al Khawr, Al Wakrah, Ar Rayyan, Jarayan al Batinah, Madinat ash Shamal, Umm Sa'id, and Umm Salal. The local governments handle planning and development of their areas but are under the leadership of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs.

Geography/location in the world:

Qatar is in the Middle East. Qatar is located eastern shore of the Arabian Peninsula in the Persian Gulf, with Saudi Arabia as it's only land border. It lies between latitudes 27 to 24, and 10 to 26 degrees north and longitudes 45 to 50, and 40 to 51 degrees east.

Number of people groups: 26

Picture of flag:



Religion Snapshot:

Major Religion and % of population:

95% Muslim (according to the CIA website)
Muslim 80% (according to Operation World)
The Qataris are mainly Sunni of the Wahhabi sect.

All religions and % for each:

Christian 10%
Hindu 2%
Non-religious/other 1%

Operation World 21st Century Edition

Government interaction with religion: (is the government cooperative [i.e. official church-state], supportive, tolerant, non-tolerant, antagonistic, etc.)

www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/qa.html

Qatar, though largely Muslim, officially believes in the freedom of religion. Qatar has recently decided to allow churches to be built. Churches of various Christian sects will be built in the coming years. The first church to be built will be catholic. Until now foreign Christians were not allowed to worship in public.

Before 1980 there were no known believers in Qatar. Criticism of the Muslim faith is a crime. Proselytizing the Christian faith to Muslims is forbidden. Emir Sheikh Hamd bun Khalifa al-Thani, who is currently ruler of Qatar, desires Qatar to be a permanent host to ongoing seminars to discuss the common bonds of Christianity and Islam hoping for understanding to be reached between Arab and Western culture. The first of such seminars was held in 2003.

MISSION ATLAS PROJECT

Profile of Qatar

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Demographics

The population in July 2005 was estimated to be 863,051. The growth rate is approx. 2.61%. The capital city is Doha with an approximate population of 339,471. Ninety-one percent of the population of Qatar is urban.

Only 3.4% of the population is over the age of 65. Fifteen to 64 years of age makes 72.9% of the population. Infants to 14 years of age comprise 23.7% of the population.

The birth rate is 15.54 births/ 1,000. The death rate is 4.61/1,000. Life expectancy is 71.15 years for males and 76.32 years for females.

The expatriate community of Qatar is very large. The total population is about 40% Arab, 18% Indian, 18% Pakistani, and 10% Iranian, and 14% other nationalities.

In 1955 the population of Qatar was 40,000; 28,000 were Qatari; 12,000 were non-Qatari. Economic development brought opportunities to the country and by 1985 the population make-up drastically changed where the non-Qataris outnumbered Qataris. The total population was 276,000; 113,160 being Qatari with 162,840 non-Qataris.

Language

Arabic (official), English commonly used as a second language and is widely understood. Urdu is also spoken.

Society/Culture

The Arab world has gone through a huge change in the past few decades. There has been a desire for modernization but Western values have invaded Qatar along with Western technology. This has caused a huge gap between generations and a breakdown of traditional values.

The current Emir brought many social reforms. Qatar has a less strict observation of the codes of Islam than neighboring Saudi Arabia which also follows Wahhabi Islam. Such as foreign women are not required to wear full coverings as they are in Saudi Arabia. A woman was recently elected to a political office in a democratic election in Qatar.

Before oil was discovered Qatar was poor, had a small population, and there were no paved roads or community water. In the 1940's when oil was discovered and they began to capitalize on the revenue there were great strides to modernize this small country. Along with economic growth there has been much progress made in women's role in society. The economic growth has led to increased education and contact with the outside world, also there has been a large influx of ex-patriots. All this has led to an increasingly liberal view of women's role in Qatari culture. This can be seen in the election of a woman to a political office and that women were allowed to vote. There is still tension between women's rights and what is allowed in traditional Muslim beliefs. The work that women are allowed to do in Qatar is under the constraints of proper behavior for a Muslim woman and it must be a job that allows her to complete all her duties in the home. (Social Change and Attitudes of Educated Elite Toward the Role of Women in Qatari Society, by Jassim al-Nasr. A thesis submitted to the faculty of the Graduate College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts department of sociology, June 1994.)

Arab values rest in loyalty to one's family. Arabs are traditionally descendants of nomadic people. Thus there has always been a strong emphasis on family. There is great tension as Arab people try to hold on to these traditional values yet seek to be on par in technology and modernization with Western powers.

Most Arabs have very long names that include their given name, father's name and grandfather's name on their father's side and then their family name. Women do not take their husbands name in marriage. Muslim given names are generally religious such as Muhammad after the prophet or Fatima after Muhammad's daughter. If the Arab family is Christian they typically take western names.

Holidays in Qatar are generally Islamic and are set following the lunar calendar. The most well known is Ramadan, a forty day fast. Muhammad stated that during this time evil was chained up and the gates of heaven are opened, thus the jinn's (devils or demonic powers) influence over people who correctly follow the fast are lessened. The First of Muharram is the Muslim New Year. Friday is the Muslim holy day and most businesses close.

Arab culture places great importance on hospitality. To adapt well in an Arab society one must be able to pick up on discreet signals. It is considered rude to ask a personal question as are direct refusals. One should only use the right hand in accepting or giving objects to an Arab, the

left hand is considered unclean. It is common for members of the same sex to hold hands and touch in public but you will never see members of the opposite sex (even married couples) touching in public.

Many Qataris still wear traditional clothing. Men will wear an ankle length robe, while women will wear a black abaya, which covers them completely. Older women will wear a batula, which is a face mask.

Rice is a staple food and bread is served at almost every meal. Fish and mutton are the most common meats. Pork and alcohol are forbidden in Islam. Tea and coffee are the most common beverages.

Art is best expressed in mosques, through architecture. Islam forbids reproduction of the human form so art focuses on geometric shapes. Calligraphy, especially focused on the Qur'an is also a very important art form.

Soccer is the most popular sport. Camel-racing is a very popular sport as well. Camel-racing involves the use of children as jockeys and has become controversial with a new focus on human rights. Doha will host the Asian games in 2006.

Government

The 1970 constitution instates Qatar as a sovereign Arab, Islamic state. The Al Thani family has held the position of emir for many years. The emir is considered supreme in relation to any other individual or institution in practice though his rule is not absolute. The Advisory Council is partially elected and they have the right to debate legislation before it is ratified. The emir is held to Islamic precepts and religious and ethical values are part of his public and private life. The Al Thani family held ten of the 16 Council of Ministers posts in 1992.

The constitution protects the equality of Qataris regardless of race, sex, or religion. It sets up freedom of the press, the sanctity of the home, and the recognition of private ownership of property. These are all subject to and limited by public interest and are under authority of the ruler.

There are no state taxes on individuals. Health care and education are provided free of charge for Qatari residents. Basic commodities are subsidized to offset inflation. These obligations are a result of the ruler's sense of duty imparted by the ethics presented in Islam.

The election held in 1999 for a 29 member council. Women were allowed to vote and also to stand for office. Qatar was the first Gulf State to elect a woman to office.

Qatar's closest foreign relations are with Britain. The Britain Foreign Embassy is the only embassy to own land outright. Many businesses in Qatar are owned by Britons and many Qataris study and own homes in Britain.

Ties with the United States were strained after American made missiles were seen in a Qatari parade and the government refused to be inspected. Things improved after 1990 when the missiles were destroyed. During the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait Qatar sensed their need to foster good relations with powers that could offer protection from their larger neighbors such as Iraq so they allowed the American army to use their land as a launching point for Desert Storm and Desert Shield. This action made relations easier between the US and Qatar. In 1992 Qatar and the United States signed a bilateral defense cooperation agreement.

To Western eyes, the Qatari authorities seem to keep a tight rein on freedom of expression and moves for equality. When compared to neighbors like Saudi Arabia, however, Qatar boasts one of the best standards-of-living and quality-of-life in its region.

The ruling Al Thani (البن ائلا) family continued to hold power following the declaration of independence in 1971. The Emir functions as head of state and the right to rule Qatar resides within the Al Thani family. Politically, Qatar has started to evolve from a traditional society in the direction of a traditional modern welfare state. In order to meet the requirements of social and economic progress, the authorities have established Government departments.

The Basic Law of Qatar (1970) institutionalized local customs rooted in Qatar's conservative Wahhabi heritage. It grants the Emir pre-eminent power. Continuing traditions of consultation, rule by consensus, and the citizen's right to appeal personally to the Emir all influence the Emir's role. The Emir, while directly accountable to no one, cannot violate the *Shari'a* (Islamic law) and, in practice, must consider the opinions of leading notables and of the religious establishment. The Advisory Council, an appointed body that assists the Emir in formulating policy, has institutionalized the position of such influential groups. Qatar has no electoral system, and imposes a ban on political parties. The influx of expatriate Arabs has introduced ideas that call into question the tenets of Qatar's traditional society, but no serious challenge to Al Thani rule has emerged.

Qatar's constitution provides for freedom of speech but as a strong Islamic state its citizens provide self censorship in newspapers and in public settings. Imported materials are screened for pornography and other material considered harmful to Islam. But political and censorship of imported material has not been common. Religious items that are not Islamic are allowed to be imported on a personal scale. Freedom of religion is granted in the constitution but proselytizing of Muslims is prohibited and there are restrictions on public worship. Christian ex-patriots seemed to be allowed more freedom in Qatar than Buddhists or Hindus.

Economy:

Qatar has recently become a very important in the world of energy. Before the discovery of oil the economy of the Qatari region focused on fishing and pearling. After the introduction of the Japanese cultured pearl onto the world market in the 1920s and 1930s, Qatar's pearling industry faltered.

The discovery of oil reserves, beginning in the 1940s, completely transformed the nation's economy. Now, Qatar has a high standard of living, with many social services offered to its citizens and all the amenities of any modern nation.

Qatar controls 15% of the world's proven gas reserves. In the 1940's a large offshore gas field was discovered in Qatari's territory. The country has oil reserves estimated at 15 billion barrels. Qataris' wealth and standard of living compare well with those of Western European nations. Qatar has the highest GDP per capita in the developing world (\$39,607 as of 2005).

The Qatari economy has seen a huge boom with the exportation of the oil resource. In 1998 oil export revenues reached \$2.44 billion. Oil and gas make up 55% of the GDP and 85% of export earnings. The current output should ensure output for the next 23 years. It is the third largest output of oil in the world. Per-capita, Qatar boasts one of the fastest growing economies in the world.

Agriculture only makes up 0.3% of the GDP. Industry is 58.2%. Industries include crude oil production and refining, ammonia, fertilizers, petrochemicals, steel reinforcing bars, cement, and commercial ship repair. Services make up 41.5%.

The Qatar government is attempting to diversify the economy by developing industry beyond oil into producing steel, ammonia, fertilizers, and cement.

The labor force is 140,000. Unemployment is 2.7%.

While oil and gas will probably remain the backbone of Qatar's economy for some time to come, the country seeks to stimulate the private sector and develop a "knowledge economy". In 2004 it established the Qatar Science & Technology Park to attract and serve technology-based companies and entrepreneurs, from overseas and within Qatar.

www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/qa.html
www.qatar-info.com ; <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qatar>

Literacy:

Literacy in Qatar is 82.5% and increasing yearly. Eighty-one percent of men and 85% of females are literate. Qatar provides free compulsory schooling for a 12 year program. Many scholarships are given to students obtaining further education abroad. These scholarships may even cover the cost of travel to and from the university abroad. The University of Qatar was founded in 1973 and is the leading provider in Qatar for higher education. There are also numerous private schools for the varying ethnic communities.

Land/Geography:

Qatar is located on the eastern side of the Arabian Peninsula. It is bordered in the south by Saudi. The waters of the Persian Gulf make up the remaining borders for this small country. The Qatari peninsula pushes 100 miles (160 km) into the Persian Gulf from Saudi Arabia. Much of the country consists of a low, barren plain, covered with sand. To the southeast lies the

spectacular *Khor al Adaid* or 'Inland Sea', an area of rolling sand dunes surrounding an inlet of the Gulf.

The highest point in Qatar occurs in the *Jebel Dukhan* to the west, a range of low limestone outcrops running north-south from *Zikrit* through *Umm Bab* to the southern border, and reaching about 90m. This area also contains Qatar's main onshore oil deposits, while the natural gas fields lie offshore, to the northwest of the peninsula

Qatar is slightly smaller than Connecticut. It covers 11,437 sq km, about 4,250 sq miles. Qatar has a strategic location in the Persian Gulf near major petroleum deposits. Qatar's territory includes several islands in the coastal waters. Halul, one of these islands serves as the main export terminal for the offshore oilfields.

Qatar is primarily made up of barren desert made up of loose sand and gravel. It is an arid climate. While summers are very hot and humid the winter is pleasant yet relatively warm. The temperature in the summer months can be as high as 110° F. In the winter the temperatures are generally milder but humidity can reach up to 100%.

Sandstorms are common and an almost constant warm desert wind blows. There are a few areas that flood seasonally. These depressions are important sites for seasonal vegetation and are primarily found in the north and central regions. Rainfall is minimal, about 75.2 mm per year. Water is scarce and the majority is obtained from desalination of seawater.

There is limited wildlife in this desert country, lizards, snakes, foxes, rabbits, and various small rodents are the most frequently found. There is a large variety of sea life and flamingoes can be seen in flock along the coast.

<http://www.al-hammadi.com/qatar/index.htm> ; <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qatar>

History

Archaeologists date the first signs of human habitation in the Qatar peninsula from 4000 BC. Some historians believe the inhabitants to have been the ancient Canaanites. Most of Qatar's history boasts only short-term settlement by nomadic tribes particularly from the Nejd desert.

Although Qatar was inhabited for many centuries, due to the nomadic nature of its people little is known about its history before the 18th century. The Al Thani ruling family arrived in the 18th Century from Saudi Arabia. Qatar as a modern state may have begun around 1766 when an Arab tribe, the Utub, settled on this small peninsula.

The Utub tribe had previously conquered Bahrain. They exercised a certain amount of authority over Qatar. The tribal leaders of Qatar began to question the authority of Bahrain towards the end of the nineteenth century. (The Creation of Qatar Rosemarie Said Zahlan 1979 London, introduction)

Around 1880 Qasim, the existing leader of Doha (now the capital city of Qatar), was involved in attacks and counter attacks against Zayid the Khalifa of Abu Dhabi (now a major city in the

UAE). The Ottomans did not give sufficient help to Qasim which caused a rift between the two powers. This conflict kept the Ottomans from establishing a customs house in Doha. This worked in Qatar's favor as it put an end to the tribute payments. In 1893 the deteriorating relationships reached a point of confrontation. The Ottomans came to Doha to take Qasim prisoner but he was able to leave the city before they arrived. Qasim did not come back to Doha to appear before the official. After about a month the Ottoman official became impatient and took sixteen leading men of Doha captive. He then set up a blockade. By this time Qasim, once a very important military leader, was about 80 years old, but he was still a good fighter. He rallied troops and stood against the Ottomans. Although the Ottoman military forces were superior the Qatari troops faced the Ottomans with great courage. Qasim controlled the water supply of the town in order to bargain for the release of the prisoners and the Ottomans leaving Qatar. After Qasim's victory the Ottomans gave him a full pardon and he lived in Qatar as an undisputed ruler the rest of his life.

In 1902 Abdel Aziz bin Turki took the city of Riyadh (now the capital city of Saudi Arabia) for the Wahhabis. Qasim became a Wahhabi. The majority of Qataris now claim to adhere to Wahhabi Islam although they do not follow it as strictly as their neighbors. This aligned Qasim with Saudi Arabia through a common religion. Another aspect to Qasim's decision to follow the Wahhabi sect may have been that his enemy, the ruler of Abu Dhabi, was clearly anti-Wahhabi.

In 1913 The Wahhabis of Riyadh took Hasa, the eastern province of the peninsula from the Ottomans. This made the Wahhabis important players in the politics of the gulf as they still are today. Qasim's son Abdullah took over rule when his father died. In July of the same year the Anglo-Turkish Convention renounced the Ottoman right to Qatar. This was not ratified due to the start of World War 1. At this point Bahrain tried to revive his right to receive tribute from Qatar but was informed that this was no longer his right due to the convention. These events ended Qatar's ties with Bahrain and the Ottomans.

In 1935 Qatar's border disputes with Bahrain and Saudi Arabia became very important. The dispute with Bahrain once again involved Zubarah and offshore islands, the Hawar Islands. The dispute with Saudi Arabia sought to determine a set land boundary. During the 1920's Ibn Saud made great advances in increasing the land area of Saudi Arabia. It was an area the same size as Western Europe. Qatar and Bahrain were protected from Saudi Arabia's advances due to their relations with Britain. Britain was concerned with Saudi Arabia gaining more coastal land in the gulf and thereby jeopardizing their trade rights.

The modernization of Qatar was made possible through the discovery of oil and the revenue generated from that but also an equally important factor was the Al-Thani family, chiefly, Muhammad, Qasim, and Abdallah. These rulers began to establish national institutes and provided continuity that allowed Qatar to begin to view itself as a nation. Qatar became a more cohesive unit in the twentieth century. Treaties with Britain gave Qatar a more solid position and the Al-Thani rulers were a powerful presence.

Abdallah outlived his son Hamad who was next in line to inherit the throne. Hamad died in 1948. Ali was Abdallah's oldest son and not the first choice to inherit the throne. He lacked the strong qualities of leadership that the other Al-Thani rulers possessed. Ali signed an agreement

that Hamad's son would succeed him. Hamad's son was too young at this point to rule. Ali ruled for 11 years. Ali abdicated in 1960 and his son Ahmad succeeded him, this denied the earlier agreement. This incited a new quarrel within the royal family. Ahmad was not a well equipped leader and was very extravagant with Qatar's wealth. In 1972 Hamad's son Khalifah retook the throne in a peaceful coup.

Non-Arabs began outnumbering Qataris in the early twentieth century. In 1939 about 40% of the population was made up of foreigners. There were a large number of Negroes who had been slaves. They began as slaves in the pearl trade but also worked in homes of Qataris. There was no reported discrimination against the former slaves and they continued to live in Qatar. Persians made up another larger percentage of the non-Arab population. They also came because of the pearl trade but they became involved in other economic pursuits when the pearl trade ceased being profitable. Unlike other countries in the Arabian Peninsula with large Indian populations there was only one known Indian in Qatar, a Baluchi barber. The population was significantly non-Qatari before oil and the expatriate population only grew as the oil industry grew. (Creation of Qatar Rosemarie Said Zahlan. 1979 London)

The Arabian Gulf has enjoyed a strategic position for many centuries connecting trade with India, the Mediterranean and Europe. There has long since been a great deal of commercial prosperity. Fishing centers were established that encouraged pearl diving which fueled a somewhat limited economy in Qatar for many years until the discovery of oil. During the Roman Era trade was concentrated in the Red Sea and the Gulf suffered a commercial decline. But by the third century the Gulf was reinstated as an important trading position.

In the 16th century Qatar was under Portuguese influence. They controlled many areas in the Arabian Gulf and controlled trade. In 1538 the Ottomans ousted the Portuguese. The Ottomans were merely figureheads and the real power was wielded by the local sheiks.

There was a great deal of turmoil during this period due to many border disputes with Qatar's neighboring countries. Britain made treaties with several other gulf states but decided not to include Bahrain and Qatar due to the conflicts. Qatar's close neighbor, Bahrain laid claim on Qatar's lands and after a series of naval battles Britain intervened and the Perpetual Maritime Truce was signed by Muhammad bin Thani in exchange for a tribute payment.

The British's interests laid in Qatar's proximity to their colonial interest in India. The Bahraini aggression violated a treaty and the British Protectorate began a series of events that would lead to Qatar's development into a sovereign state. Qatar officially became a British protectorate in 1916. Another treaty was signed with the UK in 1934 that strengthened the relationship between the UK and Qatar. India became independent in 1947 after World War II Britain began to pull out of the Gulf emirates. Qatar declined entering Saudi Arabian and United Arab Emirate coalition and became an independent sovereign state in 1971. Qatar then signed a treaty of friendship and cooperation with the UK followed by admittance into the Arab league and the United Nations.

In 1940 oil was discovered at Dukhan but due to World War II it was not exploited until 1949. Since that time Qatar's source of income shifted from pearl-diving to oil exports taking Qatar from a very poor nation to one of the richest nations, per-capita, in the world.

In 1995 Hamad Bin Khalifa took the throne from his father. He seized control of the country from his father Khalifa bin Hamad Al Thani while the latter vacationed in Switzerland. As Emir of Qatar he brought several reforms including press freedoms that led to a Qatari satellite news station, Al Jazeera, which is uncensored and is an important broadcaster in the Middle East. In October 2001 Al Jazeera was the first station to air statements by Osama Bin Laden following the US advances against Afghanistan.

Also under Emir Hamad, Qatar has experienced a notable amount of sociopolitical liberalization, including the enfranchisement of women and a new constitution. Qatar served as the headquarters and one of the main launching sites of the US invasion of Iraq in 2003.

In 2005 a suicide-bombing that killed a British teacher at the Doha Players Theatre shocked the country, which had not previously experienced acts of terrorism. It is not clear that the bombing was from organized terrorist sources, and although the investigation is ongoing there are indications that the attack was the work of an individual, not a group.

The United States Armed Forces Unified Combatant Command unit for the Middle East theater, known as CENTCOM (US Central Command), has its headquarters in Qatar. Qatar also hosts a large United States Air Force base.

Qatar held the West Asian Games in 2005. Qatar will host the 15th Asian Games in 2006.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/country_profiles/791921.stm ; <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qatar>

Christian History

During the early centuries of Christianity, there were many Christians spread throughout the Arabian Peninsula but at that time Qatar was practically uninhabited. The *Ghasannids*, an early nomadic tribe, were Christians and they passed through Qatar on their travels. They promoted Christianity throughout the peninsula and even in the Roman Empire. Philip a son of the Ghasannid king became a Roman Emperor and was among the first rulers of Rome to promote Christianity. During this time there was little reason to settling in Qatar. It was not until the pearling industry became profitable that a considerable number of people began to settle in Qatar. During the seventh century Islam began to eclipse all other religions of the gulf region.

Christian presence was brought back to the gulf with the discovery of oil and the influx of expatriate workers. The community of believers in Qatar is largely expatriates from Asian or European nations. They have been allowed to meet together in homes and schools for casual worship times. The Roman Catholic Church has had a school established for the children of these foreign workers and thus they have been able to participate in religious activities. The first

Christian church to be built is the Anglican Church of Qatar that is set to be built the beginning of 2006. Other churches are likely to follow.

There are a number of evangelical believers living and working in Qatar but they are restricted in their activity. There are no resident missionaries. Christians living in Qatar are severely restricted and face deportation if they attempt an open witness and proselytizing of their Muslim neighbors.

There were no known Qatari believers before 1985. There are several Qatari believers who accepted Christ outside of Qatar. Some Qataris have studied abroad and been exposed to Christian beliefs. They face being ostracized by their Muslim families if they come back and openly confess their new beliefs. Christians are still not allowed to proselytize Muslims and have been mistreated in the past. This Wahhabi Muslim country allows more religious freedom than its strict neighbor, Saudi Arabia.

There are Christian Arabic Radio programs broadcast in the country and a television program as well. Qataris who have studied abroad and new concerns for personal rights and freedom may lead to a more open environment for Christians to be able to share.

The first Christian church in the conservative Muslim state of Qatar since the arrival of Islam in the 7th century is to be built on land donated by the reform-minded Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani. The \$7 million development of the Church of the Epiphany, which will not have a spire or freestanding cross, will begin early next year.

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/1110/p07s01-wome.html?s=u>

Religions

Non-Christian

Islam

Most Muslims in Qatar are Sunni, particularly Wahhabi. There is a small number of Shi'ites as well.

Baha'i

Baha'i has a relatively small following in Qatar. Baha'i is considered an offshoot of Islam, similar to the way Buddhism is born out of Hinduism. They are monotheistic. They see Adam, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad, Zoroaster, Krishna and Buddha all as prophets and having revealed a specific but incomplete portion of God's message. Baha'i is a fairly new global religion. It was founded in the nineteenth century in Iran by Baha'u'llah. Adherents see Baha'u'llah as the fulfillment of the Messianic promises in the preceding religions. Individuals that follow this religion have been persecuted in Iran and other Muslim countries. There are between 5 and 8 million followers of Baha'i around the world.

Hindu

Around 43,500 Hindus reside in Qatar and make up around 7.2% of the population. The Hindu groups report a growth rate of + 17.6%

Buddhist

Buddhists claim 1.89 % of the population or as many as 11,000 members. They report a growth rate of + 10.4%.

Non-religious

The non-religious population numbers over 5500 persons or 0.92 % of the people

Marginal Church-type groups

The Iglesia ni Cristo Church and Western Marginal groups such as Jehovah's Witnesses and the Church of the Latter Day Saints (Mormons) have a total of 30 congregations with over 5500 members.

Catholic/Orthodox

Catholic and Orthodox groups make up about 6% of the population. In 1995 there were about 34,000 Catholics. The Catholic Church came to the Arabian Peninsula in modern times via Yemen around 1841. The Arabian vicariate is administered from the UAE. The Catholics are growing at a rate of + 10.8% and the Orthodox at around +7.0%.

Evangelical/Protestant/ Pentecostals

There is not an indigenous Qatari church to speak of. There is a large interdenominational church in Qatar made up mostly of expatriate workers. Westerners are primarily Anglican, Episcopalian, Scottish Presbyterian, and Lutheran. The Indian expatriates are Syrian Orthodox, Mar Thomas Church, and the Church of South India. There are also Lebanese and Palestinian Arab Christians counted among the Christian population of Qatar.

Lutheran Church reports some 16 congregations with almost 3000 members

Arab Evangelical Church has 13 congregations with around 250 members

Brethren Church reports 3 congregations with 60 members

The Mar Thoma Syrian Church has 4 congregations with over 350 members

The Pentecostal Churches have some 18 congregations with over 2500 members

Operation World

People Groups

42791

African Bantu (54,885)

The African Bantu speak Standard Arabic. They are mainly Muslim. The Bible, Jesus Film and gospel recordings are available in Standard Arabic.

Bantu is a broad term that refers to a large number of different ethnic groups from the northern part of Africa to South Africa. One-third of the Africans in Qatar came as slaves. Most worked in the pearl industry. There were Africans that served as household slaves but they were eventually taken as a part of the families that they worked for. (Creation of Qatar)

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Agamudaiyan

Alternate people names: Agambadia, Ambalakaram, Maruar, Marumaravar, Mudaliyar, Muppan, Mutracha, Muttiryan, Nattaman, Parkavakulam, Pillaimar, Sanagara, Sekkan, Servaikaran, Udaiyan, and Valaiyan. There are about 1 million Agamudaiyan people living throughout the world. They speak Tamil and are primarily Hindu. An unknown number of Agamudaiyans live in Qatar. The Bible, Jesus Film, and other gospel literature are available in Tamil.

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American, U.S. (4,000)

The Americans are part of the community of western workers in Qatar. They make up the majority of percentage of Christians in Qatar.

11899

Balochi, Southern (12,000)

The Southern Balochis are primarily Sunni Muslims and speak Southern Balochi. Parts of the Bible, the Jesus Film, and Audio recordings are available in Balochi, Eastern. They are considered unreached/least reached. They are also known by the names Baloch, Baluch, and Baluchi, Southern. They also live in Iran, Kuwait, Oman, Pakistan, Nepal, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, and Sri Lanka. Their homeland is in an area of the border of Iran and Pakistan. Some say that the name Baluch means nomad while others believe it is an old Persian words meaning the “cock’s crest.” They are believed to be descendants of Nimrod, son of Cush.

They live by an honor code that includes hospitality and mercy, honesty in dealing with others, and offering refuge for strangers. This honor coed is the Baluchmayar and is very similar to traditional Muslims codes of honor. These are taught through songs and poetry.

Traditionally Baluchi were semi nomadic shepherds and farmers, with the chief crop being wheat. Their communities are organized into clans with male elders as the heads. They would live in settlements during the summer months and migrate in the winter to coastal areas to find grass for the livestock. Land was owned by tribes not individuals.

11901

Egyptian Arab (8,700)

There are 46,306,000 speakers in the world. New Testament was translated in 1932 but needs updating. Bible portions are available, also needing updating. There are three dialects: North Delta Arabic, South Central Delta Arabic and Cairene Arabic. There are evangelical Egyptian Arabs in Egypt. Denominations are Coptic Orthodox Church with twenty-four dioceses, Roman

Catholic with seven rites and 12 dioceses, Assembly of God, Episcopal Church in Jerusalem & the Middle East, and Conservative Baptist, Missions Society of St. Francis de Salas, Franciscans, and Society of Jesus (Jesuits). Eighty-two percent are Muslims (Shafi, Mailki, and Hanafi Sunnis). They do have the Jesus Film and Audio recordings of the Gospel. They do have the Jesus Film and Audio recordings of the Gospel.

46415

Filipino (25,000)

The Filipinos are individuals of mixed race, Philippine and Spanish, from the 300 years of Spanish rule in the Philippines. They speak Tagalog and most are Christians.

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French (2,000)

The French speak French and most are Christians.

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German (1,300)

The German speak standard German. They are primarily Christian.

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Han Chinese, Mandarin (300)

The Han Chinese speak Mandarin and only 5% living in Qatar are considered Christian. The Bible, Jesus Film and other materials are available in Mandarin.

42792

Lebanese Arab (51,891)

The Lebanese Arabs speak Arabic, North Levantine Spoken Arabic. They are primarily Muslim. The Bible is available but the Jesus Film, and gospel recordings are not. Most Lebanese are descendants of the Canaanites who lived in Lebanon about 5,000 years ago. The Lebanese Arabs living in Qatar follow most traditional Arab practices.

11903

Malayali (6,500)

The Malayali speak Malayalam. These people originate in Tamil Nadu, specifically in the Jawadi hills of North Arcot; Shervaroy hills of Trichy; Salem and Dharmapuri districts of India. Tradition holds that they were the Vellala caste of cultivators that migrated into the area. Tamil is their mother language. Their diet is non-vegetarian. They involve themselves in agriculture, honey collection, cattle, and pig rearing. Hinduism is their primary religion and most worship Malayan, Katteriamman, and Murugan. Around 14% of the people claim Islam while Christians make up .07%. However, widespread church planting has been conducted in the last two years. The Bible, Jesus Film, God Story Video, Christian broadcasting, and audio recordings have been translated into their language.

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Moger (Unknown)

Their language is unknown. There are 129,000 of them in all countries. They are primarily Hindu.

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Murhid (Unknown)

The Murhid speak Hindi. The Bible, the Jesus Film, and other evangelistic materials are available. The Murhids are largely Hindu.

42793

Palestinian Arab (74,000)

The Palestinian Arabs speak North Levantine Spoken Arabic. They are Muslim. Portion of the New Testament are available. The Jesus Film and other recording of the gospel are not available. Palestinian Arabs are classified with several other Arab groups such as the Jordanian, Palestinian, Iraqi, Arabic, Jewish, Chaldean, and Syrian Arabs. Many of the Levant Arabs live along the northern edge of the Arabian Desert. Palestinian Arabs have had a close tie with Islam throughout their history. A small percentage of them are not Muslim, the Jewish Arabs.

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.

There are only a few known Christians among the Palestinian Arabs and conversion can be very costly. Many Palestinian Arabs live in restricted area and it is challenging to present them with the gospel.

46416

Persian, Iranian (65,600)

The Persian Iranians speak Farsi. Persians are primarily classified by language and secondly by location. Farsi is the Persian language. Persians are the dominant ethnic group in Iran. The Bible is translated and the Jesus Film as well as Gospel recordings are available. There are no radio broadcasts of the Gospel.

Persian communities are found in many nations. Large majorities are in Iran and surrounding Middle Eastern countries. Persian farmers living in the Middle East use fairly primitive irrigation. Oil production provides jobs for a great number of Persians. Most Persians who live abroad work in the oil industry. Persians are divided in several different social classes. The lowest classes are villagers who came to urban centers many years ago and are unskilled laborers. They live on the outskirts of larger cities. Commercial and industrial businessmen are the highest class.

The family is very important and is traditionally patriarchal. Persians are very male dominant. The women are influential in decision making but only in private, in public they are submissive. Arranged marriages are still practiced.

The Persians used to practice Zoroastrianism, which taught that there was an eternal struggle between good and evil. During the 16th century Shiite Islam became the official religion after Arabs invaded the Persians' land. The number of Persian coming to Christ is limited.

11904

Persian, Irani (73,000)

The Persian Iranis speak Farsi and are mainly Muslim. The Bible is available in Farsi. The Jesus Film has not yet been translated. There are no radio broadcasts or Gospel recordings available.

Many Persians came to Qatar in the 19th century to participate in the pearl diving industry. They grew in number over the following years due to the unsettled conditions and high taxation in Iran. (Creation of Qatar)

11905

Qatari Arab (250,000)

The Qatari Arabs speak Gulf Spoken Arabic. There are no known Qatari Christians, they are 100% Muslim. There is a Bible translation but there is not a translation of the Jesus Film and there are no gospel recordings or radio broadcasts.

There are a relatively small number of Qatari people. Most can trace their lineage back to the Bedouin tribes that came to graze in the area. The Bani Hajir tribe and the Kaban tribe are regarded as belonging to Qatar although they have branches elsewhere. (Creation of Qatar)

There are only a few known Qatari believers therefore Qatari society is very similar to most other Arab peoples. Hospitality is very important. Islamic holidays determined by the lunar calendar are celebrated. Most men wear traditional Arab ankle length robes and women will wear the abaya and older women will wear the batula (face mask). Rice and pita bread are found at most meals. Pork is forbidden, mutton and fish are common meats.

Education is very important. The rate at which Qatar moved toward modern culture caused a rift between the older generation and the younger. The older generation sees the loss of tradition and the younger generation sees only the benefits of modernization.

11906

Saudi Arab (8,700)

The Saudi Arabs of Qatar speak Hijazi spoken Arabic. They are primarily Muslim. There are translations of the Bible, Jesus Film and Christian Broadcasts. Saudi Arabs are also known as Gulf Arabs. Most live along the southern edge of the Arabian Desert in Yemen, The United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia.

Arab culture is traced to the nomads and villagers that lived in the Arabian Desert. From here some later migrated to Northern Africa. Arabs are perhaps most well known for their long treks across the desert and the raids on caravans crossing their paths. There are also Arabs known as fellahin who relied on farming and therefore lived a more settled life on the edge of the desert.

Traditionally Arabs lived in a long tent made from woven animal hair. They were divided into two parts, one side for women and children and the other side for the men and for entertaining guests. The women were responsible for most of the daily work while the men made plans for the group. Camels were very important for those that traveled in the desert. The farmers kept sheep and goats. Camels and goats both provide a main source of a Saudi Arabs diet. Milk, yogurt and butter called ghee are made from both camel and goat's milk. Meat is only served on special occasions Saudi Arabs pass inheritance to the next male family member and practice marriage within small social circles. Manual labor was considered degrading and so few Arabs take wage-paying jobs.

Ninety percent of Saudi Arabs living in Qatar are Wahhabi Muslims. They see themselves as the true followers of pure faith. There are no known believers among the Saudi Arabs in Qatar. Conversion to Christianity is costly. It is likely that a convert will lose his family, job, honor, and even his life.

46417

Sinhalese, Sri Lankan (12,000)

The Sinhalese speak Sinhala. The Bible is available as are gospel recordings and the Jesus Film. Their language is called Sinhala and most of them are Buddhists. Most of the Sinhalese belong to the Theravada branch of Buddhism, although they follow Hindu beliefs as well. For example, Buddhism is unconcerned with the millions of Hindu gods, but the Sinhalese worship Hindu deities they believe control daily life. In addition to gods, the Sinhalese believe in demons, which they must appease through rituals conducted by exorcists or shamans.

http://www.bethany.com/profiles/p_code5/1719.html

11908

Sudanese Arab (8,700)

The Sudanese Arabs speak Sudanese Arabic. They are primarily Muslim. The Bible is available in Sudanese Arabic. The Sudanese Arabs are descendants of the Bedouin, the nomadic tribes of the Northern Arabian Peninsula. They are the largest people group living in Sudan and are spread throughout the Middle East and Northern Africa. Although in Sudan they align themselves with their tribe, outside of Sudan they find their identity in being solely an Arab from Sudan. Rigid codes of honor, loyalty and hospitality are the common threads of Arabs throughout the world. A particular practice of the Sudanese Arabs is by serving coffee in an intricate presentation. They are generally devout Muslims. There are very few Sudanese Christians.

42794

Syrian Arab (46,902)

The Syrian Arabs speak Standard Arabic. They are Muslim. The Bible, Jesus Film, and gospel recordings are available.

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Ta'izz-Adeni Arabs (16,000)

Ta'izz-Adeni Arabs speak Ta'izzi-Adeni Arabic. Alternate names for the Ta'izzi-Adeni Arabs are: Djibouti Arab, Tihama Yemeni Arab, Taizz Adeni, and Yemeni Arab. There are Christian audio recordings, but the Bible and Jesus Film are not available.

The Ta'izz Arabs are separated into four classes; the wealthy, referred to as Sayyidd, the tribesmen known as the Qatani, the Shafi'ite which consists of the craftsmen and merchants, and the slaves known as the Akhdam.

There are only about 5,000 known Christians among the Ta'izz Arabs worldwide. They are largely Muslim. Nearly half of them are Zaydis Muslims, the other 40% are Shafi'ites and a very small number (5%) are Ismailis. The Zaydis sect is branch off of Shi'a Islam. They followed Zayd as the fifth imam instead of Muhammad al-Baqir. Muhammad al-Baqir would not engage in political activities so Zayd gained many followers as he led a rebellion against the Umayyad dynasty. Zaydis is somewhat of a fanatical form of Islam and most believe all wars to be Jihad, or holy war against the infidels, or those who do not believe in Allah.

Most Ta'izzi homes are flat-roofed. One must remove their shoes upon entering the home. As with other Arab groups, important daily social encounters occur over coffee daily. Most marriages are monogamous although Islam would allow up to 4 wives. Inheritances are passed down through the male line. About 5% of Ta'izzi Arabs live in countries outside their home country of Yemen. It is not certain if the Ta'izzi Arabs living in Qatar would continue to conform to traditional social customs as those living in Yemen.

11910

Tamil (2,200)

The Tamil speak Tamil. They are from the Tamil Nadu province in India. They are primarily Muslim. The Bible, Jesus Film and gospel recordings are available in Tamil. Indians originally came to Qatar for the pearl diving industry. There was only one Indian resident. They were more likely to move to areas like the Trucial Coast and Bahrain due to the treaties that Britain made and privileges they enjoyed there as British subjects. (Creation of Qatar)

11911

Urdu (28,000)

The Urdu are primarily Muslim and they speak Urdu. The Bible as well as the Jesus Film has been translated into Urdu. There are also Christian radio and television broadcasts although these may not be available in Qatar. Urdu is primarily a language distinction there are many diverse groups of Urdu throughout the world. They share their identity in the Islamic religion, Persian cultural tradition and the Urdu language. The Majority of Urdu speakers are found in Pakistan where the official language is Urdu. Many Urdu speakers are found in the Persian Gulf and also Saudi Arabia. Urdu speakers are found in every level of society. Skilled Urdu workers and educated professionals are found in Western Europe, North America, and other nations.

The Urdu are a diverse group of people but their difference lie mainly in the class they fall into. Pakistan and India became separate countries in 1947 and this changes the Urdu lifestyle in many ways. Many Urdu-speaking Muslims stayed in India. Political situations did not make this an easy transition so many people immigrated to the Persian Gulf and there they felt discriminated against and held on to their original citizenship. Urdu speakers that immigrated to westernized countries took on the citizenship of their new country. Second generations of these immigrants tended to loose their Urdu identity unless surrounded by an Urdu community.

Urdu women take care of all household duties and care for the children. The women are also secluded from public view. In some areas women are fairly outspoken and are not required to wear full covering, in other places women live in separate quarters and are required to cover their entire bodies with only a small veil to see through.

Missiological Implications

1. Evangelical Christians should thank the Lord for the response that is being seen in Qatar. Although this response involves relatively few people, it is remarkable in a country controlled by Islam. Christians should also rejoice at the freedom and life styles that are enjoyed in the country.
2. Evangelical Christians should develop methods for presenting the Gospel to Muslims in ways that enable Muslims to consider the Message. Contextualized means of gospel proclamation are needed in Qatar and the other strongly Muslim peoples of the world. Christians should study Islam and its beliefs, develop the contextualized strategies for witness and church starting, and find ways to introduce Christianity into these peoples.
3. Evangelical Christians should consider “tent-making” approaches to living and witnessing in Qatar and other Muslim nations. Due to the recent economic developments greater opportunities for tent-makers have opened. Tent makers follow the example of Paul in supporting their own ministry through living and working among other peoples. Qatar has been moving toward more tolerant and open policies in dealing with religion and human rights. Standing on a street corner, proclaiming the gospel, may not be a viable option but the stage is set for committed Christians willing to spend time building meaningful relationships to invest in the advancement of the Kingdom among Muslims living in Qatar.
4. Evangelical Christians should seek ways to evangelize among the many expatriates in Qatar. Some of these might well be more open to the gospel than in other countries.
5. Evangelical Christians should seek means to work with Christians in Qatar to impact the social needs in the nation.