



Jordan

Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Asia

Geography

Area 89,206 sq km. Lies on the eastern bank of the Jordan River. Agriculture and population are concentrated near the river. Most of the country is desert.

Population	Ann Gr	Density
2010	6,472,392	3.06%
2020	7,518,599	1.56%
2030	8,616,498	1.27%

Capital Amman 1,105,402. **Urbanites** 78.5%. **Pop under 15 yrs** 35%. **Life expectancy** 72.4 yrs.

Peoples

With mass relocation of Palestinians, Kuwaitis and Iraqis in the past decades, no precise figures exist. **Arab** 95.4%. Palestinian 33.2%; East Bank Jordanian 31.3%; Iraqi 13.8%; Bedouin 4.0%.

Jordanian minorities 2.2%. Adygei (Circassian) 1.6%; Armenian, Kurd, Turkmen, Chechen.

Non-Jordanian 2.4%. Assyrian, Greek, Western, Pakistani, others.

Literacy 91.1%. **Official language** Arabic. **All languages** 16. **Indigenous languages** 10. **Languages with Scriptures** 2Bi 2NT 4por.

Economy

The geopolitics of the last 60 years have seriously hindered economic development, making poverty and unemployment significant issues. Main income sources: tourism, phosphates, agricultural products. Jordan has no oil and little water. Broad economic reforms by King Abdullah since 1999.

HDI Rank 96th/182. **Public debt** 62.2% of GDP. **Income/person** \$3,626 (8% of USA). **Unemployment** 14.5%.

Politics

Part of the Turkish Empire until 1918. Independent from Britain in 1946. Constitutional

monarchy with King Abdullah having executive powers. Turmoil in the Middle East profoundly affects life, due to loss of land, massive influx of refugees and economic disruption. Jordan relinquished its claim to the West Bank area, but Palestinians are the largest group in the nation. A moderate Arab nation and a Western ally; suicide bombers in 2005 again brought to light Jordan's precarious position.

Religion

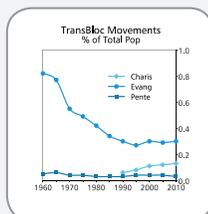
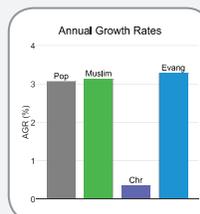
Islam (Sunni) is the state religion, but the constitution prohibits discrimination and promotes the free exercise of religious belief and worship. The Church has a visible public presence and relative freedom, but there is some pressure on evangelical churches.

Religions	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Muslim	96.47	6,243,917	3.1%
Christian	2.24	144,982	0.4%
Non-religious	1.00	64,724	3.1%
Other	0.28	18,123	3.1%
Baha'i	0.01	647	3.1%

Christians	Denoms	Pop %	Affiliates	Ann Gr
Protestant	16	0.23	15,000	3.2%
Independent	2	0.09	6,000	6.7%
Anglican	1	0.06	4,000	-0.5%
Catholic	3	0.40	26,000	-3.5%
Orthodox	4	1.46	94,000	0.8%
Marginal	1	<0.01	<300	2.3%

Churches	MegaBloc	Congs	Members	Affiliates
Greek Orthodox Ch	O	26	40,223	72,000
Catholic Church	C	60	14,857	26,000
Armenian Orthodox	O	2	9,581	16,000
Syrian Orthodox Ch	O	1	840	4,200
Evang Lutheran Ch	P	6	2,395	4,000
Episcopal Church	A	11	2,275	3,800
Jordan Baptist Conv	P	25	1,500	2,500
Coptic Church	O	2	1,150	2,300
Assemblies of God	P	10	1,200	1,950
Iraqi Evangelical chs	I	10	1,000	1,800
Other denominations[15]		53	6,784	10,218
Total Christians[27]		206	81,805	144,768

TransBloc	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Evangelicals			
Evangelicals	0.3	19,116	3.3%
Renewalists			
Charismatics	0.1	8,328	4.0%
Pentecostals	<0.1	2,250	1.1%



Challenges for Prayer

1 King Abdullah's rule began with promise and hope. But war in Iraq and the resulting turmoil have placed great pressure on the nation. Over a million immigrants fleeing from the two wars in Iraq have intensified Jordan's economic and political stresses. Half of them still remain. The tourist industry is a bright spot, but Islamist suicide bombings in 2005 demonstrated Jordan's fragility. Rising tensions between moderate and Islamist sentiments portend further difficulties. Pray for the peace of this land and for the king and government.

2 Christians are a community under pressure. Since Jordan's independence, lower birth rates and high emigration rates have contributed to the Church's numerical decline. Additionally, a huge influx of Muslim refugees and the rise of politicized Islam place increasing pressure on Christians, especially evangelicals. From 1980–2010, Jordan's Christian population dropped from 6.5% to 2.2% of the population. Yet, Christians are found in all walks of life, including in Parliament, and often in positions of influence. Christianity needs to be seen as an important component of Jordanian society and history. Pray that Christians may be salt and light in Jordanian society and find ways to witness to nominal Christians as well as non-Christians.

3 The evangelical Church is experiencing encouraging growth, doubling from 1995 to 2010. Believers meet at more than 50 churches and many more house groups. Most new believers are from the nominal Christian community, but recently more and more Muslims are coming to faith, possibly hundreds every year. This causes some increased pressure on churches from the authorities. Relationships between traditional and evangelical churches and believers from a Muslim background are cautious, but improving. A newly formed evangelical synod balances the diversity of denominations in a small evangelical population. In fact, churches work together rather well. Pray that all in Jordan who call on Christ might cooperate together to make Him known.

4 The steady loss of leadership potential through emigration is a drain on the body of believers. There is a great shortage of both lay leaders and full-time trained ministers. But, through several agencies and TEE courses, more Arab leaders are being trained for service in Jordan or in the wider Arab world. The work of Jordan Evangelical Theological Seminary is strategic in this regard. Pray for its continued impact in education and leadership development. Youth work, Christian bookstores and Christian camp ministries have been fruitful in recent years. Pray for more Jordanian believers to be called to full-time work.

5 Religious freedom could be a casualty amid rising religious tensions. This nation is a centre for many Christian activities and ministries, and much Christian work in the Middle East would suffer were a setback to occur in Jordan. A number of converts find life difficult – pressure comes from family, work and society. Emigration is often seen as an obvious and safe option. Pray for the freedom to proclaim the gospel and for followers of Jesus to be able to remain in Jordan.

6 Ministry opportunities for foreign Christians are under threat, but remain important. A crackdown on Islamist extremism resulted in some Christian ministries being shut down and visas denied. Several agencies are involved in a wide range of activities, usually supporting and enhancing the national Church and meeting humanitarian needs. Jordan also hosts a language school wherein many learn Arabic for their service in the Arab world. Pray that these expatriates' lives may commend the Lord Jesus and gain witness opportunities. Pray that the well-placed Jordanian Church might experience growth in its mission vision.

7 The unreached comprise the vast majority of Jordan's population. Upheaval in Iraq and the lethal violence of Islamism open many hearts to examine Isa al-Masih. Pray that every Jordanian may have opportunity to hear the gospel. Pray especially for:

a) **The Muslim majority.** Many have still not heard the clear gospel. Pray for a sensitive witness to Muslims. Several successful methods include literature, media ministry, friendship evangelism, development programmes, home meetings and camps. Pray for the protection of converts amid persecution. Pray also that the growing number of Muslim-background believers might have the legal right to convert from Islam.

b) **The millions of Palestinians,** who are a majority in Jordan. Many are the second or third generation after those removed from their traditional homeland. Some integrate into

Jordanian life; others suffer from disillusionment, bitterness and frustration which only the Man of Calvary can heal.

- c) **Iraqi refugees.** During and after the two Gulf Wars, around one million Iraqis fled to Jordan. Years later, nearly half of these are unable or unwilling to return home. Christian work among them (Jordan Evangelical Committee for Relief and Development, **CMA**, WVI, Tearfund) elicits a very good response. Equally, Jordanian churches have effective and widespread ministry to these people. Though the welcome that Jordan extended to these refugees is strained, Iraqi Christians nonetheless benefit from training and resources available to them in Jordan. Pray that churches may be granted permission to provide education to refugees; this is a ministry on their hearts.
 - d) **The 300,000 Bedouin.** Many are still nomadic; others (*fellahin*) are settled and more easily reached. Believers are very few, but there is some ministry among them. Pray for more specific outreach to these, the “true” Arabs.
 - e) **Dom Gypsies** are a hidden, poor and marginalized people. Cousins of the European Romani Gypsies, the Dom Gypsies have a great need for holistic ministry and for Scripture (especially in audio format) in their language.
 - f) **People of many nationalities** present in Jordan. Saudi and Gulf Arabs visit for the summer. Many nationalities come to work. Adygei, Druze and Chechens form proud minorities. Pray that they all may encounter the gospel while in Jordan.
- 8 **Outreach** to the majority community, and development of house churches, remain unaccomplished goals. Perhaps only 10% of churches have any meaningful interaction with Muslims. Pray that believers may catch a vision for sharing Christ and for developing house groups; both are keys for the expansion of the Church.
- 9 **Media ministry.** Jordan’s circumstances enhance the importance of radio, TV, videos, films and literature. Arabic radio (49 hours per week) from FEBA, IBRA and **TWR** has a significant effect. Satellite TV has a large impact – **SAT-7**, *Al Hayat*, The Miracle Channel and others are making great strides in Arabic-language Christian TV. The JESUS film is available in Adygey, Colloquial Egyptian and Standard Arabic. Pray for long-term fruit.
- 10 **Literature in Arabic** is widely available, with increasingly diverse materials offered. There are three Christian bookstores in Amman. They are the focal point of a successful Bible and Christian literature ministry in which The Bible Society and others are actively involved. From these literature centres, much material is sent to Iraq and to other Arab nations.