

## Luos people

Omar grew up in the western part of Kenya near Lake Victoria. His family belonged to the Luos people and they lived as a small Muslim minority among the many Christians in their village. During his school years Omar was torn between the two religions. On one side, his father did not allow him to eat with Christian boys because he was afraid of ceremonial pollution, and besides – “these are not the right friends for Omar to play with.” On the other hand, Omar liked the Christians and he happily ate with his friends when there was no food at home.

There are about 39 Million people in total in Kenya. The Luos are the second largest ethnic group with about 5 million people (the biggest being the Kikujus with about 7.5 million). Traditionally, they live in the area near Lake Victoria, but like most other groups they are also found scattered throughout the country, particularly in the urban centers.

Since there was no religious education for Muslim students in his school, Omar took part in the Christian religious education class – and he enjoyed it. Sometimes he attended church services with his relatives (his mother came from a Christian family). However, when Omar attended secondary school in a typical Kenyan boarding school, his sympathy for the Christian faith quickly



gave way to a hostile attitude. He attended the Muslim student group supported by local businessmen and distanced himself from the Christian students.

Muslims in Kenya and East Africa in general do not only come from ethnic groups in which Muslims are a majority, but they are found as minorities in many tribes. There is hardly any information available about Muslims among the Luos, Luhyas, Kikuyus, Kalenjins or Kambas in Kenya – ethnic groups which have a tribal majority of Christians. However, it is estimated that at least a third of the approximately three million Muslims in Kenya have such a background. They grow up with an interesting mix between open familiarity and hostile rejection to the Gospel and Christian believers.

The shocking experience of seeing his brother dying as a result of an occult curse and sensing that he was himself also in serious danger was the catalyst that led Omar to trust in the Messiah. The positive experiences with believers in his childhood and youth encouraged him to take this step. Today Omar is active in a group of believers and seeks to proclaim the Messiah to Muslims through song.

## ▶ Prayer REQUESTS

- ▶ *Many Muslims have had positive experiences with believers in their childhood. Pray that they would remember these experiences and seriously consider the possibility of encountering the Messiah for themselves.*
- ▶ *Pray that believers find inspiration to live out their faith and proclaim the Good News in such a way that Muslims could be attracted to the Messiah.*
- ▶ *Pray for the Christian believers in East Africa, that they would not overlook Muslims around them, but meet them in love.*