

# MISSIONARY ATLAS PROJECT

## MIDDLE EAST

### United Arab Emirates

#### Country Snapshot

**Country Name:** United Arab Emirates

**Country Founded in:** gained independence from UK on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1971

**Population:** 4,444,011 (July 2007 est.)

**Government Type:** Federation with specified powers delegated to the UAE federal government and other powers reserved to member emirates

**Geography/location in the world:** Located in the Middle East, bordering the Gulf of Oman and the Persian Gulf, between Oman and Saudi Arabia

**Number of people groups:** 33 (peoplegroups.org)

**Picture of flag:**



**Religion Snapshot:**

Major Religion: Sunni Muslim 96%

Shiite Muslim 16%;

Other (includes Christian and Hindu) 4%

**Government interaction with religion:** Allows the existence of Christian Churches and the worship of other religions, but it is illegal to proselytize in the UAE and is punishable by the issuing of a steep fine or by going to prison.

## **UNITED ARAB EMIRATES**

### **Country Profile**

#### **Basic Facts**

**Name:**

United Arab Emirates

**Demographics:**

The population of the United Arab Emirates is at 4,444,011 according to a census that took place in 2005. Only about 20% of that number consists of UAE citizens. The rest comprise all of the foreign workers that have come to seek employment in the UAE. They come from various countries from the Arab world, India, Pakistan, the Philippines, European countries, and the United States of America.

**Age Structure:**

*0-14 years:* 20.6% (male 467,931/female 447,045)

*15-64 years:* 78.5% (male 2,558,029/female 932,617)

*65 years and over:* 0.9% (male 24,914/female 13,475)

*note:* 73.9% of the population in the 15-64 age group is non-national

**Median Age:**

*total:* 30.1 years  
*male:* 32 years  
*female:* 24.5 years

Population Growth Rate:  
3.997%

Birth Rate:  
16.09 births/1,000 population

Death Rate:  
2.16 deaths/1,000 population

Life Expectancy at Birth:  
Male: 73 years  
Female: 78 years

Source: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ae.html>

### **Language:**

Arabic is considered to be the official language of the country. Because of a heavy influx of immigrants that come in to work in the UAE, Persian, Hindi, and Urdu are minority languages. English is taught in schools and is used in the business sector.

### **Society/Culture:**

Many people of the UAE live very comfortably because of the oil production and the tourism sector generates adequate supply of funds for the country. Emirians are a tribal people and consider family to be one of the important things to be a part of. Marriages are traditionally arranged by parents, with first cousins being the match that is most preferable. Polygamy is legal. A man can marry up to four wives, but must promise that he would take care of each wife equally and treat them well. One can see this practice taking place more in villages and smaller cities, but even the former president of the UAE had more than one wife.

Divorce is not very common among Muslim families, but if one divorces the Father gets all the children that are over 5 years old. The mother keeps all the younger children and moves back in with her families until she remarries.

Although the UAE is considered to be a conservative nation among Western countries, they are actually considered to be very liberal among the Arabian Gulf nations. Women are able to pursue higher education and pursue professional careers such as engineering and medicine. Women form 70% of the students at the Higher Colleges of Technology and over 60% at the UAE University.

Emirians have certain traditional clothing that men and women wear. Men wear a long robe that reaches their ankles that is called a *dishdasha* or *kandura*. It is often found in a white or off-white color, but can also be found in darker colors to be worn during the winter months. They wear a large piece of cloth on their heads that is called a *ghutra* and is held in place with a piece of woven rope called an '*aqal*, which is a thick black circular band made of twisted wool. A traditional UAE woman's costume is the '*abaya*, a full-length black cloak-like garment that covers her from head to toe when she is in a public place. They also wear a traditional mask that covers their face, but one can only see their eyes.

The Emirian cuisine consists of rice, meat, and fish. They use different types of spices that include coriander, cardamom, saffron, and turmeric. One of the popular dishes found in the UAE is called *machbous*, which consists of rice and meat that are seasoned with spices, onions, tomatoes, and dried lemon. Another dish that is served, only during the month of Ramadan, is called *harees*. It consists of small pieces of shredded meat, usually camel meat, with wheat and water, mixed together until it forms into a porridge. They also love sweets. Some of their favorite sweets include, al-halwa, a dessert made from sugar, eggs, starch, water, and oil; al-Jibee, a sweet made from date syrup and sesame seeds; and Kul Wiskut, a dessert made from a mixture of peanuts and sugar. They also enjoy drinking coffee and tea. They like to put cardamom in their coffee and mint or saffron in their tea.

Source: *WORLDMARK: Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life, Volume 3-Asia and Oceania.*

## **Government:**

When the UAE gained its independence they adopted a constitution in 1971 and made it permanent in 1996. The government established a federal government and leaves much power to the seven emirates which are as follows: Abu Dhabi, Dubai, 'Ajman, Al-Fujayrah, Ras al-Khaymah, Ash Shariqah, and Umm al-Qaywayn. The UAE government consists of an executive branch, a legislative branch, and a judicial branch, but the executive branch is the most power and dominates the political system.

There are no popular elections that are held in the UAE and political parties do not exist in the country. The Supreme Council of Rulers consists of the seven emirates. This council establishes general UAE policy. They meet approximately four times a year, and it elects the president to indefinitely renewable five-year terms. Each ruler has a vote, but on some very important matters the two strongest emirates of Abu Dhabi and Dubai can exercise veto power. The Council of Ministers, appointed by the president, is both the federal cabinet and principal source of legislative authority. The Supreme Council of Rulers ratifies laws enacted by the Council of Ministers.

The Federal National Council consists of 40 delegates from the seven emirates, appointed by their respective rulers for two-year terms. They hold no legislative powers, but can make recommendations to the Supreme National Council. The FNC have a significant function as a forum for discussion of important national issues. In December 2006 the first elections to the FNC were taken place. There were about 6,700 voters that were hand selected to pick 20 representatives to the FNC. The rest of them were appointed by the government. The

constitution does allow a popular election to be held for the FNC. The constitution requires that the 40 seats be distributed as follows: Abu Dhabi and Dubai each have 8; Sharjah and Ra's al-Khaimah each get 6 seats; and 'Ajman, Umm al-Qaiwain, and Fujairah each receive 4 seats. The Supreme National Council does not meet that frequently. Most of the emirates govern themselves according to their tribal rituals and rulings, in which citizens hold open meetings and express themselves directly to their rulers.

The judicial system in the UAE is composed of the Shari'ah law (Islamic law) for civil matters and western legal codes. The constitution that was established in 1971 declared that they would have a Supreme Court and as specified number of courts of first instance. The Supreme Court includes a president and a maximum of five judges that are decreed by the president with the approval of the Supreme Council of Rulers. Once the Supreme Court president and the judges are put into office they cannot be removed from their positions. There are no jury trials held in the UAE.

Source: [http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761560366\\_5/United\\_Arab\\_Emirates.html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761560366_5/United_Arab_Emirates.html); WORLDMARK: Encyclopedia of the Nations, Asia & Oceania, Tenth Edition

### **Economy:**

Originally, the UAE was merely an agricultural country; however, with the production of oil, the country has shifted from being an underdeveloped country to a country that provides a very high standard of living. In 2006, it was estimated that that the gross domestic product was at 129.4 billion dollars. The labor force within the UAE consisted of 2.968 million people and mostly working within the services sector at 78%, the rest worked in the industry sector at 15% and the agricultural sector at 7%.

An interesting factor within the UAE to note is its heavy dependence on a foreign workforce. More than 90 percent of the workforce of the UAE is made up of people from other countries. The unemployment rate is at 2.4%. The agricultural products that the country produces are dates, vegetables, watermelons, poultry, eggs, dairy products, and fish. Other industries found in the UAE are ship building and repair, fishing, petroleum and petrochemicals, cement, textiles, and so on. The UAE does not have a personal income tax, but does have a 5% tax that is imposed on hotel services and entertainment. Corporate taxes are only paid by oil companies (taxes vary among each emirate) and branches of foreign banks at 20%.

There is no social security system in the UAE, but the country takes very good care of its people. For its citizens, free medical care is available to them, subsidies for education, and free electricity and water. They have a disaster fund available if a catastrophe was to hit the country. If a father of a family falls ill, disabled, or becomes old, he receives help under the National Assistance Law. If a man should die or divorce his wife, the woman's future is secured under UAE law.

Source: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ae.html#Econ>; [http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761560366\\_4\\_34/United\\_Arab\\_Emirates.html#s34](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761560366_4_34/United_Arab_Emirates.html#s34); WORLDMARK: Encyclopedia of the Nations, Asia & Oceania, Tenth Edition.

## **Literacy:**

When UAE gained their independence in the early 1970s, they started working on established an advanced and modern education system. Education is made mandatory for six years at the primary level starting from the age of 6. There are four stages of education that take approximately fourteen years to complete: 4-5 year olds attend kindergarten, 6-11 year olds attend primary schools, the preparatory stage aims at children that range from the ages of 12 to 14 years of age, and 15-17 year olds attend secondary school.

For UAE citizens, all education is made free for them including books, school uniforms, equipment, and transportation. At the secondary level of schooling, children go through six years of education in two stages, the liberal arts and the sciences. The private education sector is very advanced and caters for nearly 40% of the student population. Some of these schools offer foreign language education for various expatriate communities and follow the curriculum of the concerned countries. For example, children can attend American, British, French, German, or Urdu schools. In private schools, Arabic was a required subject and the segregation of classes by sex was enforced in 1980, according to the UAE government. The public schools in the UAE are completely segregated into entirely boys schools and into girls schools.

According to the CIA World Factbook, most people in the UAE that are 15 years and over can read and write. The total population of people that are literate are 77.9% and that includes 76.1% of males and 81.7% of females. Most of the teachers that work in the UAE are not actually from the Emirates, however, the UAE is trying to change this and by 2020 they are hoping to have 90% of the teaching staff to be from the Emirates. They are wanting to do this so as to ensure that Islamic principles and UAE customs and traditions are preserved. There are several universities and technical colleges that are present in the UAE. The biggest university in the UAE is entitled United Arab Emirates University and is located in Al-‘Ayn.

Source: [http://www.sheikhmohammed.co.ae/english/history/history\\_edu.asp](http://www.sheikhmohammed.co.ae/english/history/history_edu.asp); WORLDMARK: Encyclopedia of the Nations, Asia & Oceania, tenth edition; <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ae.html>

## **Land/Geography:**

The land mass of the UAE is approximately 29,182 sq. mi. and includes 2,300 sq. mi of islands. The UAE is located in the eastern Arabia Peninsula. Comparatively, the area occupied by UAE is slightly smaller than the state of Maine. The UAE is bordered on the north by the Persian Gulf, on the east by Oman, on the south and west by Saudi Arabia, and on the northwest by Qatar. Abu Dhabi, the UAE's capital, is located on the Persian Gulf. The UAE is comprised mostly of a sandy desert. It is bounded on the west by a vast salt flat, or known as a sebkha, extending southward for almost 70 miles. The flat coastal strips that makes up most of the UAE has a large area of sebkha that is subject to flooding. Behind Ras al-Khaimah and separating Fujairah from the Persian Gulf is an area of mountains that reaches up to 3000 ft. in height and is not much cultivated.

Most of the year, the UAE is considerably hot since it is desert climate. The months between May and October are the hottest months and it can reach between 100 and 120 degrees Fahrenheit. It is very humid along the coast. It can be very cold during the winter months

reaching as low as 36 degrees Fahrenheit, but on average it will reach between 63 and 68 degrees Fahrenheit. It does not rain much in the UAE and the annual rainfall is from 2 to 4 inches, however, it does rain more in the mountains. Most of the rain that falls in the UAE falls between November and February.

Source: WORLDMARK: Encyclopedia of the Nations, Asia & Oceania, tenth edition.

## **History**

### **Pre 20th Century History**

Little is known of ancient history in the UAE, but the first significant settlements in the UAE occurred during the Bronze Age. In the 3rd century BC, a culture known as Umm an-Nar's arose near the site of modern Abu Dhabi and its influence extended well into the interior and along the coast of what is now Oman. The next major empire to come upon the scene were the Greeks. One can find Hellenistic ruins at Meleiha, about 30 miles from Sharjah, and at Al-Dour, in the emirate of Umm al-Qaiwan.

During the time of the Middle Ages, the area was controlled by the kingdom of Hormuz which controlled the trading routes in the Arabian Gulf. They were also taken over for a time by the Persian Empire, which included the Persian groups of Achaemenids and the Sassanians from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> centuries AD. They controlled the extensive maritime trade that they carried as far as China. Islam reached the area of the UAE before the death of Muhammad in 632

The Portuguese arrived in 1498 and by 1515 had occupied Julfar near Ras al-Khaimah, building a customs house that taxed the Gulf's flourishing trade with India and the Far East. The Portuguese stuck around until 1633 and were followed by the British, who began exercising their naval power in the Gulf in the mid-18th century. The British came into conflict with the Qawasim tribal confederation, a seafaring clan whose influence extended to the Persian side of the Gulf.

The British dubbed the area the Pirate Coast and launched raids against the Qawasim. In 1820, a British fleet systematically destroyed or captured every Qawasim ship it could find, imposed a General Treaty of Peace on nine Arab sheikhdoms in the area and installed a garrison in the region. As life quieted down, Europeans took to calling the area the Trucial Coast, a name it retained until 1971.

Abu Dhabi island was settled by the present ruling family, Al-Nahyan, toward the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and Dubai was settled by relatives of the Al-Nahyan family in 1833. There was division that came about during the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and 19<sup>th</sup> century between the Nahyan and the Qawasim. They were the rulers of Ras al-Khaimah and neighboring territories. They had numerous clashes with British and Indian shipping that led to British naval expeditions against what came to be known as the Pirate Coast.

There were treaties that were established in 1820 and 1835 between the southern Gulf states and the British that lasted until 1971. The British navy also enforced a "perpetual maritime truce" that was put forth in 1853 agreed upon by the sheikhs of the UAE. There was another treaty

signed in 1892 that stated that the UK would protect the Trucial Coast from all harm by sea and by land.

## **Modern History**

In the year 1968, the UK announced that they were intending to withdraw from the area by 1971. This came as a shock to the ruling sheikhs, but they wanted to form a single state that consisted of Bahrain, Qatar, and the seven Trucial states. However, it proved impossible to reconcile certain differences among the different states. In 1971, six Trucial states (except for Ras al-Khaimah) agreed on putting forth the United Arab Emirates. The UAE was officially proclaimed an independent and a sovereign nation on December 2, 1971.

Ras al-Khaimah joined the UAE in early 1972, thus establishing the modern day seven emirates that make up the UAE today. Abu Dhabi's Sheikh Zayd Bin Sultan al-Nahyan became the first president of the UAE and kept this position until his death at the age of 86 in 2004. He was succeeded by his son, Sheikh Khalifa, in November 2004. It is said that his son is a pro-Western modernizer. The late Sheikh Zayed was quick to seize on the potential of the oil industry. He oversaw the development of all the emirates and directed oil revenues to building of the country. He put the oil revenues into healthcare, education, the building of roads, and the national infrastructure.

The oil industry has attracted many people from all over the world to work in the UAE and comprise about three quarters of the population. The country is also seeing a boom in the business sector, particularly in Dubai, and its tourist industry that is fueling an influx in construction projects. There are new buildings being erected and elaborate projects being put forth, such as man-made islands and gigantic hotels in the shape of a sail boat. The UAE is also considered to be one of the most liberal countries in the Gulf. Even though proselytizing is illegal, they recognize other beliefs and help fund in various constructions of churches. Until December 2006, it was the only country in the region not to have elected bodies.

Source: <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/worldguide/destinations/middle-east/united-arab-emirates/essential?a=culture>; [http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761560366\\_7/United\\_Arab\\_Emirates.html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761560366_7/United_Arab_Emirates.html); [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/country\\_profiles/737620.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/country_profiles/737620.stm)

## **Christian History**

In the early days of Christianity, the new faith did not make a lasting mark in this area and when Islam came through, it kept tight grips on this region that has lasted until our modern day. Because of the high influx of foreigners that have come to the UAE after 1971, churches have started to spring up all over the country, mainly in Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

A large number of Catholics that live in the UAE that number about 110,000 people. The Holy See has no diplomatic relations with the United Arab Emirates, but has an apostolic delegate residing in Lebanon. St. Andrew's Church in Abu Dhabi is the center for the Anglican chaplaincy of Qatar, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates, in the Anglican diocese of Cyprus



and the Gulf. The Syrian Orthodox Church has been present in the UAE for several years serving the Arab and Indian expatriates.

There is a Protestant hospital that opened up in Al-Ain that is run by several evangelical organizations. Proselytizing is forbidden by Christian groups and is punishable by prison time, getting kicked out of the country for life, or getting a heavy fine.

Source: World Christian Encyclopedia, Second Edition, Volume 1: The World By Countries

## **Religions**

### **Non-Christian:**

#### *Islam*

Islam is considered to be the majority religion held by the people in the UAE. They are of the Sunni sect, but there is a minority of people who adhere to the Shia sect who come from Iraq, Iran, and other countries. Islam arrived in early on in the Persian Gulf after the death of the prophet Mohammad in 632 A.D. Muslims comprise about 75.6% in the UAE and are about 1,683,100 in number.

#### *Hinduism*

This religion is worshipped by the many expatriate Indians and Sri Lankans who are working in the oil fields, hospitals, or in the service sector. They are about 7.6% of the population and are 186,576 people.

#### *Baha'is*

This religion began under a man named Bahauallah who was a Persian nobleman from Tehran during the mid-nineteenth century. He believed that he was part of a succession of messengers from God that include Abraham, Krishna, Moses, Zoroaster, Buddha, Christ, and Muhammad.

They believe in unity, one God, one human race, and that all the world's religions represent stages in the revelation of God's will and purpose for humanity. They represent about 2.3% in the UAE and are about 55,214 people.

#### *Buddhists*

It is an ancient religion that originated in India by a man named Siddhartha Gautama in 535 B.C. It is now that fourth largest religion in the world.

In the UAE, there are about 48,573 Buddhists which is about 2.0% of the population. They mainly come from Asian countries such as the Philippines and Thailand.

#### *Sikhs*

Their founder's name is Guru Nanak (1469-1539 AD) and was the first of Sikhism's 10 Gurus, a lineage of holy teachers that continued until the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. They are the mediators of divine grace. The Sikh means "disciple" or "learner." It originated in the Punjab region in northwest India. It drew elements from Hinduism and Islamic Sufism. They believe that one is freed from the Karmic cycle of rebirths if one merges their human spirit with the all-embracing spirit of God. They are known for their males not cutting their hair, among other practices. Their ultimate deity is known by several names including Sat which means truth.

There are about 5,859 Sikhs living in the UAE which is about 0.2% of the UAE population.

### *Roman Catholics*

There are about 124,345 Catholics present in the UAE which is about 5.1% of the population. There are about seven known Catholic congregations present in the UAE. They mainly come from the Middle East such as Lebanon and Palestine or Western countries such as the United States.

### *Orthodox*

There are about 70,000 people who belong to the Orthodox faith in the UAE which is about 2.9% of the population. They mainly come from Lebanon and Syria. There are about seven Orthodox congregations.

### *Non-Religious*

Over 32000 people in UAE claim to be non-religious (1.3% ). This group is, however, increasing at + 4.5% annually.

### **Protestant/Evangelicals/Pentecostals:**

#### *Protestants:*

There are about 12,800 people who claim to be Protestant in the UAE which constitutes about 0.5%. There are about 47 Protestant congregations in the UAE. The Christians in UAE mainly come from European countries or the United States of America.

#### *Anglicans:*

There are about 8,600 Anglicans which is about 0.4% in the UAE. There are about 9 congregations in the UAE. Other reports claim only around 3000 members. Many of them are people that come from the United Kingdom.

#### *Evangelicals:*

There are about 13,500 people in the UAE who adhere to Evangelicalism which is about 0.6% of the population in the UAE.

## *Pentecostals/Charismatics*

There are about 54,000 present in the UAE which is about 2.2% of the population. Many come from various Asian or African countries.

Source: <http://www.religioustolerance.org/buddhism.htm>; [http://www.bahai.org/faq/facts/bahai\\_faith](http://www.bahai.org/faq/facts/bahai_faith); [http://www.beliefnet.com/index/index\\_10036.html](http://www.beliefnet.com/index/index_10036.html); *Operation World, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Edition*; *World Christian Encyclopedia*, Second Edition, Volume 1: The World By Countries.

## **People Groups**

12232

Afghan (226381)

The Afghan people come to the UAE in search of work to earn money for their families that are back in Afghanistan. They mainly work in service jobs such as construction workers. They mainly adhere to Sunni Islam. They are very much looked down upon by the Emirates since they look at them as labor workers. There is a very small number of evangelicals among them. They do have Gospel recordings in their language and Christian radio broadcasts directed to them.

12255

Balochi, Southern (126823)

They originally came from Baluchistan which is a country near Pakistan. They have been living in the UAE for many years as laborers and working in the oil fields. They adhere to Sunni Islam, but they mix their beliefs with animistic beliefs. They are not as devout as the Arabs that live in the UAE. There are very few evangelicals among them, but have the Bible in their language and the Jesus Film can also be found in their language.

42881

Bedouin (191830)

They are semi-nomadic and live very simple lives. They rely on agriculture and livestock. They adhere to Islam, but mix it with folk Islamic beliefs. They speak Arabic. There are very few evangelicals among this people.

12225

Bengali (112875)

They come from the country of India. They have come to the UAE seeking employment so that they can earn enough money to send back to their families. Many work as laborers such as construction workers or maids. The majority of Bengalis adhere to Islam, but the rest adhere to Hinduism. There are very few evangelical Christians among them, but they have the Bible, the Jesus Film, Gospel recordings, and Christian radio broadcasts in their language.

12226

#### Black African (6721)

They mainly come to the UAE seeking employment and a better life. They adhere to Islam, but mix their orthodox beliefs with folk Islamic beliefs. There are very few Christian evangelicals among them, but have the Bible and other Christian resources in their language.

12231

#### Eastern Pashto (403605)

This group of people come to the UAE in search of work to earn money for their families that are back in Afghanistan. They mainly work in service jobs such as construction workers. They mainly adhere to Sunni Islam. They are very much looked down upon by the Emirates since they look at them as labor workers. There is a very small number of evangelicals among them. They do have Gospel recordings in their language and Christian radio broadcasts directed to them.

12233

#### Egyptian Arab (95119)

The many Egyptians that come to the UAE seek employment opportunities. Many of the husbands and fathers come to work in the UAE and send their paychecks to their families back home in Egypt. Most of the Egyptians that live in the UAE adhere to the Sunni Muslim faith, but there are is an adequate number of their population that adhere to the Orthodox Christian faith called Coptic. There are many Christian materials written in their language such as the Bible, the Jesus Film, and Christian radio programs. There is a small number of evangelicals among them, but not a church planting movement among them.

12238

#### Gulf Arab (1009400)

This group represents that Arabs that come from the Gulf region of the Arab world which includes Saudi Arabians, Qataris, Kuwaitis, and so on. They are not very inclusive and tend to stay within their own communities making them hard to reach. They adhere to Sunni Islam. There are very few evangelical Christians among them and there is not a church planting movement among the Gulf Arabs.

47004

#### Hazara (80000)

They are a group that come from central Afghanistan who have their ancestry stemming from Mongolia. They speak Farsi. They have come to the UAE to seek employment. They predominately work in the service sector such as construction workers, garbage collectors, manual labor, and so on. They adhere to Shia Islam and the number of evangelical Christians among them is unknown.

42882

Iraqi Arab (10801)

This group of Arabs have come to the UAE to seek employment and a better life for themselves. Many of them send home their paychecks for their families. They mainly adhere to Sunni Islam, but there is a number of them who belong to the Shia sect. There is a small number of evangelical Christians among them, but it is recorded that it is less than 2%. There are Christian materials available to them such as the Jesus Film and the Bible.

42883

Jordanian Arab (77,131)

They have come to the UAE to seek employment. There are a few that come to the UAE without their families and send their paychecks back home to them and there are a few others that come over with their families. They mostly adhere to Sunni Islam. There is a small number of evangelical Christians that are less than 2%. There are Christian materials available to them such as the Bible and Gospel recordings in Arabic.

12241

Konkani, Goanese (unknown)

They are a group that come from India and are a Hindu group. They actually have a large number of Christians among them. They have come to the UAE to seek employment. They have Christian materials in their language such as the Bible and the Jesus Film.

42884

Lebanese Arab (38566)

They have mainly come to the UAE seeking employment. They mainly adhere to Sunni Islam, but there is a large number of Lebanese Orthodox Christians among them. There is a small number of evangelical Christians and have Christian materials written in their language.

12242

Malay (6721)

They are a group that come from Malaysia and adhere to Sunni Islam and mix their Islamic beliefs with folk Islamic beliefs. They have come to the UAE to seek employment and mainly work in the service sector such as maid service, cooks, manual labor, farming, and so on. There is a small number is Malay that believe in the Christian faith and have Christian materials in their Malay language such as the Bible and the Jesus Film. There is also a high percentage of them that speak English.

12243

Malayali (355109)

This is a group that comes from south India. There is a large portion of Malayalis that are Christians or have grown up in Christian homes where Christianity has been present for many

years. They have come to the UAE to seek employment. Many work in the service sector such as maid service, construction, nursing, and so on.

42887

Nawari Gypsy (13785)

They are a gypsy group that come from Libya. They tend to work in the service sector such as maids service, garbage collecting, construction, and so on. They tend to stay close in their community. They are looked down upon by others and many do not trust them, since they have a reputation for being dishonest and shrewd. They mainly adhere to the Muslim faith. There is a very small number of evangelical believers among them.

12245

Omani Arab (90094)

They mainly adhere to Sunni Islam and speak Arabic. They come from the neighboring country of Oman to seek better work. The economy is a little better in the UAE than it is in Oman. There is a small number of evangelical believers which is less than 2%.

42885

Palestinian Arab (73968)

Many have fled Israel and have settled as refugees in countries like Jordan, Syria, and so on. Many have left these refugee camps to seek a better life for themselves and their families. They tend to belong to the Sunni Islamic faith. There are not that many Christian evangelical Palestinian Arabs, but there are Christian resources available to them such as the Bible, Christian radio broadcasts, and Gospel recordings in Arabic.

12247

Persian (101460)

They come from Iran and speak Farsi. Many have come to seek employment and a better life outside of Iran. Most Persians are Shiite Muslims of the Ithna Ashari branch, and are radical in their adherence to Islamic laws and principles. There is a small percentage of Persians that are evangelical Christians, but it is less than 2%. They do have Christian resources available in their language such as the Bible and the Jesus Film.

12249

Punjabi (67217)

They are a group that comes from India and Pakistan. The name "Punjabi" is used to describe those who speak Punjabi and those that live in the Punjab region which is found in India and Pakistan. They adhere to the Islamic faith. They have come to the UAE seek employment. Many belong to the three major religions of India: Hinduism, Islam, and Sikhism. Most of the ones that have left India are Sikhs. Sikhism was founded in India around the sixteenth century. It combines the religions of Islam and Hinduism to find one god who transcends all religions

distinctions. There is a very small number of Pujabis that adhere to the Christian faith, but there are Christian materials available to them in their language such as the Bible and the Jesus Film.

42888

Saudi Arab (112070)

Saudi Arabs originate from Saudi Arabia. They are in the UAE working in the oil sector and engineering sector. They are a very wealthy people. They adhere to Islam very strictly and there are very few known Christians among them. They do speak Arabic and have the Bible in the Arabic language. They are very difficult to reach since they like to stick within their own communities.

12250

Serbo-Croatian (124)

They have come to the UAE to seek employment. Most Serbians are either non-religious, belong to the Serbian Orthodox Church, or adhere to Islam. They are, however, very nominal in their beliefs. There are very few Serbians who are evangelical Christians, but there are Christian resources available to them in their language.

12251

Shihuh (6340)

They can be found on the Musandam Peninsula and trace their ancestry back to Yemen. They are hostile to outsiders and very private about their own tribe. They can be found along the coast or in the rugged mountains on the peninsula. They are goat herders and farmers. They do speak Arabic and Shihhi. There are very few known evangelical Christians among them.

12252

Sindhi (34242)

They are a people that come from Pakistan, but can also be found in India. They have come to the UAE to seek employment. They are a Muslims group and have very few known evangelical Christians among them. They do have Christian resources available to them in their language such as the Bible and the Jesus Film.

12253

Sinhalese (40585)

They are group that come from Sri Lanka. They either adhere to Buddhism or to Islam. They have come to the UAE to seek employment in the service sector such as maid service, nanny positions, construction workers, and so on. There are a small number of evangelical Christians among them. They do have Christian resources among them such as the Bible and the Jesus Film.

12254

Somali (31706)

They are a group that come from the country of Somalia and are mostly a Muslim group. They have come to the UAE escaping troubles from their country and to seek a better life for themselves. There are very few known evangelical Christians among them. There are Christian resources available to them such as the Bible and the Jesus Film.

12256

Sudanese Arab (21974)

They come from the country of Sudan and mainly adhere to the Muslim faith. They have come to the UAE to seek employment. There are very few evangelical Christians among them, but have Christian resources available to them such as the Bible and the Jesus Film.

12257

Swedish (143)

They have come to the UAE to work within the oil sector. They are nominal Christians and many belong to the Lutheran church. Church attendance is very low among them. There are Christian resources available to them such as the Bible and the Jesus Film.

42886

Syrian Arab (30852)

Mostly adhere to Sunni Islam, but there is a large majority that belong to Shiite Islam and its many sects. There are Syrians that belong to the Eastern Orthodox Church. There are missionaries that are trying to reach the Syrian Arabs, but there is not a church planting movement among them. There are few evangelical Christians among them, but there are Christian resources available to them such as the Bible and the Jesus Film.

12259

Telugu (152190)

They are a group from India and are believers in the Hindu religion. They have come to the UAE to seek employment in the service sector. There are only a small number of them that are evangelical Christians, but they do have Christian resources such as the Bible and the Jesus Film.

12260

Turkish (954)

They come from the country of Turkey and adhere to the Sunni sect of Islam. They are very prideful of their country and many are considered to be nominal Muslims, even though there is a good number of Fundamentalist Muslims in Turkey. There is a small number of evangelical Christians among the Turkish people, but they do have Christian resources available to them in their language such as the Bible and the Jesus Film.



12261  
Urdu (6721)

It the official language spoken in Pakistan, but there are pockets of Indians that speak Urdu. They mainly adhere to the religion of Islam. They have come to the UAE to seek employment and a better life for themselves. There are very few evangelical Christians among them, but have Christian resources available to them in the Urdu language such as the Bible and the Jesus Film.

12262  
Yemeni Arab (19024)

They are a group that mainly adheres to the Sunni sect of Islam. They have come to the UAE to seek job opportunities. They have left their country because of high unemployment and a harsh economy. There are very few evangelical Christians among the Yemeni Arabs, but they do have Christians resources available to them such as Christian radio broadcasts and Gospel recordings.

### **Missiological Implications**

Among most of the Arab countries, the UAE is considered to be very liberal in its ways, even though it is still an Islamic nation. They allow the existence of churches and have also helped in the construction of such structures. However, they do respect Christianity; they do not allow the sharing of the gospel with its citizens. It is considered to be illegal and is punishable by the issuance of a fine or being sent to prison. One cannot enter the country as missionaries, so many have to think how to enter the country creatively and have a platform. UAE is considered to offer good living and many people come to it from many other countries such as Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, and many others.

1. Evangelicals should pray for boldness among the Christian expatriate community that they would share their faith with their fellow Muslims and co-workers.
2. Evangelicals should seek to provide Christians in UAE with materials for sharing the Gospel with followers of Islam
3. Evangelicals should encourage the minorities of UAE in evangelizing their own peoples.
4. Evangelicals should encourage people who would choose to live in UAE and serve as evangelists while there.
5. Evangelicals should provide Christians in UAE with materials for evangelizing the Roman Catholics who reside in the country.
6. Evangelicals should encourage the Christians in UAE to evangelize the non-religious in the country.

**Pictures** – See attached Folder

**Links**

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/worldguide/destinations/middle-east/united-arab-emirates>  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_Arab\\_Emirates](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Arab_Emirates)  
<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5444.htm>  
<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/aetoc.html>  
<http://www.government.ae/gov/en/index.jsp>  
<http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0108074.html>  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle\\_east/country\\_profiles/737620.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/country_profiles/737620.stm)  
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<http://www.khaleejtimes.com/index00.asp>  
<http://alkhaleej.co.ae/>  
[http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_1050.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1050.html)

