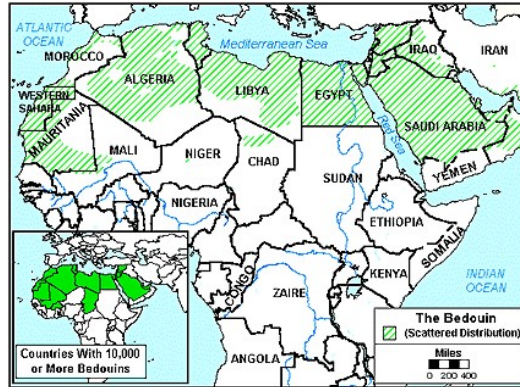


Bedouin, Laguat in Algeria



Photo: Fapisanzo



Map: Bethany World Prayer Center

"Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."

People Name	Bedouin, Laguat
Country	Algeria
Status	Unengaged Unreached
Population	71,000
Language	Hassaniyya
Religion	Islam
Written Scripture	Yes
Oral Scripture	Yes
Jesus Film	Yes
Gospel Recordings	Yes
Christ Followers	No
Churches	No
Workers Needed	1
Workers Reported	0

BACKGROUND

The name "Bedouin" is derived from the Arab word *bedu*. It is a term used to differentiate between those groups who migrate with their herds and those who have settled in an urban or agricultural area. Although distinct, both communities rely on each other economically, socially, and politically.

Today, many Bedouin live as semi-nomads, both migrating with their herds and engaging in some form of settled agriculture. Most Bedouin are organized into tribes, virtually all of which speak Arabic and claim Arab descent.

The Arab conquests of the seventh century brought about a rapid expansion of the Bedouin. At that time, thousands of Bedouin left the Middle East and began spreading across North Africa. They have adapted well to the nomadic or semi-nomadic way of life in the desert. Apart from tribal affiliations, there is little to distinguish one group of Bedouin from another.

WHAT ARE THEIR LIVES LIKE?

The Bedouin economy is primarily based on raising livestock. At the core of their society is the need for migration, which is determined by the supply of water and the availability of grazing land. Political borders

are of little importance to the Bedouin, although various government restrictions are now having more effect on their migratory lifestyle than in times past.

Because food is scarce in the desert regions, most Bedouin suffer from hunger at some time in their lives. Meat is only served on special occasions such as marriage feasts, ceremonial events, or when guests are present. During such times a young goat, camel, or lamb is slaughtered and roasted.

To endure the extreme heat of the desert, the Bedouin wear lightweight, light-colored clothing. It is very loose-fitting, allowing for the circulation of air and freedom of movement, yet providing protection from the sun and windblown sand.

Most of the Bedouin live in low, rectangular tents woven from camel or goat hair. A line of poles supports the center of the tent. The wealthier a Bedouin is, the longer his tent will be. The sides of the tents may be rolled up to let the breezes in, or closed up tightly during rain or sandstorms. Half of the tent is for the men. It contains a fireplace and is used for entertaining guests. The other half is for the women, children, and stored items. It also has a fireplace that is used for cooking.

The women do most of the work, while the

men socialize and make plans for the group. The women's responsibilities include tending to the children; preparing meals; sewing; collecting and weaving the animal hair; pitching, striking, and loading the tents; gathering fuel for cooking; and nurturing the elderly. Marriage ideally occurs within the extended family. Generally, the father's cousins have the first preference.

Bedouin society is organized according to a series of overlapping kin groups. The family is the smallest unit, followed by the clan, then the tribe. In the past, it was shameful for a Bedouin to accept a wage-paying job. Today, however, many have been forced by economic circumstances into full- or part-time employment.

WHAT ARE THEIR BELIEFS?

While most of the Bedouin are Sunni Muslims, there is still a basic belief in spirits known as *jinnis*. The *jinnis* are, according to Muslim legend, spirits capable of assuming human or animal form and exercising supernatural influence over humans.

WHAT ARE THEIR NEEDS?

All of the Bedouin groups are basically untouched with the Gospel. Although there are resources available in their languages, the Bedouin have proved to be resistant to Christianity.