



# Gleams in the Desert

## May Zerma Team Prayer Letter

O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water. I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. Psalm 63:1

The picture is of our yard after a big dust storm and over an hour of rain. It dropped the temperature from around 110 degrees to 85.

April was the most unusual month we've had in all of our twenty-five years on the field. Our medical department recommended us to remain in self-isolation through May 1st, as the Coronavirus continues to spread in Niger. At this time Niger has 750 confirmed cases of the virus and 32 deaths. We have not left our home or yard since March 19th. We're under a curfew and the borders remain closed. Gatherings and meetings are prohibited, which has resulted in a few protests by young Muslims. The Islamic Council is recommending that the government ordinances are to be followed. Our Zerma church has a WhatsApp group and we communicate with each other through that. A highlight for me was participating in a Zoom meeting with language learners and coaches from all over the world. I participated in a second one for language coaches at the beginning of May. I was able to encourage and provide new activities to Tiffany after that first Zoom meeting. We're all learning some new ways of doing things during this pandemic. We stay in touch with our believers through phone calls and messages. Our mission family continues to faithfully bring us groceries and

supplies as our self-isolation continues. We continue to prepare lessons and materials that we can share with others once we can leave our home. Phil wrote a Baptist Global Relief Project request and our colleagues were able to distribute hand washing stations and soaps to key areas where Christian leaders and pastors could then distribute them to other areas. Ramadan began, as well as frequent power cuts with temperatures of 110 degrees. Please lift up the following prayer points. We have much to pray about.

## May Prayer Points

Kimberly participated in a Zoom call for language coaches all over the world on May 1. It was an encouraging meeting with 100 other coaches from all around the world. Pray for those learning a language during this challenging time and for their coaches as they seek to find creative ways to help them.

Every year Muslims spend an entire month in a concentrated time of fasting. They may fast because their family has always fasted, or because it is expected of them from their community, or because they felt the need to gain favor from Allah, or perhaps all of the above. Yet the hovering threat of a global pandemic may demand that this year's Ramadan be different. There may never have been a Ramadan in history when Muslims would feel so acutely the need to be right before God. This month pray for the one billion Muslims around the world. Pray for them like their life depends on it. Pray that today would be the day of salvation for many across the globe. **This was taken from the [IMB.org](http://IMB.org) website. Daily requests for Muslims during Ramadan can be found there as well. Please check it out and download these important requests.**

Pastor "Bob" texted Phil to say that in one village where they've shared the gospel for a couple years, 17 women have accepted Christ as their Savior. We praise God that the work of sowing the gospel is bearing fruit. Pray for these women and other believers in the village to grow in their new faith and to rest on the firm foundation of Jesus Christ in the face of persecution.

Pray that the Baptist Global Relief projects that are being used by IMB missionaries here and around the world will meet the needs of many during this pandemic. Pray for these supplies of soap,

hand washing stations, and food to open the eyes of the lost to see the light of the gospel as never before.

We're staying in touch with our Zerma church on WhatsApp. We use a lot of voice messages. One of the pastor's daughters sent Kimberly a message eager for more Bible stories from our kids club time. Pray for Kimberly to clearly communicate the truth and Christ connections in each story as she sends these precious girls these stories on WhatsApp.

Please pray for encouragement for us. We're ready and eager to be able to be out and visit with people using social distance and wearing masks. We're still being told by our wonderful and caring medical department that we must self-isolate longer because our country has not yet peaked in its number of cases.

Pray for the health of the Nigerien people. Due to the spread of Covid-19, vaccinations for other diseases were not taking place. As a result, Niger is currently experiencing an outbreak of polio.

We continue to receive calls for help from friends in the villages and in the city. We've helped with money for food needs, doctor visits, and medicine. We leave what is needed out on a chair inside our gate and our friends come in and pick it up while we remain in our home. Please pray for our friends to seek God's care and provision for their lives. Pray for us to have wisdom in how best to help.

### **55 in 5**

Please lift up this month's 5 unreached, unengaged people groups across Africa. For more information in these people groups, please go to [www.imb.org/sub-saharan-africa/55-in-5/](http://www.imb.org/sub-saharan-africa/55-in-5/)

### **Manga Kanuri of Nigeria**

They number around 387,000 and can be found in Niger and Nigeria. Islam is the main religion but there are a few Christians. Long-standing Christian work among this group, including Bible translations and medical work, have produced few results. The area they live in faces much terrorist activity by Boko Haram. Pray for peace to be restored to the villages and towns of the Kanuri region. Pray for opportunities for humanitarian assistance to open the

door for the gospel, as many of the people have been displaced and are living in IDP camps.

### **Naath of Ethiopia**

The Naath, also called the Nuer, are cattle herders living in both Ethiopia and South Sudan. The Naath believe in a supernatural being. They also believe in lesser gods, which they call “kuuth,” but they know there is only one God (Kuoth). The Naath of Ethiopia are highly unevangelized and unengaged, while their counterparts from South Sudan have had a lot of evangelical influence. Pray that the Father will open the eyes of the Naath community to see Christ as the source of abundant and eternal life.

### **Ngongo of DRC**

There are approximately 200,000 speakers of Ngongo in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. There is no written scripture in their language, but last year a group of six committed Christians began putting stories from the Bible into their language to be shared orally. These six have recruited and trained 25 others to join in their work. Pray that those who are putting God’s Word into their heart language would remain faithful to the Scriptures. Pray that they remember the importance of the work they are doing and not become discouraged by setbacks.

### **Rwandese of Tanzania**

Rwandese refugees moved into Tanzania during years of internal conflict in Rwanda, including the mass genocide of 1994, when as many as 1 million people were murdered. Pray that displaced Rwandese will find a place of peace in their adopted home of Tanzania. Ask God to help them know they are His no matter where they live.

### **Wolof of Mauritania**

The Wolof are a West African people found primarily in Senegal. However, over 230,000 Wolof live in the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, a country on the northern border of Senegal. It is illegal to share the gospel openly in Mauritania. Evangelism is prohibited by law. Pray for God to raise up Wolof believers in Senegal who are willing to live among the Wolof in Mauritania in hopes of sharing the gospel despite the law restrictions. Pray that

in a land that is desert, both physically and spiritually, God would allow the Wolof to discover the water of life: Jesus.