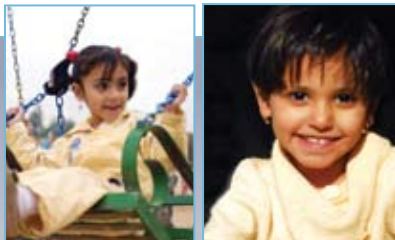


## Pray for the Iraqi tribes

A large percentage of Iraqi Arabs trace their ancestry back to one of several tribal confederations. Each of these groups is divided into tribes, clans, houses and extended families. There are possibly 20-30 confederations with over 100,000 people and possibly over 1,000 tribal organizations in the country. Tribalism is central to Iraqi cultural identity. "Iraqi culture builds to a very large extent on tribal traditions. From a cultural point of view, you cannot understand Iraq without understanding the importance of tribalism."\* Tribes are grouped into federations (qabila), the clan (fukhdh), the house (beit) and the extended family (khams). A khams consists of all male-born children who share the same great-great grandfather (five generations of men in a single family). The Bible tells us that people from every tribe and tongue will one day be before the throne of God (Rev. 5:9).  
 \*<http://www.cfr.org/publication/7681/#12>



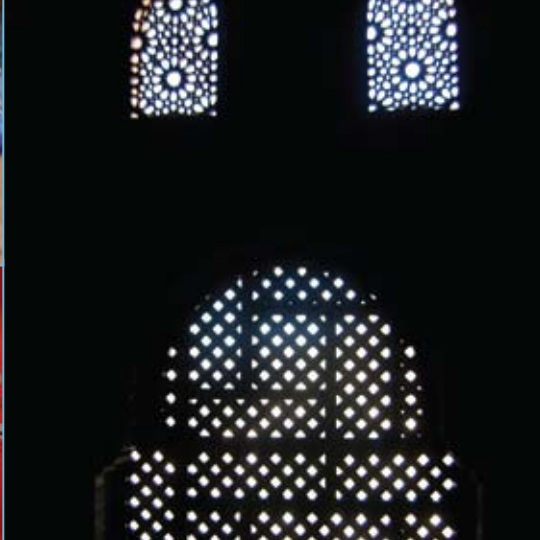
*Several of the main tribal confederations:*

*the Muntafiq  
 the Zubayd  
 the Dulaym  
 the 'Ubayd  
 the Khaz'al  
 the Bani Lam  
 the Al Bu Muhammed  
 the Rabi'a  
 the Ka'b  
 the Shammar  
 the Anaza  
 the Bani Tamim  
 the Zafir  
 the Bani Malik  
 the Khaza'il  
 the Bani Ka'b  
 the Jubour  
 the Azza*



### Prayer topics:

- ▶ *The pain and suffering of the Iraqi people is very great. Pray for healing from the pain and a positive rebirth of Iraqi society after years of bloodshed, privations and hopelessness. See the database of the following site: [www.iraqbodycount.org/](http://www.iraqbodycount.org/)*
- ▶ *Pray for the heads of tribes, clans, houses and enlarged families. God wants whole confederations, tribes and clans to turn to His salvation. Pray that many would discover new life in Christ. True lasting change and hope will only be found in the Messiah. The tribal leaders should take their notions of service, leadership and humility from Jesus. Use the list on the left in your prayers.*
- ▶ *A very high percentage of Iraqi believers have had to flee the country. Iraq has become a very dangerous country for believers.*



## THE GOSPEL AND CULTURE

While the religious differences between Christians and Muslims are significant, sometimes cultural differences can be even greater sources of misunderstanding and mistrust. Different perspectives can also be opportunities to learn from each other. Cultural differences may inhibit or enhance our ability to proclaim Christ, as well as a Muslim's ability to receive our message. Below is a list some basic differences between Western culture and many African and Oriental Islamic cultures. (These characteristics are generalizations. There may be many exceptions in various nations and regions):

### **Western societies:**

*Individualism, independence and initiative are encouraged*

*Time oriented (exact times, for example: one arrives on time)*

*Future oriented (seeing opportunities and foreseeing problems)*

*Performance oriented (ability and accomplishments are important)*

*Freedom to show weakness*

*Egalitarian relationships / Direct communication*

*Analytical thinking / concept oriented*

### **African and Oriental Islamic societies:**

*Community / group oriented*

*Event oriented (general times, example: arrival when an event happens)*

*Present oriented (enjoy the present, take action when crises develop)*

*Status oriented (class, age, family and reputation are important)*

*Fear of showing weakness or admitting failures (shame cultures)*

*Indirect communication (seeking to not offend or dishonor)*

*Holistic thinking / experience / circumstance oriented*

### *Simple questions*

One very real difference between accepted Western and Islamic cultural norms can be found in simple conversation. In many Islamic societies a man is not permitted to inquire about another man's wife in direct conversation. One can ask about how things are "at home" instead of asking the question directly: "How is your wife?" It could be deemed incorrect, impolite and even a bit suspicious for a man to ask directly about another man's wife, even if the two men are friends.