

## Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia has the largest share of oil of any nation with over 260 billion barrels of proven oil reserves. The Saudis are currently developing their reserves even further with the addition of the large Khurais and Shayba oil fields. By comparison the United States has only 21 billion barrels of proven reserves and Russia has possibly 60 billion barrels. The Saudis are currently exporting about 12 million barrels of oil per day. The Saudi Aramco Corporation is the world's richest company. A few years ago Saudi Aramco topped the Non-Public company list with an estimated value of \$781 billion USD.

The Saudis have developed a huge infrastructure to facilitate the drilling, processing and exportation of petroleum. They have some of the very best technology in the oil industry. Engineers manage the entire operation from the Aramco headquarters command center, which has banks of computers and even a 4 by 80 meter digital display showing all the operations. Every facility and every valve on the pipelines and all operations are centrally controlled. It is interesting to know that the CEO of Saudi Aramco says "oil is a gift from God but the recovery of oil is the work of men."

Historically, significant numbers of foreign workers and engineers were involved in the oil industry, but

now about 85 percent of the official Saudi Aramco work force of 54,000 is Saudi. There are also thousands of foreign contractors. Westerners in Saudi Arabia have become a small minority. Besides Saudi Aramco, there are many other companies working in various aspects of the oil industry throughout Saudi Arabia.

Saudis are largely Sunni Muslims, and from their perspective they are all Muslim by birth. Many of them have never had any opportunity to hear a presentation of the Gospel in a way that would incline them to obey the risen Lord Jesus. The Qur'an and the traditions concerning Mohammed are the foundations of Saudi law. Shi'a Muslims are persecuted, but they are permitted to practice their faith in their villages and towns.

There is no freedom of religion. While proselytism is "only" punishable by jail and deportation for foreign workers, apostasy, which is forbidden in the Qur'an, is subject to the death penalty (on par with rape, murder, sorcery and drug trafficking). While the Saudi government has not executed anyone for believing in the Messiah, in August 2008 a Saudi believer was martyred at the hands of her brother. He was not imprisoned for the homicidal act.



### Prayer REQUESTS

*The Scriptures say that the whole earth will one day be "filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Hab. 2:14).*

► *Pray for the thousands of Saudis involved in the oil industry that they could come "to know the glory of God in the face of Jesus the Messiah" (2 Cor. 4:6). Many of them live in the following cities, towns, ports and drilling settlements: Dhahran, Ras Tanura, Jubail, Dammam, Al-Khobar, Hofuf, Abqaiq, Udhailiyah and Shaybah. (Know that you are among only a small group worldwide who has ever prayed for these cities by name.)*

