



Oman

Sultanate of Oman

Asia

Geography

Area 309,500 sq km. A mountainous land on the southeast coast of Arabia and the strategic tip of the Musandam Peninsula that dominates the entrance to the Arabian/Persian Gulf.

Population	Ann Gr	Density
2010 2,905,114	2.10%	10/sq km
2020 3,495,132	1.79%	12/sq km
2030 4,048,408	1.37%	13/sq km

Capital Muscat 650,000. **Urbanites** 71.7%. **Pop under 15 yrs** 32%. **Life expectancy** 75.5 yrs.

Peoples

Approximately 25% of the official population is expatriate, comprising the majority of the workforce.

Arab 66.8%. Omani 42.7%; Gulf Arab 15.1%; Dhofari 2.5%; Mahra 1.8%; Egyptian 1.5%.

Iranian-Median 16.6%. Baloch 13.4%; Persian 2.6%.

South Asian 14.3%. Malayali 4.4%; Bengali 4.0%; Punjabi 2.0%; Urdu 1.4%.

Other 2.4%. Filipino 1.8%, African, European, North American.

Literacy 74.4%. **Official language** Arabic. **All languages** 21. **Indigenous languages** 16. **Languages with Scriptures** 2Bi 1NT 2por.

Economy

Oil production is the primary source of revenue, followed by agriculture, fishing and light industry. Tourism is increasing. Oil wealth has been distributed wisely for the improvement of living standards, but its declining production requires economic diversification. High proportion of workforce from South Asia.

HDI Rank 56th/182. **Public debt** 56% of GDP. **Income/person** \$21,646 (46% of USA).

Politics

An isolated feudal monarchy until 1970; a benevolent absolute monarchy since then, when the then Sultan was ousted by his son. No political parties permitted, but a high degree of personal freedom and political stability for the region. Universal suffrage to elect the Consultative Assembly.

Religion

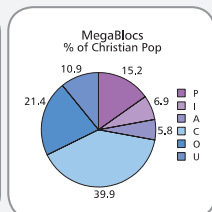
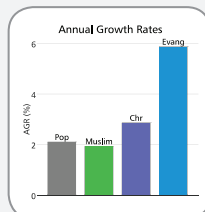
Islam is the state religion; the Ibadi sect predominates. Churches and church activities for the expatriate communities are permitted, but proselytizing Muslims is forbidden. Since his reign began in 1970, the Sultan has consistently opposed extremist strains of Islam.

Religions	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Muslim	88.72	2,577,417	1.9%
Hindu	6.80	197,548	3.7%
Christian	2.76	80,181	2.9%
Buddhist	0.65	18,883	3.8%
Sikh	0.55	15,978	6.3%
Baha'i	0.30	8,715	2.1%
Non-religious	0.22	6,391	3.1%

Christians	Denoms	Pop %	Affiliates	Ann Gr
Protestant	17	0.42	12,000	5.3%
Independent	7	0.19	5,000	6.7%
Anglican	1	0.16	5,000	2.8%
Catholic	1	1.10	32,000	1.3%
Orthodox	3	0.59	17,000	5.5%
Unaffiliated		0.30	9,000	-2.1%

Churches	MegaBloc	Congs	Members	Affiliates
Catholic Church	C	22	20,513	32,000
Orthodox Church	O	64	12,782	17,000
Anglican Church	A	4	1,704	4,600
Filipino Chr Fellowship	I	20	2,000	3,000
Pentecostal Fellowship	P	14	1,350	2,700
Indian/Pakistani Chs	P	22	1,300	2,600
Mar Thoma Syrian Ch	P	9	1,087	2,500
Arab Charismatic groups	I	32	1,600	2,400
Other denominations[10]		90	2,513	4,494
Total Christians[29]		277	44,849	71,294

TransBloc	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Evangelicals			
Evangelicals	0.8	23,986	5.9%
Renewalists			
Charismatics	0.4	12,790	5.9%
Pentecostals	0.2	5,820	5.9%



Answers to Prayer

- 1 Praise God that Oman** enjoys a reasonably open and liberal society compared to neighbours in the region. All residents are free to practice their faith, and the government has generously given land for places of worship to be built.
- 2 Christians are growing in number.** The large majority of converts actually come from expatriate workers and usually from non-Muslim backgrounds, but Omanis are also coming to faith in Christ.

Challenges for Prayer

- 1 Oman has been transformed** since 1970 into a relatively progressive and open society. Oil wealth, although declining, allowed for a much greater level of education and economic diversification. Pray for spiritual openness as well, that the gospel might have a powerful impact on all levels and peoples in Oman.
- 2 The unreached.** The entire Muslim majority remains a big challenge. Proselytism of Muslims is illegal, and the few Omanis who have come to faith face huge pressure to return to Islam. There are no known churches among the semi-nomadic Mahra or Jibbali of Dhofar, the Baluch of the eastern coasts, the rural population or the Swahili speakers.
- 3 Almost the entire Christian population is expatriate.** There are four centres where Christians of over 30 denominations or languages meet and where services in many languages are held. There are no restrictions on evangelism among expatriates, and there is a steady stream of conversions among Asians in both the newer and more traditional churches. Churches are very active, conducting home groups, TEE and Alpha Courses. Pray for the Christians to live godly lives that clearly display Christ to their unbelieving neighbours, both expatriate and Omani.
- 4 Christian professionals and workers.** The door remains open for Kingdom workers to share the gospel effectively through words, actions and lifestyles that honour Jesus. The Reformed Church in America has had a good witness here since 1890, when Samuel Zwemer, the famous missionary to Muslims, began his work in Oman. Its hospital, clinics and missionary workers have been incorporated into the government health service. Christians also have a strong presence in the education and business sectors. Pray that more workers would be willing to serve here. Pray also that, despite obvious limitations, mission-minded Christians might be fruitful and effective in planting, watering and reaping a spiritual harvest.
- 5 Other means of witness.**
 - a) The Bible Society** has a good ministry in distributing the Scriptures in many languages to the expatriate communities. There are four Bible Resource Centres, one in each Christian Resource Centre of Oman. The Bible Society also partners with CEF and other Middle Eastern-based ministries to reach children with the good news contained in Scripture.
 - b) Christian radio broadcasts** in Arabic are clearly heard from FEBA, TWR, IBRA and Adventist World Radio. They broadcast 108 hours/week, in Arabic (57 hours/week) as well as English and several Asian languages. There is a sizeable audience, and some have come to the Lord as a result. SAT-7 makes a significant impact through satellite television broadcasts.
 - c) More than 2,000 Omanis study abroad.** Pray for effective witness to them.
 - d) The Internet** is used widely and is an evangelistic medium of great potential. Pray that this may prove a good way to reach and disciple a new generation of Omanis.
 - e) The mobile phone** is everywhere and has great potential for rapidly and discreetly spreading the gospel in video, audio and text formats.