

one ambition

"It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known..." ROMANS 15:20

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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

"...and thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else's foundation, but as it is written, 'Those who have never been told of him will see, and those who have never heard will understand.'"

The Apostle Paul (Romans 15:20-21)

In his popular book *Start with Why*, Simon Sinek discusses the why (purpose), the what (product), and the how (process), emphasizing the most important place to start is the why. He describes the why as being a goal or purpose that gives our lives a deeper meaning and makes everything else secondary.

Do you have a "why" as Sinek describes? You see, when you know the why, there is a commitment and perseverance that follows. If you don't know the why, the what becomes boring, rote, and stale. We all need to occasionally review our lives in prayer to find direction, course correct, or simply rediscover our why.

The apostle Paul was clear about his "why" in Romans 15:20-21. The what was the Gospel to the unreached of his day, the how was to preach that Gospel, and the why was so that those who have never been told of Jesus will see and those who have never heard will understand.

One Ambition, what you are reading right now, is named in honour of the passion and purpose that Paul expressed: to take the Gospel where people of his generation had not heard. The name *One Ambition* represents our mission well. It is Pioneers' "why".

Jesus calls all of us to a deep and meaningful why. He came that we might have life eternal and have it to the fullest. But He is also calling us, the church, to go to those peoples around the world who do not know Jesus or His great love for them. There are more than 7,000 people groups who still don't know Jesus!

That is a tremendously meaningful "why" of our work.

In this issue of *One Ambition* we are focusing on just 1 of those 7,000 people groups, the people of Yemen, a country where less than 1% know the hope of the Gospel. Ordinary, innocent people are caught in a conflict between powerful states.

The work is hard, there are many challenges, and this great task cannot be done alone. That is one of the reasons why Paul wrote the letter to the Romans; so that they could join him. This is also why we are sending you this issue of *One Ambition*. You are a valuable part of our team. Partnerships with local churches and individuals like you are the foundation of our work.

We invite you to join us as we *Ask for The Nations*.

Are you ready to participate in whatever way He calls you?

Our why is clear. God delights when we join Him on this journey of the Gospel to the ends of the earth. And we welcome you too! Let's obediently follow His leading. Pioneers is here to serve the church as she sends emissaries of the Gospel. Let's pray, give, and go to fulfill this purpose.

Donnie

Donnie Scarce
Executive Director, Pioneers



YEMEN

a tragedy unfolds

War. Famine. Disease.

Perhaps these are the words that come to mind when you think of Yemen, but history tells us that centuries ago it was one of the most advanced regions in Arabia. Strategically situated at the crossroads of major trade and communication routes, Yemen was home to many ancient kingdoms. Located on the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula, south of Saudi Arabia and southwest of Oman, Yemen has 1,900 km of coastline on the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. The western part of the country is a fertile land where the widely popular arabica coffee was first cultivated and consumed centuries ago. More than 99 percent of the 28 million citizens of Yemen are Muslim.

Centuries of political and administrative upheaval and unrest have plagued this developing country. Modern-day Yemen was established in 1990 when, after years of fighting, the Yemen Arab Republic (north) and People's Republic of Yemen (south) united as one country. Sadly, unification did not completely bring an end to the conflict.

Yemen has long been one of the poorest countries of the modern Arab world, and this has been greatly exacerbated by civil war. In September 2014, rebels from the Houthi movement, an armed Shia religious and political group, took control of the capital, Sana'a. The war between the Houthis and troops loyal to the internationally-recognized government of Yemen escalated in March 2015, when President Abdrabbuh

Mansur Hadi was forced to flee into Saudi Arabia as an exile and a Saudi-led coalition intervened.

The current conflict in Yemen has endured for more than four years and the tragedy unfolding is what the UN has called "the world's worst man-made humanitarian disaster."

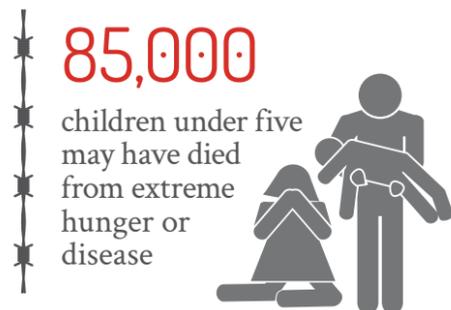
More than 2.3 million people have been displaced by the war, having had to flee from their homes. According to UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, the UN Human Rights Office has documented more than 6,800 civilian casualties and at least 10,700 civilian injuries in Yemen between March 2015 and November 2018. These figures are devastating.

And that's not all! The United Nations reports that Yemen is in "clear and present danger of an imminent and great big famine ... much bigger than anything any professional in this field has seen during their working lives." In December 2018, Mark Lowcock,

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“the world's worst man-made humanitarian disaster.”

United Nations



the UN's Emergency Relief Co-ordinator, shared that more than 20 million Yemenis are food insecure, half of whom are severely food insecure, leading to what he called "Yemen's descent toward famine." Save the Children estimates that "85,000 children under five may have died from extreme hunger or disease since the war in Yemen escalated." Extreme hunger and malnutrition lead to a greater susceptibility to disease, and with only half of the country's health facilities fully functioning, millions are without basic health care as the country faces the world's largest cholera outbreak.

But Mr. Lowcock also stated in his address to the Security Council that humanitarian aid is having a major impact. Millions of Yemeni people have access to food who, without humanitarian aid, would simply go hungry. The needs are critical, and the humanitarian efforts must expand to reach all those devastated by hunger, malnutrition and disease in

Yemen. On page 14 we outline how you can pray, give, and go as we ask God for the nation of Yemen. Join with Pioneers as we work together with Christians from around the world to show the love of Jesus through how we serve the Yemeni people in this time of crisis.

To read Mark Lowcock's address to the Security Council in its entirety go to www.reliefweb.int/report/yemen/under-secretary-general-humanitarian-affairs-and-emergency-relief-coordinator-mark-12

To donate directly to Pioneers relief projects in Yemen go to www.pioneers.ca/give/projects



*Arise, cry out in the night, at the beginning of the night watches!
Pour out your heart like water before the presence of the Lord!
Lift your hands to him for the lives of your children, who
faint for hunger at the head of every street.*

(Lamentations 2:19 ESV)



Of the **28 million** citizens of Yemen more than **99%** are Muslim



More than **6,800** civilian casualties and at least **10,700** civilian injuries in Yemen between MAR 2015 - NOV 2018

More than **2.3 million** people displaced by the war



ASK

for the nations

Ask me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. Psalm 2:8

3,000,000,000 - 3 billion people around the world have not yet heard the Gospel message, the good news of the hope we have in Jesus Christ. That's a lot of zeros and it may seem daunting to know where to start!

7,000 - 7 thousand people groups, entire cultures, do not yet know of God's great love for them. In a world so seemingly connected, how can there still be so many who have never had the opportunity to hear this amazing Truth?

We understand that the task of taking the Gospel message to 3 billion unreached people may seem overwhelming, and with this in mind we have launched *Ask For the Nations* - an interactive focus highlighting 10 of the over 7,000 Unreached People Groups in the world. Over the coming months we will be sharing stories with you from several different people groups that are still unreached and invite you to be part of bringing the Gospel message of hope to them through practical, tangible ways.

It is our hope that, through *Ask For the Nations*, you will discover opportunities where you can be involved through giving, praying, and perhaps even going! We want to equip you with relatable and personal ways that you can join us in sharing the incredible Hope we have in Jesus with people around the globe, including here in Canada. Our prayer is that God reveals your role in bringing the message of Jesus to every tongue, tribe, and nation. (Rev. 7:9)

In this issue of *One Ambition*, we are highlighting the tragedy that has been unfolding in Yemen. As you read about the devastating civil war and heartbreaking humanitarian crisis, remember that God's heart is for the Yemeni people. He is Lord over *all* the nations, and we rejoice that His incredible promise to His Son, "to make the nations his inheritance," will be fulfilled. (Psalm 2:8)

How incredible is it that we are invited to be a part of the amazing story of God bringing man to Himself?!

Together let's "Ask" for Yemen.

DIVINE *intervention*

Abdul's* life was changed the day of the accident. He was hurt, but not as badly as others in the car. As he lay in his hospital bed, visitors came in and out. Many stated things like:

"Thanks be to Allah, Abdul, that you were not killed or hurt worse."

"Abdul, you should thank Allah for sparing your life."

Up to this point in his life he had not been that interested in spiritual things, but accidents like his have a way of making you think about your own mortality.

Abdul began to reflect on the attributes of God (Allah) that he had heard throughout his life: God is holy, God is just, God is righteous. He also found himself thinking about what little he had learned about Jesus (Isa): Jesus is holy, Jesus is just, Jesus is righteous. He realized that these attributes of Jesus were really the attributes of God and that no other human except Jesus exhibited these attributes.

"If this is true," thought Abdul, "then Jesus must be God! I will be a follower of Jesus."

He had never met a Christian, he did not have a Bible and yet his life was radically changed. The way he lived changed. The way he talked changed. He shared his discovery of Jesus's God-like attributes every chance he got!

One day, as he talked about Jesus with a Muslim friend, the friend asked him if he knew Hamza*. When Abdul replied that he did not, his friend said, "you must know him because you both talk about Jesus all the time!"

So his friend introduced Abdul to Hamza, a believer, and together they began to talk about Jesus. Hamza introduced Abdul to a community of Christ-followers in Yemen and invited Abdul to join them.

We met Abdul in this community and had the privilege of asking him about his faith.

"How did you know what to do to follow Jesus?" we asked.

"I thought about what Jesus was like and tried to do what Jesus would," was his reply.

Simple. Beautiful.

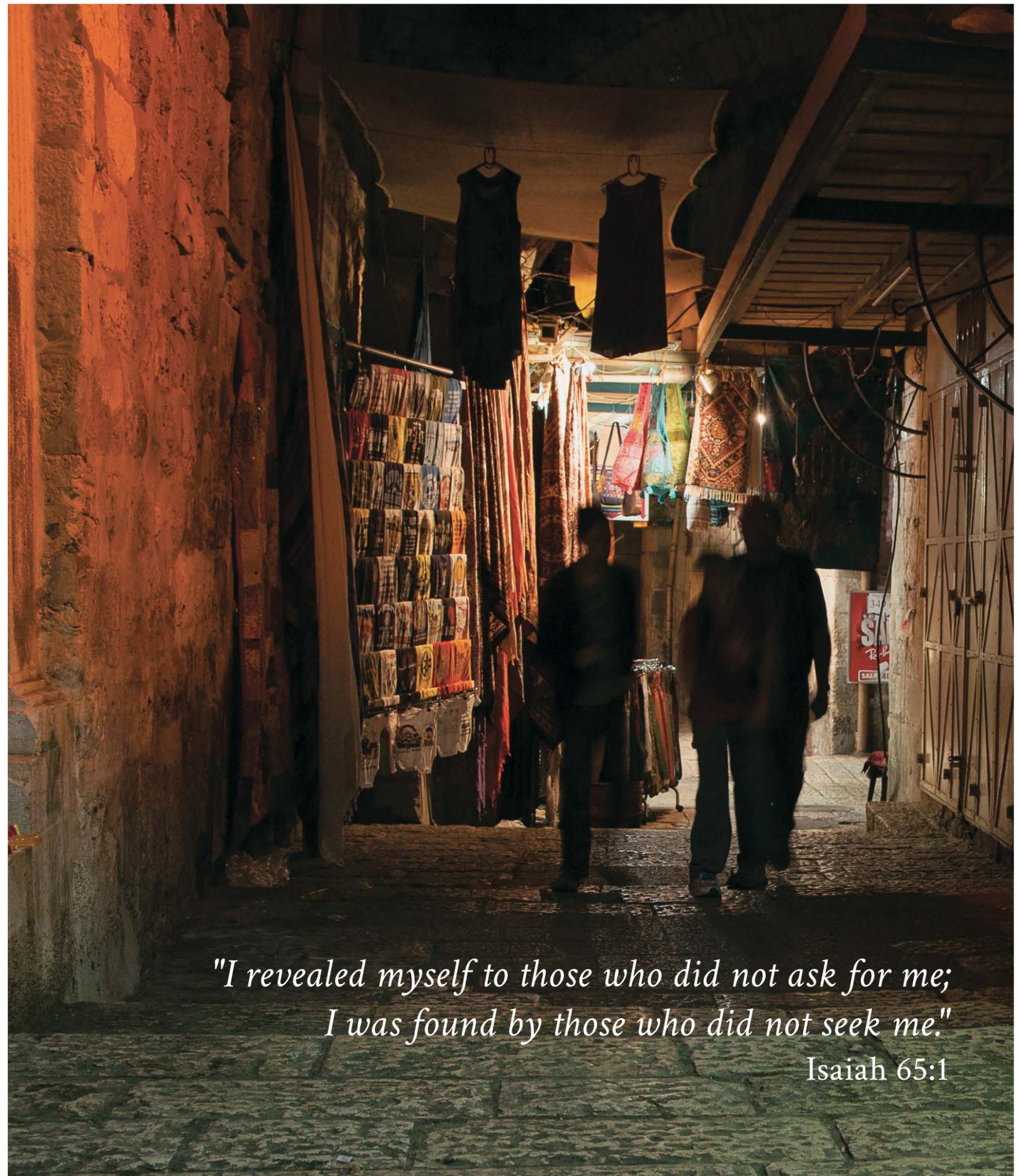
Through God revealing His Son, Abdul's life was transformed. And now, he is connected with other Jesus-followers who are proclaiming the truth of the good news of the Gospel. Local believers are coming together to declare that Jesus is God. They are teaching and discipling new believers like Abdul, and the number of Christ-followers continues to grow.

Like Abdul, there are many Muslims coming to faith through visions and dreams. God is using these in combination with relationships and media to draw people to Himself.

A car accident led Abdul to question who God is, and similarly the war and humanitarian crises in the area are causing people to question what they believe; many are disillusioned with Islam and searching for peace and hope. Peace and hope that only comes through a relationship with Jesus!

The beauty is, we have access to God's Word and fellowship in community with Christ-followers and now, thanks to the connection with other Yemeni believers, so does Abdul. What if we followed Abdul's example of simple, beautiful faith? What if we "thought about what Jesus was like and tried to do what Jesus would do?" How would our lives look different? Let's be doers of the Word.

*pseudonym



*"I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me;
I was found by those who did not seek me."*

Isaiah 65:1

when the WORLD comes to us

We really didn't know what to expect as we drove into the church parking lot. Our newest workers on the *In Canada Ministries (ICM)* team launched an ESL program for refugees in this small Ontario town in a church. The young Canadian couple, Arabic speakers, had recently returned from the Middle East and turned down a government offer of a salaried position to teach ESL in the town library, choosing rather to launch it in the facilities of a local church. "They" said it would never work. Muslim refugees would never enter a church, "they" said. However, what we saw with our own eyes proved the opposite to be true.

Several women dressed in burkas and hijabs and a handful of Middle Eastern looking men were milling about on the front steps of the church, coffee cups in hand, talking among themselves in animated terms. We were greeted with shy glances and big smiles as we entered the church facilities. The delicious smell of curry floated up the stairs as our friends showed us to the basement where 9 ESL classes would be held. 45 students from several countries in the Middle East and Asia are currently enrolled in the program and volunteers prepare a meal for the students every day.

OUR DISAPPOINTMENTS, GOD'S APPOINTMENTS

Three years ago, this couple received the disappointing news that they were no longer welcome back into the country where they had served for 10 years. But, rather than step away from cross-cultural ministry to least reached peoples, they recognized that the Canadian government welcomed Syrian refugees. In response, they started an ESL program in their home town through the auspices of their home church.

Quickly the word spread. More and more refugees and newcomers began to attend. The school kept expanding with dozens of volunteers, from both within and outside the church, offering their services. Today, families are moving from larger cities to this small town in order to participate in this excellent language program – within the confines of a church! Our workers chose not to accept government funding and all the restrictions that accompanied it and as a result, they are free to use their own teaching materials and share Jesus in culturally effective ways.

DIASPORA MISSIOLOGY

This is just one example of how *Pioneers* is engaging in outreach to unreached peoples here at home. It is called "Mission to the Diaspora".

Diaspora refers to peoples on the move who take up residency away from their place of origin. Never before in human history have so many people been on the move! According to the UN: International Migration Report (2017), the total number of international migrants is estimated at 258 million. If all of these migrants



God has brought
the world to Canada

were to settle in one country, it would be the fifth largest country in the world! Millions have left their homeland in the past year fleeing war, famine and disease, looking for a safer place to raise their families. Many are from countries where it is illegal to convert to another faith and Canada is the ultimate destination. Here we have freedom of religious belief.

Because God is behind the "scattering", He also has the re-gathering effort fully in His control (Acts 17: 22-27). The sovereign God is in charge of this current upheaval for His divine purposes. He calls His church to be awakened and fully engaged in efforts to be intentionally present with our "new neighbours" through tangible acts of love and care. The possibilities are endless. Mission to, with and through the diaspora, will shape how the church does mission over the coming decades (Lausanne 2010). One pastor mentioned to me recently that he does not need to hop on a plane and travel to some distant land, he sees a mission field right outside the doors of his church! His mandate is to awaken his congregants to the challenge before them.

WORKING TOGETHER

We thank God for the more than 40 ICM workers strategically placed across the nation. We realize that we are barely scratching the surface of the tremendous need for workers. This is why we seek to partner and work collaboratively with other mission agencies and like-minded churches in reaping a harvest among migrant peoples.

The church today has an amazing opportunity to welcome the strangers next door; people from limited access or closed nations who are arriving here daily. While more and more countries close their doors and expel Christian workers, the doors in Canada are wide open, like they were for the couple engaged strategically in ESL work. There are so many other ways we can get involved: sports clubs, potluck dinners, Discovery Bible Study, friendship evangelism, cultural events, hosting refugees and welcoming new-comers, international student outreach, digital ministries – really the sky is the limit!

HOPE FOR LOST PEOPLE

All cultural barriers of traditional missional enterprise need to be assessed and crossed – except the geographical barrier. There are no borders to cross as the world has come to us! The world's people are located right here, in the apartment complex across the street, at the checkout in Walmart, in our parks and malls and on the sidewalks of every town and city across the nation. God has brought the mission field to Canada. The God of mission offers Hope in the midst of despair for diaspora and we are privileged to be the bearers of the message that sets people everywhere free. Please join us in prayer for more workers to engage this needy field.

To learn more, contact us at go@pioneers.ca

From Al Qaeda to the PRINCE OF PEACE

"I am from Al Qaeda. I need to know who Christ is."

One young Yemeni man connected with Arab World Media, a ministry of Pioneers, through its media outreach. Eager to learn more about the Gospel, he arranged a phone call with Mira, an Arabic response team member.

Mira is a passionate follower of Christ, gifted evangelist, and apologist. God is using Mira to share Jesus with members of Al Qaeda and ISIS. Confident in Jesus Christ, she shares the Good News with army generals, government leaders, Imams and Muslim religious leaders.

Mira listened to the young man's story. She learned that his whole family was with Al Qaeda. Every night he slept with a weapon under his pillow, just like every other member of his family. He shared that he had made plans to kill some Jesus-followers.

All his life he had been taught to hate Christians, but he found himself living with a Christian family while he was a student in South Asia. He intended to kill them on his last day, but when that day came, and the father walked into his room, he could not reach for his weapon. All he could think was, "Why do I have more peace now?"

God used this Asian family to prepare his heart to meet Jesus personally.

When he returned to Yemen, he caught his father watching a Christian TV show. Shocked, he wondered if his father was doubting Islam. His own doubts grew, but he was still too scared to talk about Christianity.

An Arab World Media campaign caught his attention. He sought more information by visiting the website. He emailed and asked for a phone conversation. Mira could tell he was very open to receiving the Gospel.

He moved to the city where Mira lived, so she made plans to meet with him.

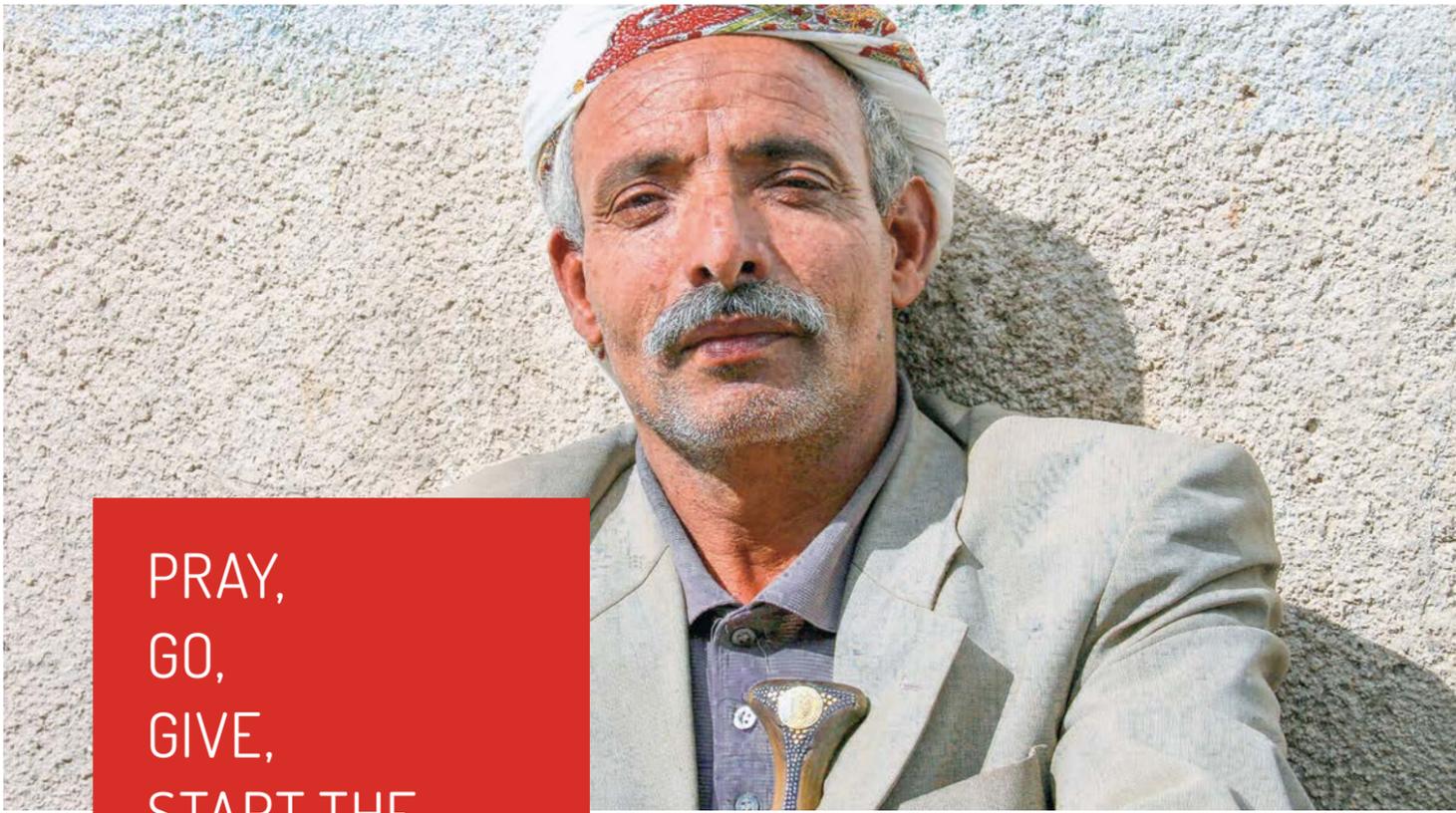
Face to face, Mira felt that God had prepared this young man to come to faith in Christ. Every time she shared a message of salvation, he associated an element of it with the Christian family he lived with. After a few conversations, he surrendered everything in service to his Saviour.

Not long after his conversion, his parents came to Egypt. His father learned of his son's meetings with Mira. Surprisingly, he wasn't angry; he too wanted to know about Jesus! Mira met with the father as well. God had prepared his heart and he too became a Christ-follower!

From Al-Qaeda to the Prince of Peace, the focus of their lives changed forever.

Arab World Media is a ministry of Pioneers that "uses strategic digital media to present the truth of the Gospel and engage Muslims who are seeking, open, and ready. In addition, we support believers in the Arab world through online discipleship and by connecting them with other believers near to them."





PRAY,
GO,
GIVE,
START THE
CONVERSATION

PRAY FOR THE PEOPLE OF YEMEN:

- + That those who have the power to end this war would do so.
- + For Yemen's future. This war will eventually end, but what will happen next? Saudi Arabia has been mobilising Al-Qaeda operatives, but what role will they play in Yemen's post-war future? Pray into the years beyond the war.
- + That all people would have access to clean water, food and medicine. Pray that aid would get to the people who need it most and that nothing would go astray.
- + For the children of Yemen. This war has made them weak and incredibly vulnerable. They are also losing their education. Pray that they would be able to reclaim their childhood and look to a more positive future.
- + Lift up the small number of believers from a Muslim background. Many have a strong and solid faith and are able to nurture others. Pray for our brothers and sisters to have strength and to keep their eyes fixed on Jesus.
- + Give thanks that Yemenis want to know more about Jesus. Pioneers teams are in regular contact with Yemeni seekers and believers, both inside and outside the country.

*Prayer requests provided by Arab World Media. Visit www.arabworldmedia.org/prayer-guides/breakthrough-yemen for ways to pray and an excellent video by PrayerCast that takes you through a guided prayer for Yemen.

GO

God is calling. The Yemeni people, and others like them, need Jesus and the answer is to obey the call of God and GO, short- or long-term to the people and ministry He is laying on your heart. We are here to help you make it, step-by-step!

Featured Opportunity: Families in Yemen have been devastated by war, poverty, and disease, and now they are facing famine of dramatic proportions. Starving and frightened; they have little hope for the future. Many are fleeing their homeland in search of safety, food security, and a better life for their families. Is your heart broken by the immense needs of the Yemeni people? Is God calling you to serve, love, and share the hope of the Gospel with Yemeni refugees? If so, we would love to connect with you and start a conversation about how you can use your gifts and talents to serve God in this way.



GIVE

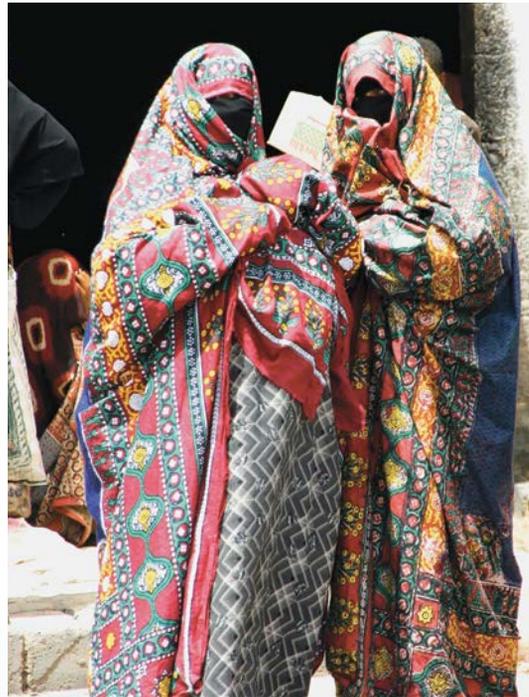
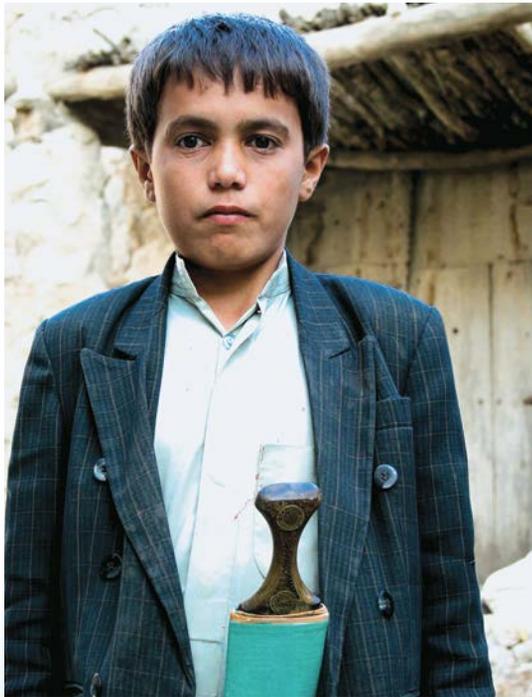
By financially supporting *Ask for the Nations* your gift could mean that more Yemeni people will have the opportunity to hear and receive the Gospel. Your financial partnership will enable us to engage and prepare new team members to serve among the Yemeni and other unreached peoples, to care for those already on the field as they face great challenges and create communication materials that tell the stories of unreached people like the Yemeni people.



START THE CONVERSATION

Contact us to see how you and your church can get involved with *Ask For The Nations* through prayer, advocacy and other ways to have workers join teams around the globe to bring the Gospel to those eager to hear it, like the Yemeni people.





ASK FOR THE NATIONS - ASK FOR YEMEN

The people of Yemen are in crisis. War, famine and disease threaten their lives daily. They are searching for the truth and peace found only in Jesus Christ.

Help us bring the Gospel to the people of Yemen. Join us today!



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