

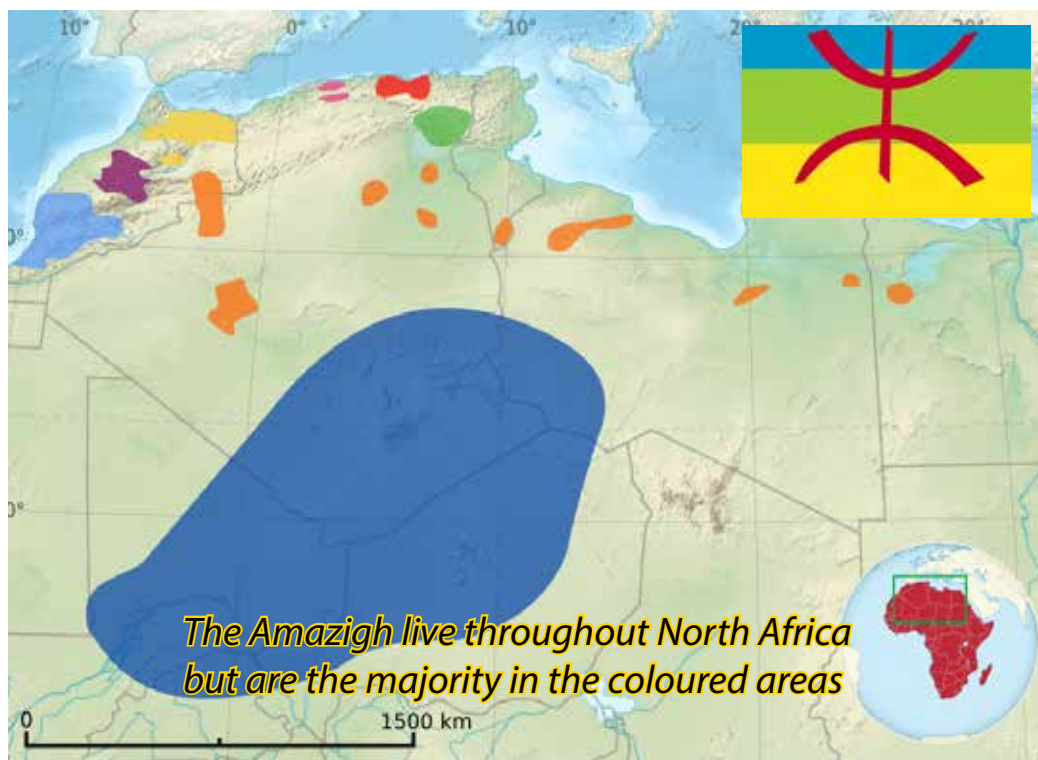


Reaching North Africa

A North African, Simon of Cyrene, was made to carry the cross for Christ, on the way to Golgotha. The Holy Spirit miraculously first brought the gospel to North Africans in their own language through the preaching of the apostles on the Day of Pentecost.

Afterwards it spread widely and flourished among the Amazigh (Berber) people of North Africa. In Roman times, many churches were established. Early church fathers, such as Tertullian and Augustine arose from among them to bless the whole church. Vestiges of Christianity remain in the Amazigh language and culture.

However, in the 7th century, Arab Muslim invaders quickly swept over and conquered North Africa. In the following centuries, large numbers of Arabic-speaking Muslims migrated to North Africa. So, Arabic became the dominant language and cul-



The Amazigh live throughout North Africa but are the majority in the coloured areas

ture. Except for outlying areas and in their homes, the native Amazigh people were absorbed into the Islamic Arab culture. Their roots were forgotten. Only in recent years, has the native Amazigh language and culture been openly acknowledged and publicly accepted in North Africa.

Arabic Ministry

Yet, for decades MERF has received large numbers of encouraging responses from North Africa to the Arabic language radio and online ministry. Some Arabic ministry responses from North Africa:

S.A.S., an Algerian school administrator: *Many of*

my friends are opposed to all things that have to do with religion. I learned something very enlightening from one of your online interviews – that Jesus did not come to lead people to any religion. Some of my friends now like the idea and want to learn more about him.

F.N., a Tunisian university student: *Two years ago, my sister helped me to truly understand the divine identity of Jesus. She and I participate in a friendship discussion group with other girls in our neighbourhood. Please help us answer this question – Why are not all Christians in the world under the Vatican Pope?*

Amazigh Ministry

In North Africa, in recent years, interest and opportunity have continued to grow for open expression of Amazigh people in their native language. So, MERF added an Amazigh media ministry team, multiplying both indirect and direct gospel outreach. Amazigh productions are aimed at introducing Christ and the foundations of faith. Their evangelistic approach is to creatively raise compelling issues along with the seeds of the gospel in audiovisual productions. These draw many interesting responses to be followed-up.

“And they compelled a passerby, Simon of Cyrene, ... to carry his cross.”

— Mark 15:21



Traditional Amazigh warrior

A number of these engaging productions focus on reviving interest in Amazigh history and the heritage of the Amazigh Christian civilization of North Africa. These Amazigh language productions have been well-received and widely-discussed in their society. Some have become very popular and recently one received an award for excellence. Some are being

translated into Arabic. *Please ask the Lord to continue to bless these gospel seeds sown in so many, many lives to germinate, drawing the lost from darkness to Christ, the Saviour, Light of the World.*

Good Fruit

Already these efforts

have borne encouraging fruit among the Amazigh people. Many have made contact requesting the Bible. Those interested are personally followed-up with answers to their questions and encouragement to read the Scriptures for themselves. By God's grace, some are coming to faith in Christ, as evidenced in changed lives.

The follow-up process includes continuing to nurture them in God's Word to bring them to spiritual maturity. When living near enough, they join local church fellowships. The team also provides much needed Amazigh language materials for worship, evangelism and Bible teaching to the small believing fellowships that are springing up. Two Amazigh testimonies:

S. formerly studied the Koran in the Islamic school. He shared that before his commitment to Christ, his relationship with his wife was not good. He was bossy, kept her at home and sometimes beat her. After knowing Christ, everything changed. He began to understand that husband and wife are to be one. Now he treats his wife in a good way and encourages her to attend Christian women's meetings. Their relationship has returned to normal. He asks prayer for the Lord to give them a baby as his wife has suffered several miscarriages.

M. is married and has a son. He works as a barber. In response to reading a Christian testimony, he began to cor-



Arabic - Amazigh Stop sign

respond to discuss theological issues. Eventually he asked to meet up. He expressed great admiration for how Christ changes lives and was interested to attend a prayer meeting. Soon he came to faith and shared the gospel with his wife, who now also follows Christ. They are steady in the small church fellowship and he shares the gospel with his customers.

Please pray for our Amazigh brothers and sisters. Their faith needs to be steadily nourished. Pray also for the protection of the North Africa ministry team.



Amazigh ladies in traditional dress

MERF-England & Wales
 NEW! 39 Addison Road, Banbury, Oxon
 OX16 9DG www.give.net/MERF

MERF-Ireland
 (charity no. 103181) 246 Vow Road, Rasharkin,
 Ballymena BT44 8TB www.give.net/20221778

MERF-Scotland
 1 MacAdam Way, Dalmellington, East Ayrshire
 KA6 7FD Scotland UK www.give.net/20035868

International Evangelical Church
 Sundays 10:30 am & 6:00 pm - John Calvin Centre
 57 Stylianou Lena St., Larnaca, Cyprus